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CURRENT MODELS IN ROMAN, LUTHERAN, AND REFORMED
PROLEGOMENA: EXPOSITION, ANALYSIS,
AND PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology,
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

by

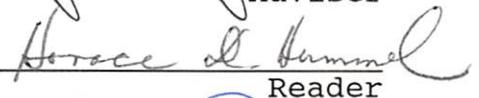
David Arthur Lumpp

May 1989

Approved by



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Reader

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter

I. THE PRIMACY AND HEGEMONY OF METHOD IN THE
THOUGHT OF BERNARD LONERGAN 11

 The Neo-Thomistic Context of Lonergan's Work (14)
 --Integral Themes in Lonergan's Philosophy (25)
 --Lonergan's Christian Realism (40)--Lonergan's
 Theological Method (45)--The "Lonergan Enterprise"
 and Traditional Romanism (71)

II. CHRIST-WORD-SPIRIT: THE EXTRA ME OF
HELMUT THIELICKE'S PROLEGOMENA 110

 The Theological Enterprise--The Priority of
 Proclamation and Faith (112)--"Cartesian" and
 "Non-Cartesian" Theology (126)--A Theology of
 the Holy Spirit Unfolded (135)--Persistent
 Questions (167)

III. EDWARD FARLEY'S POST-AUTHORITY REFLECTIVE
INQUIRY 203

 Influences and Agenda (203)--The Phenomenological
 Apparatus (210)--The "House of Authority"
 Demolished (223)--A Revisionist Alternative:
 Theology As Ecclesial Reflection (237)--
 Archimedean Point or Positivist Cul-de-sac? (258)

CONCLUSION 289

BIBLIOGRAPHY 307

INTRODUCTION

In many respects systematic theology is the integrative theological discipline. A certain reciprocity obtains. It necessarily draws from exegetical and historical theology, and at the same time its mature conclusions help to curb exegetical eccentricities while providing historical theology with its requisite raw material. Systematics cannot function for a moment apart from its wellsprings of data and renewal in the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures. Furthermore, its most diligent and sophisticated products are stillborn if they fail to vivify the proclamation, catechesis, liturgy, and nurture of the church.

These remarks presuppose that one approaches systematic theology along reasonably classical lines. Until the eighteenth century, dogmatics set out to organize and package authoritative revelation in the services of at least a traditional, if parochial, agenda. Today the nature of systematic theology itself is in dispute, and definitions vary with the practitioner.

This situation has done nothing to curb the ambitions of writers bent on commending their own interpretation and exposition of Christianity. To be sure, each age has

made its enduring contribution to systematic theology. The emergence of the discipline itself has been traced variously either to Origen or to John of Damascus.¹ We think admirably of Thomas Aquinas' magisterial Summa theologiae; the radically evangelical Loci communes rerum theologicarum (1521) of Philip Melancthon; and, of course, Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion. The Summa represents the culmination of medieval scholasticism, while Philip's masterpiece evolved into the spate of Protestant dogmatics falling from the presses during the age of Lutheran and Reformed Orthodoxy.²

The Enlightenment's exaltation of human reason to a theologically determinative status brought about an interlude in the production of dogmatic compendia. This void was most dramatically filled when Friederich Schleiermacher ushered in the era of "modern" theology with The Christian Faith of 1821-1822. Lacking any methodological consensus, the twentieth century has witnessed such disparate efforts as Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology, Karl Barth's massive Church Dogmatics, and Karl Rahner's prolific reflections on nearly every theological topic in Theological Investigations and Sacramentum Mundi.

The foregoing mountaintops on the landscape of Christian thought omit the legion of more "denominationally" oriented theologians who have enjoyed de facto canonization at the hands of generations of seminary professors and students

alike. One thinks, for openers, of Charles Hodge and his Princeton progenitors among Calvinist bodies, and of Francis Pieper among confessional Lutherans.

The marketplace is currently experiencing no shortage of systematic theologies. At both the popular and academic levels, volumes are published at a rate exceeding the ability of any one scholar to digest or evaluate. The methodological pluralism alluded to above is now a cacophony. Yesterday's mentors are challenged by process theology, theologies of hope, and seemingly infinite manifestations of liberation theology--to name only several of the most obvious.

With this history and the above cautions in mind, this essay will explore the definition, guiding motif, and methodology of three major contemporary theologians: Bernard Lonergan, Helmut Thielicke, and Edward Farley, representing the Roman, Lutheran, and Reformed traditions respectively. How do these post-critical authors conceive and carry out their theological enterprise? What presuppositions undergird their work? Are these overt or tacit? Do they reflect, implicitly or explicitly, a specific philosophical orientation? What "formative factors"³ determine the substance and style of their theological assertions? Is their goal forthrightly stated and kept in focus? How are "traditional" theological problems addressed, if at all? Are the authors internally consistent?

Our critical efforts will run along these very lines, namely, the fidelity of each to the theological task as he himself envisions it and the constancy of his pursuit thereof. Assessing their adherence to or departure from an assumed dogmatic standard from one locus to the next, while not altogether irrelevant, is neither the purpose nor the direct burden of the investigation. Their orthodoxy is not at issue; rather, we are analyzing the stance from which the three authors engage in the theological enterprise. (Because their written contributions are not all of the same character, a bibliographic statement will accompany each chapter.)

But why explore Lonergan, and not Rahner or Küng or Hans Urs von Balthasar? Why Helmut Thielicke and not Wolfhart Pannenberg? Why Edward Farley and not Langdon Gilkey or even Carl F. H. Henry? These are legitimate questions, and several considerations account for the choices. Lonergan was selected among Roman Catholic writers because his work on theological prolegomena is the most explicit, and it has been regarded as such by many Roman Catholic authors active in this field (for example, David Tracy). Thielicke wins out over the arguably more intriguing Pannenberg simply because he is not quite so idiosyncratic as Pannenberg and his school. The latter has charted a fascinating and often compelling course with his thoroughgoing theology of history and its pervasive emphasis on

eschatology. Edward Farley was chosen from among many Reformed writers because he, like Lonergan, has written prodigiously in the area of theological prolegomena.

One cannot read far in the works of Lonergan, Thieliicke, or Farley before realizing that a different thought-world casts a pronounced shadow over their labors. Each seizes, albeit eclectically, a philosopher or philosophical school as either the point of departure or the foil for his inquiry, and some acquaintance with these philosophical premises is essential. For example, Bernard Lonergan falls within what has been characterized broadly as transcendental Neo-Thomism. This is a complex reassertion of St. Thomas in the face of the challenges directed against him by the likes of Descartes, Hume, and particularly Kant. It is discernible, with important variations, in such modern writers as Joseph Marechal, Jacques Maritain, and Karl Rahner. Helmut Thieliicke eschews the usual descriptive labels "modern" and "conservative" in favor of "Cartesian" and "non-Cartesian" classifications. Edward Farley asserts that his principal contributions to theological prolegomena are beholden to the phenomenological analyses of Edmund Husserl.

Each of the following three chapters will begin, therefore, with a survey of the intellectual milieu within which our protagonists work and write. These necessarily brief prologues will lead into the exposition of their theological prolegomena. The questions of definition, dominant

and unifying motif, and methodology will guide this investigation. Thereafter, the critical queries will be directed to the extent applicable to each author. Obviously, the structure of these analyses will vary with the character of their respective writings.

A concluding programmatic chapter explores those stubbornly perduring issues that necessarily will be addressed--note well, either forthrightly or by default--in any comprehensive theological endeavor. How they are addressed in large measure determines the shape and substance of one's theology. Certain matters are self-evident and persist: the question of integrating motif, one's corresponding theological method, and the relationship of faith and reason.

Other seemingly perennial and interrelated questions center around the basis of theological authority and the manner in which this authority is rendered contemporaneous for every generation of the church (in other words, the thorny but intransigent problem of revelation and its neuralgic corollary, hermeneutics); the relationship of Heilsgeschichte to mundane Historie; the fate of pluralism and its often unspoken bedfellow, universalism, at the hands of a radically incarnational faith and the concomitant "scandal of particularity." What can Lonergan, Thielicke, and Farley tell us about such issues? (Doubtless the answers one gives to these problems will impact dramatically on the prescriptive claims churches routinely make in the areas of personal

and social ethics. While moral theology is an ancillary branch of systematics, the derivative relationship of ethics to theological prolegomena will not be explored here.) In these last pages the orientation of the present writer will be permitted to surface, and some lessons will be drawn for the elaboration of a confessional Lutheran systematic theology.

For all their important differences, Lonergan, Thielicke, and Farley unite in suggesting that one's theology will gain a hearing only if it recognizes that more than doctrinal affirmations are involved. In fact, a comprehensive systematic theology commends and inculcates a worldview, for in any careful and reflective prolegomena profound metaphysical and epistemological convictions are operative. (One can scarcely make a bolder metaphysical statement than the Apostles' Creed!) If the positive responsibility of apologetics is the identification of a viable "point of contact" through which the community of faith can communicate the Gospel to "the world of sensible reality,"⁴ the theologian will not shirk his responsibility of addressing these fundamental concerns. Moreover, if truth is one and if indeed "all truth is God's truth"⁵--bluntly, if the theologian is the least bit serious about the inherent claims of his vocation--systematics will attract the widest possible audience by paying close attention to this ultimate integrative dimension.

NOTES

¹In favor of the former, see Robert H. King, "Introduction: The Task of Theology," in Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks, ed. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, 2d ed., rev. and enlarged (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 4. Richard Klann opts for the latter in class notes for the study of systematic theology (printed by Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, print shop, n.d.), p. 8. Note also Gillian R. Evans, Alister E. McGrath, and Allan D. Galloway, The Science of Theology, vol. 2, The History of Christian Theology, ed. Paul Avis (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; and Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 32-38, for the discussion of Origen. Curiously, the contributions of John of Damascus are not mentioned. For a good history of the concept of theology, especially in the early period, see Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., A History of Theology, trans. and ed. Hunter Guthrie, S.J. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1968), pp. 25-36; see also Emil Brunner, Dogmatics, vol. 1, The Christian Doctrine of God, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1949), 89-96.

²Martin Kähler held that the loci method arose from the need to render the reformers' commentaries on Romans into textbook form. This is most evident in Melancthon's first edition of his Loci (1521), and less so in later editions. See Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 96. For a thorough discussion of the products of Lutheran and Reformed Orthodoxy, see Robert D. Preus, The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism, vol. 1, A Study of Theological Prolegomena (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970-), 72-252; and Richard A. Muller, Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, vol. 1, Prolegomena to Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987-), 53-97. Muller's comment at the beginning of this chapter, "The Development of Theological Prolegomena," is a helpful etiology for self-conscious prolegomena (p. 53): "Medieval theology received from the church fathers a great body of highly detailed doctrine. This body of doctrine was further clarified and systematized by the controversies of the Carolingian era and of the eleventh and twelfth centuries--to the point that, toward the close of the twelfth century, the theological teachers of the cathedral schools and monaster-

ies were able to draw doctrine together into collections of theological statements and definitions, the sententiae. Only with this latter codification of theology as an academic discipline do prolegomena as such become possible or desirable. A similar situation obtains in the much more rapid development of a Protestant system of theology. Protestant system begins to develop within a few years of the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses in 1517; genuine theological prolegomena appear after 1590."

Edward Farley argues that concern for theological method came as a result of the Protestant Reformation and, later, the emergence and application of historical criticism. First, the reformers asserted the "autonomy" of Scripture both over tradition as a "material source" of knowledge and over the magisterium as an indomitable authority. Thus, Farley contends, "methodological issues are drawn into the body of theology itself" and so theological prolegomena is born. Second, a major shift in theological method occurs in the wake of historical-criticism: "Post-historical critical theology de-supernaturalized not only the traditional authorities but the content of Christian faith as well." Theological method thereafter becomes problematic in itself, and one is left to forage about for a substitute for the traditional "truth-guaranteeing bearers of revelation." Precisely this search, Farley maintains, is the one unifying characteristic of all post-historical-critical theology. See Edward Farley, Ecclesial Man: A Social Phenomenology of Faith and Reality (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 4-5. For an extended discussion of the development of prolegomena within a Lutheran context, see also Adolf Hoenecke, Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik, vol. 1, Prolegomena (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1909), 3-191.

³The designation is John Macquarrie's. See Principles of Christian Theology, 2d ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977), pp. 4-18.

⁴The terminology is that of James M. Childs, Jr. As will be evident in Chapter II, "point of contact" language is highly problematic for Thielicke.

⁵This is the title of a short book by philosopher Arthur Holmes (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977). In this connection the comments of Gerhard Ebeling are instructive: ". . . because Christian faith knows itself finally to be decisively concerned with the truth and bound to the truth, confrontation and agreement with the total awareness of truth belongs unalterably to its living character. The inner necessity of theology as a responsible accounting for the truth of Christian faith is based on this, so that theology as such already implies openness to a comprehensive concern for the truth. Meeting

and communicating with all scholarly fields must be affirmed by theology as things that fundamentally belong to its own constitution. How this affirmation in principle is to be practiced appropriately is an issue that must ever be struggled with anew in the history of theology." See The Study of Theology, trans. Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 83. Also, note Schubert Ogden, On Theology (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1986), pp. 78-84; and Gordon D. Kaufman, An Essay on Theological Method, American Academy of Religion Studies in Religion No. 11, rev. ed. (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 15.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRIMACY AND HEGEMONY OF METHOD IN THE THOUGHT OF BERNARD LONERGAN

Few single works can precipitate such intense scrutiny and academic acclaim as Bernard Lonergan's Insight: A Study of Human Understanding and Method in Theology. While some authors can boast of longer bibliographies, virtually none can lay claim to volumes of such epochal significance in two cognate disciplines. Philosophers and theologians alike have found the Canadian Jesuit a critical thinker of rare acumen and intimidating breadth. Indeed, a deliberate interdependence and reciprocity characterizes Lonergan's philosophical and theological endeavors, and these factors at the very least make a circumscribed theological or philosophical reading of his work problematic if not distorted.

With this stricture in mind, the present chapter on Lonergan's theological prolegomena will necessarily begin with his prodigious contributions to cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics as expressed most overtly in Insight. The positions he formulates so carefully in Insight are never far beneath the surface in Method in Theology or in his other specifically theological works. This

disciplinary interaction came in the pedagogical setting of Rome's Gregorian University, where Lonergan taught dogmatics in relative obscurity to students who had come from across the continent and who, equally important, brought with them notions from existentialism and phenomenology. Their formidable new mentor had laid much of the groundwork for In-sight by the time he had arrived in Rome.¹ "For [these] Catholic students it was the bridge they needed from the outdated world of Thomistic scholasticism to the new world of critical philosophy and historical reflection."²

The above assessment (perhaps arguable in one of its assumptions) comes from a Lutheran generally sympathetic to Lonergan. This same writer notes that Lonergan's plaudits came incrementally, thanks largely to a cadre of disciples who disseminated his work in the aftermath of the second Vatican Council. His reputation spread well beyond the confines of Roman Catholicism with the publication in 1972 of Method in Theology, when Lonergan was nearing his seventieth birthday. Lonergan's position as a major twentieth-century thinker is now both indubitable and altogether secure, his work having been almost effusively praised by academic journals as well as by such mass-circulation periodicals as Time and Newsweek.³ This exalted estimation is expressed representatively in Christianity Today, published by and largely for Protestant evangelicals in North America:

So who is Bernard J. F. Lonergan? Just possibly the most important orthodox philosopher-theologian of the century in the Anglo-American Christian world. . . . For evangelicals seriously interested in grappling with the critical problem of providing adequate philosophical underpinning for an orthodox Christian faith in the contemporary world, Bernard Lonergan is a name to remember.⁴

Before charting the course of Bernard Lonergan's theological method, we must first establish its intellectual moorings in the setting of modern Thomism. Moreover, because his work is of one piece, the general contours of his philosophy must be delineated. Only then will Father Lonergan's "critical realism," his carefully articulated method, and his avowedly conservative position over against traditional Romanism be viewed in their appropriate light and accorded proportionate emphasis.

Obviously, the key primary sources are Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (1957) and Method in Theology (1972). We are now fortunate to have many of Lonergan's most important essays in three "Collections" (1967, 1974, 1985). These varied articles will be cited frequently, as will Understanding and Being: An Introduction and Companion to Insight (1980). Also significant are the following: Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas (1967); Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas (his Gregorian dissertation, finally published in 1971); and The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology (1976). Finally, when necessary we will refer to

those untranslated works produced largely as need arose in the pedagogical context of Gregorian University in Rome. (With the exception of The Way to Nicea, which is an abridgment and translation of some of his Gregorian material, all of Lonergan's key works were first published in English.)

The Neo-Thomistic Context of Lonergan's Work

Those who identify the overall context of Bernard Lonergan's work as "Neo-Thomist" do well to acknowledge that this label (much less its twin, "neo-scholasticism"⁵) is rarely a self-description and is always variously nuanced. Along with "transcendental"--perhaps the operative adjective--"fundamental theology" and/or "foundational theology" are the other terms in the Roman glossary calling for some discussion in any elaboration of contemporary theological prolegomena. They will be elucidated as need arises.

If, given the above qualifiers, one sought any justification for a discussion of contemporary Thomism, he need only turn to Lonergan's most demanding monument, Insight. Near the end of that work, Lonergan observes almost in passing that he viewed his efforts as a contribution to the program inaugurated by Aeterni Patris, the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII issued in 1879.⁶ This encyclical marked not so much a resurrection of Thomism as a reassertion of its viability and promise for an intellectually trying age.⁷ Indeed, Gerald A. McCool goes so far as to call Aeterni Patris

a "purely disciplinary document" promulgated in response to the failure of post-Cartesian philosophy satisfactorily to address the faith/reason and grace/nature questions.⁸

While McCool's careful etiology may be accurate, Aeterni Patris did not signal a return to methodological homogeneity in the intellectual quarters of Romanism. Neo-Thomists were and are sharply divided on such basic issues as the primacy of metaphysics over against epistemology (or, in Lonergan's case, cognitional theory), the propriety of a "critical" realism, and the viability of a "transcendental" Thomism.⁹ Characteristically, the eclectic and enigmatic Lonergan is difficult to categorize on these and other important issues. He sets his own course, and in some instances introduces his own set of coordinates. These heretofore uncharted explorations are responsible in no small measure for the estimations of genius accorded Lonergan in at least the last two decades of his career.

Given this proviso, it is possible nevertheless to sketch in general terms the main features of contemporary Thomism. Whatever their intramural differences, Neo-Thomists unite in affirming that "the Kantian paradigm" (the chapter title used by W. T. Jones in his widely-used history of philosophy)¹⁰ does not mitigate decisively against the contributions of St. Thomas in toto. Kant, roused from his "dogmatic slumbers" by Hume's criticism of the principle of causality, shifted the locus of philosophical activity from

experience to the intellectual conditions of experience. His agenda was threefold: (1) to rescue science from skepticism; (2) to rid metaphysics of any pretension to objective knowledge; and (3) to make it clear that metaphysics was an illusion.¹¹ The conclusion is bold. Metaphysics, understood as positive knowledge, is dead.¹²

Obviously, as metaphysics goes, so goes any natural theology. Simplistically defined, natural theology refers to that theology developed without benefit of special revelation. It is derived through experimentation and observation.¹³ In Kant's criticism, knowledge devolves to scientific intelligibility on the pattern of Newton's physics. "To know" entails the expression of observable relations between given facts in their mathematical relations.¹⁴ Etienne Gilson states the inevitable consequences: "Since God is not an object of empirical knowledge, we have no concept of him. Consequently, God is no object of knowledge, and what we call natural theology is just idle talking."¹⁵

Since God is not an object apprehended in the a priori forms of sensibility, space and time, he cannot be related to anything else by the category of causality. Hence, Kant concludes, God may well be a pure idea of reason, that is, a general principle of unification of our cognitions; he is not an object of cognition. Or we may have to posit his existence as required by the exigencies of practical reason; the existence of God then becomes a postulate, it is still not a cognition.¹⁶

Neo-Thomists concur in their disavowal of these stark and radical conclusions. Metaphysics is more than a quaint

historical curiosity. Yet once this rudimentary postulate has been duly noted, all concord disappears. Precisely how the relic of metaphysics is to be rescued from its museum and restored to the halls of serious intellectual discourse is another question entirely.¹⁷ Indeed, Thomas Gilby's article in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy understates the matter: "It [Neo-Thomism] represents no fixed image of conformity."¹⁸ Textbooks, reflecting this situation, more often than not survey the work of Joseph Marechal and/or Jacques Maritain and are content to stop there. While the status of these luminaries in the Neo-Thomistic pantheon is uncontested, they are merely the most prominent of a diverse group united only by its insistence that the Kantian paradigm is not inviolable. Metaphysics is a perfectly appropriate field of philosophical reflection.

The object of metaphysics . . . is, according to the Thomists, being as such, ens in quantum ens, being not clothed or embodied in the sensible quiddity, the essence or nature of sensible things, but on the contrary abstractum, being disengaged and isolated, at least so far as being can be taken in abstraction from more particularized objects. It is being disengaged and isolated from the sensible quiddity, being viewed as such and set apart in its pure intelligible values.¹⁹

Jacques Maritain's summary, cited above, represents the conclusion of what is often a circuituous route to being qua being. It is in the journey to this destination that sometimes pronounced differences arise between "classical" and "critical" realists.

The former view, championed by Gilson and his followers, stresses the primacy of metaphysics over epistemology. Descartes, Hume, and Kant--for all their undeniable differences--converge in their emphasis on the human cogito as the locus from whence philosophizing necessarily begins.²⁰ The critical realists, whom Gilson opposes and who claim the cogito as their point of departure, are not to be labeled as skeptics. While they distinguish between "sense data" and the objects such data represents, the things known (the objects) remain independent of the knower (mind). Ideas represent objects: thought refers to objects (albeit indirectly) and not merely to the ideas of the knower or to sense data.²¹

For the likes of Etienne Gilson, who wrote most prolifically on this issue, critical realism in any form is an oxymoron. Calling his position "classical," "natural," or simply "Thomist" in the straightforward historical sense, he argues that philosophers who begin with epistemology or cognitive theory have attempted a theoretical impossibility: "You can start with thought or with being, but you cannot do both at the same time. If you wish to construct a Thomistic epistemology, . . . you must start with being."²² To label a realism that proceeds from being to thought "critical" effectively strips the term of all meaning.²³ In fact, the net result of "critical realism" is the dreaded opprobrium "idealism."

. . . the critique of knowledge is essentially incompatible and irreconcilable with metaphysical realism. There is no middle ground. You must either begin as a realist with being, in which case you will have a knowledge of being, or begin as a critical idealist with knowledge, in which case you will never come in contact with being.²⁴

Bernard Lonergan's personal contributions to this dialogue come in three key areas, each of which introduces and highlights themes that pervade every aspect of his work. Stated in preliminary fashion, these interrelated themes include: (1) the distinction between classical and empirical culture; (2) the introduction of a "transcendental" method; and (3) the emphasis on the human "subject."

Lonergan enters the fray over classical and critical realism only indirectly. In itself the debate does not receive extended treatment;²⁵ moreover, Lonergan's direct references to scholars like Gilson is invariably circumspect and irenic. Father Lonergan does not contest Gilson's exposition of St. Thomas. The point is not fidelity or infidelity to Thomas. Lonergan almost casually concedes that his metaphysics bears a "marked family resemblance" to traditional views.²⁶ Nor is this just an obligatory sop from a writer working within a Roman context--even a quick perusal of Lonergan's specifically dogmatic works disabuses one of that possibility. At issue for Lonergan is not Thomism per se or even the primacy of cognitional theory. Rather, any contemporary advertence to Thomas could only proceed from a recognition of the cultural disparity that obtains between

the thirteenth and twentieth centuries. One can open Lonergan's books or collections of essays virtually at random and soon come upon his relentless insistence that theology must adjust its method to suit the exigencies of an empirical rather than a classicist understanding of culture.²⁷

"A culture is a set of meanings and values informing a common way of life, and there are as many cultures as there are distinct sets of such meanings and values."²⁸ Such a definition represents an "empirical" account of culture, and it is at the heart of John XXIII's Aggiornamento: "Aggiornamento is not desertion of the past but only a discerning and discriminating disengagement from its limitations."²⁹

The transition from classicist to empirical culture, ushered in with the French Revolution, is signaled by five "transpositions." First, the advent of empirical culture witnessed a shift from deductive logic to method.

(Lonergan's definition of method is consistent: "A method is a normative pattern of related and recurrent operations."³⁰) Second, science moves from the Posterior Analytics of Aristotle, where certain causality and necessity prevail, to verifiability and probability. Third, classicism's apprehension of man in terms of human nature gives way to an empirical apprehension of man through human history--a transposition of profound import for theology when it comes to such issues as the development of dogma. Fourth, empiricism entails an unobtrusive shift from the metaphysics of

the soul to the self-appropriation of the subject. Finally, classicism's "first principles" give way to transcendental method.³¹

. . . classicism is no more than the mistaken view of conceiving culture normatively and of concluding that there is just one human culture. The modern fact is that there are many cultures, and that new distinctions are legitimate when the reasons for them are explained and the older truths are retained.³²

The above enumeration has switched Lonergan's order slightly in order to focus on the subject and on transcendental method, both indispensable features of his thought. Because of the cultural shift here summarized--and linked inextricably to Father Lonergan's overwhelming, interdisciplinary stress on method--the philosophical preoccupation is no longer with logical propositions a la Aristotle but instead with "concrete realities": "sensitively, intellectually, rationally, morally conscious subjects."³³ Taken one step further, first principles in philosophy are not merely abstract verbal propositions but rather what Lonergan terms the de facto structural invariants of human conscious intentionality.³⁴

The study of the subject . . . attends to operations and to their centre 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.³⁵

These remarks introduce the key anthropological point on which so much of Lonergan's methodological work hinges. In a fashion analogous to but not identical with the Heideggerian-informed thought of Karl Rahner (what the latter calls "metaphysical anthropology"),³⁶ the stress on the subject progresses sometimes indistinguishably to transcendental method. To put the matter as simply as possible, the human subject intends (hence, "intentionality") authenticity, and this authenticity is realized to the extent that one follows a set of transcendental imperatives.³⁷ These transcendental directives are "be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible."³⁸

Such transcendental precepts derive their theological import from Lonergan's resolute insistence that they point one beyond himself. More precisely, human authenticity is realized only insofar as one cumulatively sustains fidelity to the principles of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility.³⁹ But Lonergan can speak of "self-transcendence" as well, by virtue of the "transcendental tendency of the human spirit"⁴⁰ to ask questions, to do so without restriction, and even to question the significance of its own questioning--and thereby to arrive at the question of God.⁴¹

The question of God, then, lies within man's horizon. Man's transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value. The reach, not of his attainment, but of his intending is unrestricted. There lies within his

horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored.⁴²

The ultimate fulfillment of one's capacity for transcendence--and thus for human authenticity as well⁴³--is being in love with God.⁴⁴ This fulfillment and its enduring ground is not the product of human knowledge or choice; rather, it is God's gift of His love for us mediated (for Christians, at any rate) by Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ Lonergan repeatedly cites Romans 5:5 in describing the experience of the gift of God's love: ". . . God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."⁴⁶ Father Lonergan's representation of this divine gift approaches the homiletic:

Like all being in love, as distinct from particular acts of loving, it is a first principle. So far from resulting from our knowledge and choice, it dismantles and abolishes the horizon within which our knowing and choosing went on, and it sets up a new horizon within which the love of God transvalues our values and the eyes of that love transform our knowing.⁴⁷

In Method in Theology one encounters the claim that an orientation to "transcendent mystery" is basic to systematic theology.⁴⁸ This means, of course, that skeptics, Kantians, and positivists simply err when they attempt to confine human inquiry within parameters that men and women "naturally and spontaneously" transcend.⁴⁹ Because, Lonergan claims, the question of God is implicit in all one's questioning, so being in love with God involves the basic fulfillment of one's conscious intentionality.⁵⁰ In this way one can link

the essence of transcendental method with the language of classical Thomism: "Grace perfects nature both in the sense that it adds a perfection beyond nature and in the sense that it confers on nature the effective freedom to attain its own perfection."⁵¹

To this point we have set Bernard Lonergan within the context of Neo-Thomism by emphasizing the transition from a static, classicist culture to an empirical one. With this shift comes a concomitant stress on the intending human subject and a transcendental method that arises from the same. The transcendental method is a concrete, dynamic unfolding of human attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. This unfolding is realized whenever people use their minds appropriately. The completely open transcendental notions--the questions for intelligence, reflection, and deliberation--constitute one's capacity for authenticity and self-transcendence.⁵²

Lonergan regards St. Thomas as anything but a relic from a bygone cultural epoch. The cultural and philosophical distance between Thomas and Lonergan entails neither disparagement nor disengagement but rather the sympathetic mediation of an albeit critical disciple. In a 1974 lecture appropriately entitled "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation," Lonergan eloquently weaves together several of the themes adumbrated here with his own profound debt to the Angelic Doctor:

For him theology was not only science but--something better--wisdom; and this we can retain in terms of the successive sublations observed in intentionality analysis, where the curiosity of sense is taken over by the inquiry of intelligence, where inquiry is taken over by rational reflection, where reflection prepares the way for responsible deliberation, where all are sublimated by being-in-love--in love with one's family, in love with the human community, in love with God and his universe. . . .

But if scientific specialization differentiates our world from that of Aquinas, theology changes difference into analogy. As Aquinas conceived his world as coming from God and returning to him, so too can we. As Aquinas conceived man as the end of the material universe, so much more clearly and distinctly can we. Finally, as Aquinas, so we too can place the meaning and significance of the visible universe as bringing to birth the elect--the recipients to whom God gives himself in love, in the threefold giving that is the gift of the Holy Spirit to those that love (Rom. 5:5), the gift of the divine Word made flesh and dwelling amongst us (John 1:14), the final gift of union with the Father who is originating love (I John 4:8, 16).⁵³

Integral Themes in Lonergan's Philosophy

Twelve years after his celebrated Critique of Pure Reason of 1781, Immanuel Kant, in private correspondence, explicitly identified the three questions his philosophical program sought to address: What can I know? (metaphysics); What should I do? (ethics); and, What may I hope? (religion).⁵⁴ In similar fashion, Bernard Lonergan often repeats three queries that guide his own philosophical endeavors. Calling them sequentially the "gnoseological," epistemological, and metaphysical questions, Lonergan asks: (1) What are we doing when we are knowing? (2) Why is doing that knowing? and (3) What do we know when we do it? These ques-

tions are reiterated frequently, and they afford the careful reader the internal clues necessary to identify and outline the salient themes in Lonergan's overtly philosophical writings.⁵⁵

Father Lonergan's major philosophical effort, Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, is devoted to an exploration of "self-appropriation."⁵⁶ In fact, Lonergan's exceedingly illuminating Understanding and Being describes Insight as a set of exercises through which one might attain self-appropriation.⁵⁷ This paramount concern is reflected in Lonergan's working definition of philosophy: "Philosophy is the flowering of the individual's rational consciousness in its coming to know and take possession of itself."⁵⁸ Likewise, philosophical method will be concerned with the structure (and aberrations) of human cognitional processes.⁵⁹ His magnum opus aspires to convey "an insight into insight":⁶⁰ "the object of our inquiry [is] . . . the dynamic structure immanent and recurrently operative in human cognitional activity."⁶¹

For Lonergan, the connection between cognitional theory and systematic theology is anything but incidental. As he invites readers of Insight to self-appropriation, so he seeks to inculcate a methodological program that will, more specifically, inform one's theological method. "Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood

but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding."⁶²

. . . we are concerned not with the existence of knowledge but with its nature, not with what is known but with the structure of the knowing, not with the abstract properties of cognitional process but with the personal appropriation of one's own dynamic and recurrently operative structure of cognitional activity.⁶³

Such self-appropriation will finally become theologically explicit when the knowing human subject moves from the three overarching questions cited above to a fourth: "What am I doing when I am doing theology?"⁶⁴ A fruitful response to this latter query presupposes full, precise, and well-grounded answers to the former questions.⁶⁵ In straightforward terms, Insight is an exploration of methods in other diverse fields; as such, it is preliminary to his 1972 attempt at theological method.⁶⁶ In aspiring to what Father Lonergan terms "the functionally operative tendencies that ground the ideal of knowledge,"⁶⁷ he presupposes a developmental pattern wherein one moves from "the world of immediacy" to "the world mediated by meaning." The infant and small child know only the former. This world of immediacy therefore includes all the data of consciousness and all the data of sense. One's process into the world mediated by meaning comes through socialization, acculturation, and education. Eventually one is able to ask questions and to be more or less satisfied with his answers.⁶⁸ In short, while

one continues to live in the world of immediacy as well as in his new world mediated by meaning, he is now in a position to respond--authentically or inauthentically--to the transcendental imperatives.⁶⁹

Lonergan's cognitional theory, then, assumes one's encounter with the world mediated by meaning, and in this setting "insight" itself assumes the character of a "super-vening act of understanding":⁷⁰ "Insight . . . includes the apprehension of meaning, and insight into insight includes the apprehension of the meaning of meaning."⁷¹ In far less obtuse terms, "insight" builds first upon raw empirical presentations, then upon "inquiry," the intellectually alert effort to understand (compare Aristotle's dictum that wonder is the genesis of all science and philosophy). "The 'insight' is the click, the grasp, what is added to one's knowledge when one sees the must in the data."⁷² There is, finally, conception, a general formula that satisfactorily expresses the insight.⁷³

In language again at least superficially reminiscent of Kant, Lonergan begins his outline of the process of human knowing by stating that all human knowledge is empirical insofar as it proceeds from data.⁷⁴

Yet along with sensory data there is also the data of consciousness, and among the data of consciousness one's cognitional activities hold pride of place. These cognitional activities provide empirical grounds for assessing

all human pretensions to knowledge.⁷⁵ Adverting repeatedly to man's "detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know"⁷⁶--the integrated unfolding of which is the aim of philosophy⁷⁷--Lonergan develops the process that characterizes our coming to know.

