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In the last class, we moved into the second set of themes for this final portion of our course: Conversion and the Structure of Theology. This second set has some subdivisions. The first we considered in the last class: General Statements:

1. A modern theology that is at the same time thoroughly Christian will differ from the theologies of the past, not by reason of the faith it attempts to understand, but because there is a new superstructural context in which the meaning of that faith must be clarified.
2. Theology's mediation of religion and modern culture occurs on the superstructural level.
3. This does not mean that theology is isolated from the concerns of everyday living.
4. With regard to conversion, it means that theology's task is not directly to persuade to conversion, but to make conversion a theme that is reflected on and talked about, studied and described, in academic circles.
5. A modern theology must be empirical.

The second subdivision is concerned with The Two Phases of an Empirical Theology:

1. An empirical theology has two phases: one that studies the Christian faith in its origins, its history, the development of its doctrines, the evolution of its theology; and the other that attempts to state the meaning of Christian faith for contemporary experience and culture.
2. A modern empirical theology thus does not lose its concern for the past, but shifts that concern into a new context and treats the past in a different manner from classicist theology.

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Thesis 3. Theology will treat the ~~fact~~ ^{or historian} by using modern historical methods.

Nevertheless, what the interpreter ^{or historian} finds in the data of the fact will be in part a function of the ^{subject} ~~person~~ he or she is, and of his or her assumptions about religion, morality, and human knowledge.

Comments: In the first part of our course, we studied the problems raised for theology today by the modern methods of studying history. We spoke of the historical-critical method of inquiry, which is a sustained attempt to recover fact meanings and fact events by patient analysis of all available data, of all evidence.

We said that this method insists on impartiality on the part of the historian. The historian, according to this method, cannot allow his or her own personal beliefs to influence the histories they write. We saw, though, that the method allowed one assumption: the worldview of modern science, presumably because this was not belief, but knowledge. Finally, we saw that, as a result of this method, historians came to regard much of what previously had been accepted as fact, now as fiction, myth, legend, a matter merely of literary genre, etc. Among the events so classified were ^{the} miracles of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The latter, of course, is the event around which the whole of Christian faith pivots. As St. Paul said: "If Christ be not raised from the dead, then our faith is in vain."

This thesis is stating that, no matter how precise one's historical method, there are some assumptions that the historian cannot help entering into his or her interpretation of the data. Even the 19th-century practitioners & creators of the critical-hs^m method allowed for the assumptions

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of the modern scientific world-view. Furthermore, such assumptions, on Lonergan's analysis, were not knowledge but belief. Thus these historians who denied miracles and the Resurrection were letting their beliefs in the modern scientific world view -- i.e., about what we can know, about what can happen -- enter into their writing of history.

More precisely, there are three areas of assumptions that will inevitably color one's interpretation of the past: assumptions about religion and God, assumptions about morality and value, and assumptions about the capacities of human knowledge. Because these assumptions will differ from one historian ^{or interpreter} to another, the two historians ^{or interpreters} can follow exactly the same method and can study exactly the same data and yet arrive at quite different conclusions about the meaning of a text or about a given course of events.

Some examples: Let us consider two different historians studying the development of Christian faith between 33 A.D. - 100 A.D.

~~Religion:~~

Both are using exactly the same data and following exactly the same method.

But: Historian A believes that

- a. religion is nothing but an expression of human psychological wishes, there is no God, or, if there is, there is no personal and historically effective relationship we can have with God;
- b. all attempts at moral living are futile, expressions of man's desire for power or pride or prestige; one may as well strive for satisfaction as for value -- it makes no ultimate or lasting difference.
- c. modern science has shown that the universe is a clockwork machine, bodies in motion, and bound together by inflexible law; and so miracles are impossible.

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Historian B, on the other hand, assumes:

- a. there is a possibility of a living, personal, historically effective relationship between man and God;
- b. this religious conversion enables us to live authentic moral lives, choosing on the basis of value rather than of satisfaction; and it does make a difference in one's own life and in history which choice one makes;
- c. what I can know is not bodies in motion, bound together by inflexible law, but whatever can be intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed; moreover, this position our knowledge explains why 20th-century science has been able to move away from the notion of the universe as a clockwork machine to the world view of an evolving universe whose events happen statistically and not necessarily; and, on this view of the universe and granting that God exists, there is no reason why miracles and the resurrection of Jesus should be declared impossible.

