

Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.

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Among recent Roman Catholic thinkers Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J. occupies a prominent place.

J. F. Lonergan was born in Buckingham, Quebec, on December 17, 1904. Among the institutions of learning he attended was the University of London. What a joy it was to Lonergan to be able to read Cardinal J. H. Newman there. Newman's work *An Essay of a Grammer of Assent*, says F. E. Crowe, S.J. "had a profound influence on Lonergan's developing epistemology."¹

When in 1940 Lonergan began his teaching career, i.e. Roman Catholic theology was turning into "new ways." The "revolution in theology was to be as world-shaking," says Crowe, "as the war had been in international politics." "The gathering of professors at the Gregorian in the thirties," Crowe adds, "represented the fine flowering of the old 'classical' culture and from them Lonergan imbibed much that was best in the patrimony they had inherited and built up and handed down, but the future belonged to other men: new ways of thinking, new attitudes to fellow-Christians, new programs in theology were taking over." To those new trends Lonergan was to make his contribution as his ideas slowly matured."²

"In his intellectual pilgrimage Lonergan travelled from Newman to Augustine to Plato, then he imbibed Marechal 'by osmosis' from a fellow scholastic at the Gregorian; and in his doctorate work he came to a personal confrontation with St. Thomas and Aristotle that would lead him far from the established schools and be a powerful fertilizing influence for further evolution and new creative thinking. For St. Thomas, even the genuine St. Thomas, was now obviously not enough."

A glance at Lonergan's main writings during his first twenty-five years of teaching indicate this general trend of his thinking. Lonergan wrote his doctoral dissertation on "the concept of *gratia operans* in St. Thomas."¹ He thus began his work as writer on philosophy and theology by "reaching up to the mind of a genius."²

¹ *Collection Papers* by Bernard Lonergan, S.J. edited by F. E. Crowe, S.J., Herder and Herder, 1967, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

1. Insight

Omitting other writings we pass on at once to Lonergan's work entitled *Insight, a Study of Human Understanding*. Insight is, says Crowe, "a Thomist book—in its fundamental metaphysics and epistemology" but it is in fact "a profound rethinking of cognitional theory on the basis of seven centuries of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, depth psychology, the social and human sciences and modern philosophy. The net result was a transformation of the transcendental method as developed by Marechal in correction and complement of Kant: a critical appropriation of human cognitional structure as a basis for a methodical science and philosophy."³

"But, despite all its wealth and fertility," Crowe continues, "*Insight* was really only preliminary and preparatory, it had not yet come to the heart of the matter in regard to goals and objectives." *Insight* "dealt mainly with the subject, and the subject was irrevocably orientated to an *intentio entis intendens*." Lonergan's "lectures in graduate courses ... have moved since *Insight* through the implementation of methods founded on that book, to the question of the meaning that constitutes human institutions and, because meaning develops in history, of the new historical consciousness of man."⁴

Thanking Crowe for his help in getting under way we take a look into *Insight* for ourselves.

The first five chapters of the book are devoted to the question, "What is meant by *Insight*?" Man cannot begin his effort to understand himself and his world in an uncritical way. Why did I not, asks Lonergan, simply begin "from the simple and obvious notion of the thing? The answer is that man is involved in a dialectical tension, and he can be made aware of the fact only after he has grasped what is meant and what is not meant by inquiry, insight and conception as opposed to sensible data and schematic images. Accordingly our first task was to clarify the nature of insight and to it we devoted our first five chapters."⁵

Let us then, argues Lonergan, each for himself ask the question: "Am I a knower?"⁶ But any one who asks the question "Am I a knower" is rationally conscious. For the question is a question for rational reflection, a question to be

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

met with a "Yes" or "No"; and asking the question does not mean repeating the words but entering the dynamic state in which dissatisfaction with mere theory manifests itself in a demand for fact, for what is so. Further, the question is not any question. If I ask it I know what it means. What do I mean by "I"? The answer is difficult to formulate, but strangely, in some obscure fashion, I know very well what it means without formulation, and by that obscure yet familiar awareness, I find fault with various formulations of what is meant by "I"...

Still further, when I ask myself what I mean when I say "I" I ask whether in answering the question I am, at the same time, affirming the unconditioned. "As each has to ask these questions of himself, so too he has to answer them for himself. But the fact of the asking and the possibility of the answering are themselves the sufficient reason for the affirmative answer."⁷

What has been said is but a very small sample of Lonergan's analysis of the subject of all human thought and action. Unable to follow Lonergan in the detailed descriptions of the subject in *Insight* we turn at once to his little book entitled *The Subject*. In this booklet we have the "Acquinas Lecture 1968."⁸

1. Emphasis On The Subject In Recent Philosophy

Lonergan is in agreement with the modern philosophical "emphasis on the subject."⁹ Roman Catholics may well rejoice in it. Were they not often embarrassed by the syllogism: "What God has revealed is true. God has revealed the mysteries of the faith. Therefore, the mysteries of the faith are true"? This syllogism "implied that the mysteries of the faith were demonstrable conclusions" which they are not. Some Catholic theologians of the past "seem to have thought of truth as so objective as to get along without minds." These theologians "little understood the need to respect the dynamics of the advance toward truth."¹⁰

This overstress on objectivity may be traced back to Aristotle's notion of science as "propounded in the *Posterior Analytics*, and proximately in the

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁸ Marquette University Press.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

rationalist notion of pure reason.”¹¹ On this basis there is again “no need for concern with the subject.”¹²

Again the traditional “metaphysical account of the soul” was “totally objective.” “The study of the subject is quite different for it is the study of oneself inasmuch as one is conscious. It prescind from the soul, its essence, its potencies, its habits, for none of these are given in consciousness.”¹³ It attends to operations and to their center and source which is the self. It discerns the different levels of consciousness, the consciousness of the dream, of the waking subject, of the intelligently inquiring subject, of the rationally reflecting subject, of the responsibly deliberating subject. It examines the different operations on the several levels and their relations to one another.”¹⁴

A. The Truncated Subject

Besides neglecting the subject men have often truncated it. When they did so they were not able to appreciate the complexity of the totality of the operations of consciousness because of the disease of conceptualism.

The result was an “anti-historical immobilism,” an “excessive abstractness.”¹⁵ Men thought of being as an abstraction while in reality it is concrete. “It intends everything about everything.”¹⁶ “The notion of being, then, is essentially dynamic, proleptic, an anticipation of the entirety, the concreteness, the totality, that we ever intend and since our knowledge is finite never reach.

The neglected subject, then leads to the truncated subject, the subject that does not know himself and so unduly impoverishes his account of human knowledge.”¹⁷

(1) The Merely Immanent Subject

What remains is the “merely immanent subject.”¹⁸ The merely immanent subject knows no thinking but picture-thinking. But “visual images are incapable

¹¹ *Idem.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

of representing or suggesting the normative exigencies of intelligence and reasonableness and, much less, their power to effect the intentional self-transcendence of the subject.”¹⁹

B. The Existential Subject

What we need is the “existential subject.”²⁰ To understand the nature of the “existential subject” we must see that “we are subjects, as it were, by degrees. At a lowest level, when unconscious in dreamless sleep or in a coma, we are merely potentially subjects. Next, we have a minimal degree of consciousness and subjectivity when we are the helpless subjects of our dreams. Thirdly, we become experiential subjects when we awake, when we become the subjects of lucid perception, imaginative projects, emotional and conative impulses, and bodily action. Fourthly, the intelligent subject sublates the experiential, i.e., it retains, preserves, goes beyond, completes it, when we inquire about our experience, investigate, grow in understanding, express our inventions and discoveries. Fifthly, the rational subject sublates the intelligent and experiential subject, when we question our own understanding, check our formulations and expressions, ask whether we have got things right, marshal the evidence pro and con, judge this to be so and that not to be so. Sixthly, finally, rational consciousness is sublated by rational self-consciousness, when we deliberate, evaluate, decide, act. Then there emerges human consciousness at its fullest. Then the existential subject exists and his character, his personal essence, is at stake.”²¹

Thus, says Lonergan, “I have been affirming the primacy of the existential.”²² This is not a question of pragmatism. To think of man as an existential subject is to think of him as basically “concerned with himself or herself as becoming good or evil ... ”²³

C. Is The World Good

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

This leads to the question "whether the world is good." "This question can be answered affirmatively, if and only if one acknowledges God's existence, his omnipotence and his goodness."²⁴

And this leads us in turn to the comprehensive questions of cognitional theory, epistemology and metaphysics. We can find answers to the questions involved in those subjects only if we start from the existential subject as described.

