Aquinas, Lonergan, and the split soul

In this lecture delivered at the Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, Missouri, January 28, 1986 (The Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas), Sister Carla Mae Streeter, O.P., summarizes Thomistic spirituality, assesses the state of spirituality today and focuses on the thought of Bernard Lonergan, S.J., an Aquinas scholar who proposes to do for our time nothing less than Thomas did for his: give us the new synthesis needed to move theology and ourselves into a new age and provide a way to heal the rift that exists between academic and spiritual theology.

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The study of theology is an intellectual ministry. For Thomas, its object was the Mystery of God. It operates with a double dynamic: faith seeks understanding, and understanding seeks faith. The hunger of our time is for a faith once more that is credible.

Theology is struggling for its life in our time. Cartesian thought patterns would have us spin our wheels in the mud of conceptualism. The Kantian "turn to the subject" lures us to adopt a mind-view that splits reality into two distinct worlds: the phenomenal and the noumenal (to which reason simply cannot attain). With the modern existentialist, metaphysics is finally dismissed as no more than a construct of the mind inherited from the Greeks and rigidified by scholasticism. Thus, the stage is set for the philosophical eclipse of God.

The two world wars brought home historically the unbelievable destructive-ness of the human being. History and philosophy then united to sing a dirge for a humanity entombed inside its own moral impotence. In the midst of this dark night of the eclipse of God, theology and the theologians become a voice crying out in the wilderness.

Our times are similar to those of Thomas only in the sense that we too are on the brink of the close of an era and the birth of another. What kind of theologians are going to be needed to midwife the new age? And what kind of theology?

I suggest that Karl Rahner was right when he said a few years before his death that the theologians of the future will be mystics, or they will be nothing at all. Our need then is for theologians who pray, and mystics who have found words. We have need of theologians who can operate from a viewpoint inclusive and empirical enough to challenge the
most secularist thinker; theologians who can explain how religious experience is the core, not only of their own exegetical and doctrinal work, but of secular reality itself, including the wonder of the sciences.

THE SITUATION

It is helpful in trying to understand a situation, to sketch its history. We will do this by dividing our Christian history into four stages: 1) The scriptural or experiential period. Its language was imagery and prayer, and its aim was to articulate its experience of God in Christ Jesus. Its writings have come down to us as the Christian scriptures. 2) The theoretical period. Its language is the creedal statement, and its aim is to articulate clear statements of belief that flow from the Jesus-experience of the Christian community. Roughly, this is the patristic period in our history. 3) The stage of systematicization. Its language is metaphysical and its aim is not merely to state what is believed, but how these beliefs relate to one another in a wholistic system. This is roughly the medieval period in our history. 4) The personalist stage. Its language is subjective, and its aim is to relate religion to life. Ushered in by the protestation of the sixteenth century, this stage seeks once again the concretization of religious experience. Moving us into what is known as the Enlightenment, and what became expressed philosophically as the Kantian "turn-to-the-subject," this fourth stage reached its narcissistic zenith in the rationalism, scientism, nationalism, and materialism that marks recent history. I would like to suggest that we are living on the brink of yet another age. I will call it the age of conscious interiority, using the word as Lonergan uses it, to identify an age of raised consciousness. This new consciousness is already upon us. It is attuned to the earth. It is historically in touch, and psychologically self-aware. Mechanization seeks to abort it, to at least reduce it to an unobservant, unquestioning mentality ready to abdicate choice. These are the birth-pangs of our time, the time in which we are doing a theology in search of its own soul.

What Is Spirituality?

The scriptural period of our history knows nothing of the more abstract term spirituality. Instead, one finds the Latin words spiritus and spiritualis as the translation of Paul's pneuma and pneumatikos. Walter Principe is careful to point out in his writings that these terms are contrasted with Paul's "flesh" (sarx or caro and sarkikos or carnalis), not with "body" (soma or corpus, somatikos or corporalis).