Recalling that the ability to pose relevant questions is basic to an existence in a world mediated by meaning, Father Lonergan asserts that the conscious and intentional operations of human cognition take place on four interlocked levels: experiencing; understanding and conception; reflection and judgment; and, finally, deliberation and decision.⁷⁸ One is moved (or "promoted") from one level to the next by questions: "from experiencing to understanding by questions for intelligence; from understanding to judging by questions for reflection; from judging to deciding by questions for deliberation."⁷⁹

To summarize, experience is the first level of knowing. It presents to us the matter to be known. At the second level, understanding defines the matter to be known. With judgment, knowing reaches what Lonergan calls a "complete increment"--"when the merely experienced has been thought and the merely thought has been affirmed."⁸⁰ Human intellect functions properly when the detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know dominates in cognitive operations.⁸¹

Human knowing, then, is not experience alone, not judgment alone; it is not a combination of only

experiencing and understanding, or of only experience and judgment, or of only understanding and judgment; finally, it is not something totally apart from experience, understanding, and judgment. Inevitably, one has to regard an instance of human knowing, not as this or that operation, but as a whole whose parts are operations. It is a structure and, indeed, a materially dynamic structure.

But human knowing is also formally dynamic. It is self-assembling, self-constituting. It puts itself together, one part summoning forth the next, till the whole is reached. And this occurs, not with the blindness of natural process, but consciously, intelligently, rationally. Experience stimulates inquiry, and inquiry is intelligence bringing itself to act; it leads from experience through imagination to insight, and from insight to the concepts that combine in single objects both what has been grasped by insight and what in experience or imagination is relevant to the insight. In turn, concepts stimulate reflection, and reflection is the conscious exigence of rationality; it marshals the evidence and weighs it either to judge or else to doubt and so renew inquiry. Such in briefest outline is what is meant by saying that human knowing is a dynamic structure.⁸²

Whether Lonergan discusses this "structure" in terms of three or four levels, considerable attention is given to the affirmation connoted by judgment. Rational judgment is the singular constitutive criterion in our knowledge.⁸³ Judgment grasps the sufficiency of the evidence and gives assent to a proposition.⁸⁴ The answer to questions calling for reflection ("explanation" addresses questions calling for intelligence),⁸⁵ the act of judgment elevates an object of thought into an object of knowledge.⁸⁶ The precise distinction between "judgment" and "decision" (the fourth level of human cognitional structure) will come into sharp relief only with a look forward to Lonergan's theological method,

where decision marks the transition from the last "functional specialty" of "mediating theology" ("dialectics") to the initial specialty of "mediated theology" ("foundations"). As such, decision within the structure of consciousness plays a role corresponding to "conversion" in Lonergan's theological method.

Thus, while judgment is not synonymous with decision, both are rational, both deal with objects apprehended by insight, and both arise because of what Lonergan calls a "reflective grasp of reasons."⁸⁷ "Judging . . . is the fruit of the actual rationality of consciousness. . . . [It is] an element in personal commitment in an extremely pure state."⁸⁸

If the answer to Lonergan's gnoseological question is the cognitional theory sketched above, in which human knowing is a compound of experiencing, understanding, and judging,⁸⁹ the epistemological question ("Why is doing that knowing?") recognizes the primacy of the intellect in the human constitution--so much so that it leads anyone who attempts to avoid it into the cul-de-sac of self-contradiction.⁹⁰

Father Lonergan's own epistemological orientation, variously labeled Christian realism or critical realism, will be discussed in the next section. For the time being, suffice to say that the multitude of other options (for example, naive realism, naive idealism, empiricism, critical

idealism, absolute idealism) all fail to meet the exigencies of the transcendental imperatives.⁹¹ The self-appropriation that affords the subject his ultimate basis is reciprocal: "[it] is not simply a matter of moving in and finding the functionally operative tendencies that ground ideals. It is also a matter of pulling out the inadequate ideals that may be already existent and operative in us."⁹²

The trick in self-appropriation is to move one step backwards, to move into the subject as intelligent, asking questions, having insights and being able to form concepts, as weighing the evidence and being able to judge. We want to move in there where the ideal is functionally operative prior to its being made explicit in judgments, concepts, and words. Moving in there is self-appropriation; moving in there is reaching what is pre-predicative, pre-conceptual, pre-judicial.⁹³

Lonergan postulates an "epistemological theorem," which, in fact, furnishes him with a suitable transition from epistemology to metaphysics and, by implication at least, to theology proper.⁹⁴ The ideal of knowledge, congruent with a transcendental method, is one's self as intelligent, as asking questions, and as requiring intelligible answers.⁹⁵ From cognitional theory (what one is doing when one is coming to know) to epistemology (why doing that is knowing) one can proceed to setting up a metaphysics: "to state in general what one knows when one does come to know."⁹⁶ His epistemological theorem, variously stated, makes the connection explicit. Knowledge, properly speaking, is knowledge of reality. Such knowledge is "intrinsic-

cally objective," that is, objectivity is the intrinsic relation of knowing to being, and this being and reality are identical.⁹⁷ From here it is but a short step to overtly theological considerations. Having argued that ontological truth entails the intrinsic intelligibility of being,⁹⁸ or, in more characteristic language, the conformity of being (noun) to the conditions of its being known (verb) through both intelligent inquiry and critical reflection,⁹⁹ Lonergan introduces his key metaphysical/theological distinction between the "virtually unconditioned" and the "formally unconditioned." One's judgment is unconditioned or possesses "absolute objectivity" inasmuch as it is independent of the judging subject, or as rational consciousness gives rise to a product independent of itself.¹⁰⁰ To make all of these connections explicit, the criteria of objectivity lie in intelligent inquiry, critical reflection, and grasp of the virtually unconditioned.¹⁰¹

What, precisely, is the "unconditioned"? It is the requisite metaphysical backdrop to the human drive to transcendence and self-appropriation; and, the "immanent" source of human transcendence is one's detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know.¹⁰² Father Lonergan asserts this link-up in more traditional language: "Being is the objective of the unrestricted desire to know. Therefore, the idea of being is the content of an unrestricted act of understanding."¹⁰³

The notion of being first appears in questioning. Being is the unknown that questioning intends to know, that answers partially reveal, that further questioning presses on to know more fully. 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.¹⁰⁴

"Proleptic" is perhaps the key term in this citation. Those questions that can neither anticipate nor admit further riddles directly point to Lonergan's notion of the unconditioned. By tautology, an unconditioned has no conditions.¹⁰⁵ The "formally unconditioned" is unconditioned in the sense that it lacks any conditions whatever. Only God, conceived as absolute necessity, is formally unconditioned. The "virtually unconditioned" does have conditions, but these have been fulfilled (hence, "virtually" unconditioned).¹⁰⁶ The virtually unconditioned is the cognitional counterpart to contingent being, and, in addition, a technical formulation of the usual criterion of true judgment, to wit, sufficient evidence.¹⁰⁷

Lest the present division between philosophical and theological considerations be blurred too excessively, one might observe that this distinction facilitates an exploration of what has traditionally been termed the "natural knowledge" of God. Lonergan devotes a chapter of Insight to "general transcendent knowledge." As one might expect, he rules out the classical ontological arguments as being merely analytic propositions.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, a priori attempts to

deduce effects from their causes founder for the simple reason that God is not someone who has a cause; indeed, He is formally unconditioned.¹⁰⁹ Rather, the argument for God's existence must be a posteriori; it must proceed from effect to cause or from consequence to antecedent.¹¹⁰ Stated in a rudimentary syllogism, Lonergan's argument is this:

If the real is completely intelligible, then God exists.
 The real is completely intelligible; the real is being.
 Therefore, God exists.¹¹¹

However one might be disposed to this argument and its exposition, it is clear that Lonergan's whole effort is unintelligible save for its context in his cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics. "We answered the question whether God exists by affirming that the real is being and that being is the completely intelligible objective of an unrestricted desire to understand correctly."¹¹²

. . . the dynamism constitutive of our consciousness may be expressed in the imperatives: be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, and the imperatives are unrestricted--they regard every inquiry, every judgment, every decision and choice. Nor is the relevance of the imperatives restricted to the world of human experience, to the mundus aspectabilis; we are open to God. Implicit in human inquiry is a natural desire to know God by his essence; implicit in human judgment about contingent things here is the formally unconditioned that is God; implicit in human choice of values is the absolute good that is God.¹¹³

One has thus entered the sphere of metaphysics proper. Repeatedly stressing that being is what one can grasp intelligently and affirm reasonably, Lonergan proposes to "do

metaphysics" in two steps. First, one can do metaphysics with regard to this world. Second, one can explore the question of the existence of God.¹¹⁴

The former topic serves to introduce yet another distinction basic to Lonergan's program, namely, "proportionate" being. If Lonergan's "fundamental category" is one's pure desire to know correlated with the fully-orbed universe of being, with whatever is known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation,¹¹⁵ "proportionate" being is whatever is to be known by human experience, correct understanding, and true judgment.¹¹⁶ In short, proportionate being differs from being in general in that the former lies within the domain of one's inner and outer experience.¹¹⁷ Does the absence of the experiential component preclude a genuine metaphysics in the second sense defined above? By no means. "The possibility of transcendent knowledge . . . is the possibility of grasping intelligently and affirming reasonably a transcendent being. And the proof of the possibility lies in the fact that such intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation occur."¹¹⁸

The best that natural reason can attain is the discovery of the paradox that the desire to understand arises naturally, that its object is the transcendental, ens, and that the proper fulfillment that naturally is attainable is restricted to the proportionate object of finite intellect.¹¹⁹

Lonergan's standard, most complete definition of metaphysics calls it the "integral heuristic structure" of pro-

portionate being.¹²⁰ A heuristic "notion" is one of an unknown content; it is determined by envisioning the type of act through which the unknown might become known. A heuristic "structure" pertains to the ordered set of heuristic notions. Hence, an integral heuristic structure is defined as the ordered set of all heuristic notions.¹²¹ Still more precisely, it is the "anticipatory outline" of what one would know by affirming a complete explanation of possible experience.¹²²

Traditional definitions of metaphysics as the science of being qua being¹²³ properly necessitate its inclusivity, and serve to underscore its import and penetration beyond any particular class of beings.¹²⁴ For Lonergan, metaphysics in this sense has implicit, problematic, and explicit stages. Metaphysics is implicit simply because men are conscious subjects who experience, understand, and judge. The problematic stage emerges out of one's aspiration for the unification of the sciences in terms of a satisfactory method.¹²⁵ Finally, metaphysics becomes explicit when self-appropriation takes place,¹²⁶ when and as one "works out" the implications of the pure desire to know and its unfolding with regard both to the structure of reality and the unification of knowledge.¹²⁷ "Consequently, explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being."¹²⁸

Just as there is heuristic structure with regard to acts of understanding, so there is a total heuristic

structure; there is the total goal of intelligent and rational consciousness as such. We have named that goal 'being'. When we speak of knowing being, we mean knowing everything about everything; but we do not know everything about everything. We are simply anticipating the totality of acts of understanding and judgment by which we could completely achieve the ideal, the goal, set us by our desire to know. . . . Metaphysics is concerned with the integral heuristic structure. It is not content to say that being is what one will know when one knows everything about everything. It can become more explicit. It can go on to say that, in any case of knowledge of proportionate being, there will be a component of experience, a component of understanding, a component of grasping the unconditioned and judging; and because the acts are differentiated from one another by different contents, the object known is going to involve a content from experience, a content from understanding, a content from judgment. Consequently, there will be a triple content in the known.¹²⁹

The antithesis to metaphysics is nothing short of obscurantism, specifically, the contention that one's range of knowledge is limited and that the extent of one's desire to know is circumscribed.¹³⁰ Conversely, "being" is the objective of one's pure desire to know. As such, it entails everything that is known and everything that remains to be known--"the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions"¹³¹ or the act of understanding that leaves nothing further to be understood.¹³²

In practice, one's viewpoint is universal to the extent that (1) it is one and coherent; (2) it raises basic, inevitable issues; and, finally, (3) its analysis of the evidence is sufficiently incisive both to account for the

existence of every other view and to establish the cogency of its own.¹³³

The integration of many of the foregoing themes is facilitated by a parting transitional glimpse at a triad of key themes: being, truth, and God as the (formally) unconditioned.

Being has been defined as the objective of one's pure, detached, disinterested desire to know. Such desire grounds inquiry and reflection. The former leads to understanding; the latter eventuates in affirmation. Being, it follows, is whatever can be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably.¹³⁴

Truth proceeds from a grasp of the virtually unconditioned and conforms to the being it affirms. It demands an intrinsic intelligibility in being as a condition for the possibility of knowing.¹³⁵ Therefore, in brief, being is what is known truly.¹³⁶

Insofar as God is a being, he too can be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation.¹³⁷ For Lonergan the theologian, God as the formally unconditioned does lie within the horizon of man's knowing, thus connoting religion as a fundamental dimension in human living.¹³⁸ Indeed, there is a final dialectical component that really renders any dichotomy between Lonergan's philosophy and theology misguided. The paradox is this: "I do not think that in this life people arrive at natural knowledge of God without God's

grace, but what I do not doubt is that the knowledge they so attain is natural."¹³⁹

Lonergan's Christian Realism

The previous section synthesized Lonergan's explorations on the data of consciousness, from which he developed successively a cognitional theory, an epistemology, and a metaphysics. The transcendental method and the metaphysics of proportionate being signal responses to the interrogative rudders of Lonergan's thought: What is one doing when one is knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What does one know when one does it? The second of these queries, which points to epistemology, was addressed only in the most cursory fashion, and it is now the focus of our consideration.

The order of the above questions is important. Reversing the classical Aristotelian progression, Father Lonergan derives epistemology from cognitional theory and metaphysics from epistemology--and he is adamant about this sequence.¹⁴⁰ In response to the charge that a basic judgment of existence undergirds all acts of perception, questioning, and affirming,¹⁴¹ Lonergan concedes that metaphysics is prior only if--in the manner of a petitio princeps--one regards what one is studying as fully known objects. The net result is that one is left without any way of critically justifying his metaphysics.¹⁴² In Lonergan's view, one can critically justify a metaphysics only if it is derived from a cogni-

tional theory and an epistemology. One justifies cognitional theory, in turn, by finding it in oneself: "the terms of the theory are found in your own operations, of which you are conscious and which you are able to identify in your own experience, and the relations connecting the terms are to be found in the dynamism relating one operation to the other."¹⁴³

The basic discipline, I believe, is not metaphysics but cognitional theory. By cognitional theory is meant, not a faculty psychology that presupposes a metaphysics, but an intentionality that presupposes the data of consciousness. From the cognitional theory there can be derived an epistemology, and from both the cognitional theory and the epistemology there can be derived a metaphysics. These three are related to all other disciplines, not by supplying them with elements for their basic terms and relations, but by providing the nucleus for the formulation of their methods.¹⁴⁴

Richard McBrien calls Christian realism the distinctively Catholic manner of integrating the plurality of philosophies which, in turn, reflects a similar doctrinal pluralism.¹⁴⁵ To be sure, philosophical answers to the question of reality are legion. Naive realism, naive idealism, empiricism, rationalism, absolute and critical idealism, positivism, pragmatism, phenomenology, and existentialism are all enumerated as sundry "misconceptions of truth."¹⁴⁶

In their place, Lonergan postulates Christian realism or critical realism. Critical realism presupposes the cognitional theory outlined above, and it exposes the shortcomings of the various other options. The differences, more-

over, are substantive and fundamental. Empiricism, idealism, and realism are three entirely different horizons; they have no common identical objects.¹⁴⁷ Naive realism insists that knowing simply involves taking a good look. Objectivity entails seeing what is there to be seen, with the result that reality is whatever is given in immediate experience. Empiricism is the by-product of naive realism: the only reality that counts is one amenable to quantitative measurement. Finally, empiricism spawns its philosophical opposite, critical idealism (for example, Immanuel Kant). Here the categories of understanding themselves are empty; they refer to objects only insofar as categories are applied to sensory data. (This is the phenomenal world. Things in themselves, the noumena, are inaccessible.)¹⁴⁸

In terms of their failings, naive realism assumes that the world mediated by meaning is known by merely "taking a look," for things are what they seem to be to common sense.¹⁴⁹ To arrive at empiricism one need only empty this world mediated by meaning of everything save what he can sense, thereby equating the real with what, in Lonergan's terms, is "exhibited in ostensive gestures."¹⁵⁰ The idealist exposes empiricism's failure to acknowledge the "structuring elements" constitutive of human knowing yet--note well--not given to sense. Paradoxically, he retains the empiricist notion of reality, avers that human knowledge is constituted by posing and answering questions, and, most

characteristic of any idealist view, concludes that the object of human knowledge is not the real but the ideal.¹⁵¹

To break through the assorted forms of idealism to realism, one has to discover both that rational and intellectual operations involve a self-transcendence of the operating subject and, to revert to the language of the previous section, that the real is what he comes to know through a grasp of the (virtually) unconditioned.¹⁵² Stated in less idiosyncratic language, critical realism finds both idealism and empiricism wanting inasmuch as it (critical realism) affirms that a verified hypothesis is probably true and that what probably is true has reference to what in reality probably is so.¹⁵³

For Lonergan, only critical realism can acknowledge the facts of human knowing and affirm the world mediated by meaning to be the real world. It can do so as it demonstrates the process of experiencing-understanding-judging to be a process of self-transcendence.¹⁵⁴ "The world mediated by meaning . . . is the world of a critical realism in which the objects are intended when we ask questions and are known when the questions are answered correctly."¹⁵⁵

Father Lonergan summarizes much of the above in the following selection from an article expressly devoted to this theme:

I too hold for the primacy of conscience, for the primacy of the questions that lead to deliberation, evaluation, decision. Still, responsible answers to those questions presuppose sound judgments of fact,

of possibility, and of probability. But such sound judgments, in turn, presuppose that we have escaped the clutches of naive realism, empiricism, critical and absolute idealism, that we have succeeded in formulating a critical realism. The key to such a formulation is basically simple. It is the distinction already drawn between the infant's world of immediacy and the adult's world mediated by meaning. In the infant's world of immediacy the only objects to which we are related immediately are the objects of sensible intuition. But in the adult's world mediated by meaning the objects to which we are related immediately are the objects intended by our questioning and known by correct answering. In more traditional language, the objects intended are beings: what is to be known by intending Quid sit and An sit and by finding correct answers.¹⁵⁶

How can one effect the transition from critical realism as an epistemological/metaphysical orientation to an overt consideration of theological method? The clue lies in what Lonergan often terms the transcendent exigence,¹⁵⁷ the "immanent source" of which is man in his detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know.¹⁵⁸ Human inquiry embraces an unrestricted demand for intelligibility, just as human judgment aspires to the unconditioned. Within human deliberation, furthermore, there is a criterion that criticizes every finite good. For Lonergan the conclusion is plain: "So it is . . . that man can reach basic fulfillment, peace, joy, only by moving beyond the realms of common sense, theory, and interiority and into the realm in which God is known and loved."¹⁵⁹

Lonergeran's Theological Method

Whatever criticisms one might have of Bernard Lonergan's Method in Theology, haste or carelessness will not be among them. As it turns out, Lonergan already envisioned the publication of a volume on method in the early 1950s, only to find that he would shortly be teaching dogmatics at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Indeed, Insight is an exploration of methods in various other fields, in anticipation of doing method in theology. Only Bernard Lonergan could claim that he "cut down" his original ambition to do method in theology and "put this book [Insight!] together."¹⁶⁰ Method in Theology finally appeared in 1972.

In Method in Theology Lonergan delineates his method with care and precision. More than that, Lonergan sets theological method in the context of the cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics discussed most massively in Insight. The previous section of this chapter, pertaining to Father Lonergan's critical realism (particularly the last citation), began to signal the transition from philosophical considerations to overtly theological concerns. Stated explicitly, the transcendental method is a part of theological method insofar as it provides the basic anthropological component. It does not, and can not, supply the specifically religious component. To rise from transcendental to theological method, one must add a consideration of religion.¹⁶¹

With reference to the classical formulation of Augustine and Anselm (Crede, ut intelligas), Lonergan maintains that reason illumined by faith--to wit, when it inquires diligently, piously, soberly--reaches with the help of God some understanding of the revealed mysteries. "Such understanding rests on the analogy of things known naturally and on the interconnection of the mysteries with one another and with man's last end."¹⁶² Yet reason is never capable of grasping these mysteries in the same manner that it understands the truths clearly appropriate to it.¹⁶³ At the very least, Anselm's dictum acknowledges that the truths of faith which make perfectly good sense to a believer may appear to be nonsense to an unbeliever.¹⁶⁴

The transcendental method embraces in their complementarity both men and women as attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible and the human world as given and structured by intelligence, reasonable judgment, and decision and action.¹⁶⁵ This terse definition--provided by Lonergan himself, not a synthesis--alludes to the different levels of consciousness and intentionality discussed in the second section of this chapter.

There is the empirical level on which we sense, perceive, imagine, feel, speak, move. There is an intellectual level on which we inquire, come to understand, express what we have understood, work out the presuppositions and implications of our expression. There is the rational level on which we reflect, marshal the evidence, pass judgment on the truth or falsity, certainty or probability, of a statement. There is the responsible level on which we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our

goals, and so deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide, and carry out our decisions.¹⁶⁶

Within such a transcendental method, with its four levels of intentional and conscious acts, the lower levels are presupposed and complemented by the higher.¹⁶⁷ The human subject is aware of himself on all four levels; however, as one progresses from level to level it is a "fuller self" of which he is aware and this awareness itself is different.¹⁶⁸ The most basic difference one encounters in the modes of intending lies in the distinction between the categorial and the transcendental. The former are "determinations," as they have but a limited denotation. Father Lonergan's method is transcendental: ". . . the results envisaged are not confined categorially to some particular field or subject, but regard any result that could be intended by the completely open transcendental notions."¹⁶⁹

As we stressed earlier, the transcendental precepts are permanent. The directives to attention, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility obtain both with respect to the existing situation and with respect to any subsequent, altered situation. The net result is that sustained fidelity to the transcendental precepts renders cumulative change an instance of progress.¹⁷⁰

In various detailed manners, method will bid us be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible. The details of its prescriptions will be derived from the work in hand and will vary with it. But the normative force of its imperatives will reside, not just in its claims to authority, not just in the

probability that what succeeded in the past will succeed in the future, but at root in the native spontaneities and inevitabilities of our consciousness which assembles its own constituent parts and unites them in a rounded whole in a manner we cannot set aside without, as it were, amputating our own moral personality, our own reasonableness, our own intelligence, our own sensitivity.¹⁷¹

Can one state more specifically how theology emerges out of a foundational setting in transcendental method? Lonergan's answer is decidedly affirmative: as soon as philosophy becomes concrete (for example, in existentialism) one cannot have ultimate answers without entering into theology. The presumption that philosophy is done by one's own native endowments of reasonableness and intelligence in turn presupposes that his philosophical questions are confined to "the per se" of human nature. To the extent that the latter presupposition holds, the philosophy so conceived is possible. However, as soon as one's philosophical questions move beyond this epistemologically circumscribed level, one has raised the type of question that translates him from one level to another and propels him from the philosophy department to theology.¹⁷²

Bernard Lonergan does his overt theologizing in such works as Verbum, Grace and Nature, and The Way to Nicea. In his most prestigious works, Insight and particularly Method in Theology, he stresses that he is not writing theology but method in theology:¹⁷³ "I am concerned not with the objects

that theologians expound but with the operations that theologians perform."¹⁷⁴

Having forthrightly stressed his preoccupation with method, Lonergan is not reticent to define theology as such. Availing himself of the standard etymological definition of theology as discourse about God, Lonergan defines Christian theology as an individual's reflections on the revelation given in and by Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁵ Father Lonergan's most celebrated definition of theology, however, comes at the outset of Method in Theology and is programmatic for that work: "A theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of religion in that matrix."¹⁷⁶ Elsewhere, in very similar yet subtly nuanced language, Lonergan defines theology as reflection on the significance and value of a religion in a culture.¹⁷⁷ Recognizing that Christian theology has been regarded as die Wendung zur Idee (the shift towards system) occurring within Christianity, theology thus "makes thematic" that which is already a part of Christian living.¹⁷⁸

The last of the above "definitions" implies the important distinction Lonergan makes between religion and theology. Rejecting the negative estimation of the former attributable to the noted patristic scholar Jean Danielou¹⁷⁹ (and one parallel to the view of Karl Barth), Father Lonergan defines religion as the dynamic state of being in love, which has the character of response to the divine initia-

tive.¹⁸⁰ To revert to what has been stated heretofore, being in love with God is the ultimate fulfillment of the human capacity for self-transcendence; and, note well:

". . . this view of religion is sustained when God is conceived as the supreme fulfillment of the transcendental notions, as supreme intelligence, truth, reality, righteousness, goodness."¹⁸¹

Within the framework of these definitions theology pertains to the cultural "superstructure," while religion has reference to what Lonergan terms its "day-to-day substance."¹⁸² If theology's function is to illumine the significance and value of a religion in any given culture, it follows that, while the religion will remain unchanged, a theology will vary with cultural transitions.¹⁸³

This, of course, entails the empirical notion of culture. Culture, so conceived, is the set of meanings and values that informs a way of life.¹⁸⁴ As such, it may remain stable, or it may be in process of incremental development or abrupt disintegration.¹⁸⁵ Recalling that the notion of doctrinal development is the preeminent characteristic of an empirical culture, from the conceptions of theology and culture previously outlined it follows that theology is not a single, monolithic system of abiding validity as in the Aristotelian and Thomistic synthesis. "[Theology is] as manifold as are the many cultures within which a religion has significance and value."¹⁸⁶

The key task, then, in contemporary Catholic theology is to replace the shattered thoughtforms associated with eternal truths and logical ideals with new thoughtforms that accord with the dynamics of development and the concrete style of method.¹⁸⁷

This is the context from which Bernard Lonergan begins his consideration of theological method. He variously identifies the theological task as the making explicit of what already is implicitly believed,¹⁸⁸ or as stating clearly and unequivocally the full meaning of the articles of faith.¹⁸⁹ With a tacit and deferential nod to St. Thomas, Lonergan declares that it is through the "illumination of method by faith" that theology exercises "her queenly rule."¹⁹⁰

Like so many other central themes of Lonergan's work, he defines "method" frequently and, fortunately, consistently. Compared to the definition of theology stated above, a definition which all other conceptualizations seek to complement, Father Lonergan has a basic point of departure from which he discusses method: "A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results."¹⁹¹ In practice, a method is a set of directives whereby one guides a process towards a result,¹⁹² or, in more pedestrian terms, ordering means to achieve an end.¹⁹³

Congruently, Lonergan observes that one's method in philosophy predetermines what his philosophy will be,¹⁹⁴ but this does not signal any methodological autonomy. The directives of the method will be issued by the self-affirming

subject to himself.¹⁹⁵ Transposing these comments back to a theological key, the theologian does have a personal contribution to make, and to that extent he does retain a degree of autonomy. Yet there is an evaluative criterion, one which guides the theologian in the exercise of his autonomy: ". . . each theologian will judge the authenticity of the authors of [theology's] views, and he will do so by the touchstone of his own authenticity" (that is, by fidelity to the oft-cited transcendental precepts).¹⁹⁶

At one point Lonergan terms revelation as God's entry into man's making of man.¹⁹⁷ This in turn means that theology is called both to reflect on revelation and in some fashion to "mediate God's meaning" into the whole of human life.¹⁹⁸ Quite clearly this is a daunting prospect, and for precisely this reason he identifies the fundamental theological problem of this generation to be that of integration.¹⁹⁹ Set in the milieu of an empirical culture--a fact of intellectual life to which Lonergan ceaselessly adverts--theology discovers that what once was in the purview of a single theologian now can be undertaken only by a larger aggregate.²⁰⁰ Father Lonergan describes the issue, and he does so by linking up this necessity for integration with the earlier problem of the relation of philosophy per se to theology.

Insofar as man in this world suffers from original sin and receives God's grace or refuses it, there are fundamental truths about man that cannot be subsumed under a philosophy considered as knowledge

natural to man, knowledge attained by reason. Those truths have to be subsumed under a theology. Now, it is in these empirical human sciences that there arise problems of integration not only in human living but within theology itself. The whole of anthropology, the whole of history of literatures and, consequently, the literary history of the Bible, the whole of patristic study and conciliar study, and all of the particular human studies that enter into theology, cannot be assimilated by theology unless synthesis is found, unless integration is found.²⁰¹

For these reasons Lonergan conceives theological method as a framework for "collaborative creativity."²⁰² Method is not, however, a rote prescription or set of directives, which Lonergan finds analogous to a recipe that can lead only to a single result. Crucial to method is the relation between questioning and answering: "The questioner, while he does not know the answer, at least intends it."²⁰³ Unlike classicist logic, which is static, theological method will be progressive and cumulative. The new results are not merely juxtaposed to the old; instead, they grow out of it, correcting and qualifying and complementing what went before in order to yield an at once fuller yet single view.²⁰⁴ The vibrancy of method, for want of a better noun, is aptly described in a lecture delivered in 1974:

Method begins with an apprenticeship, with doing what others have done, or advise, or demand. Method becomes meaningful in its own good time: when we discover for ourselves what a discovery is; and when we realize that the individual's achievement is a breakthrough because it occurs in a scientific community that needs it, witnesses it, attests it, judges it, embraces it, and sooner or later goes way beyond it. Method takes command when one assigns logic its subsidiary role, when one grasps how questions combine with answers, how they are woven to-

gether into contexts, how contexts merge into the horizons of subjects, how horizons can be open to and subjects can be eager for further development along certain lines yet, along others, subjects can be strangely inattentive, complacently obtuse, pompously irrational.²⁰⁵

Method in an empirical culture has a twofold function. First, it can select and define inadequacies in former procedures while indicating better procedures that are now available. Second, method may also have to discern the shortcomings or exaggerations to which the new modern epoch is itself exposed.²⁰⁶ "Indeed, inasmuch as theological development is dialectical, contemporary risks and dangers are apt to provide, if not the highest motive, at least the most efficacious incentive towards a renewal of theological method."²⁰⁷

Lonergan's method is transcendental in the sense that it is grounded in the human subject, and, most important, because it is universally applicable--"transcending the demarcations of fields of inquiry."²⁰⁸ It is transcendental in the latter sense precisely because it is so in the former sense, namely, rooted in the universality of human subjectivity.²⁰⁹

Only with this overall context in mind can we understand the role of specialization in Lonergan's method. The reality of an empirical culture and its concomitant factors preclude comprehensive interdisciplinary mastery. This leads to a threefold specialization. Field specialization

divides the field of data into different parts, thus enabling each specialist to concentrate on his part of the whole. Subject specialization divides the results of investigations into different subjects as in the various academic departments at a university. Finally, and most important for the present essay, there is "functional specialization": "It divides the process from data to results into different stages. Each stage pursues its own proper end in its own proper manner."²¹⁰

How does this impact upon theological method? Given this functional specialization, the task of theological method is to distinguish between these proper ends and to determine each of the proper ways of pursuing the proper ends.²¹¹

When Father Lonergan terms method as a model or framework for collaborative creativity,²¹² it is this specialization that he has in mind. Method comes to be seen as an "intelligible, interlocking set of terms and relations"; these are useful when one attempts to describe reality or form hypotheses.²¹³ Moreover, a theological method will sketch the various "clusters of operations" to be performed as theologians go about their respective tasks.²¹⁴

As Lonergan delineates his method, constructive theology "goes forward" in a twofold process: (1) painstaking recovery of the message; appropriating the available data in Holy Scripture, tradition, and the contributions of earlier

theologians; and (2) fresh statement and application; reinterpreting the data to meet contemporary exigencies. In this fashion we have, respectively, mediating and mediated disciplines in theology.²¹⁵

Lonergan envisages eight distinct tasks in working out a contemporary theological method: research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications.²¹⁶ These tasks are the functional specialties. The functional specialties, in turn, are divided into two groups, each group corresponding to the four stages of the cognitional theory (experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding) and the four transcendental imperatives (be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible).²¹⁷

Already in Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas, Father Lonergan sought to demonstrate that the purpose of intellectual activity is the understanding of objective reality.²¹⁸ Not coincidentally, the act of understanding is the unifying factor that cuts across any discipline.²¹⁹ Each functional specialty corresponds to an appropriate operation of human knowing; and this interpenetration of cognitional theory, transcendental precepts, and the functional specialties will be described in due course. For the moment we shall discuss very briefly each of the eight functional specialties.²²⁰

Initially, there is research, which assembles and makes available the data relevant to theological investiga-

tion. Research establishes the actual contents of the documents. This would include textual criticism as well as the editions and indexing of texts.²²¹

Interpretation, certainly including if not coterminous with exegesis,²²² seeks to ascertain the meaning of this data:²²³ "It grasps that meaning in its proper historical context, in accord with its proper mode and level of thought and expression, in the light of the circumstances and intention of the writer."²²⁴ In short, interpretation tries to understand what the authors meant in writing as they did.

Critical history follows. Critical history seeks to determine what was going forward in the past,²²⁵ or, more technically, to discern the relationship between a historical fact and its intelligible interconnection (zusammenhang)²²⁶--"what hitherto had been experienced but not properly known."²²⁷ Critical history relates authors and documents in a coherent narrative, along with the other persons, events, and circumstances of the times.

If history discovers meanings that are "incarnate" in deeds and movements,²²⁸ dialectic investigates, compares, and evaluates the conflicting views of the researcher, exegete, and critical historian.²²⁹ It prescind from accurate description of the past to the evaluation of it.

The fifth functional specialty, foundations, sets forth or objectifies the horizon, the standpoint, from which religious affirmations have meaning and reveal values.²³⁰

Dialectic and foundations have a key role in Method in Theology. In a lecture delivered several years after the publication of Method, Lonergan states that dialectic stands to theology as pull and counterpull stand to the spiritual life. For its part, foundations stands to theology as discernment stands to the spiritual life: ". . . it sorts out pull and counterpull and does not permit counterpull to distort the pull or pull to let seep some of its dignity and worth on to counterpull."²³¹

Left unsaid in this paragraph is that foundations makes thematic and explicitly objectifies the horizon engendered by affective, intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.²³² The role of conversion can hardly be overstated; indeed, it is the linchpin of his theological method, for it brings his cognitional theory into an overtly theological sphere.²³³

How is the pivot from dialectic to foundations accomplished? Any significant change of horizon comes as one envisages an altogether different, even incomprehensible, alternative and then undergoes a conversion.²³⁴ At its root, conversion represents neither change nor even development; instead, it is a radical transformation from which emerges an interlocked series of changes and developments on all levels of human living.²³⁵ Conversion is ontic.²³⁶ It is a change of course and direction: "It is as if one's eyes were opened and one's former world faded and fell away."²³⁷

Father Lonergan's principal works talk about intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. All three are termed modalities of self-transcendence.²³⁸ Moreover, all three are interconnected.²³⁹ Still, each is a different type of event, and each has to be considered in itself before it can be related to the others.²⁴⁰ Religious conversion "sublates" moral conversion, and the latter sublates intellectual conversion. But this does not imply a sequence wherein one proceeds from intellectual to moral and finally to religious conversion. Instead, from a causal perspective there is first God's gift of His love (Romans 5:5).²⁴¹ Intellectual conversion is a consequence of both religious and moral conversion, and moral conversion emerges out of religious conversion. Religious conversion, as noted, is the fruit of God's grace.²⁴²

Conversion involves a new understanding of oneself because, more fundamentally, it brings about a new self to be understood. It is putting off the old man and putting on the new. It is not just a development but the beginning of a new mode of developing. . . .

