

920 Fourth discussion, 23 June 1977, TC 920

Question 1: [The first part of this question Lonergan did not read – RD. One pivotal aspect of the event of the crucifixion of Jesus was the tearing of the veil (curtain) of the sanctuary in Jerusalem, the symbol of the presence of God to the Jewish people. This can be associated with the veiling of Moses and what St Paul refers to in Hebrews and elsewhere, the hope which extends beyond the veil, through which Jesus, our forerunner, has passed.] Could you comment in terms of your theological method, on the understanding of the revelation of God in Christ which is expressed in symbolic language?

Lonergan: The last two lines of the first question. Well, my method is not that detailed to go into a question like that. However, it is a large and intricate issue, and my paper this evening will attempt to say something apropos of symbols and of revelation. Perhaps it will be desirable to return to the issue in tomorrow's dialogue. So for the moment we will take a rain check on that one.

Question 2: Last year you expressed interest in Sebastian Moore's understanding of generic guilt. Do you find Sebastian's understanding of the sinlessness of Jesus acceptable in this light? Does he put more weight on this one point of the tradition than it can bear?

Lonergan: I'm still very sympathetic to Sebastian. I was reminded of his contention in his previous paper that the heroes of the New Testament were the publicans and sinners during the meeting at Notre Dame. Monsignor Miles Bourke of New York took issue with those who spoke so feelingly of Jesus' concern for the poor and the oppressed. He remarked that according to the Gospels Jesus was concerned with the publicans, the tax gatherers, and the notorious sinners. The tax gatherers were not oppressed but rather oppressors. Imagine what would happen if the Internal Revenue Service was replaced by a system that sold the right to collect taxes to the highest bidders.

That Jesus was sinless is scriptural doctrine, e.g., Hebrews 4.15 and 7.26. That the love of God inspired by the sufferings of Christ can cause such sorrow for one's sins that there is no need for any punishment to make satisfaction for them is a doctrine of St Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 3: 158: 'One must consider that when the mind, the soul, has turned away from sin, its displeasure in sin may be so vehement and the mind's clinging to God so firm that there may remain no obligation to any penalty. For, as may be gathered from what has already been said about penalties, a penalty suffered after the forgiveness of sin is needed that the mind cling more firmly to the good and also that the order of justice be maintained. But the love of God suffices to fix firmly a man's mind in good, particularly when that love is vehement. And one's displeasure in one's own past sins can cause the greatest sorrow. Consequently, through the vehemence of one's love of God and of one's hatred of one's past sins, there can be excluded the necessity of any satisfying or purgating penalty. And even if the love of God and the displeasure of sin does not attain that vehemence, at least it reduces the penalty required.'

And he goes on, 'Since what we can do through our friends we somehow can do ourselves because friendship makes two people one in affection and particularly when the affection is charity, so just as one can satisfy for one's own sins, so can one satisfy to God for another's. For the pain which a friend endures for another is taken, considered, by the other as

though he himself were suffering. For your friend to suffer is for you to suffer. So, for a friend, a friend's sufferings are his own. And consequently, the sufferings of Christ, contemplated by the sinner who is moved by charity, are at once an incentive to his love of God and the cause of the greatest sorrow for his own sins.'

So Thomas is using a connection between suffering and love as an account of what reconciliation is. Sebastian is meditating on the principle that showing love is a cause of love, a cause of the liberation that makes loving possible. I'm not aware that this principle was explicitly taught in the tradition, but I'm inclined to think that it was understood in all preaching of Christ and him crucified. I would not say that the principle is a matter of faith, but I do think it pertains to the understanding of the faith that is the theologian's business to promote. In other words, it is a theological opinion; it is not a matter of faith, probably, if you want a note on it.

Question 3: Could you make some suggestions on how people who are collaborating with you in various aspects of the theological enterprise, e.g., psychology, spirituality, can make a contribution to your renewed efforts in economic and political theory?