D. The Conditions Of Critical Inquiry

We have now taken proper note of the nature of the subject in its relation to objectivity. As a result we are now in a position to understand what is meant by inquiry, insight and conception as opposed to sensible data and schematic images."²⁵ We are now prepared to ask the question 'Is it so?' But this is a question "not of intelligent inquiry but of critical reflection."²⁶

(1) Defects Of Kant's Transcendental Deduction

Lonergan says that he has performed something similar to what Kant performed in developing his notion of the transcendental deduction. But he is quick to point out in what way his deduction brings different results from those of Kant.²⁷

Kant inquired into the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience in the sense of knowing an object. "We have distinguished two issues; there is the problem of objectivity, and from this we have carefully prescinded not only in the present section but also in all earlier sections; there also is the prior problem of determining just what activities are involved in knowing, and to this problem we have so far confined our efforts. Hence we asked, not for the conditions of knowing an object, but for the conditions of the possible occurrence of a judgment of fact. We have asked for the conditions of an absolute and rational 'yes' or 'no' viewed simply as an act."²⁸

A second difference springs from his immediate interest in the difference between the thing for us and the thing in itself. In contrast to Kant we should

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁵ *Insight*, p. 267.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

²⁸ *Idem.*

think of that difference as the difference between description and explanation, between the kind of cognitional activities that fix contents by indicating what they resemble and, on the other hand, the kind that fix contents by assigning their experientially validated relations. A thing is a concrete unity-identity-whole grasped in data as individual. Describe it, and it is a thing for us. Explain it and it is a thing itself. Is it real? Is it objective? Is it anything more than the immanent determination of the cognitional act? These are all quite reasonable questions. But as yet we answer neither 'yes' or 'no'. For the moment our answer is simply that objectivity is a highly complex issue and that we shall handle it satisfactorily only if we begin by determining what precisely cognitional process is." ²⁹

In the third place, says Lonergan, Kant was immediately interested in the question of universal and necessary judgements. Kant was immediately interested in these because he was out to transcend the experiential atomism of Hume. "But in our analysis they play a minor role. A universal and necessary judgment may be merely the affirmation of an analytic proposition, and such analytic propositions may be mere abstract possibilities without relevance to the central context of judgments that we name knowledge. Our emphasis falls on the judgment of fact that itself is an increment of knowledge and, as well, contributes to the transition from the analytic proposition to the analytic principle, that is, to the universal and necessary judgment whose terms and relations are existential in the sense that they occur in judgments of fact." ³⁰

A fourth difference between Kant and himself, says Lonergan pertains to Kant's schematism of the categories. There is for Kant a proper use of the category, Real, if there occurs a filling of the empty form of Time. There is a proper use of the category, Substance, if there is a permanence of the Real in Time. However, Kant's schematism is not regarded as one of his happiest inventions. What he was trying to get hold of was, perhaps, the reflective process of checking, of verifying, of bringing the merely conceived and the merely given into unity. In fact, that process is far more complicated and far more versatile than Kantian analysis would lead one to suspect. Verifying supposes a vast array of hypothetical propositions that state what would be experienced under precisely defined conditions. Verifying consists in having those experiences, all of them, and none but them, under the defined conditions.

A fifth difference between Kant and himself, says Lonergan, lies in the fact that though Kant did postulate an "original synthetic unity of apperception as the *a*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

priori condition of the 'I think' accompanying all cogitional acts" he has no room for a consciousness of the generative principles of the categories ... " ³¹ As a consequence we must say that "if the Kantian proscribes consideration of inquiry and reflection, he lays himself open to the charge of obscurantism. If he admits such consideration, if he praises intelligent curiosity and the critical spirit, then he is on his way to acknowledge the generative principles both of the categories Kant knew and of the categories Kant did not know." ³²

The significance of what Lonergan says about Kant can scarcely be overestimated. His criticism of Kant may well be summed up in what he says in the following sentences. "But the basis of the Kantian attack was that the unconditioned is not a constitutive component of judgment." ³³ And Lonergan's own effort as over against that of Kant is expressed in the following words: "A complete rehabilitation of human rational consciousness will show that the unconditioned is a what is verified is a constitutive component of judgment." ³⁴

Kant's view, argues Lonergan, led to the destruction of the possibility of predication. Kant's view ended with a final dualism between fact and interpretation, between knowledge and being. The only way to overcome that dualism is to begin with the notion that predication is involved in the very first fact that one observes.

We must therefore maintain that the virtually unconditioned is involved in the entire activity of the human consciousness. We shall hear more of this point ere long.

2. Cognitional Process Involves Being As The Immanent Dynamic Orientation Of The Cognitional Process

We proceed then to point out, says Lonergan, that "our analysis of the cognitional process involves the notion of being and that the spontaneously operative notion of being has to be placed in the pure desire to know." ³⁵ "Not

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

³² *Idem.*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

only does the notion of being extend beyond the known but also it is prior to the final component of knowing when being is actually known.”³⁶

We conclude then, says Lonergan, that the notion of insight as we have developed it involves and is involved in the notion of being as virtually unconditioned. We have herewith reached what Kant was unable to reach, namely, “absolute objectivity.” “The ground of absolute objectivity is the virtually unconditioned that is grasped by reflective understanding and posited in judgment.”³⁷

3. The Virtually Unconditioned And The Formally Unconditioned

But Lonergan does not stop at this point. Beyond the “virtually unconditioned there is the formally unconditioned. The formally unconditioned, which has no conditions at all, stands outside the interlocked field of conditioning and conditioned; it is intrinsically absolute. The virtually unconditioned stands within that field, it has conditions, it is itself among the conditions of other instances of the conditioned, still its conditions are fulfilled; it is a *de facto* absolute.

4. Metaphysics And The Pure Desire To Know

Lonergan continues his exposition of absolute objectivity as follows: “Again, it is the absolute objectivity that is formulated in the logical principles of identity and contradiction. The principle of identity is the immutable and definitive validity of the true. The principle of contradiction is the exclusiveness of that validity. It is, and what is opposed to it, is not.”³⁸

We have seen, then, that according to Lonergan, the notion of being underlies, penetrates, transforms, and unifies all other departments of knowledge. This is, says Lonergan, precisely what must be said of metaphysics, “for its principles are neither terms nor propositions, neither concepts nor judgments, but the detached and disinterested drive of the pure desire to know and its unfolding in the empirical, intellectual, and rational consciousness of the self-affirming subject.”³⁹

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

In metaphysics then, abstract deduction must be shunned. We must have "concrete deduction." But concrete deduction stands in need of a prior inquiry. And "this prior inquiry was not conducted with sufficient generality by Kant, nor with sufficient discrimination by Scotus. Finally, its possibility was implied by Aquinas, but the varieties of Thomistic interpretations are as much in need of a prior inquiry as anything else."⁴⁰

5. Being Is Open And Closed

It is this "prior inquiry" in which Lonergan has been engaged for many years. The result of that prior inquiry is the notion of Insight in its active development in Being. If we were to take the Parmenidean notion of conceptual understanding and its implied notion of all reality as one block of static being, we should therewith kill the idea of dynamic self-affirmation. Of course, we cannot flee from Parmenides to Heraclitus and his *panta rei*. Intelligent self-affirmation is discernible growth in our "understanding" of being, with absolute understanding, i.e. knowing everything about everything as its goal. Reality must be "closed" but not in the Parmenidean sense of the term, and reality must be "open" but not in the Heraclitean sense of the term.