The abstract term spiritualis is first used by an unknown author early in the fifth century. It is clear from the context that the author intends to preserve the Pauline sense of the word, for the author is urging a life according to the Spirit of God. This meaning is preserved by authors until the thirteenth century. There is the exception of a ninth-century use for the word that would become prominent in the twelfth century and later: the opposition of "spiritual" to "bodily" (spiritualitas to corporalitas or materialitas). Principe reports that in Thomas' own works the term spiritual is found some five thousand times and spirituality occurs some seventy times, mostly in the Pauline sense. Thomas does, however, use the term in a good number of texts in opposition to matter or bodiliness. The original Pauline sense slowly recedes into the background. By the seventeenth century a pejorative use of the word arises in referring to persons under suspicion, and Principe suggests this may account for the infrequent use of the word into the nineteenth century.

It is in the early twentieth century that the term "spiritualism" began to be used often in France. Several new publications appear, their titles making clear distinctions between mysticism and asceticism. In 1943, the Institut Catholique de Paris established a chair in "Histoire de la spiritualité," with Etienne Gilson giving the inaugural lecture. Following this event, numerous studies appear in French, many of them reflecting the opposition of soul to body that had emerged in the twelfth century.

The word "spirituality" has a broad meaning in English. Usually it means little more than "regard for things of the spirit as opposed to material and worldly interests." In general works Principe reports that there is no reference to spirituality as a branch of study within theology.

In Christian circles, Principe detects three uses of the term spirituality: 1) referring to the lived experience; 2) a teaching about the lived experience; and 3) a study by scholars of the experience and the teaching. What is included in such a study frequently reveals narrowness in a person's or group's vision regarding helps or barriers to growth in life in the Spirit. This narrowness is the result, already evident in the fourteenth century, of the growing disintegration of doctrinal theology. Moral theology as separate from doctrinal theology, and mystical theology from moral, systematic and dogmatic theology, follows. The relation to theology as a whole becomes lost, and concentration in spirituality is directed to results produced in religious consciousness.

The broader view of spirituality that Principe recommends is a consideration of the total context of the lived life. This includes one's theology and one's religious attitudes. It also includes the psychological, historical, anthropological, sociological, philosophical, and linguistic influences of one's milieu. To settle for less, Principe says, runs the risk of settling for a truncated or disincarnate view of a spirituality as lived or taught.

What, then, will we use as a tentative definition of this abstract term? Principe suggests that spirituality refers to those aspects of a person's living a faith or commitment that have both to do with striving for the highest ideal or goal of that living. Vernon Gregory (Loyola University, New Orleans), prefers to deliberately avoid any reference to self-cultivation. He prefers to speak of spirituality as that state of openness which results from the moment of religious conversion. Gregory points out that this state of openness emphasizes the continuity of the moment of the religious conversion experience with the entire unfolding intentionality of the human spirit: intellectual, moral, and religious. What the word conversion highlights is a most important part of spirituality, namely the freeing from all drives that hamper that openness.

Theology's historical disintegration

This brings us to the heart of our consideration: despite the early impact of renewal that followed Vatican II, traditional theology and spirituality remain in their separate camps, each with a growing sense that business cannot go on as usual, but without a viable framework to once again relate them while respecting their distinct emphases.

The rediscovery of both biblical and
patristic theology by the Council Fathers became the reason to arouse hope of a
new synthesis, but neither the Council documents, so rich in implications for
spiritual life, nor the writings that followed the Council, have brought about
this synthesis. The great generation of theologians who started the patristic
renewal has been fading, and the new generation of patristic scholars is not in the
mainstream of theological discussion. Biblical research, in contrast, is in the
mainstream, but scholars here pay less attention today to the full meaning of a
text understood only in and through the church’s faith. Instead, concentration
focuses on the minute details of historical-critical analysis. Students who pursue
biblical studies hoping to enrich their understanding and find a living word that
speaks to their lives, find only what they call a sterile “academic” theology.
Many of these students abandon both the pursuit and the scriptures, concluding
that present biblical research can provide little real guidance for their lives. The
resulting disillusionment breeds an anti-intellectualism that takes refuge in
movements of enthusiasm that consider theological study useless.