Conversion is three-dimensional. It is intellectual inasmuch as it regards our orientation to the intelligible and the true. It is moral inasmuch as it regards our orientation to the good. It is religious inasmuch as it regards our orientation to God. The three dimensions are distinct, so that conversion can occur in one dimension without occurring in the other two, or in two dimensions without occurring in the other one. At the same time the three dimensions are solidary. Conversion in one leads to conversion in the others, and relapse from one prepares for relapse in the others.²⁴³

Intellectual conversion is a clarification and, as a result, an elimination of stubborn residual myths concerning reality, objectivity, and human knowledge.²⁴⁴ Intellectual conversion focuses one's orientation on the intelligible and the true, and it does so by freeing the subject from confusing the criteria for knowledge of the world of immediacy with the criteria for knowledge of the world mediated by meaning.²⁴⁵ The world mediated by meaning is not known via sense experience. Accordingly, knowing is not merely seeing; it is, instead, experiencing, understanding, judging, and believing.²⁴⁶ Intellectual conversion is to truth as attained by cognitional self-transcendence.²⁴⁷

One's moral conversion elevates the subject from cognitional to moral self-transcendence. Forthrightly stated, by moral conversion one becomes motivated fundamentally not by satisfactions but by values²⁴⁸--even when the former conflict with the latter.²⁴⁹ This reversal in the moral deliberative process clearly does not approach perfection; nevertheless, the change of criterion does signal a reorientation to values generally, values apprehended, affirmed, and realized by a real self-transcendence.²⁵⁰

Religious conversion goes beyond the moral. Queries calling for intelligence, reflection, and for deliberation disclose the eros of the human spirit, or its capacity and desire for self-transcendence. However, this capacity only finds fulfillment--its desire turns to joy--when religious

conversion takes place. Such religious conversion translates an existential subject into a "subject in love":²⁵¹ "It is a total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, reservations."²⁵² In the following citation from Method in Theology Father Lonergan indicates how religious conversion sublates (in other words, cancels yet also preserves and elevates as in a dialectical synthesis) both intellectual and moral conversion:

Religious conversion is to a total being-in-love as the efficacious ground of all self-transcendence, whether in the pursuit of truth, or in the realization of human values, or in the orientation man adopts to the universe, its ground, and its goal.²⁵³

While Lonergan can call religious conversion "permanent" as observed in the paragraph above, he also insists, somewhat paradoxically, that it is dynamic, even an ongoing process.²⁵⁴ To be sure, conversion is existential, deeply personal and incomparably intimate. But it is not solitary, for it has communal and historical, even transcendental dimensions.²⁵⁵ Precisely as communal and historical, as a movement with its own particular cultural, institutional, and doctrinal aspects, conversion precipitates a reflection that cannot but render the movement thematic. Such reflection explicitly delves into its origins, developments, purposes, achievements, and failures.²⁵⁶

The last term in this sequence affords the clue to resolving the paradox. Father Lonergan insists that alongside conversions there are also breakdowns. What has been

erected so painstakingly by an individual, a community, and a culture can collapse.²⁵⁷ This collapse is actually a reversion to "arbitrariness" or, in language more typical of Lonergan, "inauthenticity." It is a circumvention of, rather than a surrender to, the transcendental demands of the human spirit (namely, be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be in love).²⁵⁸ Elsewhere in Method in Theology Lonergan writes that a man is his "true self" to the extent that he is self-transcending, and conversion is the avenue to self-transcendence. On the other hand, one is "alienated" from his true self to the extent that he declines self-transcendence. Furthermore, the basic form of ideology is the self-justification of alienated man.²⁵⁹

Father Lonergan talks about religious conversion most predominantly in New Testament terms as an "about-face" and new beginning.²⁶⁰ By religious conversion one comes to love God with his whole heart, soul, mind, and strength; and, as a consequence, he will love his neighbor as himself.²⁶¹ In other words, overtly Christian religious conversion is not only a state of heart and mind, because integral to it is the interpersonal and intersubjective component.²⁶² It is, in the language of the synoptic gospels, an authentic response to the Baptizer's Markan cry: "Repent! The kingdom of God is at hand!"²⁶³

Before returning to the functional specialties, it would be well to recapitulate and express simply the role of

conversion in Father Lonergan's transcendental method. Objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, and the latter is the consequence of posing and addressing all pertinent questions for reflection, intelligence, and deliberation. The human subject is capable of authenticity and inauthenticity. Insofar as one is inauthentic, he needs an "about-turn,"--an intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Through intellectual conversion one unreservedly enters the world mediated by meaning. Through moral conversion one enters a world mediated by values. Through religious conversion, finally, one accepts God's gift of His love bestowed by the Holy Spirit.²⁶⁴

The authentic Christian strives for the fulness of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Without intellectual conversion he tends to misapprehend not only the world mediated by meaning but also the word God has spoken within that world. Without moral conversion he tends to pursue not what truly is good but what only apparently is good. Without religious conversion he is radically desolate: in the world without hope and without God (Eph. 2:12).²⁶⁵

So much attention has been paid here to conversion not only because of its intrinsic importance to Lonergan's thought but because of its positive emerging role in his theological method. If today's empirical theology is reflection on religion, it follows that theology is reflection on conversion, which in unabashedly circular fashion is fundamental to religion. Father Lonergan makes the point quite explicitly: ". . . reflection on the ongoing process of

conversion may bring to light the real foundation of a renewed theology."²⁶⁶ In Method a very similar position is taken when Lonergan declares that an "objectification of conversion" provides theology with its foundations.²⁶⁷

We have already alluded to foundations as the fifth of the functional specialties. To complement the cursory definition offered there, foundations objectifies the horizon effected by the threefold conversion.²⁶⁸ "The threefold conversion is not a set of propositions that a theologian utters, but a fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that a theologian is."²⁶⁹ Thus, with foundations one enters the second or "mediated" phase of a transcendental theological method.²⁷⁰

On the heels of foundations comes the sixth functional specialty, doctrines. Doctrines avail themselves of foundations in order to make a selection from the alternatives proposed by dialectic.²⁷¹ Doctrines thus state the judgments of fact and value asserted to by the converted subject within a particular religious tradition. Dialectic, it will be recalled, expresses the slow, deliberate process that characterizes religious development.²⁷² At root it is not a conflict between any opposites whatever; it is a very specific opposition between authenticity and inauthenticity, or between one's self as transcending and one's self as transcended.²⁷³ Father Lonergan expressly weaves the fourth,

fifth, and sixth functional specialty into a single tapestry.

For the functional specialty, dialectic, deploys both the truth reached and the errors disseminated in the past. The functional specialty, foundations, discriminates between truth and error by appealing to the foundational reality of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. The result of such discrimination is the functional specialty, doctrines, and so doctrines, based on conversion, are opposed to the aberrations that result from the lack of conversion.²⁷⁴

In sum, doctrines are an attempt to express judgments and affirmations. They are based on an appropriated tradition, but furthermore they are transposed into those categories derived from conversion and conceptualized in foundations.²⁷⁵

Systematics, the seventh functional specialty, aims at the ultimate clarification of the meaning of doctrines.²⁷⁶ Assuredly, both doctrines and systematics seek to understand the truth, albeit in different fashion. The former aspires to a clear and distinct affirmation of religious verities: "its principal concern is the truth of such an affirmation; its concern to understand is limited to the clarity and distinctness of its affirmation."²⁷⁷ The latter specialty, systematics, attempts to understand the religious realities affirmed by doctrines.²⁷⁸ Systematics asks how the doctrines cohere and how they relate to the rest of human knowledge and opinion. While obviously it pursues a true understand-

ing, it recognizes nonetheless that its understanding will be imperfect, analogical, and routinely only probable.²⁷⁹

The last of Lonergan's eight functional specialties is communications, without which the first seven never attain maturity.²⁸⁰ In a word, communications assumes the task of preaching and teaching doctrines to all people in every class of every culture--and in a fashion congruent with the "assimilative powers" (in other words, their particular stage of intellectual development) of the various classes and cultures.²⁸¹

Within these eight functional specialties the theological operations all occur.²⁸² Dynamic interdependence, or reciprocal dependence, is the rule.²⁸³ They represent a distinction of specialties, not specialists. Functional specialization, therefore, arises not to parcel out different jobs; on the contrary, it distinguishes different tasks and thereby prevents them from being confused or precludes any single specialization from assuming potentially "totalitarian ambitions."²⁸⁴ All the principles of division reduce to the fact that no individual specialization can stand without the other seven.²⁸⁵

As important as these eight functional specialties are, their setting and unity in the transcendental method is even more noteworthy. Theology is an ongoing process pursued within a contextual structure.²⁸⁶ To do method in contemporary theology is to conceive this discipline as a set

of "related and recurrent operations" that advance cumulatively to an ideal goal. Yet it is not a single set of related operations; rather, it is a series of interdependent sets.²⁸⁷ Lonergan is at great pains to stress that the interaction of these self-regulated and ongoing processes is not along static logical lines (for example, premise to conclusion, particular to universal, and so forth).²⁸⁸ It may be superfluous to point out that within Lonergan's transcendental method the interaction will be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and religious.²⁸⁹

Finally, how do all these moving parts fit together? The eight functional specialties each corresponds to an operation of human knowing. In the first phase of "mediating" theology, research corresponds to experience (accumulate the data). Interpretation corresponds to understanding (understand what it meant). History corresponds to judgment (specify and make precise the human activities in temporal succession and geographical distribution). Dialectic corresponds to decision (attain a comprehensive viewpoint from which to examine conflicts).²⁹⁰

At this point the transition to "mediated" theology is effected, and the initial quartet of functional specialties pass on their data to the following four, which treat explicitly the faith content of theology.²⁹¹ Foundations, much like dialectic, corresponds to the cognitional function of decision and deals with Christian conversion, which, one

will recall, is the horizon within which the doctrines can be affirmed. Doctrines, parallel to critical history, correspond to judgment of facts and values. The facts and values affirmed prompt further questions as to the truth, inconsistency, or even fallacy of doctrinal assertions. Systematics, comparable to interpretation, aspires to appropriate systems of conceptualization, the removal of seeming inconsistencies, and, eventually, to a comprehensive grasp of theology. Communications, analogous to research, corresponds to experience, and it is concerned with theology in its "external relations."²⁹²

Table 1.--Cognitional Theory and the Functional Specialties²⁹³

Structure of Consciousness	Mediating Theology	Mediated Theology
deliberation	(4) dialectic	foundations (5)
judgment	(3) history	doctrines (6)
understanding	(2) interpretation	systematics (7)
experience	(1) research	communications (8)

To summarize briefly, the world of immediacy and the world mediated by meaning are both crucial to Christianity, the former because of religious experience (because of God's love flooding one's heart through the Holy Spirit given to him, Romans 5:5), the latter--and this is central to theological method--because divine revelation is God's own entry into humanity's world mediated by meaning.²⁹⁴

Before concluding this discussion and moving to the final section of this chapter, it is helpful to point out the manner in which Father Lonergan organizes the relevant theological disciplines. Among the terms not often seen in Protestant theological taxonomies are "fundamental", "speculative", and "positive." These, of course, complement such more typical classifications as "dogmatic" and "historical" theology.

Fundamental theology, which traditionally has been identified with "natural" theology and even seen as a form of apologetics, enlarges the horizon of dogmatic theology to include comparative religion and general anthropology. It brings the data of these sciences into the investigations of the systematic theologian.²⁹⁵ Lonergan insists that natural theology be pursued in a theological and not a philosophical context; any abstraction that would separate the two is pedagogically counterproductive and, more important, is foreign to contemporary modes of thinking.²⁹⁶ One cannot chop up the world and keep it all in separate compartments. Because the main purpose in this setting is the development of the person, the more one can put together, the more integrated he or she will be.²⁹⁷

Speculative theology is more straightforwardly defined. It seeks a universal formulation of the truths of faith.²⁹⁸ Dogmatic theology, which Lonergan pursues in his work on the Trinity, has a similarly clear agenda: "[it]

sets forth the dogmas of the Church and relates them to their origins in the sources of revelation."²⁹⁹

Positive theology turns its attention from commonly shared beliefs to the individual authors themselves, exploring such matters as their background, temperament, interests, aims, and style. It asks, for example, how these idiosyncrasies account for the differences of approach and emphasis that one discovers in the sources.³⁰⁰

The historical theologian discloses the "doctrinal identity" in the verbal and conceptual differences between (1) the initial revelation; (2) the practical theologians who are concerned with the effective communication of the message; and (3) the work of the speculative theologian.³⁰¹

These pages have outlined at least one major dimension of what Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. has termed "the Lonergan enterprise."³⁰² It has stressed that Lonergan conceives theology as a dynamic unity of interdependent parts. As such, each part adjusts to changes in the others, and the whole develops as a result of these changes and adjustments. These internal processes and their interaction have an external pole as well, since Christian theology conceived holistically functions within the larger context of Christian living; and Christian living, in turn, functions within the still larger process of human history.³⁰³

The "Lonergan Enterprise" and
Traditional Romanism

The discussion of Father Lonergan's Neo-Thomism, his principal philosophical convictions, his critical realism, and now his theological method has been marked by one significant omission, which will be evident to anyone who reads the preface and this chapter together. For all of our use of terms such as "orientation," "method," and the like, we have yet to state clearly and unequivocally the guiding motif or central tenet that both integrates and energizes Lonergan's theological labors. We have not pointed out the raison d'etre of Lonergan's theology itself--why he cared so passionately and devoted himself so painstakingly to the formulation of a viable theological method.

What accounts for this intentional postponement?

Lonergan does articulate a consistent theological core, and he does so in various places with a fair degree of frequency. But, and this is the key point, he does not expressly do so in the context of theological method. Lonergan expressly conceives his theological methodology in ecumenical terms, and in building a foundation that will accommodate the largest possible array of dialogue partners, he does not emphasize an overtly Roman theme that could conceivably imperil the methodological discussion.³⁰⁴ So broadly conceived is Lonergan's work that Karl Rahner could actually observe that the program outlined in Method in Theology is not even

uniquely theological; and to the extent that Lonergan unfolds a method for theology along interdisciplinary lines, this charge is not entirely unfounded.³⁰⁵

Nevertheless, as stated, Bernard Lonergan does have guiding theological convictions that do operate in centrifugal fashion to inform all dimensions of his work. He talks about the "principal concern" of the New Testament:

For first and last, the New Testament is a book with a message; the message is presented in a great variety of manners, in narratives and parables, in precepts and counsels, in exhortations and warnings. The message is depicted as emanating from the man, Jesus, who suffered, died, was quickened from the dead, and now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven. The message announces the imminent coming of the kingdom of God, and, as it challenged Jew and Greek two millennia ago, so too today it challenges us with a last word about last things.³⁰⁶

Lonergan develops this message in largely Roman Catholic categories, of which the primary one is "redemption": "in which Christ suffering, dying, and rising again is at once the motive and the model of self-sacrificing love."³⁰⁷

To fall in love is to go beyond attention, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility. It is to set up a new principle that has, indeed, its causes, conditions, occasions, but, as long as it lasts, provides the mainspring of one's desire and fear, hope and despair, joy and sorrow.³⁰⁸

Moreover, Lonergan manifests a (qualified) soteriological monergism. Humanity lives under the reign of sin, and its redemption lies not in natural capabilities but in what is effected by the grace of God.³⁰⁹ Furthermore, the "essential moment" of revelation is a "twofold pull": "being

drawn by the Father, listening to him, learning from him; and being drawn by the Son, crucified, dead, and risen."³¹⁰ Similarly, Father Lonergan can affirm a twofold grace: first, an inner operative grace that extracts a heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh; second, the "outer" grace of the Christian tradition that brings the Gospel to one's ears.³¹¹

To be sure, one could state phonetically all of the above and then proceed to eviscerate the same by means of a systematic and comprehensive redefinition of terms. This is not Lonergan's procedure. The classical creedal affirmations are not code words necessitating a new lexicon. If anything, typical existential categories (authentic, inauthentic, and so forth) are best understood in traditional Christian terms rather than vice versa. Bernard Lonergan simply does not set himself up as a dissenter in the same fashion as a Hans Küng or Edward Schillebeeckx (though he did contribute to the latter's Festschrift).³¹²

Nowhere are Lonergan's traditional views more evident than in his Christology, where he affirms the dogmas of the ecumenical councils and expressly rejects the revisionist proposals of both Leslie Dewart and Piet Schoonenberg.³¹³ Like everything else Lonergan writes, his critiques of these two writers are not easily assimilated, and questions remain as one seeks a firm understanding of his own position; however, through his application of a careful historical-

critical method (what Lonergan usually calls "critical history") he can conclude at least the following:

(1) that Jesus is named time and again from different viewpoints and in different contexts the Son of God; (2) that we through faith are sons of God and by baptism are one in Christ (Gal. 3:26-28), that God sent his only Son that we might acquire the status of sons as is proved to us by the sending of the Spirit of Christ crying in our hearts "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:3-7; Rom. 8:14-17); and (3) that the Spirit we have received from God knows all and has been given us that we may know all that God of his grace gives us (I Cor. 2:10-16; John 14:16, 17, 26).³¹⁴

If Jesus is repeatedly declared to be the Son of God, one can interpret this in several ways. Possibly it is a mythic or merely honorific title. Perhaps it denotes the mission of the Messiah. Or, finally, it may highlight an "inner reality" comparable to our own divine sonship through Christ and in the Spirit. The other possibility, of course, is the option confessed by the church for nearly two millennia: "that Jesus was truly a man leading a truly human life but his identity was the identity of the eternal Son of God consubstantial with the Father."³¹⁵ This is the conclusion of Father Lonergan--echoing Scripture, tradition, and the councils. Any "Christology from below" (Lonergan does not expressly use this formula) that permits one to deduce from the premises of Jesus' humanity and Jesus' personality that He was "only a man" is reflecting not Christian preaching but the ancient Ebionite heresy.³¹⁶ Father Lonergan states

the issue poignantly, and in an explicit soteriological context:

. . . at Nicea the real import was whether Christ, the mediator of our salvation, was a creature. Today many perhaps will be little moved by the question whether we have been saved by a creature or by God himself. But the issue may be put differently. One can ask whether God revealed his love for us by having a man die the death of scourging and crucifixion? Or was it his own son, a divine person, who became flesh to suffer and die and thereby touch our hard hearts and lead us to eternal life?³¹⁷

Most of the above comments are from an essay in which Lonergan takes exception to the Christology of Piet Schoonenberg. The previously mentioned response to Leslie Dewart is perhaps even more instructive because it expressly raises the scepter of hermeneutical questions and even one's theory of truth. In a fashion at very least analogous to Rudolf Bultmann's celebrated program of demythologization,³¹⁸ Leslie Dewart advocates a "de-hellenizing" of dogma.³¹⁹ Without reverting to the archaism and anachronism that mark a classicist account of culture, with its absence of historical consciousness and its lack of any sense of historical development,³²⁰ Lonergan proposes a "renewal" of theological method--but he does so with one crucial cautionary stricture:

No less important than a critique of notions and conclusions is a critique of methods. The new largely empirical approach to theology can too easily be made into a device for reducing doctrines to probable opinions. A hermeneutics can pretend to philosophic neutrality yet force the conclusion that the content of revelation is mostly myth. Scientific history can be so conceived that a study of the narrative of salvation will strip it of matters of

fact. If our renewed theology is not to be the dupe of every fashion, it needs a firm basis and a critical stance.³²¹

If one can escape from archaism and anachronism, he will move to the dialectic of "development" and "aberration." Both respond to the contemporary questions within a proper methodological context, but development answers them in the light of revelation and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, while aberration fails to do so.³²² At least in the case of Dewart, the failure stems from a denial of the relation between "meaning" and "meant," which in turn amounts to a denial of the correspondence view of truth. "To deny the correspondence view of truth is to deny that, when the meaning is true, the meant is what is so."³²³

Either denial, Lonergan argues, is ultimately destructive of the church's dogmas. The circle is pernicious, for if the covert rejection of propositional truth is universal, it is a self-destructive declaration that all propositions are false. If, however, the rejection is confined to the church's dogmas, it is merely a transparent and rather clumsy way of saying that all the dogmas are false.³²⁴

Clearly, programs like those of Dewart or Bultmann find the miraculous element of the New Testament incompatible with their "modern" world-view. Aside from his blunt assessment of such "modern age, we're different" sentiments as "nonsense,"³²⁵ Father Lonergan does come to grips with the issue of the miracles in Method in Theology, and he

does so in very straightforward terms. If the historian's Weltanschauung precludes the miraculous, what is he to do about witnesses who testify to miracles as matters of fact?³²⁶

The alternatives are simple enough. Either one has to reconstruct his world view along new lines, or he has to declare these witnesses to be incompetent, dishonest, or self-deceived.³²⁷ Adverting to the celebrated "father of skepticism," David Hume, Lonergan notes that even Hume did not really prove that no miracles had ever occurred; rather, "its [Hume's criticism] real thrust was that the historian cannot deal intelligently with the past when the past is permitted to be unintelligible to him."³²⁸

Lonergan asserts that the meaning of dogma is permanent and not contingent on the regnant philosophical orientation.³²⁹ Dogmas are not merely "data"; they are expressions of mysteries that could not be known by human beings had they not been revealed by God.³³⁰ Moreover, normativeness and certitude go far beyond any judgment proceeding from merely human understanding. Certitude arises from the judgment of the church to whom God has promised and conferred infallibility in faith and morals.³³¹ Faith as seen along these lines is a supernatural virtue by which we affirm what God has revealed. Such an affirmation arises not from an apprehension of the intrinsic truth of what has been revealed, but because of the authority of God who reveals and

does not deceive.³³² Finally, the normativeness of any and all theological assertions is dependent on the normativeness ascribed to divine revelation, inspired Holy Scripture, and/or church doctrine.³³³

For the doctrine of faith, which God has revealed, has not been proposed as some sort of philosophic discovery to be perfected by human talent. It is a divine deposit, given to the spouse of Christ, to be guarded faithfully and declared infallibly. Hence there is ever to be retained that meaning of the sacred dogmas that once was declared by the church. From that meaning there is to be no departure under the pretext of some profounder understanding. . . .³³⁴

This does not imply that theology is reduced to a parrot with nothing to do but repeat what has been said in the past.³³⁵ Lonergan never abandons his insistence on an empirical definition of culture and the theological method that arises within this context. There is a development of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom applicable both to individuals and to the whole church. Yet this development must be "true to type"--without change of dogma, of meaning, or of doctrine.³³⁶ If there is a tension between permanence and development, Lonergan addresses it in terms of his affirmation of the first Vatican Council. He asserts: ". . . what has been both revealed by God and defined by the Church is permanently valid in the sense determined by its own historical context."³³⁷

This clarification takes on particular significance insofar as it introduces the notion of doctrinal pluralism and, further, the more serious issue of potential universal-

ism in Lonergan's thought. In the case of doctrinal pluralism, Father Lonergan declares that dogmas pertain to the church's declaration of revealed mysteries.³³⁸ The permanence of dogma attaches to its meaning and not to its formula.³³⁹ What Lonergan excludes, and what is excluded by the first Vatican Council, is the retention of a formula and the investment of the same with a novel meaning.³⁴⁰

The variability of formulas contributes to doctrinal pluralism, and, certainly, in communications and catechetics the rule is pluralism. One must express the Christian Gospel in a language and style appropriate to a given class of people in a particular culture.³⁴¹ Yet herein lies the enigma, and one that is perhaps never resolved conclusively. Pluralism, Father Lonergan stresses, does not imply that there are many diverse Christian messages: "it is the task of the theologian to ascertain just what is the one message that the many communicators present to the many different audiences."³⁴²

The greatest interpretative difficulty in Lonergan (save for the oblique philosophical passages) does come down to his position with respect to universalism. Here he clearly goes beyond the classical Christian assertion of the universality of the Gospel's appeal. Citing the work of Friedrich Heiler in comparative religions, Father Lonergan notes seven areas common to the principal world religions: affirmation of a transcendent reality; the immanence of the

same in human hearts; that he (the pronoun is Lonergan's) is supreme beauty, truth, righteousness, and goodness; that he is ultimate love, mercy, and compassion; the avenue to him is sacrifice, repentance, self-denial, and prayer; as these religions seek God, so also they seek their neighbor's well-being, even that of his enemies; and though religious experience is infinitely diverse, the highest way to God is love.³⁴³

Presupposing the above, the problem becomes one of accounting for the great similarity among the manifold high religions without thereby denying the uniqueness of Christianity.³⁴⁴

Though God's grace is given to all, still the experience of resting in God ordinarily needs a religious tradition for it to be encouraged, fostered, interpreted, guided, developed. Though grace bestows both good will and good performances, still one shrinks and draws back from the performance of denying oneself daily and taking up one's cross and following Christ. For the fulfilment that is the love of God is not the fulfilment of any appetite or desire or wish or dream impulse, but the fulfilment of getting beyond one's appetites and desires and wishes and impulses, the fulfilment of self-transcendence, the fulfilment of human authenticity, the fulfilment that overflows into a love of one's neighbor as oneself.³⁴⁵

To sharpen the focus, what distinguishes the Christian is not God's grace, which he shares with others, but the mediation of this grace through Jesus Christ.³⁴⁶ Citing 1 Timothy 2:4 with nearly the same frequency as Romans 5:5, Father Lonergan explains the Christian "aspiration to universalism" by means of two simple assertions: (1) the sal-

vation of the Christian is in and through charity; (2) this gift of charity as religious "infrastructure" can be the Christian account of religious experience in any and all people.³⁴⁷

Is Bernard Lonergan, then, a universalist in the sense that one can attain salvation apart from an explicit awareness of and trust in the benefits of Christ? Given the evidence, this conclusion is inescapable. Once again referring to 1 Timothy 2, Lonergan makes the point in stark terms: "I have quoted St. Paul, but I would not have you think that being in love with God is to be found only among Christians. God gives all men sufficient grace for salvation. Nor is his grace without fruit."³⁴⁸ The following, from Method in Theology, is even more direct: ". . . it is in such grace that can be found the theological justification of Catholic dialogue with all Christians, with non-Christians, and even with atheists who may love God in their hearts while not knowing him with their heads."³⁴⁹

In fairness, Lonergan does not just homogenize all of the "high" religions. There are revealing dialogues in Philosophy of God, and Theology where Lonergan responds to questions of this sort. In general terms he accepts Rahner's idea of the "anonymous Christian," pertaining to people who are in a state of grace but who do not express themselves in the way such people ordinarily do.³⁵⁰ But the love of God, while it is the common element to all religion and

manifestly is supernatural revelation, is not complete revelation. Christian revelation goes beyond an unspecified love for God and thereby introduces a specific difference. There is, Father Lonergan maintains, an intersubjective element to love that is present in Christianity--since God is expressing His love in Christ in addition to giving one the grace in his or her heart--and this added element is missing where the incarnate Lord is missing.³⁵¹

To be sure, these comments about implicit or at the very least potential universalism do not invariably signal a deviation from "orthodox" Roman Catholicism, and, as noted in the preface, any such indictment is not the purpose of this exposition. Even if it were, the inquiry would have to undertake an exegesis of the pertinent documents of the second Vatican Council before identifying and pressing any presumed discrepancy between Lonergan's published writings and the magisterium. While such an analysis goes beyond the scope of this chapter, one can casually observe that many within the Roman communion would find nothing in Lonergan inimical to either the spirit or letter of Vatican II.³⁵²

Finally, for all of the perplexities Bernard Lonergan presents to any reader, he commends, with resolute consistency and a thoroughness approaching that of St. Thomas himself, a program combating the intellectual scotosis wrought by human fallenness. He seeks neither to affirm reason at the expense of faith nor faith at the expense of reason;

indeed, the "amputation" of either is lethal and allows the surd of sin unchallenged hegemony in both spheres. Instead, he aspires to a synthesis that unites the two orders of truth and manifests a fruitful symbiosis of two principles of knowledge.³⁵³ Perhaps nowhere is this unity of Lonergan's philosophical and theological endeavors more elegantly and poignantly expressed than in this selection from Understanding and Being, which, we might note, comes at the close of a consideration of the problem of evil in the context of Christian revelation:

What God is, the answer to the question, Quid sit Deus?, What is God?, is something we do not know. We do not know God by his essence in this life. We have only analogical knowledge of Him. But that has been God's revelation of Himself to us, and insofar as in humility and simplicity we accept things as they are, we can advance to a knowledge of God and an intimacy with God that will leave us convinced that what, as philosophers, we may call His wisdom and His goodness, are in truth wisdom surpassing wisdom and goodness surpassing goodness.³⁵⁴

NOTES

¹A particularly useful survey of Lonergan's intellectual odyssey is provided by Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. in his introduction to Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), roughly pp. vii-xix.

²Carl E. Braaten, Ethics and Eschatology (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974), p. 26.

³See "The Answer Is the Question," Time, April 20, 1970, p. 65; and "A Great Christian Mind," Newsweek, April 20, 1970, p. 75.

⁴"Bernard J. F. Lonergan: A Name to Remember," Christianity Today, April 24, 1970, p. 38.

⁵A brief but helpful discussion appears in David Tracy, Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 30, 54. Here Tracy parallels developments in Roman Catholicism with those of Protestant neo-orthodoxy.

⁶Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1957), p. 747.

⁷Gerald A. McCool, Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), pp. 1-2. See also Thomas Gilby, "Thomism," in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 8, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1967), 119-121; and especially James A. Weisheipl, "The Revival of Thomism as a Christian Philosophy," in New Themes in Christian Philosophy, ed. Ralph M. McInerny (Notre Dame, IN, and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 164-185.

⁸McCool, pp. 1-2.

⁹This debate is reflected in the various works of Etienne Gilson, some of which will be cited below. See especially Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge, trans. Mark Wauch (San Francisco: St. Ignatius Press, 1986). A handy, appreciative summary of Gilson's overall views is afforded by Stanley L. Jaki's introduction to

Gilson's From Aristotle to Darwin: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution, trans. John Lyon (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), pp. xiii-xviii.

¹⁰W. T. Jones, The Twentieth Century to Wittgenstein and Sartre, vol. 5 of A History of Western Philosophy, 2d ed., rev. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 8-14. Jones' discussion of Kant proper appears in Volume 4 of the same series.

¹¹Etienne Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics; and County Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 1982), pp. 223, 232. First published in 1937.

¹²Ibid., p. 223.

¹³Millard J. Erickson, Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), p. 112. See also George P. Klubertanz and Maurice R. Holloway, Being and God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Being And to Natural Theology (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1963), pp. 16, 219-228: "Natural theology deals with the uncaused reality as the first principle of all other reality, and so with that uncaused reality as itself real" (p. 16).

¹⁴Etienne Gilson, God and Philosophy (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 109.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁷Gilson's Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge is an extended survey of this debate.

¹⁸Gilby, p. 121.

¹⁹Jacques Maritain, A Preface to Metaphysics: Seven Lectures on Being (New York: Mentor Omega Books, 1982), p. 26. See also Joseph Owens, An Elementary Christian Metaphysics (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1985), pp. 61-62. One can, following the lead of Hugo Meynell, define Neo-Thomism very simply as the attempt to found a traditional type of metaphysics on a transcendental basis. See The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, American Academy of Religion Studies in Religion, No. 42 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), p. 33. The most accessible introduction to Joseph Marechal is A Marechal Reader, ed. and trans. Joseph Donceel, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

²⁰Gilson, God and Philosophy, p. 114.

²¹See the very terse summary in Milton D. Hunnex, Chronological and Thematic Charts of Philosophies and Philosophers (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books-Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), p. 10.

²²Gilson, Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge, p. 84.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 149. See also pp. 126-127: ". . . with critical realism. If you start with thought alone, you will never get beyond it, but if you do not start with thought alone, you will not have to do anything further in order to grasp existing beings since you will already be in contact with them."

²⁵See the brief discussion, in dialogue form, in Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Philosophy of God, and Theology: The Relationship between Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty, Systematics (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973), pp. 60-68. To state their difference as directly as possible, E. Coreth observes that for Gilson "being" is immediate, while for Lonergan it is either mediated or to be mediated. See Coreth, "Immediacy and the Mediation of Being: An Attempt to Answer Bernard Lonergan," Language Truth and Meaning: Papers from The International Lonergan Congress 1970, ed. Philip McShane (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), p. 34.

²⁶Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., "Theories of Inquiry: Responses to a Symposium," in A Second Collection, ed. William F. J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 40.

²⁷See, perhaps most programmatically, "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," in A Second Collection, pp. 1-9.

²⁸Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), p. 301.

²⁹"The Absence of God in Modern Culture," A Second Collection, p. 113.

³⁰"The Future of Thomism," A Second Collection, p. 50.

³¹Ibid., pp. 50-53.

³²Method in Theology, p. 124.

³³"Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation," A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press; and London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), p. 46. Emphasis added.

³⁴"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 246; "The Future of Thomism," A Second Collection, p. 52.

³⁵"The Subject," A Second Collection, p. 73. Possibly the best brief description of the transcendental method is offered by Robert Sokolowski in The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982): "The transcendental method is an attempt to shift the issue of being or of esse to the issue of the questioning of being or esse; it turns its attention to the investigator and to the inquiry into being. It acknowledges the Kantian reserve concerning a straightforward metaphysics and attempts to work with what escapes the Kantian critique: it turns from things to the subjectivity that desires and knows things" (p. 112).