St. Thomas was deeply conscious of this. Accordingly he employed the notion of the analogy of being as that which would do justice to man's [experience], both the experience of permanence and of change.

6. We Now Have The Answer To Solipsism And Scepticism

St. Thomas followed the lead of Aristotle but he modified the thinking of Aristotle so as to make it consonant with his Christian theology.

Lonergan now seeks to show that St. Thomas' synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology is the answer to the subjectivism, relativism and scepticism of modern thought but that this synthesis must be expressed by means of a more activist principle than was done by Thomas himself. We must today lay greater emphasis on the openness of reality than was done by earlier thinkers. Putting more stress on the openness of the universe than was formerly done enables us to show modern science, modern process philosophy and modern process theology that we are in basic agreement with them on the

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

principle of contingency which underlies their efforts but that we, not they, can account for the fact of development toward the goal of perfect knowledge as one with being. Kant did not have, while we do have an *a priori* principle of "sufficient generality" so as to be able to account for newness of experience. As we can answer the rationalism and indeterminism of a Hume. We can give an intelligible account of the increment of knowledge toward a "totality of correct judgments."

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All depends on conceiving of being "heuristically as the objective of the detached and disinterested desire to know and, more precisely, as whatever is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. This heuristic notion has been found to underlie all our knowing, to penetrate all conceptual contents, to go beyond them, and provide a core for all meaning."⁴²

Lonergan uses the notions of potentiality and actuality much in the way that St. Thomas did and even as Aristotle did.

Involved in these notions is the internal self-sufficiency of human self-affirmation. Lonergan does not need, indeed has no place for, the biblical notion of man as a creature of God and as a sinner before his creator as the reformers set it forth in their writings. For Lonergan, as for Thomas, man is to be described as basically interpretable in terms of the analogy of being of St. Thomas. According to Lonergan, as according to Thomas, there is no "natural man" who is spiritually dead in sin, who is a covenant-breaker along with Adam (Rom 8:15). On the Roman Catholic view man's defects are, as Herman Bavinck says, metaphysical, not ethical. Lonergan, as well as Thomas, continues to operate with the notion of the scale of being rather than with the notions of sin and grace. Man is, to begin with, near to non-being. Parmenides would say that man as a temporal being is wholly non-being. But Aristotle has shown that temporal diversity is inherent in being. To have a unified interpretation of being change must be conceived of an original aspect of it. Yet there must be a primacy of the supra-temporal. Potentiality must, in a sense, precede actuality but in a deeper sense actuality must precede potentiality. Says Lonergan, "I have been indicating a parallel between incomplete knowing headed toward fuller knowing and an incomplete universe heading towards fuller being and now I propose to employ the name, finally, to denote the objective member of the parallel."⁴³

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 444.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp, 445–446.

"Basically, then, finality is the dynamic aspect of the real. To affirm finality is to disagree with the Eleatic negation of change."⁴⁴

7. The Notion Of God

Near the end of his work Lonergan takes up "the notion of God." "If God is a being, he is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. Accordingly two questions arise, what is God and whether God is. But already we have been led to the conclusion that the idea of being would be the content of an unrestricted act of understanding that primarily understood itself and consequently grasped every other intelligibility. Now, as will appear, our concept of an unrestricted act of understanding has a number of implications which, when they are worked out, it becomes manifest that it is one and the same thing to understand what being is and to understand what God is."⁴⁵

Lonergan then proceeds to formulate the notion of God; and, after that asks "whether this notion refers to existent reality." We need not follow Lonergan in the details of his exposition of the notion of God. The first point he makes is that "if there is an unrestricted act of understanding, there is by identity a primary intelligible. For the unrestricted act understands itself."⁴⁶

Secondly the primary intelligible is "also the primary truth," "primary being," "unrestricted act," "primary good," "perfect loving," "self-explanatory," "unconditional."⁴⁷

The "primary being either is necessary or impossible. For it cannot be contingent, since the contingent is not self-explanatory. Hence, if it exists, it exists of necessity and without any conditions, and, if it does not exist, then it is impossible, for there is no condition from which it could result. But whether it exists or not, is a question that does not pertain to the idea of being or to the notion of God."⁴⁸

Formulating his notion still further Lonergan says that "there is only one primary being. For *entia non sunt multiplicandi praeter necessitatem*, and there is no necessity for more than one." Further, "primary being is simple." As a

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 657–658.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 658.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 658–659.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 659.

consequence "secondary intelligibles are conditioned."⁴⁹ Again "the primary being is the omnipotent efficient cause," and "the omniscient exemplary cause." Again "the primary being is free" and "without any increment or change in its reality."⁵⁰

Still further it follows from what has been said about the notion of God that he "would be the creator," "the conserver,"⁵¹ "the first agent of every event, every development, every emergent," "the ultimate final cause of any universe, the ground of its value, and the ultimate objective of all finalistic striving." From this "there follows a transformation of metaphysics as we have conceived it. For the metaphysics of proportionate being becomes a subordinate part of a more general metaphysics that envisages the transcendent idea of being."

There follows too "a transformation of the ethics based on restricted metaphysics. For that ethics was concerned with the consistency of knowing and doing within the individual's rational self-consciousness. But now it is clear that true knowledge not only is true but also is an apprehension of the divinely ordained order of the universe, and that doing consistent with knowing not merely is consistent with knowing but also is man's cooperation with God in the realization of the order of the universe. Inversely, error becomes a deviation not only from truth but also from God, and wrong-doing takes on the character of sin against God."

A. The Nature Of Sin And Evil

Something further must here be said "about evil and sin." "By basic sin I shall mean the failure of free will to choose a morally obligatory course of action or its failure to reject a morally reprehensible course of action." "Next, by moral evils I shall mean the consequences of basic sin." "Finally by physical evils I shall mean all the shortcomings of a world-order that consists, in so far as we understand it, in a generalized emergent probability. For in such an order the unordered manifold is prior to the formal good of higher unities and higher orders; the undeveloped is prior to the developed; there are false starts, breakdowns, failures, advance is at the price of risk; security is mated with sterility; and the life of man is guided by an intelligence that has to develop and a willingness that has to be acquired."

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 660.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 661.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 663.

(1) "Basic Sin" As "The Irrational"

At this point Lonergan goes more deeply into the nature of "basic sin." What is basic sin? It is the irrational. Why does it occur? If there were a reason for its occurrence it would not be sin. There may be excuses, there may be extenuating circumstances; but there cannot be a reason, basic sin consists, not in yielding to reasons and reasonableness, but in failing to yield to them; it consists not in inadvertent failure but in advertence and in acknowledgment of obligation that, none the less, is not followed by reasonable response.