Lonergan: Collaboration is of many kinds. The kind of collaboration that rests on accepting my method is like any scientific collaboration; basically it is a matter of people doing their own thing. One man told me in Florida, 'We are not your disciples; you taught us how to think for ourselves, and that is what we're doing.' And that's the meaning of the method too. It is: what do you do? and it rests upon self-appropriation. Because one is converted intellectually, morally, and religiously and enjoys a certain differentiation of consciousness, he will simply be himself and enjoy all the liberty that flows from being himself. People expert on psychology or on spirituality obviously can contribute to the educational project in which political and economic renewal is involved. But that that is the best thing for them to do and how they might go about it is a matter for their own decision and judgment and not for mine.

Question 4: Do you agree that energy can be informed psychically as well as biologically, chemically, and physically?

Lonergan: I think that this conclusion follows from general cybernetic theory. Control is from above downwards; energy is from below upwards. Any cybernetic system works that way. The power and the way the power is used and so on can be something that depends on several levels, several higher levels, and the control is a very, very weak little thing, like changing your mind, changing the flow of thought, changing your field of attention. That's what occurs to me to say about it.

Question 5: Would you comment on your present views on the possibility or impossibility of the reduction of psychic and conscious activities and operations to the biological level? Is such a reduction impossible in principle?

Lonergan: Well, I'd say that control moves from above downwards, because the higher level makes systematic on the lower level what on that level would be merely coincidental. Intelligence puts sensible data together in a way that sense does not put them together. And it is because intelligence does that that people say that we are not in the real world, you know, it is

just theory and talk. And similarly with regards to insights; you can have insights that are fanciful. As the psychiatrist remarked after a talk on *Insight*, 'Our patients have all sorts of insights, but the trouble is that they are wrong.' In other words, you have to have judgment as well as insight; if you just have insights without judgment, they will be wrong. So consequently, to reduce the higher level to the lower level would be to argue that the higher level has no effect on the lower or alternatively that what is systematic on the lower depends simply on the lower. And that is the sort of opinion that is dealt with for example by Phil McShane in his *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence*, and also Howard Pattee, *Hierarchy Theory*, especially Pattee's own paper; he is the editor, Braziller 1973. His theory is something about: introduce constraints and you'll get statistical frequencies, and through the statistical frequencies you'll have the possibility of a higher level coming in and making statistical frequencies systematic.

Question 6: Are you sympathetic to Bob Doran's reworking of the understanding of dreams in chapter 6 of *Insight*? How does the distinction between dreams of the night and dreams of the morning relate to this question?

Lonergan: I'm very sympathetic, because he brings out a difference between Freud and Jung on a point in which I think Jung is superior to Freud. I like his argument against Freud on that point. The kind of interaction Bob envisages between psyche and conscious living is something far more than dreams of the morning. Dreams of the morning are just one anticipation of the concrete living; but this is an interaction between conscious living and learning from the psyche where your conscious living is a bit askew.

Question 7: Could you say something about genuineness, authenticity, and the relationship between them? How is the distinction between first and second naivete relevant to genuineness and authenticity?

Lonergan: For me genuineness and authenticity are equivalent. I think I use 'genuineness' in *Insight* and 'authenticity' in *Method*. It consists in raising and attending to relevant further questions on the level of intelligence, of reasonableness, of responsibility, and of love. If you keep your questions for intelligence coming until you get the invulnerable insight, fine. But if you don't, you will be bothered by those further questions. They keep returning. Similarly with regard to your judgment: if you have sufficient evidence your judgment remains, but if you make a judgment without sufficient evidence you are bumping into difficulties all along the line until you change your judgment. And similarly with regard to your evaluations and decisions: if no further questions arise, you have peace of mind, and if they keep coming back, if you haven't really met the issue, you will have a nagging conscience; it will be the questions coming back. And genuine authenticity consists simply in that.