³⁶"Theology and Man's Future," A Second Collection, p. 147. Here a principal work is Rahner's Hearers of the Word, trans. Michael Richards (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970). In this volume Rahner outlines the transcendental structure of the human person insofar as one's internal spiritual nature is open to divine revelation. As such, the book provides the necessary "speculative background" for fundamental theology. See especially pp. 66-67: "Man is spirit, that is, he lives his life in a perpetual reaching out towards the Absolute, in openness to God. This openness to God is not a contingency which can emerge here or there at will in man, but is the condition for the possibility of that which man is and has to be, even in the most forlorn and mundane life. The only thing which makes him a man is that he is forever on the road to God whether he is clearly aware of the fact or not, whether he wants to be or not, for he is always the infinite openness to the finite for God. A revelation from God is thus possible only if the subject to whom it is supposed to be addressed in himself presents an a priori horizon against which such a possible revelation can begin to present itself in the first place. Only if this horizon is utterly unlimited is a possible revelation not subject antecedently to law and restriction in respect of what it will be possible to reveal." This work is discussed in Karl Rahner in Dialogue: Conversations and Interviews, 1965-1982, ed. Paul Imhof and Hubert Biallowons (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986), p. 11. See also Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduc-

tion to the Idea of Christianity, trans. William V. Dych (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), pp. 26-43; and James Collins, The Emergence of Philosophy of Religion (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 487-488.

³⁷"Dialectic of Authority," A Third Collection, p. 7.

³⁸Method in Theology, p. 53; "Dialectic of Authority," A Third Collection, p. 7; "Existenz and Aggiornamento," Collection, p. 249.

³⁹"Dialectic of Authority," A Third Collection, pp. 7-11; "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," A Third Collection, pp. 151-152.

⁴⁰Method in Theology, p. 103.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³"The Future of Christianity," A Second Collection, p. 152; "The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," A Second Collection, p. 170.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 111.

⁴⁵"The Future of Christianity," A Second Collection, p. 155; "The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," A Second Collection, pp. 172-173.

⁴⁶For example, in A Third Collection, "Mission and the Spirit," p. 31, and "Prolegomena to the Study of Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," p. 71.

⁴⁷"The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," A Second Collection, p. 172.

⁴⁸Method in Theology, p. 341.

⁴⁹Insight, p. 685.

⁵⁰Method in Theology, p. 105.

⁵¹Insight, p. 746.

⁵²Method in Theology, pp. 24, 105, 282. Meynell observes that the investigation of the realm of interiority makes transcendental method possible (that is, inquiry into inquiry as such). See The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, p. 18.

⁵³"Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation," A Third Collection, pp. 52-53. See also Lonergan's comment in Understanding and Being: An Introduction and Companion to Insight, The Halifax Lectures, ed. Elizabeth A. and Mark D. Morelli (New York and Toronto: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1980), p. 115: ". . . Saint Thomas' accomplishment, if one is familiar with the state of theology before he began to write, was a matter of a man taking a heap of stones and building a cathedral."

⁵⁴A letter dated May 4, 1793; quoted in Colin Brown, Philosophy and the Christian Faith (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968), p. 92.

⁵⁵See, for example, Method in Theology, pp. 25, 83, 261, 316.

⁵⁶Insight, pp. xxii. See also Elizabeth A. and Mark D. Morelli's editorial introduction to Understanding and Being, p. vii.

⁵⁷Understanding and Being, p. 1.

⁵⁸Insight, p. 429; editorial introduction, Understanding and Being, p. ix.

⁵⁹Insight, p. 421. See also Method in Theology, pp. 94-95.

⁶⁰Insight, p. x.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. xxi-xxii. ". . . Insight is nothing other than the awareness immanent in all cognitional activity uniting, not confronting knower and known. In brief, knowing is a structured dynamism whose peculiarity is its intelligent and rational consciousness of and in its acts." So David Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 136. See also Hugo A. Meynell, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976), p. 2.

⁶²Ibid., pp. xxviii, 78.

⁶³Ibid., p. xxiii.

⁶⁴"Theology and Man's Future," A Second Collection, pp. 137-138.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶"An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.," A Second Collection, p. 213. See also Understanding and

Being, p. viii: ". . . the student of Insight . . . is invited to develop and appropriate himself as a knower, to discover for himself the invariant dynamic structure of human cognitional activity, and to implement that discovery in deliberate and methodical interdisciplinary collaboration."

⁶⁷Understanding and Being, p. 18.

⁶⁸"Religious Knowledge," A Third Collection, p. 134; and "A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion," A Third Collection, pp. 196-197.

⁶⁹"The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," A Third Collection, p. 144; see also "Existenz and Aggiornamento," Collection, p. 243.

⁷⁰Insight, p. x.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 11.

⁷²Understanding and Being, pp. 40-41.

⁷³Ibid., p. 41.

⁷⁴"Theories of Inquiry," A Second Collection, p. 37.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Insight, p. 596.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 418.

⁷⁸"Natural Knowledge of God," A Second Collection, p. 127.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Insight, p. 357.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 701.

⁸²"Cognitional Structure," Collection, p. 223. See also "The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," A Second Collection, p. 169: "Experiencing is presupposed and complemented by inquiry and understanding. Experiencing and understanding are presupposed and complemented by reflecting and judging. Experiencing, understanding, and judging, are presupposed and complemented by deliberating and deciding. The four modes are interdependent, and each later level sublates those that precede in the sense that it goes beyond them, introduces something entirely new, makes that new element a new basis of opera-

tion; but so far from crowding or interfering with its predecessors, it preserves them, perfects them, and extends their relevance and significance. Inquiry sharpens our powers of observation, understanding enormously extends the field of data one can master, reflection and judgment force inquiry to attend to ever further data and force understanding to revise its previous achievements, deliberation turns attention from what is to what can be, to what probably would be and above all, to what really is worthwhile." In Chapter XVII of Insight, Lonergan notes that erroneous positions in philosophy are all due ultimately to mistaking part of the cognitional process for the whole. See the discussion in Meynell, The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, p. 9.

⁸³Insight, p. 341.

⁸⁴Understanding and Being, pp. 134-135.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 136.

⁸⁶Ibid, pp. 134-135.

⁸⁷Insight, pp. 612-613.

⁸⁸Understanding and Being, pp. 137, 138. David Tracy's cumulative summary is helpful: ". . . the authentic inquirer always moves through four levels: he tries to establish the data (experience); he then tries to understand them (understanding); he next attempts to establish the facts (judgment); and finally he makes his decision on what is to be done about his knowledge." See The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 242-243.

⁸⁹Method in Theology, pp. 106, 181.

⁹⁰Understanding and Being, p. 314.

⁹¹Method in Theology, p. 265.

⁹²Understanding and Being, p. 19.

⁹³Ibid., p. 15.

⁹⁴"Cognitional Structure," Collection, pp. 227-228.

⁹⁵Understanding and Being, p. 15.

⁹⁶"Revolution in Catholic Theology," A Second Collection, pp. 236-237.

⁹⁷"Cognitional Structure," Collection, pp. 227-228.

⁹⁸Insight, pp. 552-553.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 549-550.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 583.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 636. See also p. 348: "Being, then, is the objective of the pure desire to know. By the desire to know is meant the dynamic orientation manifested in questions for intelligence and for reflection. . . . It is the prior and enveloping drive that carries cognitional process from sense and imagination to understanding, from understanding to judgment, from judgment to the complete context of correct judgments that is named knowledge. The desire to know, then, is simply the inquiring and critical spirit of man."

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 644. See also Understanding and Being, p. 295.

¹⁰⁴"The Subject," A Second Collection, p. 75.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁰⁶Understanding and Being, p. 145. For God as unrestricted understanding, see Meynell, The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, p. 87.

¹⁰⁷"The Subject," A Second Collection, p. 70, n. 3. See also "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," A Third Collection, pp. 172-173.

¹⁰⁸Understanding and Being, pp. 298-299. See also Insight, pp. 670, 672.

¹⁰⁹Understanding and Being, pp. 298-299.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Understanding and Being, p. 303, and Insight, p. 672. (Paraphrased very slightly.) In Understanding and Being, pp. 303-304, Lonergan explains the rather obtuse Chapter XIX of Insight as follows--and in terms of the above syllogism: "The minor premise, that the real is completely intelligible, that the real is being, is established by the fact that the alternative is clearly counter-positional. If we affirm that the real is not being, that the real is not completely intelligible, then we are using our intelligence and our reasonableness to present an intelligent and reasonable judgment; from the very intention and nature of the

utterance, we are presuming the validity and the significance of an intelligent and reasonable affirmation. But, if it is true that the real is not being, if it is true that the real is not completely intelligible, our affirmations can have no significance whatever and, because they can have no significance, they cannot be intelligent or reasonable. It is only insofar as the real is being that any intelligent and reasonable affirmation can be intelligent and reasonable; if this is not affirmed, we involve ourselves in the counter-positions. . . .

"The major premise is to the effect that only if God exists can the real be being. Only if there is, at the root of all reality, an unrestricted act of understanding that freely creates everything else and, in so doing, acts intelligently and reasonably--only if the whole of reality depends upon God as absolute understanding--can it be true that the real is being, that the real is completely intelligible. That is the only way in which it is possible that all further questions that arise about this world have an answer. If we place nothing outside the world, there is no further answer to those further questions. If we make something finite, some ens per participationem, the ground of the world, then further questions arise; the ens per participationem give rise to further questions just as much as this world does. Only insofar as there is posited the formally unconditioned, as not only intelligible but also intelligent, can it be true that the real is being, that the real is completely intelligible."

See Meynell's summary of the argument in An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, p. 136: ". . . the existent is as such intelligible, . . . there are no matters of merely brute fact; and . . . this is possible only on the assumption of the existence of an unrestricted act of understanding, which understands all that could exist or be the case, and wills what actually does exist or is the case." See also Sokolowski, pp. 108-109.

¹¹²Insight, pp. 679-680.

¹¹³"Existenz and Aggiornamento," Collection, p. 249.

¹¹⁴Understanding and Being, p. 241.

¹¹⁵Understanding and Being, p. 226; Insight, pp. 391, 640.

¹¹⁶Insight, p. 391.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 640.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 640. See also p. 687: ". . . the basic questions raised by proportionate being, namely, what is being and whether being is the real."

¹¹⁹"The Natural Desire to See God," Collection, p. 87.

¹²⁰Insight, pp. 594, 521.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 392. See also p. 444: "Being has been conceived 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, to provide a core for all meaning."

¹²²Ibid., pp. 483, 521.

¹²³Understanding and Being, pp. 247, 265.

¹²⁴Ibid., pp. 242-243, 247.

¹²⁵Understanding and Being, p. 248; Insight, pp. 390, 509.

¹²⁶Understanding and Being, p. 243.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 240.

¹²⁸Understanding and Being, p. 240; Insight, p. 391.

¹²⁹Understanding and Being, pp. 242-243.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 182.

¹³¹Insight, pp. 348, 350.

¹³²Ibid., p. 644.

¹³³Ibid., p. 680.

¹³⁴Ibid., pp. 638-639.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 556.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 552.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 657.

¹³⁸"Natural Knowledge of God," A Second Collection, p. 130.

¹³⁹Ibid. A very helpful survey of Lonergan's metaphysics is "The Method of Metaphysics," Chapter 3 of Meynell, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 48-88.

¹⁴⁰Understanding and Being, editorial introduction, p. x. See also Insight, p. 387: "Let us name the cognitional theory the basis, the other pronouncements the expansion."

¹⁴¹Philosophy of God, and Theology, pp. 33, 60.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Insight, p. 397.

¹⁴⁴Philosophy of God, and Theology, p. 33.

¹⁴⁵Richard P. McBrien, Catholicism. Study Edition. (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1981), p. 1176.

¹⁴⁶Method in Theology, pp. 265, 351.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 249.

¹⁴⁸"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 240; McBrien, p. 1177.

¹⁴⁹"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 240. For a discussion of common sense, see Insight, pp. 176-179; Understanding and Being, pp. 105-106, 109-111, especially p. 111: "Common sense . . . consists of a basic nucleus of insights that enables a person to deal successfully with personal and material situations of the sort that arise in his ordinary living, according to the standards of the culture and the class to which he belongs. It follows that where the scientist or the mathematician wants to lay down universal principles that hold in all applications, common sense deals with proverbs."

¹⁵⁰Method in Theology, p. 76.

¹⁵¹"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 240; Method in Theology, p. 76.

¹⁵²Method in Theology, p. 76. See also p. 102: "Judgment proceeds from a grasp of a virtually unconditioned. By an unconditioned is meant any x that has no conditions. By a virtually unconditioned is meant any x that has no unfulfilled conditions. In other words, a virtually unconditioned whose conditions are all fulfilled."

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 239.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵"Insight Revisited," A Second Collection, p. 260.

¹⁵⁶"The Origins of Christian Realism," A Second Collection, pp. 242-243. See also "Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 240: "In the world of immediacy the only objects are objects of immediate experience, where 'experience' is understood in the narrow sense and denotes either the outer experience of our senses or the inner experience of our consciousness. But in the world mediated by meaning--i.e., mediated by experiencing, understanding, and judging--objects are what are intended by questions and known by intelligent, correct, conscientious answers. It is by his questions for intelligence (quid sit, cur ita sit), for reflection (an sit), for moral deliberation (an honestum sit), that man intends without yet knowing the intelligible, the true, the real, and the good. By that intending man is immediately related to the objects that he will come to know when he elicits correct acts of meaning."

¹⁵⁷"The Origins of Christian Realism," A Second Collection, p. 83.

¹⁵⁸Insight, p. 636.

¹⁵⁹Method in Theology, pp. 83-84. See also Bernard Tyrrell, S.J., Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), pp. 16-29.

¹⁶⁰"An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.," A Second Collection, p. 213.

¹⁶¹Method in Theology, p. 25.

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 321. Note also in this context Lonergan's interesting discussion of faith and method as it applies to St. Anselm, in Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. J. Patout Burns (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), pp. 8-9.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 336.

¹⁶⁵"Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," A Third Collection, p. 82.

- ¹⁶⁶Method in Theology, p. 9.
- ¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 120.
- ¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 9.
- ¹⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 13-14.
- ¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 53.
- ¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 18. See pp. 20-25 for the specific functions of transcendental method.
- ¹⁷²Understanding and Being, p. 322.
- ¹⁷³Method in Theology, p. xii; "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J., A Second Collection, p. 211.
- ¹⁷⁴Method in Theology, p. xii.
- ¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 296.
- ¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. xi.
- ¹⁷⁷Philosophy of God, and Theology, pp. 22, 33-34.
- ¹⁷⁸Method in Theology, p. 144.
- ¹⁷⁹Philosophy of God, and Theology, p. 20.
- ¹⁸⁰Method in Theology, p. 119.
- ¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 111.
- ¹⁸²"Belief: Today's Issue," A Second Collection, p. 97.
- ¹⁸³Philosophy of God, and Theology, p. 22.
- ¹⁸⁴Method in Theology, p. xi.
- ¹⁸⁵Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁶Philosophy of God, and Theology, pp. 33-34.
- ¹⁸⁷"Philosophy and Theology," A Second Collection, p. 201.
- ¹⁸⁸"Christ As Subject: A Reply," Collection, p. 193.
- ¹⁸⁹Ibid.

- ¹⁹⁰"Theology and Understanding," Collection, p. 141.
- ¹⁹¹Method in Theology, p. 4.
- ¹⁹²Insight, p. 396.
- ¹⁹³Ibid., p. 44.
- ¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 418.
- ¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 398.
- ¹⁹⁶Method in Theology, p. 331.
- ¹⁹⁷"Theology in Its New Context," A Second Collection, p. 62.
- ¹⁹⁸Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁹Understanding and Being, p. 117.
- ²⁰⁰Method in Theology, p. 315.
- ²⁰¹Understanding and Being, pp. 117-118.
- ²⁰²Method in Theology, pp. xi, xii.
- ²⁰³"A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion," A Third Collection, p. 204.
- ²⁰⁴"Method: Trend and Variations," A Third Collection, p. 15.
- ²⁰⁵Ibid., p. 21.
- ²⁰⁶"Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," A Third Collection, p. 74.
- ²⁰⁷Ibid.
- ²⁰⁸Paul Avis, The Methods of Modern Theology: The Dream of Reason (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), p. 141.
- ²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 141. See also Method in Theology, pp. 4, 14.
- ²¹⁰Philosophy of God, and Theology, p. 21.
- ²¹¹Ibid.
- ²¹²Method in Theology, pp. xi, xii.

²¹³Ibid., p. xii.

²¹⁴Ibid., p. xi.

²¹⁵Avis, p. 144. See "The Origins of Christian Realism," A Second Collection, p. 260. Note especially Method in Theology, p. 267: ". . . theology [is] conceived as reflection on religion and it [goes] forward in two phases. In a first, mediating phase, theological reflection ascertained what had been the ideals, the beliefs, the performance of the representatives of the religion under investigation. But in a second, mediated phase, theological reflection [takes] a much more personal stance. It [is] no longer to be content to narrate what others [have] proposed, believed, [have done]. It has to pronounce which doctrines [are] true, how they [can] be reconciled with one another and with the conclusions of science, philosophy, history, and how they [can] be communicated appropriately to the members of each class of every culture." See also Meynell, The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, p. 14.

²¹⁶Method in Theology, pp. xi, 127. These eight tasks are not enumerated as such in Lonergan's Gregorian material, and for this reason (among others) he asked that his method be assessed on the basis of the volume bearing that title. He did not identify eight tasks until 1965. This is not to say that overt concern for method is absent in the earlier works. His views on positive, dogmatic, and systematic theology and their interrelationship are certainly present in these volumes. The most useful of the Gregorian materials are a short chapter, "De Intelligentia Theologia," in De Constitutione Christi: Ontologica et Psychologica (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1956), pp. 42-56; and Chapter 1, "De Fine, Ordine, Modo Dicendi," of De Deo Trino II: Pars systematica (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964), pp. 8-64). Conn O'Donovan gives a useful overview of Lonergan's development in these matters in his translator's introduction to a portion of De Deo Trino. See Bernard Lonergan, The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976).

Again, functional specialties are not to be confused with field specialties, such as Old Testament, patristics, and so forth. See Meynell, The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 15-16.

²¹⁷Avis, p. 144. See also the brief survey in J. J. Mueller, S.J., What Are They Saying About Theological Method? (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984), pp. 14-18.

²¹⁸Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas, ed. David B. Burrell, C.S.C. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame

Press, 1967), pp. 215-220. See also Understanding and Being, p. 227; and Avis, p. 134.

²¹⁹Mueller, p. 16.

²²⁰Described in almost glossary fashion in Method in Theology, p. 355, and in Philosophy of God, and Theology, pp. 22-23. See also Michael C. O'Callaghan, Unity in Theology: Lonergan's Framework for Theology in Its New Context (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1980), pp. 335-423; and Meynell, The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, p. 15.

²²¹Method in Theology, p. 127.

²²²Ibid., p. 155.

²²³Ibid., pp. 127, 355.

²²⁴Ibid., p. 127.

²²⁵Philosophy of God, and Theology, pp. 22-23; Method in Theology, p. 348.

²²⁶Method in Theology, p. 198.

²²⁷Ibid., p. 195.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 355.

²²⁹Philosophy of God, and Theology, pp. 22-23; Method in Theology, p. 355. For a comprehensive treatment of this theme, and in a manner that goes beyond its use as a functional specialty, see Ronald H. McKinney, "The Role of Dialectic in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1980), 8-59, 217-230.

²³⁰Philosophy of God, and Theology, pp. 22-23. Meynell notes that for Lonergan the capacity to ask questions about a set of data, and to frame hypotheses and formulate judgments accordingly, is essential if one is to understand "objectivity." To be "objective" is to give full rein to one's "subjective" capacity to attend to evidence, and to continue asking questions until it is fully explained. See The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, p. 32.

²³¹"A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion," A Third Collection, p. 196.

²³²Method in Theology, p. 131.

²³³Mueller, p. 16.

²³⁴Method in Theology, p. 224. See also Charles E. Curran, "Christian Conversion in the Writings of Bernard Lonergan," in Foundations of Theology: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress 1970, ed. Philip McShane (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), pp. 41-59.

²³⁵"Theology in Its New Context," A Second Collection, p. 65.

²³⁶Ibid.

²³⁷Method in Theology, p. 130. Tracy defines conversion for Lonergan as follows: "[Conversion is] an entire shift of orientation, direction, or concern; a radical transformation of myself, my operations and worlds of meaning." See The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 11-12.

²³⁸Ibid., p. 241.

²³⁹Ibid., p. 238.

²⁴⁰Ibid.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 243.

²⁴²Ibid., pp. 267-268.

²⁴³"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 247.

²⁴⁴Method in Theology, p. 238.

²⁴⁵"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, pp. 247-248.

²⁴⁶Method in Theology, p. 238.

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 241.

²⁴⁸"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 248.

²⁴⁹Method in Theology, p. 240.

²⁵⁰Method in Theology, pp. 240-241, 242.

²⁵¹Ibid., p. 242.

²⁵²Ibid., p. 240.

²⁵³Ibid., p. 241.

²⁵⁴"Theology in Its New Context," A Second Collection, p. 67.

²⁵⁵Method in Theology, p. 130.

²⁵⁶Ibid., p. 136.

²⁵⁷Ibid., p. 243.

²⁵⁸Ibid., p. 268.

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 357.

²⁶⁰Ibid., p. 238.

²⁶¹"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 248.

²⁶²Method in Theology, p. 237.

²⁶³Ibid., p. 271.

²⁶⁴Bernard Lonergan, "Religion, Myth, Symbol," in Myth, Symbol and Reality, ed. Alan M. Olson (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), pp. 31-37, especially p. 36.

²⁶⁵"Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," A Third Collection, p. 248.

²⁶⁶"Theology in Its New Context," A Second Collection, p. 67.

²⁶⁷Method in Theology, p. 130. Early in The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, David Tracy provides the following useful synthesis: "As an operative definition of this central category, one may say that conversion is the actual transformation of the subject, his orientation and operations and therefore his world(s). While it is normally a prolonged process, it is often remembered as concentrated in a few key judgments and decisions. When Lonergan refers, moreover, to the four basic or transcendental conversions, he is referring to the horizon-factors that must be operative in any theologian: intellectual (or philosophic) conversion--i.e. (for Lonergan), the experience, understanding, affirmation, and thematization of intellect in its invariant self-structuring process and normative procedures: in short, the 'self-appropriation of one's rational self-consciousness' of Insight; moral conversion--i.e. the transformation, for Lonergan, involved in moving from the level of

judgment to that of decision: in short, the question of value, of ethics, of self-constitution; religious conversion--i.e. the transformation of the subject when he is aware of himself as possessing an openness not merely as fact and achievement (self-appropriation) but as gift: it is the level of Existenz, of the self as gift of the self by God to the self; Christian conversion--i.e. that transformation-in-faith of the subject into the life of the Spirit, into the death-resurrection of Christ Jesus: a transformation, moreover, made in the face at once of one's highest possibilities and of one's own recognized inability either to sustain indefinitely one's development or to avoid the reality of the surd, the irrational, the genuinely evil factor in one's own life and that of one's society and culture, one's own or other epochs" (p. 20). As indicated above, Lonergan talks repeatedly of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion; he rarely mentions affective and distinctively Christian conversion, nor are they systematically integrated with the other three.

²⁶⁸Ibid., p. 355.

²⁶⁹Ibid., p. 270. A compact, accessible discussion of the role of conversion in Lonergan's thought is offered in Doctrinal Pluralism, The 1971 Pere Marquette Lecture (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1971), pp. 33-39.

²⁷⁰Avis, p. 145.

²⁷¹Philosophy of God, and Theology, pp. 22-23; Method in Theology, p. 355.

²⁷²Method in Theology, p. 253.

²⁷³Ibid., p. 111.

²⁷⁴Ibid., p. 299.

²⁷⁵Avis, p. 145.

²⁷⁶Method in Theology, p. 355; Philosophy of God, and Theology, p. 23.

²⁷⁷Method in Theology, p. 349.

²⁷⁸Ibid., p. 336.

²⁷⁹Ibid., p. 349.

²⁸⁰Ibid., p. 355.

²⁸¹Method in Theology, p. 328; Philosophy of God, and Theology, p. 23.

²⁸²Method in Theology, p. 140.

²⁸³Ibid., p. 141.

²⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 136-137.

²⁸⁵Ibid., 137.

²⁸⁶"Philosophy and Theology," A Second Collection, p. 201.

²⁸⁷Method in Theology, p. 125.

²⁸⁸Method in Theology, p. 141; "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.," A Second Collection, p. 211.

²⁸⁹"An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.," A Second Collection, p. 211.

²⁹⁰Mueller, p. 17.

²⁹¹Method in Theology, p. 135.

²⁹²Mueller, p. 18; Method in Theology, p. 144.

²⁹³The diagram is taken from David Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, p. 293.

²⁹⁴Method in Theology, p. 260.

²⁹⁵Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, "Formal and Fundamental Theology," Dictionary of Theology, 2d rev. ed. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), p. 184. See also Gerald O'Collins, S.J., Fundamental Theology (Malwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981); Joseph Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology, trans. Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. (San Francisco: St. Ignatius Press, 1987). From a different perspective, see Francis Schussler Fiorenza, Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985), especially the conclusion, pp. 322-323.

Also very useful is the collection of essays in Part I of Problems and Perspectives of Fundamental Theology, ed. Rene Latourelle and Gerald O'Collins, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist Press, 1982). In this volume, see especially the essay by David Tracy, "The Necessity and Insufficiency of Fundamental Theology," p. 26: "Fundamental theologies will ordinarily be principally concerned to show the adequacy (or inadequacy) of the truth-claims, usually

the cognitive claims, of a particular religious tradition to some articulated paradigm of what constitutes 'objective argumentation' in some acknowledged discipline in the wider academic community. Usually that other discipline will be philosophy or the philosophical dimension of one of the social sciences; hence the frequent use of the phrase 'philosophical theology' to describe the same kind of task here labeled 'fundamental theology.'" An abbreviated discussion of the same appears in Tracy's "The Context: The Public Character of Theological Language," in David Tracy and John B. Cobb, Jr., Talking About God: Doing Theology in the Context of Modern Pluralism (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), pp. 11-16. Note the summary on p. 8: "[The] defining characteristic [of fundamental theology] is a reasoned insistence on employing the approach and methods of some established academic discipline to explicate and adjudicate the truth-claims of the interpreted religious tradition and the contemporary situation."

²⁹⁶Philosophy of God, and Theology, p. 19.

²⁹⁷Ibid.

²⁹⁸Insight, pp. 739-740.

²⁹⁹The Way to Nicea, p. x. Here the translator quotes Lonergan's introduction to De Deo Trino I: Pars dogmatica, p. 10.

³⁰⁰Ibid.

³⁰¹Insight, pp. 739-740.

³⁰²See the small book of this title issued in 1980 by Cowley Publications. It represents the St. Michael's Lectures at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington, in 1973.

³⁰³Method in Theology, p. 144.

³⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 123, 332-333, 366.

³⁰⁵See the discussion by Bernard Tyrrell, "The New Context of the Philosophy of God in Lonergan and Rahner," in Language Truth and Meaning, pp. 284-305. In addition, note the similar criticism by E. L. Mascall in Nature and Supernature, St. Michael's Lectures, 1973; Gonzaga University, Spokane (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976), especially pp. 24-30. This and other related objections are assessed by Hugo Meynell in The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 29-46, especially pp. 37-38.

³⁰⁶"Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," A Third Collection, p. 83.

³⁰⁷"Dialectic of Authority," A Third Collection, p. 10.

³⁰⁸Ibid.

³⁰⁹"Mission and the Spirit," A Third Collection, p. 30.

³¹⁰"Theology and Praxis," A Third Collection, p. 195.

³¹¹Ibid.

³¹²See "Mission and the Spirit," A Third Collection, pp. 23-34.

³¹³"The Dehellenization of Dogma," A Second Collection, pp. 11-32.

³¹⁴"Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," A Third Collection, p. 88.

³¹⁵Ibid.

³¹⁶Ibid., p. 95.

³¹⁷"Theology and Praxis," A Third Collection, p. 198.

³¹⁸See Method in Theology, p. 318, for a brief discussion of Rudolf Bultmann. In Doctrinal Pluralism (pp. 69-71), Lonergan distinguishes between demythologization (the ongoing growth and advance of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom necessary to eliminate misconceptions of what God in fact did reveal) and Bultmann's Entmythologisierung. The latter was a manifestation of "a positivist empiricism that ruled out other presuppositions and postulated that human history [was] a closed field of causally interconnected events." His indictment of Bultmann and Karl Barth is identical: "[Both] were incapable of effecting any serious criticism of the philosophic presuppositions of the historicism in vogue at the beginning of this century."

³¹⁹Leslie Dewart, The Future of Belief: Theism in a World Come of Age (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), especially pp. 173-175, 180, 185-190.

³²⁰"Philosophy and Theology," A Second Collection, p. 198.

³²¹"Theology in Its New Context," A Second Collection, p. 63.

³²²"Philosophy and Theology," A Second Collection, p. 198.

³²³"The Dehellenization of Dogma," A Second Collection, p. 16.

³²⁴Ibid.

³²⁵Taken from the conclusion of an interview with Lonergan appearing in Roy Abraham Varghese, ed., The Intellectuals Speak Out About God: A Handbook for the Student in a Secular Society (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1984), p. 183.

³²⁶Method in Theology, p. 221.

³²⁷Ibid., p. 222.

³²⁸Ibid.

³²⁹"The Assumption and Theology," Collection, p. 76.

³³⁰Method in Theology, p. 325.

³³¹"The Assumption and Theology," Collection, p. 76.

³³²Method in Theology, p. 321.

³³³Ibid.

³³⁴Ibid., p. 322; see also pp. 323-324.

³³⁵Ibid., p. 331.

³³⁶"The Assumption and Theology," Collection, p. 77. This comports well with Lonergan's non-technical definition of theology related by David Tracy in The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan: "Theology, for Lonergan, has always been thematized knowledge of God mediated by the Body of Christ" (p. 194).

³³⁷"The Origins of Christian Realism," A Second Collection, p. 259.

³³⁸Doctrinal Pluralism, p. 45. Elsewhere in the same lecture (p. 28), Lonergan observes that the function of doctrine is to explain and defend the authenticity of the church's witness to God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

³³⁹Ibid.

³⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 45-46.

³⁴¹"Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," A Third Collection, p. 96.

³⁴²Ibid.

³⁴³"A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion," A Third Collection, p. 217; Method in Theology, p. 109.

³⁴⁴"The Future of Christianity," A Second Collection, p. 151.

³⁴⁵"Theology and Man's Future," A Second Collection, p. 146.

³⁴⁶"The Future of Christianity," A Second Collection, p. 156.

³⁴⁷"Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," A Third Collection, p. 71.

³⁴⁸"Theology and Man's Future," A Second Collection, p. 146.

³⁴⁹Method in Theology, p. 278. See also Doctrinal Pluralism, p. 27.

³⁵⁰Philosophy of God, and Theology, p. 36. Ironically, Karl Rahner himself proposes his "anonymous Christianity" not with the intent of circumventing Christ, but precisely in order to retain Him. He states the matter simply in a 1979 interview: "'Anonymous Christianity' means that a person lives in the grace of God and attains salvation outside explicitly constituted Christianity. A Protestant Christian is, of course, no 'anonymous Christian'; that is perfectly clear. But, let us say, a Buddhist monk (or anyone else I might suppose) who, because he follows his conscience, attains salvation and lives in the grace of God; of him I must say that he is an anonymous Christian; if not, I would have to presuppose that there is a genuine path to salvation that really attains that goal, but that simply has nothing to do with Jesus Christ. But I cannot do that. And so if I hold that everyone depends on Jesus Christ for salvation, and if at the same time I hold that many live in the world who have not expressly recognized Jesus Christ, then there remains in my opinion nothing else but to take up this postulate of an anonymous Christianity." From Karl Rahner in Dialogue, p. 207.

³⁵¹Ibid., p. 20.

³⁵²The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (promulgated December 7, 1965) and the Declaration on the

Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (promulgated October 28, 1965) are two of the products of Vatican II that would require exegesis in this regard. See also the similar comments of the American Jesuit Avery Dulles, The Survival of Dogma: Faith, Authority, and Dogma in a Changing World (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), p. 56. From a slightly different perspective, see David Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1987), pp. 84-93.

³⁵³Insight, p. 732.

³⁵⁴Understanding and Being, pp. 329-330.

CHAPTER TWO
CHRIST-WORD-SPIRIT: THE EXTRA ME OF
HELMUT THIELICKE'S PROLEGOMENA

Helmut Thielicke appropriately gained his first recognition from an Anglo-American audience as a preacher and only subsequently as a preeminent ethicist and dogmatician. We shall explore their relationship further in due course, but for the moment we note only Thielicke's perpetual insistence that theology grows out of proclamation and arises as one's sanctified response to it.¹ His penetrating sermons came to public attention in North America first; then, in the 1960s, students were treated to his three-volume Theological Ethics. Finally, in the mid and late 1970s, the English edition of The Evangelical Faith was translated and published (also in three volumes). Thielicke's anthropology, his last major theological work, was published in the United States in 1984, the year of his death.

The outset of Thielicke's career as churchman and theologian came as the Third Reich was extending its pernicious tentacles into every sphere of German life, including the intellectual and ecclesiastical. Having earned doctorates in both philosophy and theology by the tender age of

twenty-six, the Wurttemberg pastor and theologian grieved the National Socialist authorities with his History and Existence. Among other things, Thieliicke suggested that the Nazi regime represented, in the words of Geoffrey Bromiley (who, along with John Dobberstein, is his semi-official translator), "a titanic self-projection of Promethean humanity."²

Not surprisingly, Thieliicke lost his teaching post at Heidelberg, and during the war he was forbidden to write, speak, or travel. When the ban was relaxed, Thieliicke was allowed to preach within the immediate vicinity of his home. The felicitous by-products of this period were his inspiring sermons from the later days of the war and the clandestine publication of Death. The latter, smuggled to and eventually published in Switzerland, was soon used by German prisoners of war.

When the war concluded, Thieliicke returned to academic life, not only teaching but also serving in various administrative posts at Tübingen and then Hamburg. During these years he began to "assemble" and publish his ethics and dogmatics. All the while he availed himself of any and every opportunity to disseminate the Christian message to an audience not limited to the seminary lecture hall or university seminar. Sermons from the pulpit of St. Michael's in Hamburg, extensive lecture and preaching tours to five continents, innumerable publications, coupled with catechetical

projects that included radio and television, made Thieliicke a cosmopolitan theologian of the first order.