At the same time, there is a widespread hunger for spirituality in America.
The market is flooded with works which include the classics of Christian
religious experience and others seeking to relate recent psychological insights
into spirituality. Contemporary theology, in its turn, continues to offer a diffuse
diet that reflects its shifting concerns. These concerns range from a critique of
classical theism to liberation and feminist theology. But nowhere has there
emerged the clear synthesis for an adequate theology of spirituality accessible
to all. Instead, conferences on spirituality range from popular religious psychol-
ogy to studies of oriental mysticism and charismatic spirituality. As wide-ranging
as these pursuits are, they have in common the minimal or non-existent role
given to sound doctrinal understanding. Concentration instead is put on what the
participant gains from spiritual experience, be it “fulfillment” or “divine conscious-
ness.” The preconciliar divide between theology and spirituality continues in the
postconciliar church, and both theology and spirituality are the losers. Spirituality risks the loss or dis-
tortion of the very Mystery with which it is concerned, and theology risks explain-
ing doctrines that are unrelated to personal appropriation and growth in the
Spirit of Christ Jesus. How did this tragic situation arise historically?

The scriptural or experiential stage of our history announces the gift of a new
heart to replace our hearts of stone, and Jesus breathes forth the healing Spirit,
who is to effect that change, at the close of the Paschal Mystery. The Holy Spirit
is not something foreign and extrinsic to the human spirit. Rather it is the indwell-
ing reality of the immanent God dynamically transforming us from within so that
we can grow into the stature of Christ Jesus. Every facet and fiber of our being
is involved in this transformation, the Spirit bringing it about and rejoicing in
its completion every step of the way. Careful analysis of the biblical word
pneuma reveals both a trinitarian and an anthropological sense. The two senses
cannot be separated. There is a personal appropriation of the Holy Spirit by our
spirit in faith, and in the community of the church. By this appropriation, the
life of Christ Jesus becomes increasingly manifest in us. This process has a cogni-
tive aspect: to the degree that we act in the Spirit, we come to know God.

In the patristic period, theology and spiritual doctrine still permeate one an-
other in a still undifferentiated unity. It is typical of this period to find, in quite
speculative treatises on the trinity or christology, direct references to corre-
sponding areas of spirituality: references to the dynamism by which one comes to
participate personally and/or communally in the Mystery discussed. In addi-
tion to theological and spiritual consideration not being sufficiently distinguished
in this period, the actual aim of many of these patristic theological works was
spiritual. They aimed unashamedly at preparing their readers for loving union
with God, because for the Fathers as well as the biblical authors, mere theoretical
knowledge of the Mystery of God was considered impossible. Theology flowed
out of conversion, and that conversion effected an actual transformation of the
person, initiating in him or her a gradual conformity to Christ Jesus. As a result,
the human nature, deformed by sin, gradually becomes a transparent Imago
Dei again. The process of this transformation has two dimensions. First there is
the “active” dimension. This vita activa involved serious intellectual activity,
specifically study of the scriptures. The spiritually mature were thus prepared
for the second dimension: the contemplative. This vita contemplativa was entered
through prayer experience. The contemplatio, speculatio, or theoria that flowed
from this fountainhead was not what we call today theoretical knowledge. It was
communion with the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit that strug-
gled for articulation. It was experiential knowledge of God seeking theological
expression. In the words of Gregory the Great: “Love itself is Knowledge.”

Lonergan will say that the knowledge born of love is faith, and faith then seeks
to explain itself as best it can.

Strictly speaking, experiential knowledge is ineffable. There are no adequate
words for it. Yet the effort to communi-
cate in either words or images from con-
templation is the task of theological gno-
sis or, in the Latin tradition, sapientia.
This conscious interpenetration of spiritual
experience and its articulation continued until the Scholastic Movement of the
Middle Ages.

With Scholasticism, the differentiation
of theology and spirituality began.
The serious study of the “active” first
stage of theological development began
to be called theology. Its method focused
on formal logic. Prayer, conversion, and
experiential knowledge of God ceased being an integral part of its method. This
does not mean that theology became such for all, but a new notion of theology
emerged: scripture = prayer = doctrinal
theology = experiexesis + doctrine + morals + spirituality = theology.