In Plato's language, it is being willing to follow the argument, the *logos*, wherever it leads. It is Plato's dialectic as opposed to eristic. First and second naivete are relevant to genuineness because both allow symbols their operative power. First naivete gives symbols their operative power because it doesn't advert to them as merely symbols, and second naivete in like manner allows them their operative power even though it does advert to them as merely symbols.

Question 8: Would you comment from the point of view of your method on the alleged discovery of powers of physical healing in the community of believers?

Lonergan: Well, healing is part of the charismatic movement. I'm not in a position to say much about healing either factually or theologically. However, I can give you second-hand information about it, in a particular case that I got a few months ago. There was a nun of whom I've known for a dozen years, whom I consider very holy, and I can tell you her story of her brother dying of cancer, and a person referred to as Fr Gino. The cancer started in the bowels and went up through the stomach through the esophagus and into the throat. She had been away, abroad, and when she came back she tried to phone, and his wife answered the phone and tried to explain the severity of it and that he couldn't talk and that it would be no use coming. So after being put off a couple of times she decided to go anyway, and she found him wasted away, weighing under 100 pounds and so on, and unable to talk. When he tried to talk, he started to cough, and so on, and she was talking to someone about it, and they said that they must get Fr Gino. Well, Gino is not his name. He has a long Indian name, and no one in this town could handle this long name, so he was generally known as Fr Gino. He was from India and was studying at the university, and he was doing a lot of healing. And she got to see him, and he said, Well, we will go and pray over him, but you must have someone else. We'll have to have three praying, and you must have forgiven everyone, have no unforgiveness in your heart. And she said that she only had a few dislikes, but she doesn't show them and takes good care of it.

So she got a friend to go along with them, and they went to the home and he gave the same talk about forgiveness and then said, Now we'll pray simultaneously, and each will do his own praying, and the prayer will be praise to the Father, and pray to the Son the Savior, and thank the Holy Spirit for coming. They started praying this way, and it went off into glossolalia. And they prayed for about an hour, and then they came back the next day and did it again, and at one point Fr Gino said to the patient in the bed, 'I say to thee, arise and walk.' And then he went into another room and always refused to take anything to eat, and the man's wife asked him if he wanted a cup of tea, and he accepted it, and placed it on a chair and sat somewhere else and they sat there waiting. And after a while the man was out of the bed and walking towards them slowly but steadily. The effect of the prayer was that it ended the suffering. The man lived on for a year and then died, and they were praying for him regularly, but the praying ended the suffering; it had an effect.

Now, all I can do is repeat the story. Does it always work, and is it psychosomatic, and so on and so forth? There are all different questions that can be asked like that. But there are also spiritual cures we can speak of. People you know, their lives are changed by being prayed over. There is a Dominican who is very much in this, a Fr McNutt, and he runs courses for people on healing. You will find other people that know more about this than I do.

Question 9: In your comments yesterday afternoon, you emphasized the importance of an economic arrangement that provided for insights into the concrete situation and encouraged initiative at the local level. If the economic planners kept in touch with realities at the local level, and if persons at the local level were provided with ample opportunities for expressing initiative, would you be receptive to a socialist economy characterized by public ownership of production facilities and public planning of production and distribution? Does the 'brigade-village-

commune' approach now being followed in China provide an example of how a socialist society can consciously seek to avoid inefficiency and the stifling of local initiative?

Lonergan: Well, there are differences in the Chinese economy. At the start they kept the traders and let them continue functioning, so that the retail trade would remain and function, and how long they kept it and what the ultimate effects were I don't know.

My point about insights into the concrete situation is that unless you are living in the concrete situation you don't get the insights, and still less do you get new ones, and the whole point to initiative is new insights, doing things differently where the difference is something better; and the idea of sending ideas from the concrete to the planners, well, the higher up the hierarchy you go, the less they know about the concrete situation and the less capable they are to judge whether or not the idea would work. And certainly, they are not going to take someone else's word for it and risk their necks by trying it. The further you get away from it the less people know, and the less are they ready to take responsibility for change.