Thieliicke continued a rigorous program of writing and teaching despite indifferent health in his later years. His published works total more than two hundred, including Glauben und Denken in der Neuzeit (1983), which as yet is untranslated.

The Theological Enterprise: The Priority
of Proclamation and Faith

In the last volume of Thieliicke's dogmatics he identifies the "core" of his life's work as the comprehensive survey of dogmatics and ethics, along with his anthropology (Being Human . . . Becoming Human).³ Throughout these books several themes appear again and again. Of these, perhaps none is stated as often and in as many contexts as the affirmation of the necessary priority of preaching to any subsequent theological endeavor. Thieliicke defines theology as a "process of reflection" (Vorgang der Reflexion) that arises out of faith; specifically, it arises out of proclamation already heard. This means, in practice, that theology will be subordinate to proclamation and at the same time continually related to it.⁴

Preaching, Thieliicke avers, is the "most appropriate form" of Christological statement. As such, preaching heralds the forgiveness of sins, comfort, hope, and a new future.⁵ It is always an "addressed" word, an announcement

of God's condescension to the world.⁶ Proclamation asserts that God has antecedently related Himself to the world in the Christ-event, and from this Word it seeks in turn to effect a relationship of faith between the God who speaks and creatures who congenitally are turned from Him. This points up a non-negotiable sequence: Christ-event, the proclamation thereof, Spirit-engendered faith, and then (and only then) theological reflection and expression.⁷

Thielicke's dogmatic work concerns the relation between God and human beings--not a purely transcendent God regarded theistically in and for Himself.⁸ A human being "is" his relation to God: "he is the one created by him, in flight from him, visited by him and justified."⁹

. . . the God of the Bible has always met us as the Immanuel who encounters man, discloses himself to him and communicates with him. He is the God who leaves the other world and comes to this world. When we speak of him, therefore, we cannot describe him as he is ontically in himself, as the supreme being, but only as we see him in this relation of his to this world. Since he is the reality which determines our existence we can speak of him only by speaking of his word which is addressed to us and his work which is directed upon us. Christ, too, is not accessible to us as he is in himself, but only in his benefits, i.e., in his history as this is oriented to us.¹⁰

By Thielicke's own express and repeated admission, all of this is really an elaboration of Melanchthon's celebrated statement in his 1521 Loci: "To know Christ is to know his benefits."¹¹

When Thieliicke argues that theology follows the proclamation of the Word and cannot in principle precede it, this means that uniquely theological reflection on the truth presupposes a new state of existence, wherein one has via Holy Baptism been called into God's salvation history.¹² The adverb in this sentence is crucial, for the relational factor determines whether one is doing theology or metaphysics. For Helmut Thieliicke the following question, and the answer one gives to it, will say a great deal about how one envisions the task at hand:

Do all the relations between God, the world, and man derive from the fact that God wills to be relational, that he thus resolves on a history with man, that he speaks to him and has dealings with him instead of remaining the silent ground of the world? Or do they derive from the relational structure of being itself as reason thinks it can explain it in speculative apprehension?¹³

Faith originates not in theology but in proclamation. Proclamation, however, originates not in theology but--and this redundancy is deliberate--in proclamation. The "effectual" Word is spoken in proclamation, in preaching and the liturgy, and in pastoral counseling. Theology follows as a "reflective act"; it is a subsequent meditation on the faith that arises on the basis of the kerygma.¹⁴ So insistent is Thieliicke on this sequence that he can, in eschewing the notion of a "perennial theology," confine himself to speaking of a "history of theology and proclamation."¹⁵ As far as Christology is concerned, the need for faith represents

the "boundary" of theology: if the "theological supply" exceeds the demand of faith, one's theology becomes speculation.¹⁶

To put it simply, the man who is unaffected by faith in Christ will not be able to understand christological reflection. The man who lives by believing contact with Christ will recognize him even in the most paradoxical leaps of reflection, for there is entrusted to him the reality of him who escapes rational comprehension and who thus makes those leaps necessary.¹⁷

Conversely, if theology attains methodological primacy at the expense of faith, the results are not only the sort of speculation scored above, but also a sterile, arid orthodoxy characterized by the absence of commitment.¹⁸

If theology always has reference to an "addressed" word, and most emphatically discloses its present significance ("in its actuality 'for me'"),¹⁹ this does not signal any retreat from the exacting discipline of theological reflection. The sequence of proclamation-faith-theology may well be inviolate, yet equally crucial is the retention of all three of the components of the triad. Reflection per se cannot comprehend what faith apprehends. However, reflection must not be omitted, and for an interesting Christological reason. When reflection is left out of one's scheme, Christ is relegated to a position "at the gate of reason," and He is no longer Lord of every sphere of life. Certainly faith will precede theology, lest the latter fall prey to "speculative entanglement" and fail to acknowledge

its fallenness as a "broken enterprise." To the extent that theology is methodologically successful, it will incorporate the "doxology of reason" within the "doxology of faith."²⁰

The preface to Volume 3 of The Evangelical Faith, in which he acknowledges his major works in almost retrospective fashion, contains a very instructive discussion of how Thieliicke perceives the relationship of proclamation, faith, and theology; and he does so in terms of the classical formula of Augustine and Anselm. We cite it in full because it is so programmatic for Thieliicke's work in both dogmatics and ethics.

If I were to reduce to the shortest formula the sum of what has come to me by way of theological insight, I should perhaps reverse dialectically the saying that Anselm originally envisaged as the title of his Proslogion. It reads: Faith Seeking Understanding, and it might be appropriately translated in this way: Faith Demanding Insight or Theological Reflection. Without, of course, contesting this statement, I might describe the opposite movement as the goal of the theological work done with this motive, namely: Understanding Seeking Faith, or Theological Reflection Moving Back Toward the Faith from Which It Comes. This reversal may also be found in Anselm and is not, then, directed against him.

The reason why there is this movement back to faith is to be found in the nexus of Christian truth. This is proclaimed truth and as such it triggers unending reflection, not vice versa. It precedes our thoughts about it. We can only think and "limp" after it. But we already are in this truth as we hear and accept it. The Spirit of God has already planted us in Christ before we examine the ground in which we are sown and study the botany that goes with the laws of our planting. Theology investigates the basis of this proclamation when it has already been heard. Thus the message always precedes theology as a text precedes its interpretation. For the same reason theology will never be healthy except when it goes back to its origin and

finds its norm in it. It draws a map which must be constantly checked by the actual terrain.²¹

Geoffrey Bromiley, the translator of The Evangelical Faith, observes that Thieliicke's dogmatics is "distinctively Lutheran" in terms of its orientation, even though it is not a Lutheran dogmatics in the strict, parochial sense of the term.²² It follows predictably that Thieliicke adopts as his standpoint the "theological center" of the Christian faith, namely, the doctrine of justification.²³ Theological questions (and questions of theological ethics as well) can and must be oriented to this doctrine: "[Theological and ethical] questions all reduce themselves to the one task of declining the doctrine of justification through all the case forms in which it appears within the grammar of our existence."²⁴ Turning from the metaphor of language to one from human anatomy, Thieliicke cites the near cliché that justification is the heart of theology, but he adds that whereas the heart pumps blood into all the regions of the body, the task and theme of theology necessarily involve the entire "bloodstream" and are not reducible to "cardiology."²⁵

Several of the citations in the above paragraphs are taken from Thieliicke's Theological Ethics and not from his dogmatics. This should occasion no surprise, since he argues that dogmatics proper and ethics say the same thing about the very same theme: they both have their common root in the doctrine of justification.²⁶ Thieliicke regards his

Ethics (especially Volume 1), published before The Evangelical Faith, as being in large measure a dogmatics and one that expresses already its author's "normative intentions."²⁷ In simple terms, the ethical and dogmatic works are a single corpus whose individual components supplement one another.²⁸

This complementarity not only pronounces a benediction on our practice of reciprocal citation; it also enables us to see and appreciate the interrelationship between faith (wrought in response to proclamation), dogmatics, and ethics. Faith is the "content" of dogmatics inasmuch as dogmatics is "faith reflecting on its object" and treating this object with "methodical rigor."²⁹ But Thielicke continues this same theme, for ethics is faith "inquiring as to the conduct" it posits for the individual toward himself, toward his neighbor, and toward the world and its orders.³⁰

Correspondingly, Thielicke defines the "sovereign claim" of dogmatics in comprehensive terms: it is to be a message concerning all of reality articulated in the name of Him to whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth.³¹ Thielicke the preacher cites favorably Werner Elert's definition of dogma as the expression of what the kerygma should be³²--a definition obviously compatible with the former's constant stress on proclamation as the first presupposition of any theological endeavor.

With communicability the watchword, Thieliicke evinces an overriding concern for relating the Gospel to the contemporary intellectual milieu. He notes near the beginning of the dogmatics that at least the prolegomena was drafted at the height of the demythologization and "death of God" struggles.³³

This admission does not limit Thieliicke's efforts to a fleeting moment in the mid-1960s, when what amounted to a stillborn positivism enjoyed momentary ascendancy. Nor does it restrict his work to that of a hermeneutical response to Rudolf Bultmann--though the concerns motivating Bultmann's program are never far from view. What it does mean is that every theologian thinks and lives in the correlation of both challenge and response.³⁴ Only as one explores how theology so thinks and lives does he "actualize" Christian truth: he thus "set[s] it forth in its actuality and . . . understand[s] it afresh thereby."³⁵

Theology is historical, but this dare not be confused with timelessness.³⁶ Authentic theological history emerges as the old truth is rearticulated in each new present.

It is because the old truth must be set in each new present that we have theological history and not timeless, once-for-all, perennial theology. As the saving facts to which faith relates are history, so too is self-renewing faith itself, and also the resultant reflection which explains the correspondence between what is believed and the self-understanding of every age. The fact that there is a history of theology, dogma, and the confessions points to the dialectic in theology itself between the old and the new, between fixity and progress, between continuity and variability in theological truth.³⁷

This dialectic invites and engenders a series of methodological questions. For instance, to which challenges has the current theology responded? Which have been overlooked or neglected? Has it been controlled by these challenges to the point of accommodation?³⁸

Actualization, or real fidelity to the kerygma, is achieved when the "beam" of the old, classical truth is focused on the contemporary situation. Such a theology will be stated in terms taken from one's own Sitz im Leben.³⁹ In Thieliicke's words, this is a call for "transposition."⁴⁰ Attempts at "restoration" are doomed because they should never have been undertaken in the first place.⁴¹ "A past which is conserved traditionalistically is an alteration rather than a preservation of the past. The fidelity of unchanged repetition is a sham fidelity."⁴²

The task, then, is to relate the New Testament Gospel to the world without collapsing it into the world. To be sure, the church's message is secular in the radical, etymological sense of the term.

The message of redemption is secular or it is nothing. It presents God in the world or it is sound and smoke. But to present God in the world does not mean equating him with the world. For . . . only that which transcends the world can make us worldly. Or, even more directly, only he who did not think it robbery to be equal with God (Philippians 2:6) and who left his eternity can direct us to time. And only to him who overcomes the world in his name is the world given back as an inheritance in which he is to keep the faith and to prove his freedom.⁴³

Secularization, or secularism, however, is another issue. Secularism regards the world as a "self-enclosed system of forces," which precludes divine intervention and which pursues its own course autonomously while still allowing a circumscribed area for human freedom.⁴⁴ The secular attitude stops short of denying God, yet it refuses to acknowledge Him as "magnitude" with a place in the world or in life. God is, quite simply, irrelevant;⁴⁵ and the appropriate posture toward such a "being" (for lack of any other, much less better, noun) is not devotion but benign neglect. Obviously, if theology is even attempted with these ground rules, it will never be able to offer the church the spiritual or intellectual apparatus whereby it can proclaim God's lordship over the entire cosmos and all the attendant spheres of life.⁴⁶ Thieliicke expresses this contemporary problem in poignant fashion:

The time when prayer meant knocking on a door that would then open (Matthew 7:8; Luke 11:10) has gone. The hour has come when God is a door that is permanently closed, when transcendence is silent, when the empirical consciousness posits its own frequencies as absolute. All that is left is the God of Spinoza with whom there can be no personal relationship. If to the angry irony of the prophets the mark of the idol seemed to be that it was dumb, that it could neither hear nor answer, and if this is what made it inferior to the living God, the dumbness of the gods seems to have come again. But it now seems to include the dumbness of God. Plainly the death of God is already imminent.⁴⁷

At the most fundamental level, secularization means that an "emancipated" world neither understands nor heeds

the Christian message.⁴⁸ Thieliicke's dogmatics and ethics both aspire to engage this false emancipation. Specifically, the aim is to free the Christian consciousness from the ill-fated cleavage between private piety and the exigencies of "secular" life and to establish their unity. Thieliicke uses Bonhoeffer's slogan of a "worldly Christianity" in the service of his own particular agenda: "I would seek to . . . rescue Christian dogmas from the sphere of the other-worldly, and bring the church out of the ghetto and back to earth, to the place where man actually lives in his sociality and where he 'may' live with his faith."⁴⁹

Thus Thieliicke ventures, in the form of proclamation, an interpretation of human reality from the vantage point of eternity, or in light of the Word of God. This does not amount to a theological or Christian Procrustean bed, "a closed and eternally valid and hence irreformable interpretation of all the phenomena of nature and history." This would result in a "closed nexus of life and meaning" and would quickly assume the character of an intellectual theocracy. Instead of liberating reason, this would cast it firmly in "ideological cement."⁵⁰

For Thieliicke, Christianity differs from sundry ideologies precisely because it does not entail a world-view that subsumes all phenomena under Christian rubrics and similarly assigns a fixed place to all historical and natural processes. God cannot be understood in Aristotelian fashion as a

first principle (as cause or substance) from which one can deduce all phenomena as either effect or accident. Thieliicke readily and in the very same context affirms that God is the basis, goal, and meaning of all being and occurrence. But one must not regard or formulate this meaning as a "principle." It is, he insists, a believed meaning; therefore, we can neither see it nor pursue it in its manifestations. The "execution" of this meaning is absconditus, concealed under the veil of the cross. In other words, to echo the language of Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, God appears to us in the form of His opposite.⁵¹

Professor Thieliicke preached and taught during an era when "hermeneutics" was emerging as a discipline in its own right. No longer definable as the principles of Biblical interpretation, it came to involve the science of the structure and processes of understanding.⁵² Set in methodological context, Thieliicke observed that theology asks its questions on the basis of an encounter with the proclaimed Word. Theological hermeneutics then explores the questions, their modalities, and their conditions. As such, it is the "epilogue" in a process initiated by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the creative Word.⁵³

This sequence (here proclamation-theology-hermeneutics)--hermeneutics as epilogue and never prologue--is cut from the same cloth as the earlier ones cited, and like these, it forbids any application of a commutative proper-

ty.⁵⁴ To reverse the process and start with hermeneutics would spell a reversion to Cartesianism, which is the bane of modern theological existence. In passing, Thieliicke's concerns here are reflected in the contemporary inclination to define theology as a "second-order" discipline.

These observations signal the orientation of Thieliicke's prolegomena. Prolegomena to systematic theology will attempt "clearance work" in what Thieliicke opines is a very "cluttered" situation. While the conventional questions of prolegomena are addressed, they arise within a framework of theological analysis: how is theology to be pursued given the situation posed by modern thought? This question, not particularly striking at the outset, assumes its programmatic and innovative character from Thieliicke's bifurcated assessment of modern theology.⁵⁵ When the dualism is exposed and Thieliicke's own predilection is identified, then prolegomena has accomplished its purpose:

". . . the building is always present in the prolegomena, and the instructed readers can at least get a hint of its outline from the preparatory activities."⁵⁶

Though the placing of theological loci is usually a matter of individual discretion,⁵⁷ Thieliicke's own order is nothing if not deliberate. Certainly the theological organism as such is indivisible, and it is viewed in its various components only because of the "discursiveness" of human thought.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the topics emerge as truly theo-

logical precisely as they are unfolded out of one's relation to God in Christ.⁵⁹ Soteriology is primary both to human existence and to our theological reflection.

. . . it is clear that what we say about God's being in himself is not in any sense pretheological, metaphysical theory. Ontically this dimension in God does precede his resolving upon the Word and his self-determination as my God. Noetically, however, this position is the final stage in reflection which begins with the actual encounter with God. It is thus a conclusion, not a preamble. It is the epilogue, not the prolegomena, to theology.

This is decisive. All theological statements are determined essentially by their place and rank in the whole system. Some are in the foreground, some in the background. Some belong to the prologue, some to the epilogue. To overlook this distinction is to level them all down and to give them the same emphasis, whether they are soteriological or cosmological.⁶⁰

When the relational, soteriological component is acknowledged and its position in the theological cornerstone is secure, then the complementarity and coherence of all the theological "particles" is evident. Furthermore, the indissolubility of the whole can come to expression--as it must--in a systematic survey.⁶¹ If the different aspects of the whole have to be considered separately, this does not mean that the whole is developed in terms of these parts. Instead, in everything that is said about the parts we are already confronted with the whole.⁶²

In practice, Thieliicke opts for a Trinitarian structure, and he organizes the material around the Apostles' Creed.⁶³ But the church's traditional baptismal symbol does not serve as a tight theological grid. The excurses and

frequent discussions of modern theology along several thematic lines mean that this outline is analogous to an artist's sketch rather than to an architect's prescriptive blueprint.

A key to Thielicke's thought, then, is his overriding emphasis on the primacy of proclamation and faith to theological reflection. A second and related key to Thielicke's dogmatics, at least in its main contours, rests in his characterization of modern theology as a struggle between "Cartesian" and "non-Cartesian" systems of thought. This conflict is basic to his prolegomena. This antinomy and its central function in Thielicke's theology is the focus of the next section.

"Cartesian" and "Non-Cartesian" Theology

Thielicke is convinced that the current intellectual and spiritual climate is marked by a "distinctive dualism."⁶⁴ This dualism takes its terminological cue, appropriately enough, from Rene Descartes. However, the dualism is not between "mind" and "body" as it is for the rationalist Descartes. Nor does a preference for a "non-Cartesian" approach amount to a polemic against Descartes himself. Descartes is not even Thielicke's principal foil--quantitatively, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing enjoys that distinction.

"Cartesianism" serves as a convenient cipher for a way of doing theology that begins with and from the human ego

(cogito, ergo sum) as the subject of experience and understanding.⁶⁵ Cartesianism characterizes modern theology, and Thieliicke calls this approach "Theology A." Herein the self-understanding achieves thematic rank⁶⁶ and soon reaches normative status.⁶⁷ It does so surreptitiously, for its professed apologetic concern ("initial impulse")⁶⁸ is for the addressee who is summoned to appropriate the Christian message.⁶⁹ Before long, this concern subtly but ineluctably inverts the subject matter of theology,⁷⁰ as "I" becomes the subject instead of God.⁷¹

This is not merely a shift of emphasis or an inadvertent lapse that a careful thinker could avoid by paying closer attention to what he is doing. Clearly, at one level it is a shift of emphasis, but Thieliicke's much more radical point is that we are talking not just about the process of appropriation but about the very possibility of this process.⁷²

The consequences are no less dire. Whatever its manifestation, the Cartesian approach in the final tally puts the kerygma under human control.⁷³ The "I" becomes an autonomous theme, and hermeneutics as a chapter within a larger anthropological analysis of existence becomes the determinative theological preoccupation.⁷⁴ Moreover, when existential analysis is primary, one is no longer talking about just the appropriation of theology's content. Thieliicke insists that we have also prejudged the content itself:⁷⁵

"What matters is what is significant for me. Expectation of what is significant for me is determined by a pre-understanding which forms a constant framework into which the contents of the kerygma must be fitted. This framework itself cannot be revised."⁷⁶

All theologians of Cartesian lineage are determined by their investigation of the human subject and his presuppositions of understanding.⁷⁷ Frequently, this "modern" orientation has surfaced in discussions of a "point of contact" (Anknüpfungspunkt) between God and the human being, which functionally enables the appropriation of the Gospel. Thieliicke has very little patience for "point of contact" language. Obviously, when the New Testament message is presented the person addressed has to be taken into account.⁷⁸ But what is categorically excluded, and with some repetition, is any postulate of a residual locus of affinity for the Word of God, whether this locus is defined in terms of conscience or something else.⁷⁹

Such debates hearken back to past battles over nature and grace and the propriety of natural theology.⁸⁰ Thieliicke's favorite way of making his point is to cite the Thomistic analogia entis and reject it (at least in any soteriological sense) in favor of an analogia fidei.⁸¹ Contrary to Kantian moral philosophy, there is no correspondence between "ought" and "can,"⁸² for such correspondence arises only from a relationship or continuity between Cre-

ator and fallen creature that does not and indeed cannot exist.⁸³ Thieliicke explores this issue within the matrix of the classical Lutheran Law/Gospel polarity:

To begin with, the conscience of the natural man cannot be a "point of contact" for the Law and the Gospel because, to be so, it would have to be able to see of itself that man is lost and in need of forgiveness. But this it cannot do, if in virtue of man's "light of nature" [lumen naturale] it understands God as judge. For the criteria of this judging are laid down by conscience itself, and these criteria are determined by the relation between imperative and ability [Sollen und Können].

Having a false conception of God, the natural conscience has also a false conception of sin and guilt. For these are matters which can be understood only in terms of our attitude to God. This is why Luther went beyond merely maintaining that conscience has no insight into the depth of man's plight. He actually gave dialectical precision to this thesis, arguing that man's real plight is that man is in no position whatever even to recognize his plight by the power of his lumen naturale alone.⁸⁴

Thieliicke's handling of this issue says much about his theological orientation as well as his anthropology. In terms of the latter, Thieliicke asserts that man cannot understand himself as long as he does not know God and understand himself in relationship to Him.⁸⁵ As to the former, Thieliicke concedes that by virtue of His self-disclosure God must be discussed with reference to the human consciousness, but this does not amount to His "enclosure" within it.⁸⁶

The foregoing signals a first transition from Cartesian to non-Cartesian theology. Professor Thieliicke grants that faith is a form of appropriating what is believed, and that this is impossible without understanding.

However, this very understanding emerges only within an analogy between the person who understands and that which is to be understood. Put in straightforward theological language, this means that some relation has to be demonstrated between Christ, the object of one's faith, and the individual self-consciousness.⁸⁷ The emphasis thus shifts to Thieliicke's primary interest: not the subject of faith but that in which faith believes and, note well, Him by whom the subject is changed into a "new creature."⁸⁸

When one moves from the level of abstraction to examine how Cartesian thought potentially insinuates itself as one actually does theology, we see that at its worst--when its ubiquitous question of appropriation dominates--systematic theology can be reduced to a system of coordinates to which the doctrinal content of faith must be related.⁸⁹ Thieliicke illustrates this approach with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity.

The "I am" of man is the dominant note. Theology is controlled, not by the history of God with man, his self-disclosure as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but by the history of man's relation to the idea of God, the arising, obscuring, and re-arising of this idea as these come about through the state of man's consciousness or his ethical situation.⁹⁰

If Cartesian or modern theology is preoccupied with the self-understanding and the human agency of appropriation, non-Cartesian theology reasserts the Biblical theme that God's creative Word does not accommodate itself to the existing carnal self. Rather, He "reconstructs" or "trans-

forms" the old self and thereby introduces a new identity.⁹¹ Thieliicke stresses that the Spirit's work cuts against the grain of the human proclivity to self-confirmation.⁹² Christ, he says, is never the answer to a particular question, for He does not fit conveniently into the intellectual categories of the one who frames the question. Precisely the opposite is the case. Jesus is the One who asks the questions, or, in Thieliicke's words, He calls the question itself into question: "He begins with the existing self-consciousness but does not let himself be integrated into it. He does not leave it as it is; he turns it upside down."⁹³

Just as Thieliicke opted for the label "Cartesian" in preference to "modern," so also he eschews the term "conservative." It too carries connotations he finds objectionable, among them the postulate of verbal inspiration or obscurantist rejections of historical criticism and evolutionary biology.⁹⁴ At best a slogan, "conservative" too often amounts to little more than a reactionary inculcation of one's tradition in authoritarian, immature, and mechanical ways.⁹⁵ Thieliicke prefers the more descriptive (even if more clumsy) designation "non-Cartesian," which he in turn abbreviates as "Theology B."⁹⁶

Cartesian theology and its preoccupation with the human means of appropriation finally becomes indissolubly wed to an anthropology that at least implicitly posits some con-

tinuity (beyond a "marginal," simple identity) between the old and new self.⁹⁷ Conscience, point of contact, the self-conscious and other sundry entities are given short shift in Thieliicke's interpenetrating prolegomena and soteriology.⁹⁸ Thieliicke's dogmatic and ethical work make it abundantly clear that the fall is a reality that impinges human existence in its totality. Only derivatively is it a quantitative failure to reach a norm; primarily, it is a qualitative and comprehensive revolt against God.⁹⁹

The struggle between Cartesian and non-Cartesian theology boils down to the Reformation question of synergism or monergism. Interestingly, Thieliicke's self-designated principal works do not frame the issue in precisely these terms. But the inference is unavoidable. The human being is altogether incapable of moving from the ego to Theos.

There can be no reaching him by human initiative, whether it be intellectual apprehension, religious receptivity or affinity, or the activism of imitation of Christ. Even though Jesus dispels the thin air of abstraction by the vivid imagery of the parables and moves deeply into the sphere of worldly wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:18), where he touches the most elementary strata, there is still no natural bridging of the gulf which separates man from the mystery of God. Human eyes do not see here nor human ears hear, even when eternal truth is put in teaching form and given didactically (Matthew 13:13). On the contrary, in this extreme proximity the shock of something alien is felt and eternal truth is not recognized in the lofty steepness of its totaliter-aliter. When the parables are unveiled, it is to those to whom it is given by him who speaks them (Matthew 13:11).¹⁰⁰

For Thieliicke it is self-evident that one can know God only as He discloses Himself and wills to be present.¹⁰¹

Applied to the present discussion, this means that the creative Word of God is the origin of being itself. Hence, one cannot integrate this Word into the "continuity of being" or even view it as an "interpretative event." Thieliicke asks rhetorically how something can be put into a system when it is the basis of the system to begin with.¹⁰²

One might put [the hermeneutical problem] as follows: Do I draw the creative Word into my self-consciousness so that it is integrated into this and can no longer be regarded as a creative Word but only as one that modifies this self-consciousness? Or does the creative Word draw me into its sphere of influence, so that I am integrated into the salvation event which works on me, and to that extent am referred to something outside myself?¹⁰³

A non-Cartesian theology acknowledges that He who is the Truth cannot be understood by those who themselves are not in the truth. Whether the human subject can understand Him hinges on whether He first brings this subject to the truth. Thieliicke states this in epistemological language when he asserts that everything depends on whether Christ establishes an analogy with Himself, wherein one is brought into the truth (in other words, hears His voice) as the object of a prior calling.¹⁰⁴

One of several New Testament texts cited most frequently by Thieliicke is 2 Corinthians 5:17--"Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." This Pauline selec-

tion neatly encapsulates Thieliicke's theological program and is as pivotal to prolegomena as it is to soteriology and ethics. In addition, it is as important for what it implicitly excludes as for what it affirms. It forbids the postulation of any analogy between the works and Word of God, on the one hand, and the inherent spiritual and/or cognitive powers of the natural man, on the other. At issue is not just conversion. More important is Thieliicke's insistence that the starting point of all theological thinking must be extra nos; that is, God's pneumatic self-disclosure invades the cul-de-sac of human contemplation and effects the indispensable breakthrough that makes theology possible.

This contrast between Cartesianism and non-Cartesianism has obvious programmatic significance and asserts itself repeatedly in all spheres of Thieliicke's work. As viewed by Thieliicke, the problems inherent in a Cartesian approach--whatever and whomever its embodiment--are legion.¹⁰⁵ In fact, a straight reading of his three-volume dogmatics discloses this very antithesis as the single overriding theme.

In summary, the crucial question is whether and to what extent man's self-understanding is prepared to allow itself to be "revalued" or "revitalized" when it is brought to the kerygma (Theology B or non-Cartesian theology); or whether and how far the self-understanding itself assumes the status of the normative (and manipulating?)¹⁰⁶ criterion of the truth addressed to it (Theology A or Cartesian theol-

ogy).¹⁰⁷ The differences can be sought materially and methodologically. The former distinction entails an altered definition of the relation between proclamation and theology, while the latter pertains to a divergent understanding of the appropriation of the kerygma. Furthermore, the sharp contrast can be spotted repeatedly in the different relation to what is "new" that stems from these material and methodological antinomies.¹⁰⁸

A Theology of the Holy Spirit Unfolded

The above title is chosen over the mild protests of Thieliicke himself. In the preface to the second volume of his dogmatics, while commenting on the reception given to the first volume, he concedes that it is his intention to pursue every theological matter "sub specie" of the third article. His reticence pertains to the connection of the nominative "theology" with any genitive, a "theology of the Holy Spirit" being no exception.¹⁰⁹

Bearing this proviso in mind, one can state Thieliicke's basic thesis as follows: the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a protest against Cartesian theology, against beginning with preliminary hermeneutical questions or existential analysis. Its point is to direct attention away from the self, away from any introspection or self-contemplation.¹¹⁰ Positively, it directs attention to the self-evidence of the Word of God and thereby to Him to whom this

Word bears witness. The Holy Spirit orients one to Jesus Christ: ". . . the Spirit points us away from ourselves to the past and the coming event of which Christ is initiator, content, and finisher."¹¹¹

Postponing for the moment Thieliicke's understanding of the image of God, we can note that he underscores the uniqueness of humanity vis-à-vis the rest of creation by asserting that only man has been called to "partnership" with God--"qualified as a 'Thou'"--and intended by God for redemption.¹¹² This is nearly an anthropological truism. Much more significant than human responsibility or addressability is Thieliicke's insistence that these very features cannot be construed as a subordination of the Spirit's activity ("what takes place on and to man") to the interpretative grid of "addressable man."¹¹³

One can only speak of a point of contact if this concept is wrenched from its schema within Cartesianism. There is no constant point of contact that one can locate in the reality of natural man and so form a steady continuum.¹¹⁴ In one sense there is a point of contact; however, this is the contact that God makes with human beings. But Thieliicke goes on to emphasize that God makes contact with men and women precisely at the point where they "dig in" against Him, at the very "nerve" where they are curved in upon themselves.¹¹⁵ "Contact" is a new creation and a new birth, and therefore it is a miracle that resists efforts at system-

atization. In keeping with Thieliicke's uncommon facility for metaphor, he observes that there is no neutral antenna with which one can hear God's voice. "Contact," Thieliicke avers, is never really appropriate because it suggests "how" the miracle can take place given the congenital human attitudes of rejection and self-emancipation. To those who echo the "how" question of Nicodemus, the only possible answer is the same one that Jesus gave: God so loved the world.¹¹⁶

Human identity, theologically speaking, is never an ontologically independent reality. Apart from an obvious creaturely dependence, Thieliicke asserts that the human being learns who he really is exclusively from the Word announcing to him God's condescension, His covenant, and His mighty salvific acts.¹¹⁷ Real identity is "riveted to" God's Word:¹¹⁸ "The Holy Spirit who discloses this word to me does not point me to myself but away from myself to the events by which I am what I am."¹¹⁹ If one still insists on talking about "continuity," this can only take the form of a "retrospective glance."¹²⁰ It becomes part and parcel of doxology: "I" am the one to whom this has happened.¹²¹

The Word does not integrate itself into something that is already there. Instead, it creates and recreates.¹²² Moreover, if one learns who he is only from what happens to him and changes him,¹²³ this adds a dimension to the classical dogmatic claim that theological anthropology is always relational anthropology. Thieliicke's concern is to stress

the Holy Spirit as the Person--the third person of the Trinity, not a psychical force--with whom human beings stand in relation.¹²⁴

For Helmut Thielicke, everything in theology commences with the creative "Word-act" of God; this effects transformation in the miracle of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁵ The testimony of the Holy Spirit does not mean that we appropriate the truth that is set before us; rather, the truth is "disclosed" to us by the witness of the Spirit with which it (this same truth) is furnished.¹²⁶ In sequential terms, one can formulate Thielicke's procedure as follows: the revelation of God's Word of truth; the person and work of the Holy Spirit; one's new identity ("analogy") through faith; hermeneutics and theological reflection. Theological truth, Thielicke stipulates, is the content of an active Word.¹²⁷

Professor Thielicke does not hesitate to affirm the "givenness" of salvation history. This "given" establishes one's faith and is not established by faith. This feature of Thielicke's thought becomes important shortly, in connection with his distinction between "ontic" and "noetic" revelation: For the time being, it is useful to acknowledge Thielicke's frequent use of Lessing as a foil for Cartesian theology. Lessing has anticipated "every conceivable position" in Cartesian theology.¹²⁸ Lessing's thesis, stated in terms of his notorious "ugly broad ditch," is this: ". . . accidental truths of history can never become the proof of

necessary truths of reason."¹²⁹ In other words, unqualified certainty is impossible when we are dependent on the testimony of others, their reliability as reputable historians notwithstanding. The "givenness" of the mighty acts of God does not and can not persuade twentieth-century men and women--and the problem runs much deeper than historical consciousness, secularism, or any other real or imagined symptom of modernity.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit plays an integral role precisely at this point. To be sure, God's Word is interpretative. The Word takes events out of the ordinary flow of history, renders them significant, and constitutes them as truly salvation history.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, the Word is not purely or exclusively interpretative.¹³¹ In fact, the Word must not be dissociated from the Creator Spirit who engenders faith--which faith, in turn, now discerns (but does not produce) the saving character of God's acts in history.¹³²

The relation of Word and faith or saving event and faith cannot be reversed.¹³³ To forfeit the preexistence of the Word and permit faith some cooperative or correlative status is to abandon the soteriological point of faith and revert to Cartesianism: ". . . it is the Spirit of God himself who confesses this Word, who bears witness to it as his own, and who causes the historical event to become preaching of God's mighty acts."¹³⁴

The response to Lessing amounts to an assertion that the Holy Spirit transports one across the "ugly broad ditch" by means of His creation of faith through the Word. The third article is God's way of effecting the transition from accidental truths of history to a confession of faith.