The University Movement and the
pressure of growing cultural intellectual-
ism had much to do with this differentia-
tion. In addition, the growing pressure
from the metaphysical questions of the
day made the time ripe for a systematiz-
ing of doctrinal theology that addressed
metaphysical questions. The theology
that would flow from Thomas’ contempla-
tive love would have to speak to those
questions and he would have to look for a
framework that would serve this pur-
pose. Aristotle’s categories became that
framework, but it must not be forgotten
that Thomas, always the contemplative theologian, altered that framework to
conform to revelation. Specifically, he
drew from Aristotle’s “substance” the act
of existence given to the form of the
substance from a First Cause, giving the
dynamic act of existing priority over
essence.
Thomas has been accused of being largely responsible for scholastic rigidity and the split between theology and spirituality. I would like to suggest that Thomas' authentic existentialism in its subtlety was lost, almost immediately after his death, by many who called themselves Thomists. The result was a decadenct scholasticism that has plagued western philosophy and theology ever since. It is this scholasticism that modern existentialists, such as Heidegger, right fully reject when they call for the destruction of metaphysics and return to existential reality.

In any case, by the late Middle Ages, the second step in the differentiation of theology and spirituality occurred: not merely the distinction, but the separation of spiritual topics from theology proper. No more is the emphasis of spirituality the interiorizing of the objective mysteries of faith. The emphasis now turns to individual experience with an accent on the extra-ordinary. The minute psychological analysis of mystical states and extraordinary graces becomes the separate discipline known as mystical theology. In contrast, the ordinary way, emphasizing moral struggle, mortification, and spiritual exercise, becomes ascetical theology. Moral theology too emerges as a distinct branch at this time. No longer concerned with the goal and means of reaching Christian perfection, it focuses on the moral minimum needed to remain in the state of grace. By the seventeenth century, the process of specialization had been completed. 8 It is not the distinction of those areas that we are bemoaning here. It is the separate development of these areas away from one another that has distorted all of them. Doctrinal theology became disconnected from biblical revelation, and turned almost exclusively in the West to a christocentrism that leaves a theology of the Holy Spirit undeveloped. Moral theology lost its identity as a response to an incarnate and redemptive love, and focused on sin and its avoidance. Ascetical/Mystical theology found little guidance in a Doctrinal theology preoccupied with metaphysical and apologetical problems, and focused on the individual's struggle for perfection and the various states and degrees of mystical union. It is this situation that a church seeking the renewal of a new Pentecost has inherited.

II TOWARD REINTEGRATION

It will be helpful, as we begin to consider the reintegation of theology and spirituality, to question the troublesome divisions of Ascetical/Mystical theology, and to identify the object of what we will call Spiritual Theology.

The artificial division of Ascetical/Mystical theology has caused confusion from its introduction in the seventeenth century. Although psychologically distinct, the areas of the human struggle emphasized by the term ascetical are not theologically different from a conscious experience of uncreated grace as the revelation and self-communication of God, which is Mystical Theology. Very often it is in the very midst of the poverty of the human struggle that the compassionate movement of God is felt. We might, then, make these distinctions: mysticism refers to the experience of Mystery, and Mystical Theology is the reflection on all aspects of this experience. The data for Mystical Theology then becomes experience. Its sources are scripture and the written accounts of the mysteries of the Christian tradition. The evaluation of the writings of the mysteries is done then in the light of the entire doctrinal subject matter of theology (trinity, incarnation, redemption, church, sacraments and eschatology). 16

What then is the immediate object of Spiritual Theology? If theology is reflection on religion, the God/human bond in a concrete culture, and Mystical Theology is reflection on the religious experience that is at the core of that bonding, then Spiritual Theology has as its object the twofold interrelated dynamism of God's activity of healing and restoring this human creature, and the creative response of the human person in faith, hope, and charity to that loving initiative. The object of spirituality is the whole of revelation as it is aimed at the total restoration of the human being. This double dynamism of the Spirit, the self-gift and the response, is not on the fringes of revelation, it is at its very center. As such it cannot be divorced from Doctrinal Theology. Yet, the nexus of this object of Spiritual Theology with the obvious concerns of Doctrinal Theology does not remove the necessity of distinguishing them. The identification of the object of Spiritual Theology as the whole of revelation aimed specifically at restoring the human imago Dei, is essential if there is to be any hope of reintegation. It is needed for the mutual dependence and integration of the two disciplines, while respecting their distinctness. The reconciliation promises exciting consequences for Doctrinal Theology, restoring it to what is at its heart, and without which it is reduced to sterility. At the same time, spirituality, constricted in the straitjacket of an unhealthy subjectivity, could be challenged to free itself from its focus on narrow, isolated, pseudo-spiritual experiences. With its object clarified, spirituality could become a sound and credible Spiritual Theology, an integrative discipline that once again unveils the healing and creative dynamism at the heart of current secular concerns and challenges. 17

Struggle of mainline theologies

We can express the focus of Spiritual Theology by the one word "experience," for it begins with existential praxis. Likewise, we can characterize present Doctrinal Theology as theoretical in its present orientation.