Now if basic sin is simply irrational, if understanding it consists in grasping that it has no intelligibility, then clearly it cannot be in intelligible dependence on anything else. But what cannot be in intelligible dependence on anything else, cannot have a cause, for cause is correlative with effect, and an effect is what is in intelligible dependence on something else. Nor does this conclusion contradict our earlier affirmation that every event is caused by God. For basic sin is not an event; it is not something that positively occurs; on the contrary, it consists in a failure of occurrence, in the absence in the will of a reasonable response to an obligatory motive.

Finally "God is personal." Though we began from the highly impersonal question, What is being?, though we have been working out the implications of an unrestricted act of understanding in itself in its relations to the universe, though we have been speaking of an object of thought, which if it exists, will be known as an object of affirmation in the objective domain of being, still the notion at which we have arrived is the notion of a personal being. As man, so God is a rational self-consciousness, for man was made in the image and likeness of God. But what man is through unrestricted desire and limited attainment, God is as unrestricted act. But an unrestricted act of rational self-consciousness, however objectively and impersonally it has been conceived, clearly satisfies all that is meant by the subject, the person, the other with an intelligence and a reasonableness and a willing that is his own.

Moreover, as the idea of being is the notion of a personal God so too it implies a personalist view of the order of the universe."⁵²

In all this Lonergan has been dealing with the "notion of God." From this notion of God we turn to the question whether such a God exists.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 657–669.

"Our knowledge of being," says Lonergan, "is by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. By asking what being is, we have been led to grasp and conceive what God is. Since it has been shown that being is the core of all meaning, it follows that our grasp and conception of the notion of God is the most meaningful of all possible objects of our thought."

But, "Is God, then merely an object of thought? Or is God real? Is he an object of reasonable affirmation? Does he exist?"⁵³

8. The Existence Of God

But, though we must thus discuss the notion of what God is before we ask the question whether God exists, we must not follow the ontological argument for the existence of God. "All forms of the ontological argument are fallacious, for they argue from the conception of God to his existence. But our conceptions yield no more than analytic propositions. And, as has been seen, one can effect the transition from the analytic proposition to the analytic principle only inasmuch as the terms and relations of the proposition occur in concrete judgments of fact. Hence, while there is no difficulty in so conceiving God that the denial of his existence would be a contradiction in terms, still that conception yields no more than an analytic proposition, and the proposition in question can become an analytic principle only if we can affirm in a concrete judgment of fact that God does exist."⁵⁴

"The existence of God, then, is known as the conclusion to an argument and, while such arguments are many, all of them, I believe, are included in the following general form. If the real is completely intelligible, God exists. But the real is completely intelligible: Therefore, God exists ... " Being is completely intelligible because "being is the objective of the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know, this desire consists in intelligent inquiry and critical reflection; it results in partial knowledge inasmuch as intelligent inquiry yields understanding and critical reflection grasps understanding to be correct; but it reaches its objective, which is being, only when every intelligent question has been given an intelligent answer and that answer has been found to be correct. Being, then, is intelligible, for it is what is to be known by correct understanding;

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 669.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 670.

and it is completely intelligible, for being is known completely only when all intelligent questions are answered correctly.”⁵⁵

But we must go even further. Now that we have proved the existence of God, we must ask “what God is or has been doing about the fact of evil.”⁵⁶

God is “the first agent of every event and emergence and development ... ” What then about the fact of evil. The solution for the fact of evil is love. Apart from the surd of sin, the universe is in love with God; and good will is the opposite of the irrationality of sin; accordingly, the man of good will is in love with God.

Again, the actual order of the universe is a good and value chosen by God for the manifestation of the perfection of God. Again, the order of the universe includes all the good that all persons in the universe are or enjoy or possess.

But to will the good of a person; and so to will the order of the universe because of one’s love of God is to love all persons in the universe because of one’s love of God.”⁵⁷

“There remains the problem of identifying the solution that exists. For if possible solutions are many, the existent solution is one, universally accessible and permanent, continuous with the actual order of the universe, and realized through human acts of acknowledgment and consent that occur in accordance with the probabilities ... ”⁵⁸

Each man must identify the solution for himself. “None the less, there is available the critique of erroneous beliefs that has been outlined,” and none of us need to “labour alone in the purification of his own mind, for the realization of the solution and its development in each of us is principally the work of God, who illuminates our intellects to understand what we had not understood and grasp as unconditioned what we had reputed error, who breaks the bonds of our habitual unwillingness to be utterly genuine in intelligent inquiry and critical reflection by inspiring the hope that reinforces the detached, disinterested,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 673.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 687.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 699.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 729.

unrestricted desire to know and by infusing charity, the love, the bestows on intelligence the fullness of life.”⁵⁹

With this sentence Lonergan’s great work concludes. In an epilogue he says the “long-suffering reader” might think himself entitled to a summary. Well, he does give something to help us catch the drift of the argument. Says Lonergan: “If I have written as a humanist, as one dominated by the desire not only to understand but also, through understanding to reach a grasp of the main lines of all there is to be understood, still the very shape of things as they are has compelled me to end with a question at once too basic and too detailed to admit a brief answer. The self-appropriation of one’s own intellectual and rational self-consciousness begins as cognitional theory, expands into a metaphysics and ethics, mounts to a conception and an affirmation of God, only to be confronted with a problem of evil that demands the transformation of self-reliant intelligence into an *intellectus quaerens fidem*. Only at the term of that search for faith, for the new and higher collaboration of minds that has God as its author and its guide, could the desired summary and completion be undertaken; and then, I believe, it would prove to be, not some brief appendage to the present work, but the inception of a far larger one.”⁶⁰

The “inner logic” of my work, says Lonergan, “is a process.” Let us, finally, look at that process “in its ulterior significance.” Let us ask, “whether it has any contributions to offer to the higher collaboration which it has envisaged and to which it leads. To this question the remaining paragraphs of this Epilogue will be devoted and, as the reader already has surmised, they will be written, not from the moving viewpoint whose exigences, I trust, I have been observing honestly and sincerely, but from the terminal viewpoint of a believer, a Catholic, and, as it happens, a professor of dogmatic theology.”⁶¹

“In conclusion,” says Lonergan, “I would add that I believe this work to contribute to the programme, *vetera novis augere et perficere*, initiated by the encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, of His Holiness, Pope Leo 13.”

Lonergan has, he says, aided us in the understanding of the medieval mind. He has made “an advance in depth that is proportionate to the broadening influence of historical research” as it pertains to St. Thomas. He has taken the “*Opera Omnia*” of St. Thomas and has followed “through successive works the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 730.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 731.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 732.

variations and developments of his views." In this manner it was possible, Lonergan argues, to appreciate the fact that the "intellect of Aquinas"... "Reached a position of dynamic equilibrium without ever ceasing to drive towards a fuller and more nuanced synthesis, without ever halting, complacently in some finished mental edifice, as though his mind had become dull, or his brain exhausted, or his judgment had lapsed into the error of those that forget man to be potency in the realm of being."⁶²

This long and penetrating study, Lonergan says, has enabled him to see what "the *vetera* really were" only a skeleton of the multi-faceted argument of his great book. Lonergan is one of the most outstanding Roman Catholic philosophers of our day. His aim in all his writing is to show that when the Roman Catholic life-and-world view is put in modern dress it will appear to rational men as the most reasonable philosophy of life to be found anywhere.

Does modern philosophy, beginning with Kant, insist that the human self must, before all else, interpret itself in terms of itself; Lonergan does more so. The whole of his Aquinas lecture on *The Subject* is devoted to making this point. The interiority of his subject is evidence of it. Does modern philosophy, beginning with Kant, as over against Greek philosophy, make time or pure contingency ultimate in human experience; Lonergan does more so. In terms of doing more so he can and does incorporate into his modern Thomism aspects of all the methods and movements of modern temporalism from that of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* to that of Sartre's *Being and Becoming*. If modern philosophy, beginning with Kant, seek to do better justice to the claims of human reason as legislative of what can and what cannot be than even Parmenides did, Lonergan does more so. Lonergan argues, in effect that one cannot do justice to the legislative rights of "reason" unless one thinks of them as correlative to the idea of purely contingent factuality.