. . . this reference back to the saving event finds expression in the fact that we do not make Jesus Christ our Lord in our own reason or strength. We cannot produce faith of ourselves. This is the work of the Holy Spirit This means, however, that the historical Jesus of Nazareth, through the Holy Spirit, makes himself contemporary with us. The natural man (psychikos anthropos) does not perceive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:1-4). Hence he cannot produce the present which eventuates in faith. Nor can he reproduce the past in such a way that it is present for him and Christ becomes his (contemporary) Lord. . . .

This is the point of the Spirit's testimony. It means that the evidence of what we believe in is provided, not by faith, but by what we believe in itself, i.e., the given fact of the Christ-event. The Lord makes himself evident and hence he makes faith possible. Faith does not make the Lord evident. The Lord himself is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17f.). He cannot be controlled, then, by the natural man.¹³⁵

Thielicke takes Lessing very seriously, and even in his Pneumatic rejection of his basic assertion he is never content merely to brush him aside. Thielicke concedes that the "Lord of history" is not evident in His works. History is at very best ambiguous, so that God is hidden in these works: ". . . faith in him can consist only in the protest of a Nevertheless against what the senses see and what reason recognizes to be the law operative in events of this kind (Psalm 72:23ff.)."¹³⁶

The Holy Spirit achieves re-presentation. He discloses God as a lovable object and attests the same through the narrative of God's own self-demonstration as such. His mighty acts, from old covenant exodus to new covenant resurrection, have also "happened to us."¹³⁷ The meaning of Holy Baptism is to have oneself called out of the old aeon and into God's salvation history.¹³⁸ God is present for us as we recall and look back on the history that He has caused to happen to us and into which His Spirit includes us.¹³⁹ How does the Spirit accomplish this re-presentation?

He evokes faith, kindles fervent love, and opens up immediate access to God by illuminating the mighty acts of God as a nexus into which I am taken up and whose earlier stages are of contemporary or existential significance to me, so that in the simpler and more expressive language of Scripture I am pricked in the heart (Acts 2:37).¹⁴⁰

Thielicke's concept of re-presentation insists that the presence of the Lord in faith is a sovereign gift, one which cannot be achieved on one's own initiative. Without this gift, the most sophisticated theological method or hermeneutical enterprise still leaves one with only a dead past or Lessing's dreaded historical distance.¹⁴¹ The emphasis is achieved by frequent recourse to Luther's celebrated metaphor of the "mathematical point." Faith's point of reference dare never become the human psyche itself; there is nothing in or about the human psyche to orient one to the God revealed in Jesus Christ. The "mathematical point" is simply the way Thielicke follows Luther in stressing the

alienum or extra me of the Word of God.¹⁴² The object of faith is always the person and work of Jesus Christ; and this implies further that the believer has, strictly speaking, forgotten himself.¹⁴³

When one sees faith as the way in which the Holy Spirit lays hold of the individual--the "Spirit's surrogate"--one is "immunized" against depicting the new being in terms of a habitual state.¹⁴⁴ Where there is no possibility of becoming new and in the absence of any claim, God has "activated his own possibilities," and the miracle of His fatherly mercy takes place.¹⁴⁵ However, the regenerative miracle does not amount to any "possession" of the Holy Spirit, as in "I have the Spirit." The appropriate posture is always one of prayer: "Come, Creator Spirit." Further, "I am" or mystical union language signals the relation that constitutes one's new being. To assert "By the Spirit I am in Christ" or "By the Spirit Christ is in me" is never a self-identifying, presumptive claim but is always a doxological confession.¹⁴⁶

Faith never outgrows its beginning. It grows into this beginning. Its beginning is the creative Word of God which effects regeneration. This is where our becoming commences. This is where the battle between the Spirit and the flesh takes place. The demand that we should enter into this becoming, this conflict, is simply a demand that, faced with the alternatives that hang over our lives, we should take our place with the Spirit and let him be our advocate (Romans 8:26). When we accept his intercession and live by that alien righteousness in faith, we can no longer be so interested in our own empirical image that we are reflected in it, that we

give it permanence, in short, that we allow it to become a theological theme of its own.¹⁴⁷

To tie together several of these themes, Thieliicke states that the Gospel, God's self-disclosure as a lovable object, is at the same time the heart of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁸ The Word of God, by the creative miracle of the Spirit, posits a new existence.¹⁴⁹ This miracle qualifies every vestige of "appropriation" language; indeed, in the light of the New Testament it means hearing the voice of Jesus Christ as it applies to me (John 18:37).¹⁵⁰ Faith refuses to relate the salvation event to the self-consciousness. On the contrary, by faith one is integrated into this event¹⁵¹--and, note well, the Creator Spirit working through the Word never integrates Himself into what He has created.¹⁵²

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit embraces the subject-object relation.¹⁵³ It does so by the re-creating Word, which discloses the given fact of the Christ-event and which, in turn, makes faith possible.¹⁵⁴ Yet not only is God the object of faith. The Holy Spirit avails Himself of the historical, saving acts and thereby imparts a new identity to the person on whom the miracle of the new birth is performed. Thieliicke's point is that one has a definition of himself only in faith, so that "man defined by God" is likewise the object of faith.¹⁵⁵

Because God's Word cannot be appropriated in any present state of human existence, by the creative miracle of the Holy Spirit it refashions the old man and itself establishes the conditions under which one may hear and receive it. Above all, it is an active Word. We do not pull God and His Word into the orbit of our own existence. For Professor Thieliicke's non-Cartesianism precisely the opposite is the case: "We ourselves are set over against ourselves in regeneration and we are integrated into God's history."¹⁵⁶ The human self is not an identity within which there are variations of self-understanding. Rather, the identity of the self must be viewed in dialectical terms. "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me."¹⁵⁷

The Word-Faith Dialectic and Theological Prolegomena

For Helmut Thieliicke it is axiomatic that one can "have" the world only as God gives it to him and permits him to see it. One can "have" God only as He condescends to him, enters into his world, discloses himself, and imparts the light with which He can be seen.¹⁵⁸ Thus, God is both subject and object: "He is not only the one I have the possibility of knowing; he is also the basis of that possibility. He embraces both the being of the objectifiable world and also the subject of objectifying."¹⁵⁹

Thieliicke's anthropology precludes any analogy that would admit a personal knowledge of God. Here his insis-

tence becomes thematic. Knowledge always presupposes an analogy between the knower and the known. It is precisely this analogy that no longer exists, for humanity has fallen out of the original analogy between Creator and creature. Alienation is the consequence of man's willful flight from God. In the aftermath of Genesis 3, the only person analogous to God is God Himself. The epistemological effects are stark: ". . . sin is the basis and form of the lack of analogy."¹⁶⁰ The apostle Paul said as much when he told the Corinthians that the natural man does not perceive or accept the things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). He cannot understand them. In more technical language, fallen man cannot "produce the present" that will eventuate in faith; moreover, he cannot "reproduce the past" so as to render it present for him or in such a way that Jesus Christ can become his (contemporary) Lord.¹⁶¹ Analogia entis language will not pass muster. It must give way to an analogia fidei if meaningful theological discourse is to ensue.

The whole point, however, is that one cannot slide smoothly from analogia entis to analogia fidei. Because the problem is much more severe than epistemological misdirection, it does not suffice merely to augment the existing data or even to sharpen its focus. Something far more radical is necessary. An analogy of faith is the work of the creative Spirit, who effects reciprocity itself through the Word of God. Of the many places where this re-creative work

is discussed, perhaps the clearest is the following selection from Volume 1 of The Evangelical Faith.

This gives us new insight on Paul's statement about no eye having seen or ear heard. We can now see the epistemological background of the verse. We stand in analogy to the historical facts of religious history, even the history of the Christian religion. But we do not stand in analogy to the divine truth manifested in these facts. This is why Christ is incognito within them.

We are thus led to an important conclusion. If there is to be any theological knowledge, any understanding of the salvation event, the analogy has to be re-established in an act of new creation. The divine Word must create its own hearer, the subject of understanding. The theological point at which to speak of this creative function of the Word, of this creation of the hearer, and hence of theological epistemology, is in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. For this doctrine . . . tells us that we are called to share in the divine self-knowledge and are thus set in a real analogy. In this sense the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10).¹⁶²

The revelation of God conveyed by the Holy Spirit is the precondition for the analogia fidei. This further entails a carefully nuanced understanding of revelation. Thielicke circumvents to some extent the perpetual debate over propositional and/or personal revelation. He says, in brief, that revelation involves both a content and a mode by which this content is rendered accessible.¹⁶³ Symptomatic of the fall is a human obdurancy that bids to maintain the status quo of rebellious existence.¹⁶⁴ This means that the Holy Spirit has to do more than disclose: "God needs to make this self-disclosure accessible in and of itself in order

that it may enter into the eye, ear, and heart."¹⁶⁵ In short, God has to break through.

For these reasons Thieliicke talks about an "active" Word of God rather than an (entirely) interpretative Word.¹⁶⁶ This Word "breaks continuity" with one's old existence--indeed, destroys it (2 Corinthians 5:17)--and creatively calls forth new possibilities that were neither present nor available in the prior modus vivendi. Without the severing of continuity with the old, God's truth cannot be mediated (though, as we shall observe later, it is not for these reasons any less true).¹⁶⁷

. . . revelation does not take place merely on the event side of an external history. It is not just what we usually call the mighty acts of God. It also takes place as appropriation, as the miracle of hearing and understanding which overcomes hardening (Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27, etc.) and opens deaf ears. It is closed to the wise and prudent, i.e., to the initiative of intellectual work (Matthew 11:25-27). Where the reception of revelation takes place in the consciousness, it is extolled as the miracle of an experience that we cannot control (Matthew 16:17). This miracle in virtue of which the Word opens itself to hearing and appropriation is performed by the Spirit of God who dwells in the Word (1 Corinthians 2:7-16). The Spirit brings it about that man can break out of the prison of the world and let God's saving work take place in him. What takes place on him, and only then and to that extent in him, he cannot understand in terms of himself because his alienation from God renders him unable to let God's Word be manifest to him. His closedness is overcome, and what is not at his disposal is made accessible. . . . God causes man to participate in the knowledge of himself. Only he himself can do this. Hence he alone is the subject of the knowledge of God. Only the Spirit searches out the deep things of the Godhead (1 Corinthians 2:10).¹⁶⁸

In this comprehensive setting, Thieliicke defines Word of God in the "primal and proper" sense as the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ. This Word is personal and ontic, and not entirely verbal or spoken.¹⁶⁹ Closely associated with this personified Word is that which instrumentally "passes on" the message of the incarnate Redeemer through human witnesses. This associated Word applies particularly to the New Testament: ". . . in these documents there is not merely reference to the Word of God but the Word of God is actually present, . . . it reaches us in them, so that the Word that was incarnate at a particular point in time is presented here afresh."¹⁷⁰ Finally, the Word of God is the witness given in later ages by witnesses to the Word, one made on the basis and under the direction of the kerygma.¹⁷¹

Thieliicke rejects any qualitative distinction between the Biblical testimony and later witnesses, or between the "verbal form" of past, present, and future witnesses and the "original witness" inscripturated in the New Testament. His reasons are not exegetical; they reflect his own theology of the Holy Spirit. Both Biblical and subsequent witnesses share the promise that God's Word is proclaimed and that the Kurios is abidingly present with this proclamation.¹⁷² While he repeatedly scores "verbal inspiration" as a product of Protestant Scholasticism and renascent fundamentalism,¹⁷³ he objects most to the claim that there was a direct presence

of the Kurios in the original Christian witness but only a reduced and indirect presence later.¹⁷⁴

Whither (whether?) the Reformation's sola Scriptura? Holy Scripture is the most authoritative witness to the presence of the Pneuma; and only for this reason, Thielicke avers, does "Scripture alone" achieve the status of a confession whereby the church describes its basis. "Inspired" is a functional and not an ontological term: "This can mean only that God was actively at work when he gave witness to his Word in Christ."¹⁷⁵ Thielicke applies the same logic in connection with the Biblical canon, and once again the issue is one of relative primacy.

As Holy Scripture originates in the spoken Word which is indwelt by the certifying Pneuma, and as it leads back to the spoken Word which for its part has the promise of the Spirit, the Spirit is assigned to it, too, as the legitimation and power of presentation. If the need for a written deposit is in a sense an emergency measure deriving from the vulnerability and confusion of the human spirit which in self-will resists God's Spirit, the deduction cannot be made that Holy Scripture is a product and abandonment by the Spirit. On the contrary, there is fulfilled in it the wrestling of the Holy Spirit with the human spirit. Scripture is the most authoritative testimony to the presence of the Pneuma. Only thus does the sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) attain the rank of a confession by which the church describes its basis.¹⁷⁶

The spiritual Word is far more than an imparting or instructing Word that somehow builds on human epistemological presuppositions, as though it (the Word) were limited by them, made contact with them, or fit neatly into their

framework. Rather, this Word is active and creative. "It ploughs up the old and fashions the new creature."¹⁷⁷

Thus, the word/faith dialectic highlights once more the fact that for Thieliicke sequence is all-important: incarnate truth; the creative work of the Spirit active in the Word; a new analogy and identity; faith; theological reflection and formulation. When this inviolable sequence is observed, one can even talk about a valid analogy of being, but now it is a new being. Note the deliberate circularity in the following brief citation:

I can understand the truth of God only through the Holy Spirit, since the analogy which underlies this understanding is imparted through him. This analogy, however, is an analogy of being before it is one of understanding. The existence of this analogy points to the creative and active Word of God which renews this being in the miracle of the Spirit and causes it truly and authentically to "be."¹⁷⁸

One can now appreciate the "highly dialectical structure" that characterizes the process of understanding in relation to the Gospel. Philip Melanchthon anticipated this with the aforecited precept connecting the knowledge of Christ with a knowledge of His benefits. Thieliicke asserts that we learn who Christ is from His words and works, specifically, "from what happens to us through him."¹⁷⁹ We do not learn of Christ and His identity through dogmatic statements, however veracious they may be--an "absurd" idea, Thieliicke suggests. On the contrary, Jesus' words and works in relation to us prompt the question of who He is. As they

trigger this query, the answer that Jesus is the Christ becomes the light through which His words and works appear to us. This is a key feature of the dialectic: "Only along these lines . . . do we assert that the person of Christ is the norm by which to interpret his words and works."¹⁸⁰

The concept of identity, so prominent in Cartesian theology, can only be retained if it is oriented to what is outside the human subject.¹⁸¹ In a fashion comparable to the unextended "mathematical point" used by Luther to counter a "fatal psychologizing" of faith and love¹⁸²--faith has no place of its own on which to rest but is determined exclusively by its object¹⁸³--identity and continuity consist in the faithfulness of God, who honors His Word.¹⁸⁴ One's new identity is characterized not by its element of consciousness but by the extra nos to which it relates, namely, the "history of Christ" into which he has been adopted.¹⁸⁵

There is, then, an important sense in which one can talk about the creation of faith as one of God's "mighty acts," a designation routinely applied more or less inclusively to the heilsgeschichtlich events chronicled in Scripture. Faith "belongs to" the salvation event, since it is effected by the Holy Spirit as an act wherein "something becomes manifest."¹⁸⁶ Yet within the matrix of the dialectic it is vitally important to remember that even given this status as a salvation event, faith does not stand on the same footing with the "mighty acts of God" on, as Thielicke

puts it, the "event side" of history. These acts are set before faith, and there they remain for all time. The relation of Word and faith can be conceived only as one in which the Word (as defined above) maintains uncontested primacy.¹⁸⁷

Creation, providence, and history are not transparent: "The Lord of history is not in fact manifest in his works."¹⁸⁸ Christ is "incognito" within the historical substratum of Christianity.¹⁸⁹ The Word of God is the "decisive basis" of the revelation in these spheres: "[God's] traces are ambiguous and unrecognizable apart from his efficacious and interpretative Word."¹⁹⁰

This has profound import for the varied tasks of systematic theology, especially apologetics. For Helmut Thielicke there is no high ground extra fidem from which one can survey the historical terrain and so discern its Christocentric meaning and telos. The Word/faith dialectic permits neither neutral observance nor assessment. The spiritual nexus (or reciprocity) of Word and faith cannot be penetrated from the outside. As the Word is active, it creates the conditions under which it discloses itself, that is, the (new) being in the truth of which the apostles Paul and John speak.¹⁹¹

Apologetics runs up squarely against two insurmountable obstacles. In crass form it fails to take seriously the utter radicality of human fallenness, which entails and

even energizes a positive aversion to Christian truth claims. Less presumptuous apologists are convinced that if only the Christian claims were accorded an unprejudiced hearing, the "mighty acts" would be sufficiently credible so as to effect "openness" (something along the lines of a fides humana). Thielicke will have none of it, even though he does not share all the extreme conclusions of New Testament criticism. He objects on both obvious anthropological¹⁹² and more sophisticated soteriological grounds.

To seek historical facticity as such at a historical distance and with disinterested objectivity, and in so doing to cherish the expectation that this will furnish a basis for faith and a diagnosis of salvation events, is to come under the verdict of trying to get behind the Word by seeking after signs, and hence of evading the faith which is engendered by this Word.¹⁹³

This analysis accounts for Thielicke's misgivings with the "revelation as history" theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg. One Pannenberg disciple, Carl Braaten, states one of his mentor's central theses: "Unlike special manifestations of God, historical revelation is there for anyone who has eyes to see. It is universal in character."¹⁹⁴ Pannenberg cites the resurrection as part of this universal history. Thielicke objects. He rejects Pannenberg's none too subtle integration of theology into the sensory experience of all the various sciences.¹⁹⁵ Though he does not disparage the Historie character of the resurrection, Thielicke stipulates that attempts to view the event of the resurrection in this

historicity--that is, apart from faith in the risen Lord--are futile.¹⁹⁶ Discernment presupposes discipleship.¹⁹⁷ The same stricture applies to the array of New Testament miracles. Thieliicke brings much of this together in the following citation from his dogmatics.

Hence faith does not have to reassure itself by first examining the facts which are its basis. It does not investigate before believing. If it does, it disparages the Word which posits the facts. It tries to establish a prior relationship to reality on the basis of which it can prove that the Word has a real foundation and is in touch with reality. Faith can take this false path only if it grants normativity to the subject-object relation which underlies its "normal" understanding of reality. In this case the Cartesian I (the subject in the relation) again plays the part of a norm. Since, however, God's mighty acts are effected by the Word, I can have access to them only through the faith that this Word brings into being. Hence there can be no certainty concerning these acts apart from the Word and faith. One might also put it thus: The facts cannot be known by the old self; they are non-existent for its "mind" and "heart" (1 Corinthians 2:9).¹⁹⁸

For systematic theology the implications are clear, and they hearken back to the initial discussion of the priority of proclamation and faith to theological reflection. Thieliicke the preacher is concerned with truth in person, rather than with truth viewed as "abstractly normative." Such personal truth can be expressed and explained in narrative form, not through argument. Christian truth, Thieliicke insists, must be told.¹⁹⁹

The Word that engenders faith and the salvation events to which they are oriented are not alternatives. They are

inextricably linked to one another and expound one another. The interpretative Word expounds the events as acts of God and (especially with reference to the miracles) signs of His inbreaking rule. Reciprocally, the events expound or disclose the Word as active, as a "deed-Word." The object of faith--the person in whom faith believes--"validates" the Word.²⁰⁰

When one couples this summary with the earlier observation that the spiritual circle of Word and faith is unbreakable, has Christianity been relegated to a fideistic subjectivism or, worse yet, to a blithely maintained ideology? On the one hand, Thieliicke will not be cowed into tempering or relaxing either pole of the dialectic. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, he rejects subjectivism and ideology as well. Theology as pursued in the modern era entails a readiness "to examine being realistically" and unconditionally, without trepidation over "possible surprises" and/or "metaphysical losses." One questions his traditions, or, echoing Nietzsche, one puts the knife to one's own roots. If one cannot avoid all presuppositions (of faith), he can at very least reflect on them. In this way theology retains its scientific dimension and escapes the charge of ideology. One is then left with the second task, namely, interpreting what is discovered and inquiring into its meaning.²⁰¹

These twin obligations are illustrated in the following discussion of Thieliicke's unique and closely related positions on the image of God and human immortality. Of the various loci, they have been chosen both because of this uniqueness and because they expose key themes in Thieliicke's theology.

The Image of God and Thieliicke's Subjective Genitive

One could probably read at random any one-hundred-page block from Thieliicke's major works and encounter, in fairly systematic form, his understanding of the image of God. This makes perfectly good sense in his anthropology itself, yet it holds true for his dogmatics and ethics as well. The point is that Thieliicke's entire theology presupposes and in large measure is determined by some bedrock anthropological considerations, and the image of God is central to these.

After one moves beyond the simple affirmation that theological anthropology cannot be content with the ontic or immanent features of the human being, but rather must focus above all on man and woman coram Deo, he is then in a position to consider those aspects of Thieliicke's understanding of the image that differ (at least in nuances) from a traditional Lutheran orientation.

These departures should not be exaggerated. Thieliicke's doctrine of the imago Dei is in many respects faithful to the Lutheran tradition, as is evidenced by his

comparatively strong denunciations of Roman and Reformed positions on this issue.²⁰² First, Thieliicke rejects the "usual concept" of the likeness, which he finds in Thomism, as an "indestructible continuity of human nature," so that one's nature remains the same through innocence, fall, and redemption.²⁰³ Second, Professor Thieliicke unequivocally condemns any notion of the image as a human proprium, some set of component parts, which purportedly distinguishes the human being from the rest of creation and which further connotes some inherent or intrinsic "dignity." These constitutive elements are familiar enough: conscience, intellect, use of language, and even the ability to walk upright.²⁰⁴

Thieliicke's polemic is directed primarily to this second aberration. In this connection he repeatedly cites Luther's observation that any definition of the image in terms of reason or speech forces the deduction that the devil himself is also God's image, since he possesses these qualities to a higher degree than fallen men and women.²⁰⁵ Reason, language, and the like connote a shopping list of corrupted "relics" of little use to theological anthropology.

Here Thieliicke is quite traditional. The image, he asserts, must be understood in relational terms, and he quotes Luther approvingly: "[the image of God is] perfect knowledge of God, supreme love for God, eternal life, eter-

nal bliss, eternal security."²⁰⁶ Every definition of the image in terms of "content" is simply false.

If it is impossible to define the imago Dei in any ontic sense,²⁰⁷ is there anything that is "constitutively" human? Indeed, what is "human" is the relationship to God, and this is crucial to both the Biblical doctrines of creation and anthropology. "Faith in creation sets me in a personal I-Thou relationship to God, not primarily into an I-it relationship to the created world. Christian thinking about creation is personalistic."²⁰⁸ To articulate this relational character of the image, Thielicke resorts to what he admits is an "extreme" formulation: "The divine address constitutes the person." This is not to be construed as "addressability"; on the contrary, the latter formulation betrays a reversion to the ontic sphere from which we have fled.²⁰⁹ It signals the "point of contact" language endemic to Cartesian theology.²¹⁰

In numerous places Thielicke describes this theologoumenon as an "alien dignity." Terms like "ontic," "immanent," habitus, and proprium are all rejected because they amount to some personal possession. "Alien dignity" underscores Thielicke's emphasis on God's initiative even in this area of theological anthropology. Relation to the Word of God constitutes human distinctiveness, since he is the one creature who is addressed in the second person and summoned

to communication with the Creator--a communication effected by the selfsame Word.²¹¹

How should we talk about the loss of the image in light of the fall? One does not lose his humanity, nor does one entirely forfeit his relationship to God. To be sure, the relationship is now profoundly disordered; Thieliicke calls this the "negative mode" of humanity. In more mundane language, this is guilt, and the presence of guilt in turn presupposes ongoing human responsibility.²¹²

Since the imago Dei is not to be defined ontologically in terms of certain demonstrated qualities, but as a relationship between God and man, it cannot be lost, just as man could not forfeit his humanity even if he wished to do so. The imago can only pass into the negative mode. Hence the imago is not "nothing." But neither is it merely something "left over," something which has survived as a relic of the original endowment at creation. On the contrary, the image is really present, but only in that negative mode which implies negation of the original fellowship with God, a negation however which is still a prerogative distinguishing man from the beasts. Man's very failure to attain the telos for which he was destined is part of the prerogative of him who was created in the divine image. For even in the negative mode he bears on his forehead the mark of his original nobility, and his misery is always that of a "deposed king."²¹³

The metaphor in the last sentence of this quote is borrowed from Pascal and Kierkegaard. This allusion, coupled with the nearly ubiquitous citation of the parable of the prodigal son, highlights an integral feature of his anthropology. The infinite stress that God places on human existence confers an "indelible character." This indelible character is neither won nor lost, nor can it be augmented

or diminished. Human beings as such are loved by God.²¹⁴ Christian theology posits the self as an ego created by God, fallen from Him, and then visited and redeemed by Him. If we know of God only in His relation to us, it is equally true that there is no appropriate theological statement about human beings apart from their relation to God.²¹⁵

Such reciprocity is rooted in Thieliicke's "subjective genitive." The image of God is the image God has of human beings: "what is involved is 'our image' as that image consists in God's remembrance of us."²¹⁶ The father "retains" an image of his son; indeed, the father remembers that the prodigal is his son throughout the latter's debauchery in the "far country." In the face of human depravity and its sordid manifestations--what one would assuredly regard as the loss of the image on any empirical reckoning--the Father keeps the genuine image in His heart. Thus, the image of God is the object of faith and not of sight or knowledge.²¹⁷

Human beings as sons and daughters--and partners--stand in a position of "privileged identity" in their relation to God. Moreover, all God's dealings with them have this presupposition as their point of contact.²¹⁸ Thieliicke observes that only human beings can fall; animals cannot. Human dignity arises at precisely this point; and this is our indelible character, which remains constant through every experience.²¹⁹ Finally, with the parable of the prodigal son again serving as the backdrop, Thieliicke observes

that the divine likeness is both that from which one comes and that to which he goes.²²⁰ All of these assertions combine to force the conclusion that the imago is not ontological but relational and eschatological. It is a state of relation rather than a state of being.²²¹

Thielicke combines his image/identity language with his radical understanding of human fallenness by noting that the divine likeness is, in the first place, that which the human being in re (in other words, phenomenologically) no longer is, but that on the basis of which he is still addressed--albeit now in a "negative mode."²²² Yet in the second place, the divine image is that which is to be apprehended once again in Christ as a quality in spe. "It is thus something which is given to man, and has to be given again. Consequently, it expresses not man's own immanent and ontic dignity, but that alien dignity which is grounded in and by him who does the giving."²²³

The last assertion makes the telling point that one's identity is not somehow confirmed or fitted with a new consciousness. The issue involves new creation and a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:16). Thielicke explains:

The father in the parable does not simply act on a claim to the title of son, which in fact is not even made. Something completely new takes place that cannot be explained at all by the entelechy of the old existence. The miracle of raising again is performed on this identity. This miracle is not a creation out of nothing, for it is performed on the old self that still keeps its identity. Yet there is no

discernible continuity between the former "living soul" and the present "life-giving spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45ff.; cf. Ephesians 2:1, 5; 5:14).²²⁴

The image of God is finally a Christological concept: "Real man is man as God created him in his own image and as we see him in the face of Jesus Christ."²²⁵

This anthropology has an obvious and direct impact on how one approaches questions in moral theology, and because ethics is at the center of Thieliicke's work we mention it here. For one thing, Thieliicke finds contemporary slogans like "quality of life" in such issues as euthanasia to be misdirected. The insistence on the alien dignity of human beings means that men and women (or infants and children, for that matter) must not be evaluated in terms of their performance on aesthetic or utilitarian inventory checks. Their lives have quality because it has been conferred and sustained by Another. Assertions of "human rights" and the like are really secular transpositions of Biblical anthropology. The key point of reference is the alien dignity one has as a creation of God--and one whom God visits, purchases with an unspeakable price, and sets under His care and protection. This reference, Thieliicke argues, is what makes the human being sacred. Once more the order is important: God did not love men and women because of their independent dignity. On the contrary, it is because God loved them that they had this dignity and became sacred (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).²²⁶

To summarize, in its Christological context the image of God consists of an alien dignity. Never is it an attribute of humanity qua humanity (Eigenschaft); instead, it is an attribute of the relationship in which one stands (Aus-senschaft).²²⁷ Luther's definition is retained, since in its positive mode the image describes a particular relationship to God effected by the impartation of Christ's alien righteousness.²²⁸ The character of the imago Dei as alien is underscored by the fact that as a proprium, as a "true ontic possession," it is ascribed exclusively to Jesus Christ. So insistent is Thielicke on this point that he can say that in the "absolute sense" Jesus Christ is the "only man."²²⁹ "We learn from Christ and perceive in him--ecce homo!--what man is."²³⁰ Participation in the Son's "unimpaired" image does not come by imitation, for this would be a confusion of Law and Gospel.²³¹ If Christ is "exemplar" and not "example," participation will come only through faith.²³²

The image of God is the image God has and retains of human beings. The identity of the human being lies in a partnership or history with God that does not cease, precisely because God's remembrance never ceases.²³³ We conclude on this note, moreover, because it is an apt transition to an illustrative promissory and eschatological feature of Thielicke's overall scheme. The present focus has been on the memory of God; the father remembers the prodigal even as he proceeds blithely into the far country. Yet the

imago Dei, given its Christological dimension, turns on what Adam was before the fall, what he now is in Christ, and on what he will be in the eschaton (Thielicke's justitia finalis).²³⁴

Personal Immortality and the Memory of God

This section does not purport to be a full-blown exposition of Thielicke's eschatology. For that matter, Thielicke himself does not comment on every issue often treated under this locus. We concentrate instead on one component of Professor Thielicke's reflections on "individual" eschatology, clustered in the third volume of The Evangelical Faith and the shorter Death and Life. The feature in question dovetails neatly with previous remarks on the image of God. There we stressed relational considerations in preference to ontological characterizations of the image. Consistent with Thielicke's non-Cartesian theology, the focus was on God--God's image of the human being, His conferral of an alien righteousness in Jesus Christ, and, finally, God the Father's memory of His wayward sons and daughters.

. . . the prodigal does not remain the son because he has maintained his qualities of sonship, or because his father could still be "seen" in him . . . even in the far country. He remains the son only because of another who has maintained his qualities of fatherhood even during the period of exile and estrangement.²³⁵

The human being is perpetually characterized by what he receives from the alien factor of divine grace.²³⁶ As Jesus Christ is our peace with God (Ephesians 2:14-15; Colossians 1:20), one has not fully become human until this peace is realized eschatologically.²³⁷ Therefore, here the emphasis will be on what is routinely termed "immortality" or the "immortality of the soul." In what sense is human identity sustained through the phenomenon of death? Thieliicke's answer to this question is distinctive, yet it follows inexorably from his understanding of the imago Dei.

Thieliicke categorically rejects Platonic anthropology, particularly its assertion of the immortality of the human psyche.²³⁸ He argues that the New Testament's varied anthropological terms--among them psyche, sarx, and soma--refer to the entire person in a specific relation.²³⁹ "Soul" is the human being as he is addressed by the Word of God, not a component of the "I": "It is the epitome of the relation to God, of incorporation into his history with us."²⁴⁰

At the same time, Thieliicke does not soften the Bible's description of death. He insists that death is not the termination of man as mammal (bios). Further, it is not a natural necessity that approaches one as a law over against which the human being is a mere object. When one reads the Pauline dictum in Romans 6 ("the wages of sin is death") or the brutal pronouncement in Psalm 90 ("for we are consumed by thy anger"), the conclusion is inescapable: "In

both [texts, death] is an event which I myself have caused, over against which I am subject, and which I have freely brought about as a responsible person."²⁴¹ The wrath of God expressed in death is God's reaction to our personal action;²⁴² as such, death comes to persons who want to be God and hence have to learn that they are only men.²⁴³

As to the knotty problem of the "intermediate state," this is an issue only for the living.²⁴⁴ Does one live on, in the face of personal death? Thieliicke responds both negatively and positively. There is no indestructible quality of the soul that survives death intact or unscathed.²⁴⁵ The person dies. To affirm an immortality of the soul per se would amount again to Cartesianism. It would signal some domain within the human being hermetically sealed from the lethal contamination of sin.²⁴⁶ Yet the human being is not swallowed up in a sea of non-being, either. Eternal life is a reality, or, in Thieliicke's words, a "quantitative survival after death."²⁴⁷ This is so because of the constancy and fidelity of the promising God who has acted decisively in Jesus Christ.

. . . what causes us to live on is not a quality of the soul that survives death unscathed. It is rather that God has entered into a history with us and that this history will not cease throughout eternity. Thus the power that prevents death from laying its hand imperiously on us and plunging us into nothingness is God's faithfulness. This is signified by the resurrection of his Son by which he is the Lord of the dead and the living (Romans 14:9), as is declared to us in the first installment of the gifts of the Spirit.²⁴⁸

Eternal life is a reality because the risen Lord does not abandon His people. The communion that has been established in Baptism will not be suspended. To be sure, the "old life" has nothing proper to it out of which the quality of survival might emerge. Everything this side of the Parousia is corruptible and finite. This means, of course, that notions of immortality (for example, the Platonic athanatos) are brought under judgment. Instead, operative here are the alien factors of the divine address and the faithfulness of God, who neither abandons His people nor leaves them in death.²⁴⁹

I do not believe in the future because of some dream of the hereafter. I believe in it because I am already the companion of him who has begun a history with me and will never let me fall away from his faithfulness. With him I go confidently into the darkness and inconceivability and total otherness of the future world. For he, who is one and the same, will never be alien or other to me. I shall always recognize him whose voice has always been as familiar to me as the shepherd's voice is to his sheep. In his person the dialectic between continuity and discontinuity which has permeated all reflection on existence before and after the resurrection is finally stilled.²⁵⁰

Like the image of God, human "immortality" is rooted in something outside of man, specifically, in the "memory of Yahweh": "[Yahweh] knows our names and thinks of them eternally, having written them in the book of life."²⁵¹

Persistent Questions

Occasionally one reads summaries of Thieliicke's theology on the order of the one ventured recently by John

Jefferson Davis in an annotation to The Evangelical Faith:

"German Lutheran; generally neoorthodox in orientation."²⁵²

Is this accurate? If so, is Thieliicke's work subject to the same criticisms routinely directed to neoorthodoxy in its classical form (for example, Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr--though acknowledging their own disclaimers)? These paragraphs will demonstrate that Thieliicke's positions are too eclectic and too complex to allow such facile classification or criticism. However, this charge does serve a backhanded heuristic function, for it occasions an exploration of several additional features of Thieliicke's theology that together provide a more fully-orbed account of his prolegomena.