I have lived in a fairly bureaucratic organization for fifty-five years, with a very special motivation and so on, the apostolate. But one mustn't be naïve about what planners can do. A camel has been defined as a racehorse designed by a committee. Planners don't deal with new ideas; they deal with old ideas that are tried and proved. My brother is a chemical engineer, and he says that you don't get anything changed as long as the production line is running. If it breaks down, perhaps you could get a new idea in. Nothing is more capable of planning and being efficient than a postal system; there are no novelties; it is just more letters and more packages day by day. But in Canada the thing is breaking down; it is in considerable difficulties here in the States; and America is the place where everything used to work. If your planners can't get a thing like that to run, what can you expect when they are running everything?

For a wealthy country to reproduce the heavy industry of another country is relatively simple: no new ideas, just reproduce what somebody else has elsewhere, and it is something quite limited. You don't have to worry about the buyer because the planners sell it to themselves and cut any income from it out of general circulation; so they will be able to pay for it. The problem arises the more you are expecting variety, giving people what they want in the quantities they want, when they want it, and so on.

Now our supermarkets are things that are planned. And there was an interesting profile in the *New Yorker* on Florida tomatoes. Because of the supermarkets, they have developed in Florida a tomato that can fall six feet without the skin breaking. If it falls fifteen feet the skin will break but it won't spatter. They are all uniform. They are all a beautiful red. They have been subjected to some kind of gas that changes the color of the skin but it doesn't affect the inside. Between these tomatoes and the tomatoes that are grown normally and come from Mexico, the differences are fantastic as far as the palate goes, but for those other tomatoes you have to have a small grocery shop where the man, you know, puts the tomatoes in danger of spoiling at the top of the bin so they move off first, and it requires an awful lot of care, and a supermarket can't run under those principles, it has to have a uniform product that looks good. And they don't want people to pick and choose, and the suppliers meet the demand. The Florida tomatoes are not grown in normal soil; as a matter of fact it is the sort of soil that comes from coral beds and has no nourishment; all the nourishment that the plants get is from fertilizer; the tomatoes are harvested when they are green, and they are put in an enormous place where their color is ripened, and so on. It is quite a game producing tomatoes that satisfy supermarkets. Well, when

your whole retail trade is that way, it depends on the planners; they want something that works even though people don't like eating it.

My opinion on this is to distinguish sharply between concepts and general ideas on the one hand and insight into concrete situations on the other. You can predict insofar as you have not only natural laws but also schemes of recurrence. But schemes of recurrence are known only by insight into the concrete or the imagined situation, not insights into general propositions. And that is the difficulty with planning. It employs a different kind of intelligence, namely, abstract intelligence, and the concrete results seem to suffer, from all the reports.

Questions from the audience

Question: Do you have a position on the quality of the theological methodology in the Ordination of Women document from Rome?

Lonergan: Have you heard of Rosemary Haughton? I asked her opinion on it, and she said, well, what if the pope had said go ahead? We are unprepared for a sudden shift, and she felt as things mature a bit things will change. It is a question about which I have no personal opinion. I have never studied it.

Question: Would you assign any role at all to a social planner?

Lonergan: Well, in other words, there is such a thing as sin, laziness, indolence, destructiveness. They say about the university library in Toronto that it is easier to get on an Air Canada airplane than to get out of the university library. You have to plan for things like that. It just depends on the morality of the social group. They say there is no recidivism back into the Alabama prisons.

Question: What would be the difference between social planning and the kind of general invariants that you worked out for the economic process, surplus expansion and basic expansion? That's not the sort of thing that can be easily figured out.

Lonergan: No, it's very difficult to figure out.

Question: Would there be need for something like social planning to be able to tell you where you are?