In other words Lonergan virtually seeks to bring Roman Catholic philosophy up to date by combining the "nature-freedom" scheme of modern thought to the "form matter" scheme of Greek thought.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 748.

2. Method In Theology

All of this is, as we have seen, apparent in the epistemology that Lonergan has worked out in *Insight*. It is further apparent in his work on *Method in Theology* to which we must now turn.

Lonergan informs us that his method is transcendental. From *Insight* we have already learned that the cognitive process implies as it is implied in a transcendental method.

In his work on method we have this point made more specific than it was in *Insight*.

1. The Transcendental Method

It is of special interest to us to ascertain what a great Roman Catholic philosopher says about his transcendental method. Yet we need not quote him extensively on this subject. We already have the basic epistemology and the basic metaphysic underlying and expressing this method.

By and large Lonergan seeks to inform us on the basic conditions that underlie, i.e. are presupposed in any act of knowledge on the part of the human subject. With Kant he wants to ascertain "*die Bedingungen die die Erfahrung Möglich Machen.*"

Of course what Lonergan is at the same time seeking to prove is that it is St. Thomas rather than Kant who has shown us what these conditions are. Not that he would call us straight back from Kant to Aristotle. Aristotle was too strongly devoted to the Parmenidean principle that thought as such, can produce knowledge. Knowledge is, for Aristotle, of universals only. He was therefore enamoured of mathematics as the only true science. According to Aristotle other sciences can be called sciences "only by courtesy since, as Sir David Ross says, 'they are occupied with matters in which contingency plays a part.' " ¹

Now time; i.e. contingency, is real. It is not only real but ultimate. How else would man's "moral self-transcendence" have meaning? ² "The concrete being of man is being in process. His existing lies in developing. His unrestricted desire to

¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

know leads him ever towards a known unknown." This is man's "indeterminately directed dynamism" and this indeterminately directed dynamism "has its ground in potency; it is without the settled assurance and efficacy of form ... " ³

The whole of Lonergan's idea of "emergent probability" presupposes the notion of pure contingency as correlative to logic as pure form. This notion of emergent probability is Lonergan's equivalent of the Reformed view of God's providence as controlling whatsoever comes to pass.

Lonergan's position is not that for man, though not for the all-controlling God, "combinations of events possess a probability." His point is rather that one must talk about events as such as one must talk of logic as such without bringing in the question of the relation of God to man.

Accordingly for Lonergan the "world process is open. It is a succession of probable realizations of possibilities. Hence, it does not run along the iron rails laid down by determinists nor, on the other hand, is it a non-intelligible morass of merely chance events.

World process is increasingly systematic. For it is the successive realization of a conditioned series of schemes of occurrence, and the further the series of schemes is realized, the greater the systematization to which they are subjected." ⁴

A word must here be added about Lonergan's view on possibilities as underlying emergent probabilities. Man must determine what is possible by means of the law of contradiction. To be sure one must not use this law in the way that Parmenides used it. By using the law of contradiction Parmenides "denied both multiplicity and motion." Denying "the possibility of becoming as an intermediary between being and nothing" and thus "precluded any multiplicity of being." ⁵ Surely this must not be. We need the idea of contingency to account for "becoming," for the idea of multiplicity of beings and for the general idea of emergent probability.

³ *Insight*, p. 625.

⁴ *Insight*, p. 126.

⁵ *Method*, p. 91.

But then these very ideas in turn need the idea of permanence and permanence springs from no other source but thought. We need to think of the "actual order of the universe" as an "intelligible unity."⁶

While therefore Parmenides "specific achievement," (the idea that all reality is one static block of being) "was only a mistake, still it provided a carrier for a breakthrough. Linguistic argument had emerged as an independent power that could dare to challenge the evidence of the senses. The distinction between sense and intellect was established. The way lay open for Zeno's paradoxes, for the eloquences and the scepticism of the Sophists, for Socrates' demand for definition, for Plato's distinction between eristic and dialectic, and for the Aristolian *Organon*."⁷

But we must, Lonergan contends, go even beyond Aristotle. "There can be little doubt that it was necessary for medieval thinkers to turn to some outside source to obtain a systematic substructure. There is little doubt that they could not do better than to turn to Aristotle. But today it is very evident that Aristotle has been superseded. Magnificently he represented an early stage of human development ... the emergence of systematic meaning. But he did not anticipate the later emergence of a method that envisioned an ongoing succession of systems. He did not envision the later emergence of a *Philologie* that made its aim the historical reconstruction of the constructions of mankind. He did not formulate the later ideal of a philosophy that was at once critical and historically-minded, that would cut the roots of philosophic disputes, and that would ground a view that embraced the differentiations of human consciousness and the epochs of human history."⁸

2. History

As a Roman Catholic philosopher Lonergan seeks to show that the *philosophia perrenis* can and must incorporate into its position every advance that any modern view of philosophy and of science offers. The philosophy of St. Thomas can and must, in particular, show that its position alone has room for a truly historical consciousness.

This appears strikingly in what Lonergan says about such men as Carl Becker's and R. G. Collingwood's view of history and the historical consciousness as set

⁶ *Insight*, p. 696.

⁷ *Method*, pp. 91–92.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 310–311.

forth in his well-known work on *The Idea of History*. Like other modern historians such as Carl Becker and R. G. Collingwood, says Lonergan, "insisted on the constructive activities of the historian." "Both attacked what above I named the principle of the empty head."⁹

"There has been, then, a Copernican revolution in the study of history inasmuch as history has become both critical and constructive. This process is ascribed to the historical imagination and, again, to a logic which questions are more fundamental than answers. The two ascriptions are far from incompatible. The historian starts from statements he finds in his sources. The attempt to represent imaginatively their meaning gives rise to questions that lead on to further statements in the sources. Eventually he will have stretched a web of imaginative construction linking together the fixed points supplied by the statements in the sources."¹⁰

Lonergan gives his evaluation of Collingwood's approach to the philosophy of history in the following words: Such is the Copernican revolution Collingwood recognized in modern history. It is a view that cannot be assimilated on naive realist or empiricist premises. As presented by Collingwood, unfortunately it is contained in an idealist context. But by introducing a satisfactory theory of objectivity and of judgment, the idealism can be removed without dropping the substance of what Collingwood taught about the historical imagination, historical evidence, and the logic of question and answer.¹¹

We could scarcely find a better entrance into the "imaginative web" of Lonergan's delicately nuanced and infinitely extended process of reasoning than we can from what he says here about Collingwood.

It is by means of the modern idea of the historical or existential consciousness as so brilliantly presented by a man like Collingwood that Lonergan is able to satisfy both the basic demands of the mother-church and those of modern science and philosophy.

Lonergan has worked out for us a modernized version of the medieval idea of the scale of being. In course of time human consciousness gradually emerges from "indifferentiated consciousness."¹² This human consciousness develops step

⁹ *Method*, p. 204.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

by step. There are several stages of differentiation and specializations in this human consciousness "towards an integration." The undifferentiated consciousness survives in the later stages of its development. *Ibid.*, p. 97 Through a process of interiorization the human consciousness becomes aware of the distinction between good and evil. This raises questions "about the character of our universe."¹³ Behind these questions "there is a basic unity that comes to light in the exercise of transcendental method. We can inquire into the possibility of fruitful inquiry. We can reflect on the nature of reflection. We can deliberate whether our deliberating is worth while. In each case, there arises the question of God."¹⁴

Gradually we establish "general theological categories" and from them derive special theological categories. "In this task we have a model in the theoretical theology developed in the middle ages. But it is a model that can be imitated only by shifting to a new key. For the categories we want will pertain, not to a theoretical theology. But to a methodical theology."¹⁵

It is thus that Lonergan's existential subject and his transcendental method provides the philosophical foundation for Roman Catholic theology and, in particular for its doctrines.