Said another way, Doctrinal Theology as theory seeks the objective. It represents the important orientation of the subject-toward-objecitivity: it is the nature of theory to bypass subjectivity in order to open up objective spheres of reality. In contrast and as a complement, praxis regards human action. It is concerned with what we actually do, or possibly can do. Maturely, praxis is involuntary and commitment. By our actions we become who we are. Praxis is intersubjective. It represents the orientation of the subject-toward-subjectivity. 18

It is no coincidence that the relationship of theory and praxis is the nub of philosophical and theological discussion in our time. The serious call for authentic praxis from within the theological discipline and from outside it by philosophy, is but a confirmation that all is not well.

Matthew Lamb points out that the relationship between theory and praxis involves three recurring issues. 19 First, there is the reflex character of the relationship. Generically speaking, cognition is a type of action, and action is always in some manner cognitive. Second, this reflex character inevitably moves toward a quest for norms of truth and authentic human living. This quest for norms can be carried on in a classical mode relating the norms to absolute reality, or the ideal. In this case theory will
be primary as in Aristotle’s notion of theoretical science governed by the metaphysical idea of necessary first principles or Hegel’s sublation of praxis by theory as the absolute idea. Or the quest can be done empirically, setting up the norms according to something within material reality that is publicly observable and able to be verified. In this approach there is the danger that praxis can be identified with the manipulation identified with modern scientific methods. But there is a third option. The quest can be done critically and, in this case, the norms reflect the structural dynamics of individual and collective human performance, thus giving primacy to praxis while arguing that theorizing is itself a form of praxis to be understood critically. In this approach, the operating structure of human performance becomes basically normative.

The relationship of theory and praxis also involves the issue of religious implication. There are three tendencies here: 1) There is the tendency toward the undifferentiated sacralizing of medieval times; 2) the undifferentiated secularizing of our own times; and 3) a differentiated sacred-secular context brought about by a critical differentiation of consciousness. This differentiation will be proportionate to the needs of truly critical theory and genuinely liberating praxis, of knowing the truth through doing the truth.

These three issues in the relationship of theory and praxis continually recur and make evident that theology is in search of the very foundation of theory and praxis, a foundation that can ground complementarity such as enlightening and converting, thought and choice, incarnation and eschatology, universalism and particularity. That new foundation can come only through a differentiation of consciousness inclusive enough to evaluate various forms of theological attempts to correlate experience and symbol, praxis and theory. The challenge of our time is to effect a theological transposition, to move to a level of operation that grounds both theory and praxis. It is to move into the realm of what Bernard Lonergan calls philosophical interiority, the analysis of the structure or recurrent pattern of human consciousness itself.

Thomas In a New Key

In leading us to the realm of philosophical interiority, Lonergan as an Aquinas scholar leads us not to Thomas’ conceptualizations, but to appropriate in ourselves the recurrent pattern of intellectual performance from which concepts emerge. Thomas used his intelligence theologically, that is, in a discipline that mediates between the Christian religion and the cultural matrix in which it exists. Thomas’ three-fold distinction of lectio (exegesis), disputatio (theology), and praedicatio (pastoral application) when considered carefully, implies a further distinction in the middle step of disputatio, or theology proper. It is the distinction of an ordo inventionis from an ordo doctae, a theology in process toward the verbal articulation of a judgment of truth. Where did Thomas get these functional distinctions if not from performance based on the appropriation of his own sharp differentiation of consciousness?

Thomas, however, worked within a classical framework of theology. He started from beliefs or articles of faith. When a culture is operating empirically, as is ours, the theological focus shifts or transposes from theology’s nature to theology’s method. This shifts the focus to the interior operational and verifiable praxis of the theologian him or herself. To escape the danger of a narrow empiricism in this shift, the mystical basis of theology in faith must be made explicit. It no longer suffices to presume it, or the acceptance of beliefs. Theology’s scriptural texts are no longer simply objects of belief. They have become documents investigated by historical-critical method. No longer can the conversion of the theologian be assumed. Conversion, religious, moral, and intellectual, must be explicitly explained in terms of the data of consciousness to a culture steeped in a secular, not sacral, worldview. These conversions for Lonergan become the hermeneutical and methodological crux of a theology once more grounded in experience and verifiable in terms of the data of human consciousness.