Though the term "neo-orthodox" is itself almost too indistinct to be useful, it may be characterized as that attitude or approach which seeks to balance a core of traditional dogma with an adherence to the methodology of liberalism (most overtly in the area of Biblical criticism). In this context, we shall look first at Thieliicke's key distinction between ontic and noetic revelation/knowledge of God, and, second, his appropriation of historical-critical methodology in the execution of dogmatics.

In fairness, it is not difficult to understand how Thieliicke gets tagged as neo-orthodox. The English-speaking audience had read the Theological Ethics for a decade or more before The Evangelical Faith began to appear. The ethics is characterized by a massive polemic against natural

law and, by extension, against a natural knowledge of God. Their many differences notwithstanding (most notably perhaps in their views of Law and Gospel),²⁵³ such a rejection of natural knowledge would superficially link Helmut Thielicke with Karl Barth, for whom a repudiation of the natural knowledge of God emerged as early as his commentary on Romans of 1918.²⁵⁴

Thielicke does not temper his negative views on the natural knowledge of God in his dogmatics. Yet The Evangelical Faith does take positions on other issues that run contrary to prevalent themes in neo-orthodoxy. At most Thielicke represents selective neo-orthodoxy, a description that is self-contradictory and therefore virtually useless for theological taxonomy.

One particular issue that surfaces in any discussion of neo-orthodoxy, particularly its Barthian form, is the nature of revelation and the extent to which God's revelatory acts are "objective," or accessible to neutral empirical observation. We cannot here rehearse the still unresolved debates concerning ambiguities in Karl Barth's writings. Barth, so the charge runs, maintains that the "mighty acts of God" are not to be understood historically in the traditional fashion (as Historie); such acts--and the list varies from critic to critic--are supra-temporal or supra-historical (Geschichte). They belong to the realm of faith

and are not amenable to strictly factual or scientific demonstration.²⁵⁵

Thielicke is well aware of the multifarious indictments against neo-orthodoxy, and one can find in his dogmatics at least implicit rejoinders to several of its most important features. Perhaps the most important clarification (if not differentiation) arises from Thielicke's discussion of ontic and noetic truth. In the case of the former, truth is a quality that belongs to the sphere of being. As such, it pertains to what things are according to their true nature.²⁵⁶ The latter has reference to the "structure of thought," or to the appropriation of the "transsubjective"-ontic element.²⁵⁷ This distinction is integral to Thielicke's view of revelation and to the core salvation events of the New Testament. Once again, an important dialectic is at work.

Professor Thielicke defines God's self-disclosure as an active word that posits a new creation by the power of the Holy Spirit.²⁵⁸ The crucial point here is that revelation is not just a "signifying word" that somehow enhances a given or ongoing scheme of understanding.²⁵⁹ When revelation occurs, one's own existence is brought into the truth, and he undergoes transformation to self-sacrifice and openness to God.²⁶⁰ Thielicke goes so far as to define revelation in the strict sense as God's self-manifestation in "absolute

directness," or, stated less opaquely, when God is identical with the mode of His manifestation.²⁶¹

This takes place only in the Word: "God is his Word, or, better, he makes himself identical with it (John 1:1)."²⁶² Revelation in Biblical theology refers to an act of disclosure and hence to the Subject who performs this act.²⁶³ As a consequence, Thieliicke stipulates that one cannot inquire into the being of God in Himself (beyond or behind His economic unfolding as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) or into the Word in itself (beyond Law and Gospel).²⁶⁴

. . . "revelation" means self-disclosure in the sense that God gives other beings a share in his self-consciousness, in the understanding of his true being. Thus the nature of revelation is more than the popular view of it is aware of; it does not refer only to certain forms of supernatural inspiration. Revelation denotes a fundamental relation between God and man. It then denotes the epistemological block that results from this distinction. Finally, it stands for the miracle of the divine self-disclosure, the participation in God's self-knowledge, which alone removes the block.²⁶⁵

The dialectic alluded to earlier is most apparent when one asserts (1) that God reveals Himself through "transubjective" redemptive acts in history, and yet (2) these events are truly revelatory (or, better, disclosive) only when they are experienced within the context of an existing faith-relationship effected by the Holy Spirit. Thieliicke brings together the objective-ontic/subjective-noetic tension in the following two short theses:

First thesis: Only the fact that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead makes it possible for me to die with him (to die to sin and escape its bondage)

and also to rise again with him, and thus to walk in newness of life and to be in the truth.

Second thesis: Only when I am in the truth do I hear his voice; only when I die and rise again with Christ can I appropriate noetically his death and resurrection.²⁶⁶

The dialectic is an "interpretative interrelation." The acts disclose and interpret the person. They are a legitimate approach to the question of the "who." But only when one penetrates the mystery of the "who" does he unlock the meaning of the acts. The person "opens up" and interprets the acts. Without Him they are ambivalent and equivocal; indeed, they might be sorcery.²⁶⁷

The key is to retain the balance and not lay disproportionate emphasis on either the ontic or the noetic pole. The absence of spiritual discernment does not undermine the veracity of the core creedal facts themselves.²⁶⁸ "The truth which is concealed from the natural man, or, paradoxically, the truth which conceals and 'must' conceal itself from the natural man, is true even apart from man."²⁶⁹

Thielicke is most insistent on this point when it comes to the resurrection. Generally speaking, the "facticity" of the works of Christ should be upheld, just as it is assumed by the New Testament authors.²⁷⁰ In the case of the resurrection, however, Thielicke is adamant: "All references to the meaning of the resurrection are thus designed to solidify its ontological historicity. Christ is risen. Existential interpretation has its place as a means of ap-

appropriation. It is preceded . . . by the ontic decree."²⁷¹
 If one dismisses the resurrection, he does not reverse or undo it, since Jesus died and rose independently of one's attitude to these events. One's denial alters the nature of the resurrection. Properly, its nature is to be there for man. When rejected, it is truth against man, comparable to one's eating and drinking condemnation upon himself in the Eucharist.²⁷² "The Christian says: I stand or fall with my truth; it will become judgment or grace for me; either way it will always be the truth."²⁷³

If the resurrection is objective or transsubjective, it is not thereby "objectifiable."²⁷⁴ A historian operating in existential detachment with the canons of scientific historiography will neither discern nor assert the bodily resurrection of Jesus. This does not mean that the resurrection did not happen, or that the evangelists were mistaken. To conclude as much is to substitute an ontic statement (for example, Jesus did not rise from the dead) for a noetic statement (the resurrection cannot be proven). The logical fallacy is that what is not objectifiable is therefore not objectively existent.²⁷⁵

The resurrection is indispensable to Christian faith. Thieliicke flatly declares that if Jesus is still in the tomb He cannot forgive sins.²⁷⁶ At the same time, it is concealed to "neutral" historical research. Does this mean that historical-critical research is precluded or its conclusions

discounted? By no means. In fact, the status of historical-critical methodology is one of the real unresolved tensions in Thieliicke's dogmatic enterprise; and, because hermeneutics is so intimately linked to theological prolegomena, the issue warrants further discussion.

At one level, historical criticism is permitted because Thieliicke refuses to concede to the Biblical text any privileged status per se. Predictably enough, he traces such an elevation to the age of orthodoxy:²⁷⁷ "[During this epoch] the active fieri of revelation yields to the static propositum of a given document. The act of inspiration disappears in the product in which it is also conserved."²⁷⁸ From here it is a short step to the fundamentalism of Francis Pieper (among others), which is manifested in the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Letter displaces Spirit. Verbal inspiration offers "legalistic security," and, in a manner never clearly explained, leads ineluctably to an "unholy mingling" of Law and Gospel.²⁷⁹

Historical criticism can be employed because there is nothing intrinsic to the Biblical text to forbid it. But this statement does not say nearly enough. Historical criticism must be pursued. First, the suppression of historical criticism would reduce faith to a "partial religious province," and faith would no longer pertain to the "whole man."²⁸⁰ Second, only as we pose the questions of historical criticism will we appreciate the significance of faith for

the personal knowledge of what one knows historically. In Thielicke's words: ". . . only as we put the objectifying historical question does the frontier emerge which separates it from the relations of faith to its historical object."²⁸¹

Important as these two reasons are, they are still not the decisive basis for the use of historical criticism. Thielicke's third and crucial point involves what he calls the indispensability of "counter-criticism." Here historical work seeks to determine whether the conclusions of historical criticism are inimical to Easter faith, for something demonstrably false can hardly be an object of faith²⁸²--at least not without violating the canon that truth is indivisible and adopting an intolerable "split in consciousness."²⁸³ Elsewhere Thielicke makes a similar point when he asserts that the hermeneutical presupposition of all knowledge is the analogy between the structure of thought and the structure of being.²⁸⁴

Even a superficial reading of these three reasons for the use of historical criticism will discern a paradox. On the one hand, there is an insistence on the "happenedness" of the soteriological events, especially the resurrection. On the other hand, the mighty acts of God are not objectifiable facts, for in this sphere they succumb to Troeltsch's inflexible criteria of verification.²⁸⁵ Miracles, Thielicke says, are "possible events" for an individual only because he first "has" the One for whom all things are possible

(Mark 10:27).²⁸⁶ Only "a certain scientific ideology" can lead one to argue that historical revelation is open to the detached onlooker, so that a theology of history can rest on its "universal rational validity."²⁸⁷

The paradox can be maintained if one recalls the dialectic discussed above. Salvation events are part of earthly history and therefore are the objects of historical science. But their theme or character as salvation events cannot be the objects of ordinary historical study, for only faith can discern and acclaim that Jesus is Lord. "Once it is admitted that this [the Christ-event in its totality] is really a salvation event, the self-disclosure of the personal God, this event demands the category of faith if it is to be the object of knowledge."²⁸⁸ Analogously, in human interaction some things are perceptible only to the "personal category" of love. In such interaction, love plays the same epistemological role as faith does in secular history.²⁸⁹

I have just said that I can think of miracles as possible events only because I first have the person. But this is too simplistic. The facts are in truth dialectical. For I have the person only by way of the works. I allow the witness of Christ, the accounts of his words and deeds, to refer me to the person. The records are the spokes of a wheel that lead me to the true axis. I do not see the central point directly. It makes itself known to me through the spokes, i.e., through the works which emanate from it. Only as the one who is thus made known becomes "my Lord"--was not this the way of the eyewitnesses too?--do the works and signs find their validation, whereas previously they lay in the half-light between God and Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24; Luke

11:15-19) and to that extent could not be verified.²⁹⁰

Thielicke's approach to historical criticism does not end with this dialectic, however. The further direction of his hermeneutic at very least raises some disturbing questions. A considerable portion of Thielicke's work is directed against Rudolf Bultmann, sometimes only tacitly but occasionally overtly as well. Bultmann's celebrated rejection of the physical resurrection is repeatedly scored by Thielicke. Indeed, Bultmann's program ultimately signals the elimination of Heilsgeschichte, the substitution of philosophy for theology, and amounts to a denigration of the incarnation itself.²⁹¹

Yet several issues persist even when the uncompromised disavowal of Bultmann's comprehensive demythologization is acknowledged. First, what data comprise the nonnegotiable core of salvation history? Second, what objective criteria determine this soteriological core? Third, what hermeneutical controls permit one to demarcate the "husk of mythology" from the "kernel of revelation"--a distinction Thielicke not only concedes but actually endorses?²⁹² Fourth, does the resultant catalogue still reflect the substance of New Testament Christianity?

Professor Thielicke himself broaches the third of the above questions when he admits that the "sole point at issue" is exactly where the line between myth and kerygma is

to be drawn.²⁹³ As formulated in The Evangelical Faith, what pertains to the "mode of expression" and what is part of the "authoritative content"?²⁹⁴ The criterion must come from the text itself and not be imported from an alien ideological framework.²⁹⁵ Pursuit of the latter alternative is Bultmann's undoing.²⁹⁶

The Bible, particularly the New Testament, contrasts sharply with mythological world-views. Its linear view of time (kairos, or "qualified time") and the understanding of history as an irreversible progression from fall to judgment is a "categorical protest" against myth.²⁹⁷ At the same time, the New Testament is suffused with mythological elements: ". . . temporal myths and views surround the core of the gospel message."²⁹⁸ If one is to make the requisite distinction between "kerygmatic and sacredly freighted myth" and "disarmed myth that has degenerated into an empty form,"²⁹⁹ one must first define myth itself. In general terms, mythology is a form of human apprehension that is ideally suited to deal with religious truth.³⁰⁰ Moreover, it is an essential and permanent element in human thought and not an inferior or antiquated approach to reality.³⁰¹ Therefore, myth and history are not inherently antithetical. But this gets at the core of the problem, when one seeks precise delineation between secondary vehicle and primary cargo.

There are myths which are indispensable vehicles for the transcendental realities, and others which are legendary embroidery or accretions from non-Biblical religions. Then there are myths which are

pictorial clarifications of some historical fact, and others which are straightforward historical reports, which despite their apparently mythological form are to be regarded as directly historical.³⁰²

So far we have reached two conclusions. First, one must not transpose the New Testament mythology into the language of ancient mythology. Second, one cannot circumvent the dilemma by peering behind the mythological veneer to a pristine, non-mythological kernel of truth. This was Bultmann's error. Moving forward from these two considerations, Thieliicke argues that the exegete must affirm frankly both the mythology "as it stands" and the temporal limitations of the mythology "as they stand."³⁰³

The incarnation meant that Jesus entered into time and space, that he became our brother and comrade, and in so doing exposed himself to the notitia of our capacity to apprehend him. This meant that he entered into the particular form in which our powers of apprehension express themselves--i.e., by mythology.³⁰⁴

The intertwining of supra-mythical facticity and ongoing mythical symbols demands a concluding statement. The New Testament is supra-mythical inasmuch as it proclaims as reality what belongs to the structure of mythical speech (the incarnation). In so doing it goes beyond myth. It thus demythologizes, yet not in such a way as to set forth the signification of mythical statements, but rather by claiming a reality behind the mythical ciphers. On the other hand, it also uses many mythical figures of speech.³⁰⁵

The real crux is exposed when one recognizes this pervasive hermeneutical ambiguity. While the issues may be sharpened, the questions posed earlier never receive unequivocal answers. It is understandable that Thieliicke does

not venture a statement of his full-blown exegetical methodology. One can theoretically integrate the historical-critical method into Thielicke's "dialectical process of interpretation."³⁰⁶ Yet this integration becomes increasingly difficult when one seeks to balance several additional considerations: the absence of any clear definition of historical criticism, except to say that his notion departs from the Troeltschian pedigree;³⁰⁷ the candid admission that the limits of historical-critical inquiry cannot be fixed a priori;³⁰⁸ the reluctance to spell out where mythological trappings end and kerygmatic substance begins; and, finally, the relegation of elements traditionally considered constitutive of New Testament Christology to a status of "optional" or "irrelevant" (for example, the descent into hell and the virginal conception of Jesus).³⁰⁹ The following selection is characteristic--and revealing:

. . . faith in the Kyrios is no longer threatened by detailed critical distinctions. It does not have to await nervously the approval or disapproval of historians. It is no longer open to constant challenge. For it makes no difference to faith whether the Lord works through accounts of facts or through responsive doxologies . . .³¹⁰

Such an admission can only fuel the charge that Thielicke's theology is a "Lutheran neo-orthodoxy."

Thielicke's work is bedeviled by this paucity of objective hermeneutical controls, a situation all the more ironic when one recalls the proviso he addresses to Lessing, Kant, and Bultmann: "Wherever a non-Biblical principle de-

rived from contemporary secular thought is applied to the interpretation of the Bible, the Bible's facultas se ipsum interpretandi is violated, with fatal results."³¹¹ While Thieliicke's shortcomings here by no means vitiate his numerous contributions in theological prolegomena and soteriology--for him these two loci all but converge--they do signal a potential abridgment if not outright alteration of what the church of Jesus Christ has believed, taught, and confessed for two millennia.

For all of the above, Thieliicke remains consistent about two overriding themes. First, God is not merely an answer to human questions. Instead, in His self-revelation He gives the requisite disposition for asking after Him. The work of the Holy Spirit is always central, for He brings us into the truth. With the new creature, moreover, He introduces an altogether new set of questions.³¹²

[My] prolegomena is directed specifically against a theology which is obsessed with analyses of so-called modern man, which always orients itself to contemporaries, which is concerned about their understanding, which becomes wholly dependent on the conditions of such understanding. By reason of preliminary hermeneutical questions it can never get to the point and it threatens to fall under the verdict that Wilhelm Busch passes on Platonic love, namely, that of being an eternal seeking without leaving any imprint.³¹³

In Thieliicke's diagnosis, post-Kantian theology has become increasingly tied to anthropology and has largely been integrated into it.³¹⁴

Second, there is in Thieliicke a profound recognition of the impact of the fall on one's theological labors and the provisional character of any theological work.³¹⁵ Theology is done by sinners, and thus it pleads for the same absolution as its practitioners.³¹⁶ He compares his own efforts to those of the small child who wanted to empty out the ocean with a cup,³¹⁷ and he recognizes that Christianity does not live by academic theology. Many Christians, he observes, will be preserved in the last judgment while their theology is dashed to pieces--not only perhaps condemned by God but even "laughed out of court."³¹⁸ "The theological student who plays with the truths that the great ones in God's kingdom have arrived at only after a life of intellectual struggle is like the boy whose mother has made his clothes so big that he will have to grow into them."³¹⁹

NOTES

¹Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, vol. 1, Prolegomena: The Relation of Theology to Modern Thought Forms, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 378.

²Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "Helmut Thielicke," in A Handbook of Christian Theologians, ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 543. The biographical material in the following paragraphs is taken from Bromiley's article.

³Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, vol. 3, Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Third Article of the Creed; The Manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the Word, the Church, the Religions, and the Last Things, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), xv.

⁴Evangelical Faith 1:378.

⁵Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, vol. 2, The Doctrine of God and of Christ, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 331.

⁶Evangelical Faith 1:378.

⁷Evangelical Faith 2:317-318, 331.

⁸Evangelical Faith 1:15.

⁹Ibid. See also Helmut Thielicke, Being Human Becoming Human: An Essay in Christian Anthropology, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1984), pp. 217-218: "In Christian thought the self is to be understood only in terms of the relation to God, alienated from him, visited by him, and called to redemption. No theological statement about God or humanity can fail to reckon with this relation.

"If we still attempt a 'theo'-logical statement apart from this relation, we enter the unfathomable and inaccessible territory of a 'God in himself,' and hence a hidden God. The object of a true knowledge of God can only be

Immanuel, the God who enters into a history with us. To know God is to know his history with us, to know him in his 'for me,' if we might thus adapt a famous saying of Philipp Melanchthon.

"The reverse is also true.

"No theological statement can be made about humanity that does not include its relation to God. If we attempt such a statement apart from this relation, we either find no more than purely psychological or physiological functions and their bearers, and thus remain on the purely phenomenological plane, or we have to resort to metaphysical theories and interpretations. Either way we miss the point of human existence if we detach humanity from the relation to its ultimate basis."

¹⁰Evangelical Faith 2:116.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Helmut Thielicke, Theological Ethics, vol. 1, Foundations, ed. William H. Lazareth (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 40. See also Evangelical Faith 1:196.

¹³Evangelical Faith 2:120.

¹⁴Evangelical Faith 2:317-318; Evangelical Faith 1:196.

¹⁵Evangelical Faith 1:368.

¹⁶Evangelical Faith 2:382.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 268.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 351.

¹⁹Evangelical Faith 1:24.

²⁰Evangelical Faith 2:306.

²¹Evangelical Faith 3:xviii-xix.

²²Translator's Preface, Evangelical Faith 1:5.

²³Helmut Thielicke, Theological Ethics, vol. 2, Politics, ed. William H. Lazareth (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 648.

²⁴Theological Ethics 1:xiv.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. xviii.

²⁷Evangelical Faith 1:13.

²⁸Theological Ethics 1:xviii.

²⁹Ibid., p. 37.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Cited in Evangelical Faith 2:184.

³³Evangelical Faith 1:5.

³⁴Ibid., p. 29. See also Thieliicke's definition of "modern" theology in Being Human . . . Becoming Human, pp. 178-179: ". . . a theology which is in dialogue with the changing world, which takes it seriously and does not simply continue threshing the old corn in a sterile attempt at restoration without noting that all the barns and scenery around it have changed."

"Correlation" obviously brings to mind the theological method of Paul Tillich, wherein he begins with the human existential situation (characterized by finitude) and "correlates" the questions implicit in this situation with the answers implicit in the message of Christian revelation. (See Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963], 1:8, 59-66.)

Thieliicke is ambivalent about Tillich's method of correlation. There is a correlation between the questions modern men and women pose and the Christian answer, but Thieliicke is quick to stipulate the further correlation between the questions that Christian truth puts to them and their corresponding need to put these questions to themselves. Given his prevailing ontology, this second set of questions is far less evident in Tillich. Here Thieliicke notes, in passing, that the very first correlation of question and answer is God's question to Adam (Genesis 3:9). (See Evangelical Faith 1:24, 48, 108.)

³⁵Evangelical Faith 1:5.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 121-122.

³⁸Ibid., p. 28.

³⁹Ibid., p. 121.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 350: "The rule again applies that theology can neither be reactionary nor merely attempt restoration. Once realities are broken, we cannot go back, whether it be behind Kant's Copernican revolution, the historico-critical investigation of Scripture, or the scientific replacement of an understanding of creation that is bound up with specific theogonies and anthropogonies. Nor can we go back behind the discovery that reality has a worth of its own, e.g., the discovery of individual eros."

⁴²Ibid., p. 121.

⁴³Ibid., p. 385.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 285.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Theological Ethics 1:8.

⁴⁷Evangelical Faith 1:114

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁹Theological Ethics 1:xiv.

⁵⁰Evangelical Faith 1:379.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 378-379.

⁵²Ibid., p. 52.

⁵³Ibid., p. 198.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁵⁶Ibid, p. 13

⁵⁷Evangelical Faith 2:4.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Evangelical Faith 1:171.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Evangelical Faith 3:xvi. See also Evangelical Faith 2:116-117.

⁶²Evangelical Faith 2:3. Interestingly, Thielicke repeats the common observation that heresies usually emerge when one principle is shorn from the total organism of dogma and given disproportionate emphasis. See Evangelical Faith 1:116.

⁶³Evangelical Faith 2:4.

⁶⁴Evangelical Faith 1:11.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 34.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 193.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 109-110.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 108.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 39.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 38-40.

⁷¹Theological Ethics 1:222.

⁷²Evangelical Faith 1:38.

⁷³Ibid., p. 53.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 39, 45.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 53.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 109-110.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 33.

⁷⁸Theological Ethics 1:498.

⁷⁹See, perhaps most compactly, Ibid., pp. 321-331.

⁸⁰Evangelical Faith 1:138.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 310.

⁸²Theological Ethics 1:321.

⁸³Evangelical Faith 1:15, 205; Theological Ethics 1:320.

⁸⁴Theological Ethics 1:328.

⁸⁵Evangelical Faith 1:15.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Evangelical Faith 2:287.

⁸⁸Evangelical Faith 1:15.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 47.

⁹⁰Evangelical Faith 2:145.

⁹¹Evangelical Faith 1:174.

⁹²Evangelical Faith 2:95.

⁹³Ibid., p. 288. See also p. 283: ". . . the urgent question confronts us which we met in the Prolegomena and will constantly come up again in this christological discussion, namely, whether Christ can in fact be set in the given schema of my self-consciousness, whether he for his part does not basically change my understanding of myself, whether his understanding of me does not differ from my own, whether faith does not mean learning to see and understand with his eyes. If so, my general self-understanding cannot go unaltered when I 'integrate' Christ into it. It becomes a new and changed self-understanding, and the old one is set aside like the old Adam."

⁹⁴Evangelical Faith 1:36.

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 30, 35.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 30.

⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 174-175.

⁹⁸Theological Ethics 1:330.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 443.

¹⁰⁰Evangelical Faith 2:453-454.

¹⁰¹Evangelical Faith 1:49.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 158. See also Ibid., p. 77: "In free and voluntary address, in gracious resolve, God calls man in his Word, presents himself (Exodus 20:2), reveals himself (1 Corinthians 2:1f.), comes, and dwells among those whom he calls (Ezekiel 43:7; John 1:14). This initiation by God of a history with man we call revelation. Since it is based on an initiative in the heart of God, revelation is qualita-

tively different from the disclosure of being in the form of immanence or from coming into being in the form of existence."

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 193-194.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 206. See also Evangelical Faith 2:285.

¹⁰⁵See Evangelical Faith 1:54-55: "First, Theology A with its question of appropriation is addressing a problem which has been inescapably posed by the adulthood of man and the emancipation of existence and reason from the days of the Enlightenment.

"Second, in pursuit of this inquiry a tragic entanglement of thought occurs, since the arguments needed to throw light on the presuppositions of an understanding of revelation with the help of existential analysis unintentionally become means to determine in advance what revelation must be according to the nature and form of communication if the predicate of intelligibility is to apply to it.

"Third, since intelligibility is requisite if there is to be revelation, communication, or message (here used as synonyms), the conditions of it are also the limits of what is binding for me in the claims of revelation. . . .

"Fourth, a tragic change arises out of this, for what was originally meant to establish the possibility of appropriation, and was thus far a confession of openness to the kerygma, threatens to turn into its opposite, closing itself to the kerygma to the degree that only some kerygmatic contents can slip through the net of the prior conditions. If we impose conditions for receiving messages we put them under our own control, and openly or secretly we are thus editing them.

"Fifth, none of the types of [Cartesian] theology. . . aims deliberately to bring the kerygma under its own control. . . . But a certain autonomy set in train by the premises of this theology regulates the kerygma in spite of the original intention and protestations to the contrary.

"Sixth, there is an element of the tragic in this entanglement to the extent that (1) the argument itself takes over and escapes from the control of the one who is using it, and (2) it no longer allows to be maintained what ought to be maintained according to the original intention, namely, that the prior existential analysis should not affect what I am prepared to receive in the kerygma.

"Often, then, an astonishing discrepancy develops between what is personally confessed and what can be expressed intellectually."

¹⁰⁶Evangelical Faith 1:215-216.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 212.

¹⁰⁹Evangelical Faith 2:xiii.

¹¹⁰Evangelical Faith 1:132.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 147.

¹¹³Ibid., pp. 150-151.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 145.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 146.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 136.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 156.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 136.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 139.

¹²¹Ibid., pp. 174-175.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 150-151.

¹²³Ibid., p. 153.

¹²⁴Theological Ethics 1:83.

¹²⁵Evangelical Faith 1:217.

¹²⁶Evangelical Faith 2:454.

¹²⁷Evangelical Faith 1:194.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 226. See Thielicke's discussion of Lessing in Vernunft und Offenbarung: Eine Studie über die Religionsphilosophie Lessings (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1936), especially pp. 7-9, 28-53.

¹²⁹Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, "On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power," as cited in James C. Livingston, Modern Christian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Vatican II (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1971), p. 32.

¹³⁰Evangelical Faith 1:157-158.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 169.

¹³²Ibid., p. 158.

¹³³Ibid., pp. 157-158.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 158.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 131.

¹³⁶Evangelical Faith 2:12.

¹³⁷Evangelical Faith 1:134.

¹³⁸Theological Ethics 1:40.

¹³⁹Evangelical Faith 1:134.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁴²Evangelical Faith 2:48. See also Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 81-84. (Only this first of two volumes was translated and published by Concordia.)

¹⁴³Evangelical Faith 1:179.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 178, 182.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 138-139.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 180.

¹⁵²Evangelical Faith 2:48.

¹⁵³Evangelical Faith 1:367.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 136-137.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 216-217.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 367.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰Evangelical Faith 3:6.

¹⁶¹Evangelical Faith 1:131.

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 211.

¹⁶³Evangelical Faith 2:10-11.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 10-11.

¹⁶⁶Evangelical Faith 1:194-195.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Evangelical Faith 2:38.

¹⁶⁹Theological Ethics 1:187: "What does it mean that Christ represents the saving activity of God? . . . Christ is . . . the prototype of divine righteousness. That is, he does not merely give information and instruction . . . and then impersonally withdraw behind his own statements as artists, scholars, and teachers must do. On the contrary, he himself is everything that he proclaims. He does not merely know and state the truth; he is the truth (John 14:6). Nor are his disciples characterized primarily by the fact that they know and have comprehended the truth imparted by their Lord, like good pupils, like the initiates of mystery cults. Rather, they are characterized by the fact that they are of the truth (John 18:37), and thus have apprehended the truth. The fact that Jesus is this saving truth, that in his own person he represents the event in which this truth is actualized, is what makes him the prototype."

¹⁷⁰Evangelical Faith 3:107.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Ibid., pp. 106-107.

¹⁷³See, for example, *Ibid.*, pp. 191-194.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁸Evangelical Faith 1:196.

¹⁷⁹Evangelical Faith 2:301.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁸¹Evangelical Faith 1:159-160.

¹⁸²Theological Ethics 1:343.

¹⁸³Evangelical Faith 3:15-16, 216.

¹⁸⁴Evangelical Faith 1:159-160.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁸⁶Evangelical Faith 2:40.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁹Evangelical Faith 1:210-211.

¹⁹⁰Evangelical Faith 3:99.

¹⁹¹Evangelical Faith 2:37-38. See also Frank S. Christian, Jr., "The Gospel and Modern Man: A Study of the Theological Method of Helmut Thielicke in the Context of Modern Secularization" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1977), pp. 57-64.

¹⁹²Evangelical Faith 3:xxvi.

¹⁹³Evangelical Faith 2:37.

¹⁹⁴Carl E. Braaten, History and Hermeneutics, vol. 2, New Directions in Theology Today (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 29.

¹⁹⁵Evangelical Faith 3:xxvi.

¹⁹⁶Evangelical Faith 2:36: "If we try to view the event of the resurrection in its historicity apart from faith in the risen Lord, if, for example, we need to verify faith by the empty tomb, we find nothing. It is striking in this regard that the first news of the resurrection does not come from official recorders but from those who stand in a relation of faith to the person of him who rose, and who have ventured their own persons on him, i.e., committed themselves to discipleship."

¹⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 36, 349.

¹⁹⁸Evangelical Faith 1:157.

¹⁹⁹Evangelical Faith 3:363.

²⁰⁰Evangelical Faith 2:336.

²⁰¹Being Human . . . Becoming Human, p. 175.

²⁰²Thielicke's resoluteness here is contrasted with his far more open and conciliatory attitude on other issues; for example, Reformed eucharistic theology.

²⁰³Evangelical Faith 1, p. 151.

²⁰⁴Being Human . . . Becoming Human, p. 85.

²⁰⁵Theological Ethics 1:159, 161. See also Helmut Thielicke, The Ethics of Sex, trans. John W. Dobberstein (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 31.

²⁰⁶Theological Ethics 1:159.

²⁰⁷Ibid., p. 160.

²⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 151-152.

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 164.

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 165: "Thus in the modern doctrine of man's 'addressability,' theology has not merely made common cause with certain elements in the Aristotelian and Thomistic doctrine of nature, as did Protestant Orthodoxy with its doctrine of 'general revelation' and 'relics of the primal state.' It has also adopted Kantian epistemology and its doctrine of the subject-object relation in experience.

"That this subject-object relation simply does not exist as regards revelation--let us come right out and say it, as regards 'religious experience'--that there is no such attribute or epistemological quality as 'addressability,' we would assert as forcefully as possible by our statement that

it is the divine address which constitutes the person as imago Dei. If that be true then the human person cannot be demonstrated in his given ontic qualities because he exists only in God, witness Paul's pregnant phrase about being 'in Christ,' i.e., participating in the divine likeness of the divine Son."

²¹¹Evangelical Faith 3:99; Being Human . . . Becoming Human, pp. 85, 89-90, 134.

²¹²Theological Ethics 1:169.

²¹³Ibid., pp. 192-193, 167.

²¹⁴Evangelical Faith 1:351-352.

²¹⁵Theological Ethics 2:197. See also Theological Ethics 1:178: "God's revelation in Jesus Christ has made it in terms of their relation to one another. Man exists as the imago Dei only insofar as he is oriented with respect to God either toward God or away from him. What man could conceivably call his qualities are simply the qualities of this relation, and Luther has rightly said that in the last analysis only two 'attributes' remain, faith and unbelief. This fact is the logical consequence of man's being what he is, a relational entity."

²¹⁶Theological Ethics 1:165.

²¹⁷Ibid.

²¹⁸Evangelical Faith 1:147.

²¹⁹Ibid.

²²⁰Theological Ethics 1:152.

²²¹Ibid., p. 154.

²²²Ibid., p. 166.

²²³Ibid., pp. 169-170.

²²⁴Evangelical Faith 1:149; see also Theological Ethics 2:549.

²²⁵Evangelical Faith 1:390, 151.

²²⁶Being Human . . . Becoming Human, p. 8; Evangelical Faith 1:286-287; The Ethics of Sex, pp. 32, 52, 231; and Helmut Thieliicke, The Doctor as Judge of Who Shall Live and

Who Shall Die, trans. Edward A. Cooperrider (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), pp. 38-41.

²²⁷Theological Ethics 1:180.

²²⁸Ibid., pp. 194-195. See also p. 182: "Luther learned to believe, not in himself as a product of the medicine of grace, but exclusively in the 'gracious God.' The basis of his salvation was not he himself as the image restored through his church's means of grace; it was rather the light of the gracious God, the light which the believer reflects.

"This involves no denial of progress, of growth, of increase in justification [magis et magis justificari]. It simply disqualifies such development as an object of observation, as a possible 'outlook.' For such progress and growth is, as it were, one of those things which in passing are added to us 'as well' (Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:31). Our 'seeking' must have as its object something wholly different. Whoever confuses the purpose with the by-product--identification of the object of our seeking will quickly disclose such confusion--is practically idolatry. For idolatry is nothing but the attempt to ground oneself in what is created rather than in the one who creates, in the products rather than in the one who produces them."

²²⁹Ibid., p. 171.

²³⁰Ibid.

²³¹Ibid., p. 193.

²³²Ibid., pp. 193, 194.

²³³Evangelical Faith 3:174; Being Human . . . Becoming Human, p. 91.