In our day we no longer operate "from a metaphysical psychology, but from intentionality analysis, and, indeed, from transcendental method."¹⁶ Working by means of "intentionality analysis" and transcendental method we discover that "the human subject was self-transcendent intellectually by the achievement of knowledge, that he was self-transcendent morally inasmuch as he sought what was worthwhile, what was truly good, and thereby became a principle of benevolence and beneficence, that he was self-transcendent affectively when he fell in love, when the isolation of the individual was broken and he spontaneously functioned not just for himself but for others as well."

We proceed further on this way, says Lonergan, and come to various kinds of love, such as "the love of mankind devoted to the pursuit of human welfare locally or nationally or globally: and the love that was other-worldly because it admitted no conditions or qualifications or restrictions or reservations.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

It is this other-worldly love, not as this or that act, not as a series of acts, but as a dynamic state whence proceed the acts, that constitutes a methodical theology what in a theoretical theology is named sanctifying grace. Again, it is this dynamic state, manifest in inner and outer acts, that provides the base out of which special theological categories are set up.

Traditionally, that dynamic state is manifested in three ways: the purgative way in which one withdraws from sinning and overcomes temptation; the illuminative way in which the serenity of joy and peace reveal the love that hitherto had been struggling against sin and advancing in virtue.”¹⁷

3. Doctrines

We see how by his elaborate analysis of the existential subject and by his application of the transcendental method Lonergan has prepared us for the acceptance of the doctrines of his church.

Moreover, by means of his intentional analysis and transcendental method Lonergan has been able to develop the idea of the ever broadening church.

Friedrick Heiler, says Lonergan, has described seven areas “common to such world religions as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrian Mazdaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism.” According to all of these “there is a transcendent reality.” This transcendent reality is God, and this God “is immanent in human hearts,” ... “he is supreme beauty, truth, righteous, goodness,” ... “he is love, mercy, compassion,” ... “the way to him is repentance, self-denial, prayer” ... “the way is love of one’s neighbor, even of one’s enemies” ... “the way is love of God, so that bliss is conceived as knowledge of God, union with him, or dissolution into him.”

Now it is not difficult to see, says Lonergan, “how these seven common features of the world religions are implicit in the experience of being in love in an unrestricted manner.”¹⁸ We must always remember “that God is good and gives to all men sufficient grace for salvation.”¹⁹

Lonergan’s philosophy is consistent with the new universalism of Vatican 2. What was implicit in the teaching of Vatican 1 is made explicit in the teaching of Vatican 2. Its point of view is well expressed by the theologian Yves Congar, O.P.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁹ *Idem.*

when he says: "Those who without fault on their part, do not belong to her, can nevertheless encounter things which are an occasion for them to express the true inwardness of their hearts and thus they are able to receive the seed of faith and charity, in the same way that in the gospel, a disposition of refusal or acceptance was produced by meeting signs and parables. The great thing is to decide whether one will seek self or give self. Those who have at least the beginning of love for God implicitly desire to do his will; they have an implicit and unconscious wish for baptism and the Church, and are in some degree related to the mystical body of the Redeemer.... Such an 'implicit' desire must normally lead to a formal meeting with the gospel message." "Failing that the meeting with Jesus Christ will take place eschatologically, i.e. at the end. Many people will then come to know for the first time that face and which they have loved without being aware of it. At the end when people's eyes will be opened will they not say, 'Fine! Everybody's here?'"²⁰

Reasoning in similar fashion Lonergan says that Vatican 2 was concerned to follow the example of Paul who wanted to be all things to all men. The church "communicates what God has revealed both in a manner appropriate to the various differentiations of consciousness and, above all, in the manner appropriate to each of the almost endless brands of common sense."²¹

Turning now to the other side of the coin we observe that Lonergan's transcendental method is a criterion by which all are excluded from the fold who do not operate with the principle of unrestricted love. The church is a redemptive process."²² It is a redemptive process consonant with the philosophical view of emergent probabilities developed in Lonergan's writings. These writings present a teleology of history that is consonant with Aristotle's idea of the analogy of being. It is a teleology of history consonant with Kant's primacy of the practical reason. This teleology of history excludes extreme determinism and extreme indeterminism. It is not as though there are certain individual men who are either extreme determinists or extreme indeterminists and must therefore be excluded. The question is one of "eschatology" rather than one of "history." The church excludes no one, but individual men exclude themselves if with such men as Parmenides or Calvin they allow for no freedom in their systems of thought or if with such men as Pelagius they allow for no sovereign grace of God at all.

²⁰ Yves Congar, *The Wide World My Parish*, tr. Donald Attwater, pp. 101–102.

²¹ *Method*, p. 329.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 364.

By and large then the mother church allows for ecumenism of the sort that the world council of churches advocates.²³

Lonergeran does not mention Calvin by name. It is obvious, however, that he would have to exclude Calvin. Lonergan assumes that all philosophy must begin with the assumption that man can identify himself independently of the question whether he is created in the image of God. Consonant with this all-controlling assumption is the idea that this ultimately self-identifying man can use the laws of his thinking properly independently of their relation to the providence of God. In other words Lonergan assumes that the basic contention of Parmenides to the effect that human logic is legislative for what is possible in the world is not wrong. Parmenides was wrong only in that he did not think of logic as a form that needed pure contingent factuality for its correlative.

Accordingly, in consonance still with his basic assumption with respect to man's ability to identify himself in terms of himself, Lonergan assumes the existence, the idea of pure contingency as the source of all newness in the universe.

But then this idea of contingency must not be driven to extremes in the way that some modern process-philosophers drive it to extremes. These process-philosophers do not seem to realize that the idea of pure contingency, as well as pure rationality destroys intelligent rational experience.

Lonergeran's contribution seems to lie in the way that he works out in great detail the notion of the Kantian idea of the relation of nature and freedom as supplemental to the traditional Thomistic-Aristotelian notion of form and matter.

By doing this Lonergan gives a magnificently constructed philosophical basis to the "new theology" of some recent Roman Catholic theologians and allows the Church assembled in Vatican 2 to develop its doctrine of the sovereign-universal grace of God.

Lonergeran has built an elaborate philosophical support for the church's freedom to construct its own theology. He says he is as a methodical theologian not dictating to the church what the content of its doctrines must be.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

Of course it is perfectly clear that the only kind of doctrine the Church will pronounce will be in accord with the type of philosophy that Lonergan has constructed.

There is great harmony between the new philosophy, the new theology and the official church pronouncements of Vatican 2.

Moreover, as these three presuppose one another, they constitute together an effort to bring medieval-philosophy, medieval theology and the official church pronouncements of the Council of Trent up to date.

4. Neo-Protestantism

Involved in this effort is the new attitude on the part of Roman Catholicism toward Protestantism.

This new attitude toward Protestants finds a striking illustration in Hans Küng's great work on *Justification*. (*Rechtfertigung—Die Lehre Karl Barths und eine Katholische Besinnung*.)