Because of these assumptions or beliefs, the two historians studying exactly the same evidence and using exactly the same ~~data~~ method will write two radically different histories of the period 30-100 A.D. Any attempt to reconcile their histories by appealing to the data or to their methods will get you nowhere. They've studied the same data following the same method. Neither their data nor their methods account for the differences in their work. What accounts for this is the horizon established by their assumptions about religion, morality, and knowledge. Thus any attempt to reconcile their histories must get them to expose these assumptions and to confront one another at this level.

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I have given an example in which two extremes are depicted: Historian A is, in Lonergan's terms, converted neither religiously, nor morally, nor intellectually. Historian B is converted in all three domains of subjectivity. What shows up from this example is that there are other possibilities less extreme: one can be converted religiously but not morally or intellectually, etc., etc. So there are many ways in which the subject influences the outcome of historical research, no matter how carefully and closely one may be studying the data according to the critical-historical method. Even a religiously but not intellectually converted subject might deny the possibility of miracles, e.g.

Thesis 4: The issue of ^{the} subjectivity ^{and its horizon} is central to ~~understanding~~ ^{thus} the process from data to results, ~~even when one is limited to historical interpretation of the facts~~ that constitutes theology.

Lonergan's principal contribution to theology is in the area of method, and his principal contribution to method is the analysis he has provided of the operations and possible horizons of the subject, of ourselves as subjects.

A horizon is determined by the extent of our knowledge and the reach of our interests. It is the extent of what can be understood, affirmed, and appreciated from a given standpoint. There are some questions that do not lie within my horizon, either because of my limited knowledge or because ^{of} my interests.

There are ^{three} different kinds of differences in horizon:

a. complementary differences: in a given operation, say a business firm, you have the owners, the managers, the supervisors,

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the foreman, the workers. You have the corporation's lawyers and psychologists. Each has his own area of interest and knowledge. Each recognizes the need for the others. Their horizons are complementary.

b. Genetic: Horizons may be successive stages in a process of development, where each later stage presupposes earlier stages, includes them, transforms them. The history of an idea or of a doctrine or of my own views about X.

c. Dialectical: This is what we are dealing with in our examples of historian

A & historian B. What for one is intelligible, for the other is unintelligible. What for one is true, for the other is false. What for one is good, for the other is false. What for one is real, for the other is illusion, myth, superstition. The basis of this difference lies in their assumptions about the subject: his religion, his morality, and his knowledge.

One's horizon, then, is determined not only by one's historical tradition, social milieu, and psychological orientations, but also by one's fundamental assumptions on what is real and can be known, on what is good and worthwhile, on what is the nature of the ultimate mystery of existence.

To get at this aspect of horizon means one must devote a good deal of study to the human subject precisely in his or her operations as subject. ~~We have already dealt with the moral and religious aspects of the subject. Now intellect.~~ ~~As Lonergan points out in "The Subject," the study of the subject had been neglected by philosophy until very recently. This neglect meant that our capacity for self-transcendence in the order of knowledge was overlooked. Philosophy did not come to know much about us in our experience of our most concrete operations and their relations~~

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Thesis 5: The neglect of the study of the subject is thus responsible for many problems in modern and contemporary theology.

As Lonergan points out in "The Subject," philosophy until recently has not devoted much attention to us as subjects. Classicist philosophy tended to overlook the operations of the mind by which we arrive at truth. It emphasized instead the objectivity of truth, or a method of knowing that is deductive, or a metaphysical account of the soul. It did not attend to our operations, to the different levels of consciousness and to their relations to one another. Because of this neglect, various aberrations of opinion regarding the subject arose: behaviorism, with its neglect of the data of consciousness; logical positivism with its exclusive emphasis on mathematical logic as the only source of truth; pragmatism, with its insistence that a thing is true only if it works; conceptualism, which overlooks our experience of insights and fastens on relating concepts to one another; or immanentism in its many forms, with its insistence that we cannot know reality that is beyond ourselves, that our knowing is not self-transcendent; or nihilism, with its views of the absurdity of all moral effort, its cynicism about human responsibility, its neglect of the notion of value that is built into our very consciousness; or a kind of emotionalism, for which the questions of what I am doing when I am knowing, what I know when I do that, are inconsequential. All of these are mistaken assumptions that can influence and have influenced theologians in detrimental ways.

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Thesis 6: No matter how faithful the historian may be to the critical-historical method, his results will ^{depend on whether he is a} ~~not be accurate only if his work involves~~ ~~assumptions that flow from~~ religiously, morally, and intellectually ^{conver} ~~ed~~ subject.

This thesis follows naturally from what we have just said.
To return to historian A: the difference