For Thomas, pastoral application (praedication) was an addendum to theology proper. Not so for Lonergan. It is integral to the theological task. Lonergan’s “method” is the invariant and recurrent pattern of the intelligent operation of the theologian, unflinchingly rooted in the mystical experience of faith. Thomas’ three-fold division becomes a functionally specialized differentiation of operations, a praxis of the theologian-in-act. Thomas’ division is expanded and differentiated into eight functional specialties. We are not being asked to accept the results of Thomas’ great mind, but its process. That process reveals the operations of an intelligence in love with God.

III

THE NEW SYNTHESIS

Both philosophers and theologians are being called by Bernard Lonergan to engage in interiority analysis. Rather than have us begin with yet another theoretical framework, Lonergan would have us move behind theory to the experience of our own operations as thinkers. What Lonergan is asking is, an attentiveness to what we are doing when we come to know anything. Beginning with an implicit metaphysics grounded in the praxis of experience, he will guide us to the content of what we know when we know, or an explicit metaphysics. This is, then, no self-enclosed introspection. We are asked to “catch ourselves in the act” and name what our own conscious operations are. Recall that for Thomas, the subject and object are in the act of intellect. By beginning with the act, the performance, one gains the experience to understand what the performance is.

Lonergan’s goal is an adequate account of human consciousness, and he believes this can be done by making more explicit the Aristotelian-Thomas doctrine of the identity-in-act of subject and object. He holds that consciousness is not only cognitive, but constitutive of the subject. Further, although the proper object of the intellect is what is knowable in the sensible, the formal object of that intellect is being itself. What one knows, says Lonergan, is metaphysics. It is being, utterly concretized. Lonergan is the only philosopher who then distinguishes epistemology from cognitive theory. Cognitonal theory is the performance of intelligent consciousness. It is what we are doing when we are knowing. Epistemology is why that, and only that, can be called "knowing." Nothing else will do. Lonergan’s "method" is really no how-to-do-it set of rules. It is the invariant pattern in us that Lonergan discovered by attending to his own operations of consciousness. He is convinced that Thomas’ quasiesio reveals the same
attentiveness in this medieval genius, although there is in Thomas no explicit
cogntional theory.

What is this framework of intelligent operation? What is Lonergan's
"method" which is really ourself-in-act?

Lonergan has given us a highly developed cogntional theory, one that can
only be verified by self-appropriation, or ourselves doing the same attending and
concluding, "Yes, that is what I do." The theory is verified by ourselves getting into the act.

(See diagram, p. 326)

Our human consciousness is a unified whole. It is myself, the subject, that acts.
When this performance is "run in slow motion" as it were, Lonergan detects
five levels of conscious operation, each with its own set of acts.

The first level is simply experiencing. It is the perception of data by the senses:
seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, and tasting. When questions of inquiry start
about this data, a second level is entered, the level Lonergan calls understanding.
This wondering about the hundreds of images that come from sensory data
leads to the moment of insight, the linking of this data that pivots the intelligence into understanding. The understanding clothes the insight (the abstract
Aha!) with just enough of the image to form a concept or idea. Ideas are constructs made out of insights. Questions for reflection indicate a third level, for
a bright idea is not always a right idea. Over and over the intelligence reworks
the material before it, until insights coalesce, the questioning of a particular
matter ceases, and a judgment is reached as to the truth or falsity of the matter.
A fourth level, initiated by questions of value, indicates a weighing and evaluating
of the worth of the judgment for my life. The truth discovered is measured
with the incisive value-probe, so what?

It is what is worthwhile that we act upon, and so this fourth level culminates in
decision or commitment.

This very simply is the dynamic structure of one's cogntional and moral being,
operating in the feeling-field of the sensitive human psyche. As Lonergan
says,

"There is then a rock on which one can build
... the rock is the subject of his (her)
conscious, unobjectified attentiveness, intel-
ligence, reasonableness, responsibility."