Küng argues that Barth and Catholicism must be thought of as allies in the defense of sovereignty and universality of the grace over against determinism of the Reformers. Barth and Catholicism have lifted the whole question of sin and grace out of the predestinarian scheme of the Reformers.²⁴ It is Barth's act theology that enables him to escape what he thinks the nemesis of the theology of the Reformers.

In his work on *The Church* Küng develops the universalism of the message of grace. "The final aim of God's plan of salvation is not the salvation of the gentiles, nor the salvation of the Jews, but the salvation of all men, the salvation of the one and entire people of God composed of Gentiles and Jews."²⁵ Again: "If we wish to insist upon the negative axiom, no salvation outside the Church, then we must not use it to threaten or damn those outside the Church, but interpret it as a hope and a promise for ourselves and our community: it is true for me, we are able to say with joy, there is no salvation outside the Church for me personally."²⁶

²⁴ *Rechtfertigung*, p. 58.

²⁵ *The Church*, p. 147.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

The new Catholicism appears to be ready to embrace in its fold all men, so long as they do not insist on holding a view of reality and knowledge similar to that of the Reformers. The neo-orthodox position of Barth is quite acceptable because it has rejected the idea of the atonement of men's sins as finished once for all on a calendar day of ordinary history.

Lonergan's analysis of the human self and his transcendental method support the church's doctrine today as St. Thomas' modified Aristotelian supported the church's doctrines at Trent. The *philosophia perennis* has again shown itself to possess the totality outlook on life that alone can give men salvation. There is no salvation outside the Church because there is no man outside the church. To be sure there are many men outside the church as an institution. But these are still in the church because they are at one with the teaching of the church on the basic doctrine of the salvation of all men by the sovereign grace of God.

This is strikingly apparent in the teaching of neo-orthodoxy with respect to Christ. According to Barth God is what he is to man in Christ. Christ is his work and his work is that of saving all men.

But even beyond that, orthodox Calvinists are also in the church. No man can be anywhere else than in the church. To be a man is to be in Christ. The bitter rebellion of orthodox Protestants is the rebellion of a child against its father. The father forgives his rebellious child in advance of its acts of disobedience.

All this is the essential teaching of both the mother church today and of the neo-orthodox Protestantism today. And Lonergan's philosophy is calculated to support this new theology, this new Christology, this new soteriology. Lonergan's virtual support of this union of neo-Roman-neo-Protestant coalition in theology is based on his philosophy as a union of the Form-Matter scheme of Aristotle and the freedom-nature scheme of Kant.

As a Christian philosopher Lonergan joins with non-Christian philosophers in a common effort at self-analysis and in a common effort of finding the presuppositions which make human experience intelligible.

3. Communication

The study of Lonergan's philosophy can be very rewarding for those whose views are informed by orthodox Protestant and more particularly, orthodox Reformed writers on philosophy and theology. One can only imagine something of what the nature of a dialogue between Herman Dooyeweerd and Lonergan would be like. Dooyeweerd has worked out in great detail a Christian, i.e. a Reformed Philosophy as Lonergan has worked out in great detail a Christian, i.e. a Roman Catholic philosophy. Both men speak of the transcendental method as being the hall-mark of their thinking.

In recent times, Dooyeweerd has stressed the transcendental as over against the transcendent nature of his method in the interest of communication with non-Christian and scholastic thinkers. As a matter of fact there has been considerable dialogue between Dooyeweerd and Roman Catholic philosophers. Moreover, at least two doctoral dissertations were written by Roman Catholics on aspects of Dooyeweerd's philosophy.

But this only in passing. We must undertake a brief dialogue with Lonergan.

It would not matter much which point of common interest between us would be taken up for discussion first. Lonergan's view, as noted, while basically philosophical, presupposes as it is presupposed by Roman Catholic theology. We shall, therefore, obtain the best results if we offer to Lonergan for his consideration a brief statement of our own general outlook on life, expressing ourselves, as does Lonergan, primarily though not exclusively in philosophical terms.

We shall briefly speak of our view of the self and of our view of the transcendental method.

1. Calvin On The Self

Lonergan asks the question how it is that I can say I and mean something. His answer is expressed in his philosophy of being, as discovered in his analysis of his rational self and in his interpretation of reality by his transcendental method. Lonergan thinks that he can identify himself in germs of a modernized Thomistic philosophy.

But when I try to say I to myself with the help of Lonergan's self-analysis, I fail. To identify itself Lonergan's self needs, on the one hand, to participate in pure rationality or determinism and, on the other hand, in pure non-rationality or indeterminism. This is true of every attempt that is made at self-identification on the part of any non-Christian philosopher. And Lonergan assumes that Christianity has nothing to say to the non-Christian on this point. To be sure, Lonergan criticizes non-Christian attempts at self-identification but he does so only on the ground that they go too far either in the direction of pure contingency, i.e. of equivocism, or in the direction of pure determinism, i.e. of univocism. Lonergan takes for granted that it is possible for Socrates to identify himself if only he does not go too far with Heraclitus into the realm of pure flux or too far with Parmenides into the realm of pure static being.

Now Socrates does indeed identify himself. But he does this in spite of the fact that he tries to do so in terms of the Parmenidean-Heraclitean dialecticism and because of the fact that he is what Christ says he is. When any one tries to identify himself in terms of the Parmenidean-Heraclitean dialecticism, he has to do so by knowing himself and all things else exhaustively by becoming identical with all reality as one block of static being and, at the same time, by being exhaustively identical with all reality as a bottomless, shoreless ocean of chance. If on such a principle Socrates were successful in his attempt at identifying himself he would, at the same time, be successful in losing himself.

Lonergan's view of the self, like that of St. Thomas, assumes that man can identify himself in terms of the *Organon* of Aristotle, in spite of the fact that Aristotle has no room for the creation and the fall of man at the beginning of history. Yet he, as well as St. Thomas, wants, by his philosophy, to prepare room for a truly Christian theology. But the theology for which Lonergan makes room thinks of man as unique because participant in pure contingency and rational because participant in a timeless principle of rationality. He rejects the idea of drawing the image of man in terms of the Genesis narrative.¹ In its place he puts a construction similar to that of Teilhard de Chardin. "It has been the great merit of Teilhard de Chardin to have recognized the Christian's need of a coherent image of himself in his world and to have contributed not a little toward meeting that need."² Now, as is well known, it is the principle of progressive evolution by which Teilhard explains all reality. Claude Cuénot says of Teilhard's philosophy that in it "man is truly the key to things, the ultimate harmony, the hub of the universe, around whom the elements of the world are distributed concentrically,

¹ *Method*, p. 315.

² *Idem*.

in accordance with a definite structure. Synthesis of the cosmic and the human—such is the profound meaning of the Noosphere.” Then, Cuénot speaks of Teilhard’s further synthesis, i.e. “that of the cosmological and the Christological.” “Mankind, dominating and assimilating the universe, has transformed it into a human home. Christ, through the Eucharist, assimilates mankind, and, in the process, all the essentials of the universe. The conclusion from Teilhard’s premises is logical: since Christ before his death was an integral part of the cosmos, organically included in the stuff of the universe, then the risen Christ, who can have been nowise less than he had been before his death, became the organic center of the cosmos. In all this Teilhard was following the inspired words of St. Paul, who had already revealed the cosmic attributes of Christ, conqueror of death. By the resurrection, the body of Christ became coextensive with the cosmos, to which it had already been organically bound by the Incarnation, and the Pantocrator of the ancient Byzantine churches was revealed as the organic center of the universe and the motive power of evolution. In the cosmic Christ, Christian realism found its logical conclusion.”³

Cuénot is quite right when he argues that the Christ of Teilhard’s activism is essentially the same as the Christ of Thomistic essentialism.