Lonergan: No, I don't think so. I think they gradually develop the techniques and the know-how. There are the signals even now, you know. When the upper level, the maintenance, improvement, and growth section, begins to be a smaller proportion of the total product, and it tends to that inevitably because what it is doing is accelerating the other, what has to happen is that the price spread has to narrow, in other words, the profit in the bookkeeping sense. And when this upper level becomes merely maintenance, then there is no price spread in the other sense of profit, the functional sense of profit. You can have price spread insofar as your people who get this sort of money want to spend it on their private living. They can live like commissars, and they will do the economy no harm, provided they spend all they get. Kalecki's formula, it is a simplifying formula: workers spend what they get, and capitalists get what they

spend. Unless they are investing, there is no profit to be had, because profit is the money for investing and from investing. To do it statistically is extremely difficult, an a priori sort of thing. There are certain industries that are ambiguous. They can be doing either in one or the other. And there is no a priori way of going from their general books to what the situation is. But there are all the signals. And the thing to prevent is the sheltered industries that can make a profit at anytime just by throwing the losses on somebody else. That is the sort of thing we need to stop. And we need to know when businesses are going bankrupt.

Question: With reference to your chapter in *Method* on Communications, where you replace doctrines with policies and systematics with planning and communications with implementation of the planning, would that be a way of correcting this kind of conceptualism in planning?

Lonergan: Provided the feedback works, eh, it helps, and if people are concerned for it. You have different levels in the economy, in the range things effect and so on. But that is the future, and we're not there yet, eh?

Question: We've talked about Florida tomatoes. What about the moral issues involved in Florida orange juice?

Lonergan: Well, I can only refer to another profile in the *New Yorker*. The Floridians say that with California oranges you get the juice by running the steam roller over them. And the Californians say that if you want to eat a Florida orange you better get into the bathtub. Both of them exaggerate. But I don't know anything about the ethics of Florida oranges.

Question: A couple of years ago you were asked what you saw as some of the significant dangers in the present Church, and you said at that time that there could be decisions made in terms of advancing the Church that would be unacceptable and cause a retrenchment or pulling back. Would you agree with that summary of your statement, and do you see it happening now? How would you make an assessment of the Church's developments over the past two years?

Lonergan: Well, I have no assessment of my own. A canonist, Fr H?, is of the opinion that Vatican II didn't work because it didn't institutionalize the reforms it proposed. You have institutions insofar as you have already understood and commonly accepted modes of cooperation. And insofar as such already understood and commonly accepted modes of operation are established, you can do something new. There are relevant modes of operation, and there is something in that, because the model of feedback doesn't work too well.

On the other hand, there is to my mind a problem that is not sufficiently taken into account, or a factor that is not usually taken into account, the existence of different differentiations of consciousness; and that is a complex topic. But what it means is that there can be an awful lot of misunderstanding between theologians with different degrees and kinds of differentiations of consciousness, and between theologians and non-theologians. And you can have non-theologians with any variety of degrees of education. It is a problem that in the past was solved by a monolithic idea of culture. There was one culture, classicist culture, that produced the standardized man by the study of Latin and Greek, perennial philosophy, and so on. It was blown to pieces by nineteenth-century developments in history. And that standardization

is gone, but some of us don't know that it is gone, and don't know how to adapt to the change. A big change like that in one's ideas on culture and what culture is, that has been the big upset in the Catholic Church in this century. When I was a student in high school and college what did we do? We studied Latin, Greek, and mathematics. There were other subjects, but they weren't important, and everyone knew they weren't important, even the teachers. And you produced a standardized product that was produced equally in French Canada as in English Canada, and in Europe as in America, and so on. And that has vanished. I remember Wilfred Cantwell Smith saying to me that in Upper Canada College he had studied Latin and Greek and one could hardly be a gentleman if one hadn't, but he never bothered about them after he went to university. That is a change that gives you a new setup, brings to light a great diversity of attitudes, and it is to my mind the fundamental problem. In other words, the crisis is not a crisis of faith but a crisis fundamentally in the culture, in this new idea of culture that is in modern education, and so on.