This fifth depth-level, housing the apex of the sensitive psyche or soul, is
Lonergan's identification of what much classical mystical literature has attempted to write about. Known by a variety of names, from peak of the soul
to innermost room of the castle, it is that level of experience known as being
graped by religious love. Lonergan adds a fifth imperative to the other four,
namely, be in love, and by it he means exist in the experience of being loved.

Frederick Crowe, foremost expositor of Lonergan's thought, prefers the word
"organon" to "method" for this basic framework of human operation.

The word captures for me the "sounding" of the entire incarnated human consciousness as an outreach from the heart.

Unified human consciousness as organon
Lonergan uncovers for us a developing and dynamic human consciousness
that is unified in its interrelated operations and differentiated in the levels of
those operations. As the foundation of these operations, he identifies a level
voiced by mystics of all traditions for centuries. For the first time in the history
of philosophy we have an inclusive framework, an organon or the healing and creative vectors of what has been known, in classical terminology, as
operative, habitual, or sanctifying grace. It is interesting to note that Lonergan's
own thesis, submitted to the Gregorianum in Rome (1943), was entitled:
"Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Development in the Writings of St.
Thomas Aquinas.

Here we see already what will be Lonergan's focus: the full operation of the human person in response to the initiative of grace, and his first paradigm will be the dynamic intelligence of Thomas himself.

In "Healing and Creating in History" (1974), Lonergan expands on the dou-
bble dynamism that is operative in human consciousness. Going on simultaneously
with creativity, as though the human subject and the Spirit of God were partners in
some magnificent dance, the movement of healing "from above downwards" is a relentless compassionate siege against the citadel of egoism and
bias. The healing is for the creating, the movement "from below upwards," that
ceaseless summons into full operation of every level of human consciousness to
radically constitute future history.

In Lonergan the age-old debate of grace and freedom is transposed, for he
has worked out in existential terms the reality of Thomas' insistence on the seri-
ousness of secondary causality. It is the person grasped by love and healed from
egoism in an on-going process that can freely enter the creative dynamic in order
to constitute human society on the model of the person of integrity, an embodied
spirit that is outreach from the heart."

Toward a healed and whole theology
We are now ready to ask what this new self-understanding has to do with the
doing of theology.

We have learned that we can no longer
begin the doing of theology dogmati-
cally. Instead, the dogmatician has been
challenged to a type of cognitive therapy.
The theologian is either attentive, intelli-
gent, reasonable, responsible, and in
love with the Mystery, or not. This
movement toward authenticity or its lack
will enter into the inventions, the doing
of the theological task. Since this con-
sciousness is operating in the theologian,
then what is done should be able also
to be explained functionally, revealing the
operations of the levels of consciousness.
Keeping in mind that consciousness
works in dynamic, cyclic, and cumu-
lative fashion, Lonergan expands Thomas' lector-disputatio-predicatio
model into eight theological functions.

The first four functional specialties
(see outer part of diagram) are forms of
lectio or study of theological data medi-
ated through one's culture. Research is
the exegesis of texts. Interpretation
identifies theology itself as hermeneuti-
cal in its search for meaning. History for
Lonergan is judging what is developing
or moving forward in the data of a cul-
ture. Dialectic is the admittance of op-
posing viewpoints onto the grid of a
personal viewpoint universal in scope,
sot as to weight those viewpoints accord-
ing to the criteria of the movement to-
ward authenticity. These first four tasks of
theology can be done by a non-
believer.

Recall that in Thomas' simple pattern,
lectio is accompanied by prayer. It is
here that the theologian enters into the

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contemplative experience which is the source of the experiential knowledge that prayer alone brings. For Lonergan, after "moving across the top" one enters theology proper, the theory that is no longer only reason seeking faith, but faith now seeking understanding. The four remaining specialties are identified from within this faith context. They are Foundations, which deals objectively with the reality of conversion, religious, moral, and intellectual in the theologian; Doctrines, which are statements of belief emerging from faith; Systematics, which relate the doctrines to each other; and Communications, which is the translation of the language of theological jargon into the common-sense language of the man and woman on the street.