The “incarnation” of which Lonergan speaks is the same incarnation of which St. Thomas speaks. And the Christ of Lonergan is, to all intents and purposes, identical with the Christ-Event of neo-orthodox Protestant. In Barth’s theology Christ is the only man, i.e. the only true man. All other men, are men by participation. Moreover, according to Barth, Christ is his work and his work is that of saving all men.

In the process of the progressive evolution of man and his cosmos man becomes increasingly aware of his identity, as being that of participation in the all-conquering Christ-Event.

Lonergan does not pretend to be able to say a syllable about the Self without, at once, relating it to the cosmos. He knows the self in a way similar to the way the Greeks, particularly in the way Aristotle knows the self, i.e. by the idea of the analogy of being, i.e. by the idea of the correlativity of the idea of abstract chance to the idea of abstract timeless being. The “essentialism” of St. Thomas was built on the same idea. The difference between Lonergan and Thomas lies in the fact that Lonergan has made the form of Aristotle’s philosophy more formal than did

³ Claude Cuénot, *Teilhard de Chardin*, London, Burns & Clates, 1965, p. 122, Cf. the writer’s *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publ. Co., Nutley, N.J.

Thomas by means of making it more exclusively correlative to contingency and by making contingency more contingent by making it more exclusively correlative to form. And making the ideas of form and matter more correlative to one another, presupposes making the two together, more obviously, if not more really, the projection of the would-be original constructive effort of the would-be autonomous man.

Over against this stands the position of orthodox Protestantism, in particular that of orthodox Calvinism. In his *Institutes* Calvin sets his position on the human self and its world squarely over against a position like that of the Roman Catholic picture of man and his cosmos. Man cannot know himself at all, says Calvin, unless he, at once, sees himself for what God, speaking to him through Christ in the Scriptures, tells him he is.

In the beginning God told man what he was. Man cannot say I unless he says so in response to what God has told him he is. What has God told him about himself and his cosmos? God has told him that he is created in the image of God, and that he has the task as God's representative to subdue the cosmos to the glory of God.

Man and his cosmos are alike revelational of the power and glory of God.

As a scientist, as a philosopher and as a theologian man must consecrate all things to his maker. But Adam, representing all mankind, disobeyed God. He refused to act as a re-interpreter of God's interpretation of himself and of all the cosmos. He wanted to be as God, i.e. the original interpreter of himself and his world. He wanted to be his own law-giver and the law-giver to the cosmos. In Adam mankind declared its independence of God. In Adam mankind became apostate. Paul speaks of man, after the fall, as repressing the truth in unrighteousness and as "dead in trespasses and sins," as therefore "under the wrath" of God.

But God sent his only Son into the world to save his people from their sin. In his own body, on the tree, he bore the sin of his people for them and set them free from the wrath to come. Having been crucified for their disobedience he rose again from the dead for their justification. They are now the heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. The Holy Spirit enables them to repent and believe in him and testifies with their spirits that they are members of the family of God. When he comes again to judge all men he will finally acquit them and take them into his presence.

The rest of mankind, who have refused to repent of their sin will be cast out of his presence.

Paul the Apostle came to tell this story to the Greeks. Some believed but the many did not. They assumed that this "story" could not be true. It did not fit in with their uncritically accepted principle of human autonomy. There cannot have been, they said in effect, the sort of God and the sort of man this story mentions. Such a God and such a man would not be intelligently related to one another. The rational self-consciousness of man, the Greeks contended, demands that any God speaking to any man must be united to mankind and to any gods that might exist by means of a principle of rationality and being that informs them both. If this is not the case, as it is not the case in the case of the biblical story, then they are both lost in pure contingency.

On the other hand, the "story" Paul brought to the Greeks could not be true, the Greeks virtually said, because their rational consciousness demanded that any man must be distinguished from every other man and from any of the gods that might exist by their common participation in purely contingent being. If this were not the case then both man and God would be lost in blank identity. Now Lonergan works up his self-analysis in terms of Greek Philosophy brought up to date with modern philosophy. He says that he does not dictate to the theologian and the church what they may believe or require him as a member of the church to believe.

Yet, it is clear that when on Lonergan's view the Church proclaims Christ as the Savior of men, this Christ must be the sort of Christ that Teilhard de Chardin proclaims, and not the sort of Christ that Luther and Calvin proclaimed.

The church must not proclaim the Christ that Paul preached to the Greeks. When Paul required the Greeks to repent in terms of the story of creation, of the resurrection and the coming judgment, the Greeks were, in Lonergan's view, right in refusing to listen to him. When Paul went on to tell the Greeks that wisdom, the wisdom based on human autonomy, had been shown to be "foolishness" with God the Greeks were right in turning from him with disdain. There cannot have been a creation, a resurrection and a judgment such as Paul proclaimed.

Of course Lonergan, as well as St. Thomas and the Roman Catholic philosophers in general, do not put the relation of Christianity and philosophy in this way. It is of the essence of the Roman Catholic philosophy of history as a whole that it seeks to synthesize the Greek and the Christian positions. But such a synthesis is artificial at its center. What is more serious is that it is destructive of

the gospel of God's saving grace to men. Instead of challenging the natural man to repent the Roman Catholic synthesis establishes him in his notion that he is not a creature of God who has sinned against his maker and therefore is rightfully under the wrath of God as he walks the way of death in this life toward final death hereafter. In teaching a theology that is consonant with a philosophy such as that of Lonergan the mother Church today, together with neo-orthodox Protestants, leaves men where they are, i.e. without God and without hope in the world.

2. The Transcendental Method

We need not add much now on Lonergan's view of the transcendental method. One would think that as a Christian believer he would offer the biblical story as briefly presented just before as the presupposition of the possibility of predication. But then that would be, for him as a Roman Catholic philosopher, to mingle theology with philosophy. On Lonergan's view the results of a Christian's philosophical efforts must be seen to be true, not because they comport with the truths of the faith, but because they are in accord with the principles of autonomous reason.

When, therefore, Lonergan says that his transcendental method does while Kant's does not indicate the real presuppositions underlying the fact of human knowledge he says this only because he has made Kant's "form" more formal than Kant had made it and has made Kant's "matter" more contingent than Kant had made it. Lonergan's principle of unity, like that of Teilhard, is flexible enough to include all reality in oneness of kind from the amoeba to Christ. Modern temporalistic and existentialistic philosophies have helped him in this matter.

Kant effected his Copernican revolution from the object to the subject in the interest of saving the truth in rationalism and the truth in empiricism by making them correlative to one another and, as such, the projection of the self-sufficient unity of the human consciousness. Lonergan's Copernican revolution from the objective essentialism of the middle age to his stress on subjective existentialism of modern philosophy is, at best, and at most a refinement of Kant's position. The all important point is that underneath Lonergan's transcendental method as well as underneath Kant's transcendental method is the assumption of human autonomy, the assumption of a non-Christian principle of unity and the assumption of a non-Christian principle of diversity. Only the triune God of Scripture is self-sufficient. Unless we accept on his absolute authority speaking through Christ in Scripture what he says about ourselves and our world

everything we say and do is futile and worse than futile, we abide under the wrath of God and add to our sins daily. If we strive to find the conditions of the possibility of human predication in ourselves we walk on the way of death.

Surely then, as a Calvinist, I should plead with my kind Roman Catholic friends to forsake their alliance with the natural man and, with us, to repent and then, by believing the story of Scripture, find that we can offer men the only conditions in terms of which human predication is intelligible.¹

¹Van Til, C., & Sigward, E. H. (1997). *The works of Cornelius Van Til, 1895-1987* (electronic ed.). New York: Labels Army Co.