

Class 12

Sections 5 and 6 of chapter 9 of *What Is Systematic Theology?* and chapter 12 of *Method in Theology*

Section 5 of Chapter 9: Expanding the Notion of Psychic Conversion

Section 5 of the chapter goes into far more detail than we will have time for to suggest that psychic conversion enables not only a connection with von Balthasar but also a rapprochement with Heidegger and Wittgenstein. The basic idea is that of an expansion of the notion of the first or empirical level of consciousness through the notion of ‘reception from above.’ 125: ‘Included among the data that occur to the attentive subject of a consciousness that is also invested with exigencies to be intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, and that is meant for love, are not only ... the spontaneous, immediate data of sense and consciousness. Nor are the materials limited to those data along with the symbolic and dramatic-aesthetic operators, including feelings ... Included as well are the materials that are intended in von Balthasar’s “seeing the form,” in Heidegger’s preconceptual grasp of temporal, historical facticity, of what Heidegger, perhaps misleadingly, calls *Sein*, and in Wittgenstein’s insistence on the public meaningfulness of ordinary language.’ We receive *empirically* the intelligibility, truth, and value of communally sedimented meaning. ‘Reception “from below” has to do with the data of sense and consciousness that are the straightforward object of “empirical consciousness” in the ordinary sense of the term. But reception “from above” has to do with the meanings and values that are handed on to us in our communities. In each case there is an immediacy about the reception that qualifies it as “empirical consciousness.”’ 128: There are presentations that occur empirically to the conscious subject that are already infused with intelligence and rationality and, we may add, with ethical overtones. In this section, I spend a great deal of energy and time finding evidence for this notion in Lonergan himself. That we will have to skip. See, e.g., the schema on p. 128. Recall also the statement of Lonergan’s differentiating the data of the natural sciences, the data of the human sciences, and the data of theology.

Chapter 12 of *Method in Theology*: ‘Doctrines’

1 The Varieties of Doctrines

Question 1: How do the doctrines meant in chapter 12 differ from the four other varieties of doctrines that Lonergan discusses in the first section of the chapter? RD lecture.

The chapter is rather loosely organized. We have to realize that Lonergan is doing two things in this chapter. First, he is specifying the precise meaning of the term ‘doctrines’ **as a functional specialty**. And second, he is discoursing in general on **the complexity of the category ‘doctrines.’** The first section, on the varieties of doctrines, **both** isolates the peculiar meaning of doctrines as a functional specialty and witnesses to the complexity of the category.

So, the varieties of doctrines: **First**, there are the **primary sources**, where a distinction is drawn between **the doctrine of the original message** and **doctrines about this doctrine**.

From scripture and biblical interpretation we gain the doctrines of the **original** apostolic preaching, and doctrines about these doctrines. As Lonergan says in Paul there are references to the original message in 1 Corinthians 15.3 ff. and Galatians 1.6 ff.: ‘I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; that he was buried, and was raised to life on the third day, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter, and then to all twelve apostles. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles’ (1 Cor 15.3-7). Galatians 1.6 ff. basically claims there is no other gospel than the one Paul preached to them.

Stages in the proclamation and application of this message yield **doctrines about doctrine**. Hebrews 1.1, 2 (‘God spoke to us of old through his prophets and most recently in his Son’). Acts 1.28 recalls how a decision of assembled Christians coincides with the decision of the Holy Spirit. There is a development of a **sense of apostolic tradition** in such figures as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen, who all appeal to the teaching given by the apostles to the churches they founded. There is the **fixing of the canon** and of certain **hermeneutical principles** especially by Clement of Alexandria.

Second, there are **church doctrines**. From history we gather the church doctrines that arose as explicit answers to questions raised at another time. They are **not simple reaffirmations** of scripture and apostolic tradition.

Third, there are the **theological doctrines** of the various periods and schools in Christian history: the theological doctrines of the Fathers, of the medievals, of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation theologians, of modern and even contemporary theologians – these are theological doctrines as **studied in history**.

Fourth, history reveals a **methodological** problem, one that surfaced toward the end of the thirteenth century and continued through the succeeding centuries, one that, in Lonergan’s view demanded an answer to the three questions, What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do that? And also an answer to the question, What am I doing when I am doing theology? Here the answer ‘must envisage not only the Christian encounter with God but also the historicity of Christian witness, the diversity of human cultures, the differentiations of human consciousness’ (297). There emerges a **methodological doctrine** (i.e., Lonergan’s) that in dialectic finds that the serious oppositions among these various doctrines are rooted in the presence and absence of the conversions, and that in foundations formulates a position regarding the conversions.

Finally, there are **the doctrines meant in this chapter, namely, (church and) theological doctrines that are selected from dialectic on the basis of foundations**. To the extent possible, the contemporary theologian speaking in direct discourse will either state what he or she holds to be true (judgment) in categories derived from conversion and interior and religious