It is important to note that these functional specialties of theology, because they are based on what actually goes on in human consciousness, can be applied to any science. Data must be researched, it must be interpreted, patterns of development must be noted, and opposing views evaluated. Then one takes a stand, formulates one's scientific "doctrine," relates that doctrine to the system, and publishes the findings. The movement "over the top" can enter the scientist's experience as well, and then one has a scientist who is also a disciple.

Lonergan has only sketched the fifth level of consciousness for us, leaving much of it undeveloped for those who build on his thought. The area "over the arch" is the realm of religious experience, and its direct relation to theology proper can no longer be missed. That direct relation has everything to do with the healing and creative vectors, and this is the object of Spiritual Theology. With the careful and accountable development of this theological area, credibility will once again be restored to this integrative dynamic. As it relates to the entire theological task. If Mystical Theology deals with religious experience proper, and Spiritual Theology deals with the twofold dynamism of the divine initiative and the human response that brings the human being to wholeness and full operation, and Doctrinal Theology has to do with the articulation of faith in belief statements that are vital, then we have the beginnings here of a unity with differentiation. We have indeed a "framework for creative activity," which is really our own God-given intelligence in its recurrent, cumulative, and invariant pattern. This blueprint is the legacy of Bernard Lonergan.

IV CONCLUSION

What might the new synthesis do for the present polarities that plague Spiritual Theology? I suggest that these polarities must move from an either/or to a both/and framework, and that this shift must be explained in terms of the actual operation of human consciousness.

Examples of what must be done include the reconciliation of such tensions as leaving the world at times in order to love it, loving God in order to love the self, and discerning when our bodiliness is help or hindrance to authentic movement toward God and our own wholeness. The individual enters this movement simultaneously as part of a communal context, and must discern the primacy of first one context, then the next. The search for God's will implies a discernment in the present in the light of the past, not opposed to it. One's hope for the future is creatively constituted by our decisions in the present. The praxis of the truth lived in love is both start and outreach of a centered life, becoming ever more authentic, activity deliberately balanced by an alert listening, that defines the term "passivity." Justice seeks faith's commitment, and faith, ever releasing creativity, will demand the justice needed for the unfolding of full human operation. In all the tension of these seeming oppositions, the cross becomes their intersection, and its precious burden the compassionate heart from which we seek to live authentically.

We have been given a blueprint. In whatever area of theology we find ourselves, together let us begin to build.
Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952).
Chapter V. For Lonergan's review of this book see
122-25.


*See Method*, Chapter I.


*Ibid.*, pp. 19-20. See also Frederick Crowe,
*Method in Theology: An Organon for our Time*
(Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980),
p. 44.

*Crowe*, p. 40.

"Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in His-
tory," *Three Lectures* (Montreal: Thomas More
Institute, 1975), pp. 55-68.

*For Lonergan's treatment of bias see the index of
Insight*. Lonergan identifies four types of bias:
individual, group, general, and dramatic.

J. Norman King, *Experiencing God All Ways and
38.

*See Insight*, p. 375.

*See Peter Schineller, "Tensions of an Incarna-
tional Spirituality," in *Spirituality Today* 3:3

*In light of this challenge toward new beginnings
in the area of Spiritual Theology, I would like to
refer the reader to the work of four authors who
have already made serious contributions to this
effort. Vernon Gregson has already been men-
tioned (see note 11). Robert Doran of the Lonergan
Research Institute in Toronto has also done pioneer
work that will contribute to a restored Spiritual
Theology, specifically his *Psychic Conversion and
Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation
of the Human Sciences* (Chico, CA: Scholars
Press, 1981). A third scholar who has contributed
to this effort is James Robertson Price III of the
Department of Philosophy, Georgia State Univer-
sity. His work, particularly, "Lonergan and Con-
temporary Spiritual Theology," is available from
the Lonergan Research Institute. Finally, I would
like to recommend the work of Ted Dunne, who
has made the technical language of Lonergan so
accessible to others through his own gift of clarity.
I refer especially to *Lonergan and Spirituality: To-
wards a Spiritual Integration* (Chicago: Loyola
University Press, 1985). It is in Dunne's work that
the newcomer to Lonergan's thought will find the
interweaving of both of Lonergan's major works,
*Insight and Method in Theology*. It is also to Dunne
that we owe the fine pioneer work in the explana-
tion of theological life (faith, hope, and charity) as
it relates to the Lonergan framework.