²³⁴Theological Ethics 1:152-153; see also Theological Ethics 2:136, 145, and p. 613 as a convenient summary: "For in both the Old Testament and the New man does not exist as an ontically autonomous being, but only in his relation to God. Any statement about man's being must therefore always have the structure which such statements have in the Bible: Man occurs only as a predicate of the substantive 'relation to God.' To be a man is thus to be created by God and to have fallen from him, to be judged and visited by him, and finally, in Jesus Christ to be found, redeemed, reconciled, and brought to perfection by him. All other ontological statements about man--about his sexuality, his attributes, etc.--can be regarded only as secondary definitions within this ultimately determinative framework. To be a man is

thus to be 'from God' and 'to God,' and responsibly to lay hold of one's existence in these terms."

²³⁵Theological Ethics 1:178.

²³⁶Ibid., pp. 217-218.

²³⁷Theological Ethics 2:613.

²³⁸Being Human . . . Becoming Human, pp. 367-368. Thieliicke offers a helpful discussion of Plato's views in Living with Death, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), pp. 63-68.

²³⁹Evangelical Faith 3:397.

²⁴⁰Ibid., p. 412-413.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 391.

²⁴²Ibid.

²⁴³Ibid., p. 393.

²⁴⁴Ibid., p. 411.

²⁴⁵Ibid., p. 408.

²⁴⁶Evangelical Faith 2:31.

²⁴⁷Ibid.

²⁴⁸Evangelical Faith 3:408.

²⁴⁹Evangelical Faith 2:31.

²⁵⁰Evangelical Faith 3:410.

²⁵¹Ibid., p. 401.

²⁵²John Jefferson Davis, A Theology Primer: Resources for the Theological Student (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 78.

²⁵³Probably the clearest and most concise summary of Thieliicke's differences with Barth over Law and Gospel is given in Theological Ethics 1:99: "[For Barth] Gospel and Law are regarded as two sides of the same thing. When they are thus viewed as correlatives, the tension between them is eliminated. In the words of Barth's famous definition, 'Thus, we can certainly make the general and comprehensive

statement that the Law is nothing else than the necessary form of the Gospel, whose content is grace.' As the form of the Gospel, the Law thus conceals the Gospel."

²⁵⁴See Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 45-48. See also Barth's Church Dogmatics: A Selection, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), pp. 49-65.

²⁵⁵This is the representative estimation offered by Roland Kenneth Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), p. 450. See also Geoffrey W. Bromiley, An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 184.

²⁵⁶Evangelical Faith 1:277.

²⁵⁷Evangelical Faith 2:434. Note well Thielicke's passing statement in Being Human . . . Becoming Human, p. 153: "The correspondence thus presupposed between thinking and being can be assumed only on one condition, namely, that there rules in being the logos that is active in reason too and makes it receptive to itself. There has to be agreement, then, between the noetic logos (that of knowledge) and the ontic logos (that of being)." See also John Courtney Murray, S.J., The Problem of God Yesterday and Today (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964).

²⁵⁸Ibid., p. 34.

²⁵⁹Ibid., see also pp. 19, 27.

²⁶⁰Ibid., p. 44.

²⁶¹Ibid., p. 12.

²⁶²Ibid.

²⁶³Ibid., p. 62.

²⁶⁴Ibid., p. 192.

²⁶⁵Evangelical Faith 1:207. See also Evangelical Faith 2:14.

²⁶⁶Evangelical Faith 2:437.

²⁶⁷Ibid., p. 323.

²⁶⁸Theological Ethics 2:14.

- ²⁶⁹Evangelical Faith 1:195.
- ²⁷⁰Evangelical Faith 2:340.
- ²⁷¹Ibid., p. 426.
- ²⁷²Ibid., pp. 309-310.
- ²⁷³Ibid., p. 310.
- ²⁷⁴Ibid., p. 433.
- ²⁷⁵Evangelical Faith 1:266-267.
- ²⁷⁶Evangelical Faith 2:436.
- ²⁷⁷Ibid., p. 6.
- ²⁷⁸Ibid., p. 8.
- ²⁷⁹Evangelical Faith 3:191, 194.
- ²⁸⁰Evangelical Faith 2:436.
- ²⁸¹Ibid.
- ²⁸²Ibid., pp. 437-438.
- ²⁸³Ibid.
- ²⁸⁴Evangelical Faith 3:323.
- ²⁸⁵Evangelical Faith 2:238. See Thielicke's discussion in his early work, Theologie der Anfechtung (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949), especially pp. 103-134.
- ²⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 338-339.
- ²⁸⁷Evangelical Faith 3:xxvi. This constitutes Thielicke's methodological objection to Wolfhart Pannenberg. See the latter's Theology and the Philosophy of Science, trans. Frances McDonagh (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), p. 400.
- ²⁸⁸Evangelical Faith 1:209-210.
- ²⁸⁹Ibid.
- ²⁹⁰Evangelical Faith 2:339.

²⁹¹Helmut Thielicke, "The Restatement of New Testament Mythology," in Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), pp. 141, 157.

²⁹²Ibid., p. 141.

²⁹³Ibid., p. 155.

²⁹⁴Evangelical Faith 1:104-105; "Restatement of New Testament Mythology," p. 141.

²⁹⁵Evangelical Faith 3:141-142.

²⁹⁶Evangelical Faith 1:274. See also pp. 62-63: "Is not Bultmann working out a prior understanding of what history has to be and applying it to everything that advances a claim to historicity instead of being ready to let his view be enlarged by certain contents of history when these prove to be the center that gives history its true meaning?"

²⁹⁷Ibid., p. 88.

²⁹⁸"Restatement of New Testament Mythology," p. 156.

²⁹⁹Evangelical Faith 1:100.

³⁰⁰"Restatement of New Testament Mythology," p. 158.

³⁰¹Ibid., pp. 158, 172.

³⁰²Ibid., p. 173.

³⁰³Ibid., pp. 164-165.

³⁰⁴"Restatement of New Testament Mythology," p. 165.

³⁰⁵Evangelical Faith 1:83.

³⁰⁶Evangelical Faith 3:xxv: "The decisive concern of any theology, whether orthodox or rational, 'positive' or 'liberal,' is that of hermeneutical reflection. This reflection focuses on the question of how the biblical records that meet us as the Word can be understood, how they can be appropriated, and how there can be an intelligible relation between them and us. We have already shown how a Christian pneumatology answers this question: The Word creates its own hearer by disclosing itself to me and making me ready by the Spirit for this disclosure."

³⁰⁷Ibid., p. 197. Thielicke's estimation of historical criticism is ably summarized in this selection from Being

Human . . . Becoming Human, pp. 167-168: "The historico-critical investigations of the nineteenth century shattered a naive and simple relation to the Bible. For those who are open to these investigations and do not repress them, it has forever become impossible to be passive and uncritical consumers of what is imparted and demanded in this book. Here, too, the objection was and is quickly raised that a threat is posed to faith, that we have to avoid this threat, and that we can do this only by treating the critical breakthrough as though it had never happened, repressing it by a retreat into what were thought to be happier times. Even in saying this we put our finger already on the dubious element in this attitude. But there is a further point that what is regarded as a critically destructive invasion which seems to destroy the relation to the Bible is not in reality a negative thing at all. On the contrary, the fact that I must now cease to be a passive recipient, putting the question of truth in a critically feeble manner and simply being preached at instead of entering into dialogue with the biblical message, means that I attain to a deeper dimension of faith. I no longer take things on trust. I have to inquire into the binding content of truth that must be separated from its time-bound husk. (Luther himself did this.) Furthermore this critical research, while it may seem to be merely destructive, opens up previously unknown riches of the biblical message. It brings out the contours of the individual witnesses and their relations to one another. It forces us to seek the unity of their witnesses for all their individual variations and multiple wealth. New dimensions come to light and an incomparably greater fullness (pleroma) of content is revealed." See also The Ethics of Sex, p. 298, for a similar assertion.

³⁰⁸Ibid., p. 198.

³⁰⁹Evangelical Faith 2:407, 414, 416; "Restatement of New Testament Mythology," p. 172.

³¹⁰Evangelical Faith 2:339-340. A casual reading of Thielicke indicates that he takes for granted the standard critical conclusions.

³¹¹"Restatement of New Testament Mythology," p. 149.

³¹²Helmut Thielicke, The Hidden Question of God, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 172.

³¹³Evangelical Faith 1:12.

³¹⁴Being Human . . . Becoming Human, p. 10.

³¹⁵Evangelical Faith 1:362.

³¹⁶Ibid., pp. 123-124.

³¹⁷Evangelical Faith 3:xviii.

³¹⁸Theological Ethics 1:246.

³¹⁹Evangelical Faith 1:399.

CHAPTER THREE

EDWARD FARLEY'S POST-AUTHORITY REFLECTIVE INQUIRY

Influences and Agenda

A certain irony attends a consideration of Edward Farley on the heels of Helmut Thielicke. Farley searches for an "Archimedean point" from which to approach the theological enterprise, granting no privileged status to centuries-old revelatory claims. It is precisely this sort of external vantage point that Thielicke decries. For Thielicke one begins with the Holy Spirit and the regenerative Word, and as a consequence theology can proceed in meaningful fashion only from the "inside."

Edward Farley's views would not always have been described in these terms. A graduate of Louisville Theological Seminary and the doctoral program at Columbia University, the youthful Farley produced The Transcendence of God: A Study in Contemporary Philosophical Theology (1958), a book noted by such conservative authorities as Carl F. H. Henry.¹ In fact, Farley has even been identified as a former evangelical.² All this changed with Farley's encounter with Edmund Husserl and the phenomenological school he founded. Farley's theological orientation was radically altered, as he assimilated many of Husserl's most important

themes. By 1983 the Presbyterian professor of systematic theology at Vanderbilt Divinity School placed himself at the "liberal" or "revisionist" end of the theological spectrum.³ The accuracy of this self-description is evident to anyone who reads Ecclesial Man: A Social Phenomenology of Faith and Reality (1975) and Ecclesial Reflection: An Anatomy of Theological Method (1982), Farley's major two-part work of theological prolegomena.

Unlike Bernard Lonergan and Helmut Thielicke, Farley's thought is virtually unintelligible apart from the phenomenological apparatus that both undergirds and informs his work. Because of this pervasive indebtedness, the present chapter must do more than identify one or two major phenomenological themes. Therefore, once Farley's basic agenda has been identified, we will sketch the conceptual and terminological background in social phenomenology necessary to unravel and appreciate his theological prolegomena. Only then will we be in a position to understand Farley's avowedly radical alternative to all traditional theological approaches.

Edward Farley insists, as a matter of absolute primacy, that theological prolegomena does not commence with the problem of "authorities," "criteria," or methods, but rather with what he calls the problem of reality in faith.⁴ His theological prolegomena has two parts: first, the "problem of foundations," or the ways in which realities are "pre-

given" to theology; second, the "judgment," or the ways in which these same realities lay claim to truth.⁵ This prolegomena, in turn, reflects a particular conception of theology itself:

. . . theology is a determinate religious faith attempting to understand itself, bringing its prereflectively apprehended 'realities' into a reflective mode which grasps their interior structure and interrelationships, as well as worldly situations illuminated by them.⁶

Professor Farley elsewhere notes the ambiguity inherent in the term "theology" and defines it in less technical fashion. In Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (1983), Farley identifies theology in existential terms as the personal, sapiential knowledge--understanding--that can occur when faith opens itself to inquiry and reflection.⁷ In this sense theology is definitely a habitus.⁸ But it is more. In practice, theological understanding is not just a "timeless instant" or an impregnable structure. It is an activity, a life-process. Because the process ideally undergoes perpetual self-correction, theological understanding is a dialectical activity,⁹ or a "dialectic of reflection."¹⁰

The dialectical, self-critical character of theology carries with it the assumption that it is not simply correlative with "the orthodox conceptuality."¹¹ In fact, a good portion of Farley's efforts is a synthesis of the criticism leveled against this orthodox framework. Indeed, one con-

sistent merit of Farley's work is his willingness to state the consequences of his convictions in brutally candid terms: "The problem beneath the problem of theological method is whether and in what sense faith with its cognates of revelation and redemption is directed toward realities."¹² The failure adequately to come to grips with the issues raised by historical criticism over the last two centuries has left contemporary theology in "methodological paralysis."¹³

Present-day theology appears to be trapped within two impossible alternatives. First, acknowledging that the faith in which it is grounded does, in fact, suspend the axiom of object-evidence correspondence, it can charge this faith with being grounded on a several-thousand-year-long logical fallacy. Theology itself is, therefore, scientifically purified. Its cognitive grounding is no longer suspect, for it now does what all genuine disciplines do; it describes and explains on the basis of genuine evidence. Therefore, theology's historiography is genuine historiography. Its ontology is genuine ontology. The difficulty with this rather simple and "honest" alternative is that it reduces historical faith to something other than itself, and, therefore, puts theology out of business. Second, theology can make a heroic attempt to do justice to the "realities" on which this faith insists and to which it testifies. In this case, it must live with the impossible situation of admitting that these realities are arbitrarily asserted. Present-day theology is trapped by what appears to be a paralyzing feature of faith itself, a deadly seriousness about and a sublime indifference to reality.¹⁴

In short, are the realities to which one's faith is directed reducible to an empirically describable content (in cult, language, historical essence, community self-understanding,

and so forth), or is this content merely the mode in which the realities appear?¹⁵

We are ready then to formulate precisely our problem. Are there in faith's situation apprehensions of realities which are not simply apprehensions of authorities, and which are sufficient bases for judgments about realities not directly apprehended? Do representations such as God, Jesus Christ, creation, end-time, or salvation touch ground, so to speak, in direct apprehensions? Systematically formulated, this is the problem beneath the problem of theological method. Does faith involve apprehensions of realities which transcend a mere phenomenal status?¹⁶

Farley gets at these questions in Ecclesial Man and Ecclesial Reflection. This two-volume prolegomena does not approach the usual catena of issues in customary fashion. The books are neither a description of Holy Scripture as the principium cognoscendi of dogmatics, nor do they account for the anthropological conditions of the knowledge of God¹⁷ (as, for example, Karl Rahner's Hearers of the Word). Ecclesial Man accounts for faith's cognitivity and its grounds, while Ecclesial Reflection is devoted to theological reflection and inquiry with the overall aim of providing a critique of theological judgment.¹⁸

The above paragraphs have endeavored to state Farley's agenda without using an obtuse phenomenological vocabulary. The following section will sketch the phenomenological themes that run through Farley's key writings. Nevertheless, some rudimentary observations must be made if Farley's orientation is to be appreciated. Perhaps above all, Farley

is convinced that faith occurs in a "faith-world": "a social matrix whose concrete corporate form [is] ecclesia."¹⁹ Any attempt to inquire into faith's cognitivity goes astray if it circumvents this matrix, since faith's apprehensions occur within a consciousness shaped and made determinate in this matrix. Bypassing the phenomenological jargon, this means that for Edward Farley theological prolegomena and ecclesiology overlap in key areas,²⁰ for theologia is a "perennial possibility" for faith as the latter occurs in various social contexts.²¹

Farley seeks an alternative first to classical liberal views of theology as a historical description of "Christianity" and, second, to a "neo-orthodox" retention of theological authorities long since discredited.²² He recognizes that theological prolegomena will not offer a single, definitive procedure that, if followed consistently, will solve problems, clarify obscurities, or produce understanding. Such a conception of prolegomena amounts to a fruitless "treasure hunt."²³ At the same time, theology does have a "subject matter," a recognizable content to which questions, disputes, and clarifications can be traced.

Does theology have a "subject matter," a content to which its inquiries, controversies, and clarifications can be traced? In a phenomenal sense, the answer is clear. There are "phenomena" about which theology constantly talks. These phenomena have empirical dimensions which measure up to the narrowest kind of empirical concern, space-time entities apprehendable in sense perception. There is "before our eyes" the historical phenomenon of the Christian religion which extends into the past and is partial-

ly reconstructable by historical method, and which embraces a continuing living cultus. Like other religions, the Christian religion contains within itself an origin and development, various epochs, signal events, significant individuals, visible institutions, and, perhaps, a persisting though developing distinctive "essence."²⁴

The larger, much more radical questions--and ones that get to the heart of Farley's enterprise--are whether there are ontological verities to which one can trace the "normative language" and "intellective acts" of theology as well as the images resident in faith, and, in addition, where and how such verities are apprehended.²⁵ The intent is to discern how faith "apprehends" (see below) God as a reality who is not merely coincident with human subjectivity.²⁶

As a summary transition, we can observe four features pervading Farley's theological prolegomena. First, Farley does not begin with the problem of authorities, criteria, or even methods; rather, as previously indicated, he begins with the problem of reality in faith.²⁷ Second, a major focus of Ecclesial Reflection especially is an analysis of "the legacy of theological method," what Farley variously calls the "house of authority" or the "classical criteriology."²⁸ Third, Farley concentrates on a "phenomenology of tradition," specifically, the structure of ecclesial process and its bearers ("a determinative corporate memory carried in a determinate network of symbols").²⁹ Fourth, Farley identifies as the goal and "culminating focus" of his pro-

legomena the problem of truth, which, in turn, devolves to the issue of theological judgment.³⁰

Before any of these can be delineated further, it is essential that we unfold the conceptual backdrop of Farley's theology in the thought of Edmund Husserl and the terminology of social phenomenology. Save for this lexicon, it is difficult to attain more than a superficial acquaintance with even Farley's most obvious themes.

The Phenomenological Apparatus

Even the previous section was imperiled slightly by the use of expressions the technical nuances of which could only be inferred. Citation of other overt assertions of Farley's agenda in both Ecclesial Man and Ecclesial Reflection had to be postponed until their phenomenological import was satisfactorily elucidated. Such is the burden of this section. These paragraphs will outline the most fundamental themes of Husserl's phenomenology and define a core of terms indispensable to an understanding of Farley's use of social phenomenology. Farley avails himself of Husserlian phenomenology because he believes that its descriptive method potentially suggests a way of "salvaging" both the historical and the existential components of faith.³¹

Phenomenology is no monolithic orientation, nor can it be reduced to a set of pre-packaged methodological assertions.³² Even students of Edmund Husserl do not agree en-

tirely as to their master's teachings, a situation due in part to the treatment Husserl encountered at the hands of the Nazis and also to the incremental, posthumous publication of an enormous body of personal papers. Nevertheless, we can summarize the basic tenets of phenomenology as these impinge on Farley's theological work.³³

Edward Farley acknowledges that phenomenology has had its most extensive and fruitful influence in the history of religions.³⁴ At this level, however, "phenomenology" is being used very loosely, in almost a purely descriptive sense. Here, as sometimes in cultural anthropology, the issue of truth or falsity is rarely considered.³⁵ Ironically, phenomenology has only recently impacted theology, and then often indirectly through existentialism.³⁶ Farley offers a generalization to account for this:

The more universal and 'phenomenal' is the discipline the more explicit is the appropriation of the Husserlian method and conceptual apparatus. The more normative and determinate is the discipline, such as theology, the more phenomenology is present indirectly and without the Husserlian categories.³⁷

At the most basic level of the relationship of philosophy to theology, faith and reason are at odds only when the former is rooted in loci of authority or, in Farley's terms, "when faith fixes the details of its appresentations from its authorities."³⁸ Philosophy is appropriately occupied with ontology. Theology, on the other hand, transposes the

"local apprehensions" that transpire in ecclesia into modes of understanding.³⁹

What is the appeal of phenomenology for Farley, and how does phenomenological theology emerge as a distinct entity? Farley was first attracted to Husserlian phenomenology because of parallels between the philosophical situation to which phenomenology responds and the theological situation with its attendant "problem of reality."⁴⁰ Farley explains:

Knowledge is an "accomplishment" of human beings not simply because it involves physical experiments and the like but because it rests on structures and performances of human consciousness which synthesize disparate impressions into meanings and meant objects so that these objects can be retained as unified objects over a period of time. His [Husserl's] complaint was that the philosophy of his day had lost sight of the one problematic whose investigation distinguishes philosophy from all discrete sciences. It lost this subject matter because it appropriated from the natural sciences models pertinent to their investigations but absurd when applied to consciousness.⁴¹

Phenomenology thus attempts to reach the foundation of human knowledge in transcendental structures and accomplishments.⁴²

Correspondingly, phenomenological theology is the "founding moment" of theological prolegomena:⁴³ "[it] attends to faith's reality-directed apprehensions and their conditions, on which depends the second moment, theological method or criteriology."⁴⁴ Repeatedly Ecclesial Man defines phenomenological theology in terms similar to these and fur-

ther insists that its analyses do not establish the realities of faith's apprehensions.⁴⁵ Its aspiration is more modest. It seeks to locate, expose, and set forth the founding apprehensions of religious faith in their distinctive setting and with due attention to the various strata of that setting.⁴⁶ Stated in still more generic language, phenomenological theology is the attempt to penetrate and describe the pre-reflective (and hence pre-theological) matrix of faith's acts and structures.⁴⁷

What phenomenological theology can do is to render explicit the contours, the essence, the modes of existence which lie present but hidden in these apprehensions. . . . What phenomenological theology cannot do is to so duplicate the apprehensions themselves that they are actually and concretely mediated to a reader. In other words, the actual reality-apprehensions of a determinate community do not occur in the "uncovering" analyses of phenomenology but in participation in the community itself.⁴⁸

This quote, though rendered somewhat opaque by its use of yet to be explained phenomenological jargon, underscores Farley's insistence that phenomenology must precede theology or theological criteriology (see below). Historically, the classical theological authorities grew out of the social and redemptive existence that preceded them; in no sense did they produce or engender this special existence. To anticipate Farley's own concrete proposals, authorities are authorities only when their usage conforms to ecclesia; and ecclesia, in at least one of its dimensions, includes the constitutive structure of redemptive existence.⁴⁹ Reiterat-

ing the above observation that phenomenological theology does not establish the realities of faith,⁵⁰ Farley does concede to it a "consciousness-reshaping role," which serves to uncover these realities. To this extent, it can serve a positive function as a "theological therapeutic."⁵¹

Farley does not undertake a summary exposition of Husserlian phenomenology per se, although he does explicate certain of its fundamental features. Only after we have put the main themes of Husserl's work into some systematic focus can we appreciate Edward Farley's theological claims and the technical vocabulary with which he expresses them.

At its root phenomenology is a non-empirical science. To be sure, it yields new information and is not limited to analytic propositions; but because it does this in a way that the so-called "hard" sciences cannot, it is not empirical in the usual sense of the word. Phenomenology provides access to pure phenomena. "Pure phenomena" do not constitute mere appearances vis-à-vis the Kantian things-in-themselves. Phenomena appear to us in "immediate experience." However, this is not the raw material of sense impressions or one's stream of consciousness.⁵²

Anything, phenomenology avers, is a phenomenon if it is considered in a particular way, the explanation of which is in large measure an explanation of phenomenology. By considering objects, the contents of awareness, or the acts of awareness in this distinctive way, one can "intuit" the

essences of the same and grasp the essential connections between these essences.⁵³ The Husserlian scholar Max Farber explains: "A phenomenological description deals with what is given in experience as such, with experiences just as they are in themselves. The aim is to bring to evident consciousness the essence of that which is experienced."⁵⁴

While phenomenology may well examine the same things as other disciplines, its special consideration thereof prescind the empirical or contingent to an intuition of the essential.⁵⁵

The central feature of the phenomenological method is "intentional analysis."⁵⁶ The thesis of intentionality is rooted in the thought of Husserl's teacher, Franz Brentano. Very simply stated, Brentano noted that human beings are always conscious of something; consciousness is always about something and directed toward something. This "aboutness" is the essential characteristic of consciousness.⁵⁷ Inasmuch as all consciousness points toward an object, there is no such thing as pure consciousness.⁵⁸

Intentionality as developed by Husserl entails several other characteristics. First is the way intention "objectivates." The sensory data of experience is distinguished from objects. We are aware of a plurality of *sensa*: color, shape, weight, size. As these *sensa* are related, they disclose the object. The perception is given through *sensa*, but the object transcends the *sensa*. The referent of one's

consciousness is not a simple, straightforward relation. The *sensa* are the raw material of a complex structure, which are integrated into the total object. One is conscious of the object because all the *sensa* refer to it; they are not atomistic ingredients of awareness. They come to us as qualities of the object, and the intentionality of consciousness links an object to its "horizon." (For example, the front of a box refers or "intends" its side, bottom, rear, inside, and so forth.) In this way, what one perceives provides valid expectations of future experiences. The net result is that intentionality is responsible for the identity of an object.⁵⁹

The notion of intentionality of consciousness mitigates decisively against any split between subject and object. Objects are always objects of consciousness, and consciousness is necessarily a consciousness of objects. Intentionality is not limited to the content of consciousness, to material objects, or to the activity of perception. In fact, intentionality has correlative aspects: the intentional act or act of consciousness (noesis) and the intentional content or "meant-object" (noema).⁶⁰ Phenomenology analyzes both the act of the ego cogito (noesis: perception, imagination, image consciousness, memory) and the "what" of our awareness (noema).⁶¹

There are several stages of phenomenological analysis rooted in the preceding distinctions, and these impact di-

rectly on Farley's appropriation of Husserl for theological purposes. The first step of phenomenological analysis is to deepen and expand the range of one's immediate experience. As early as 1910, Husserl pronounced the manifesto of the phenomenological movement in "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science." There he coined the slogan "back to the things themselves!". Parallel to Cartesian methodological doubt, wherein one seeks to be free from prejudgments and preconceptions, phenomenology begins with a purgative stage, in which people must liberate themselves from ossified theories and beliefs and grapple only with what is given in direct experience.⁶² This, of course, is the celebrated phenomenological epoche, or suspension of beliefs, and for Husserl this is indispensable to any authentically critical philosophy. It meant the utter exclusion of all claims that could not be completely realized in terms of intuitive experience alone--and even this subject to well-defined conditions.⁶³

The ideal of freedom from presuppositions . . . requires that there be no unexamined assumptions of any kind; that there be no metaphysical or existential assumptions unless there is a special reason for explicitly positing them; and that there be no prejudgments. It properly means the explicit examination and constitutive analysis of all elements of the structure of knowledge and reality.⁶⁴

It takes little imagination to cast Husserl's epoche into theological categories, and Professor Farley does not disappoint. He recognizes that "presuppositionlessness" is more a goal, criterion, or "ideality" than a psychological

or intellectual capacity of the investigator or even a feature of his method.⁶⁵ Specifically, two sorts of commitments or belief-systems are suspended in this "initial moment" of theological reflection. The first is any theological commitment to the authorities posited by church tradition, such as Holy Scripture or confessional/conciliar documents.⁶⁶ The second set of belief-systems sidelined by the theological epoche are any and all metaphysical schemes, which would presume to determine beforehand the nature, scope, or criteria of faith's reality-apprehensions.⁶⁷

The theological epoche in other words is partly an existential act involving not just a temporary change of stance but a permanent attempt, perhaps always only an attempt, to put out of action the reality models which have shaped our consciousness, so that the specific realities of a determinate faith can appear. In this sense the epoche is a turning around, a transformation, or as religious people would say, a kind of repentance.⁶⁸

To some extent the following two sections of this chapter are a response to the question of what remains after the theological epoche.

With the intellectual decks suitably cleared, one is in a position to intuit phenomena. For phenomenology this difficult enterprise does not mean having a bright or inspired idea. The "intuition" of which Husserl speaks literally means "looking at" (Anschauung) in an effort to reach the essence of something (or, to take matters a step further, "essential relations").⁶⁹ As Farley observes, using the terminology of Husserl, the phenomenological method is

an eidetic one: "This means that it was a descriptive method based on a special kind of intuition into the eidōs or essence of something."⁷⁰

Given the obvious terminological indebtedness to Plato, it is not surprising that eidetic intuition (Wesenschau) has prompted the charge of Platonic realism. Husserl does regard universals as irreducible entities, but he quickly parts company with Plato when he insists that the general essence has neither a superior nor even an equal reality to that of individual essences. To apprehend a general essence one looks at the particulars as instances or examples of the general essence. Such is Husserl's "eidetic reduction": the movement from particular to universal essence. Intuiting a particular facilitates an apprehension of general essences.⁷¹

Husserl uses "free imaginative variation" to apprehend essential relations. Here one may drop certain components entirely, or even replace them with others as we examine essences. Are a plurality of associated essences necessary to each other? Are they essentially compatible, or perhaps incompatible? These considerations do not amount to tautology, since we are grappling with a word's referent and not the vocable itself. Moreover, these essential insights are not merely empirical inductions, since the individuals are examined as examples of essences.⁷² Diogenes Allen explains: "Empirical intuition could never yield the general-

ity and necessity of eidetic intuition. The insights are obtained by a nonsensuous intuition."⁷³

This momentary digression is prompted by Farley's appropriation of an eidetic method for phenomenological theology. As will be apparent shortly, through his use of phenomenology Farley is attempting what he calls an "eidetics of religious cognition." Bound up with social phenomenology (see below), this eidetics of religious cognition refers to the apprehension of theological verities under the determinate conditions of a historical faith. This, in turn, entails an "eidetics of redemptive existence" and the "communal matrix" of this existence.⁷⁴

Phenomenology deals with the phenomena available when one considers things in a particular way. Often this is called "the phenomenological reduction," which in rudimentary terms comes down to a suspension of judgment as to the existence or non-existence of the content of consciousness.⁷⁵ Husserl's mathematical metaphor for this operation is "bracketing," and it is related to the earlier call for a suspension of presuppositions.⁷⁶ "Bracketing" the issue of existence allows one to focus on the content, the "what" of one's awareness. In this way phenomena are made accessible; further, what one intuits in phenomenological analysis is used as a clue to concealed meanings.⁷⁷ Returning to a theme discussed above, Husserl's reality-bracketing sought

to expose the "intentional structures" present in reality appearance.⁷⁸

As a transcendental philosophy, Husserl's life-time program is an attempt to obtain access to and disclosure of the pre-reflective structures and accomplishments (Leistungen) by which the taken-for-granted objects in the everyday world are perceived, meant, associated, distinguished, and thereby known. For instance, it is at the pre-reflective (and even pre-psychic in the sense of the concrete flow of experience) level where consciousness performs a synthesis of an amalgam of colors and shapes into an enduring and "meant" object such as a tree, man, or table. In his initial formulations of the problem, Husserl argued that philosophy could only recover its own scientific integrity and rigor by attending to its proper task, the investigation of the transcendental foundation of knowledge as such.⁷⁹

Farley's indebtedness to social phenomenology for his theological prolegomena is evident from his use of such concepts as "life-world" and "faith-world."⁸⁰ The transition is effected by Farley's insistence that the "region of the transcendental" ineluctably "mirrors" the structures of the world.⁸¹ Here "intersubjectivity" is the key: "The degree of [a particular truth-claim's] reality status is the degree of its accessibility to a plurality of apprehensions. The cognizing 'I' is, therefore, always an intersubjective 'I.'"⁸² This assumes, of course, that one has the notion of "intersubjectivity" in clear focus.

Intersubjectivity . . . refers to an interpersonal structure which exists pre-consciously and which is already prior to any actual relationship or dialogue as their condition. Intersubjectivity in other words is human consciousness in its intrinsically social aspect. It is not produced by everyday acts of interrelationship but is presupposed by such acts. The being of the human being is therefore not merely subjective but intersubjective. Therefore,

when we wish to designate the actual empirical relations between persons, we shall use the terms reciprocity and interpersonal relations, reserving intersubjectivity for the pre-given, socially structured consciousness which such presuppose.⁸³

How does the faith-world relate to the social-world? Professor Farley asserts that the multifarious cognates of "world" share one common feature: each attempts to express a "stratum" of world, the unity of which is "prereflectively intended."⁸⁴ At the most basic level, the connection between social-world and faith-world arises from the simple observation that faith does not occur merely in an individual consciousness but "occupies" its own "world."⁸⁵ Faith emerges in conjunction with a "determinate social world"⁸⁶ or through participation in the community's "determinate intersubjectivity":⁸⁷ "The point is that faith occurs in a world or environment in which certain realities come to light, specific mutual intentionalities occur between human beings, and a special symbolic universe accompanies these activities."⁸⁸

Edward Farley finds phenomenological method, with its eidetic and intentional analysis, a potentially useful instrument for theological prolegomena. Perhaps above all, since the procedures involve viewing what is immediately given, it is not a naturalistic or metaphysical system to which the content of faith must conform. One can employ the procedure without Procrustean metaphysical commitments, wherein one reality scheme acts as the criterion for judg-

ments about another. Finally, though it avowedly focuses on the human subject, Farley believes that intentional analysis escapes the charge of subjectivism. For one thing, it is not an introspective description of contingent mental feelings or processes, and, in addition, the intentional object points the analysis beyond the human subject to what appears to this subject.⁸⁹

The "House of Authority" Demolished

At one level, this is perhaps the easiest feature of Farley's prolegomena to summarize. The basic thesis is clear and ceaselessly reiterated. The classical "way of authority," most overtly expressed in the "Scripture principle," is now altogether untenable. Therefore, systematic theology in the sense of the standard loci method is now meaningless.⁹⁰ The "models of authority" traditionally used in Roman, Lutheran, and Reformed dogmatics have been irreparably shattered.⁹¹ Farley is merciless in his express repudiation of the Scripture principle,⁹² and while some continue to inhabit the "house" even after its collapse (they are written off as antiquarians),⁹³ the real action is taking place among those who are doing theology in a "post-authority" setting.⁹⁴

Professor Farley acknowledges that his criticism is radical, and he concedes that the house of authority is the "historical form" of ecclesial existence.⁹⁵ Yet this does

not mean that the main features of the Scripture principle--its Heilsgeschichte framework, the "Adamic myth" (from Paul Ricoeur's lexicon), the "royal metaphor," and the "logic of triumph"⁹⁶--are endemic to ecclesial existence. On the contrary, the Scripture principle is antithetical to the "immanent essence" of ecclesial existence as Farley understands it.⁹⁷

A large part of Ecclesial Reflection is Farley's effort to heed the phenomenological call to "bracket" (in other words, temporarily suspend commitment to and not presuppose)⁹⁸ the traditional strata of authority within classical Christianity.⁹⁹ This exercise of epoche involves a massive critique of "classical criteriology," the latter signaling those authorities or norms that always function in theological work--however methodologically self-conscious it may be.¹⁰⁰ He calls this criticism "archaeology," which suggests an exposure and subsequent investigation of the strata assumed, often unreflectively, by the classical criteriology. These strata typically underlie beliefs, symbols, actions, and institutions.¹⁰¹ Farley has no pious illusions about the program he is advocating or about what he sees as its inexorable consequences.

Rather than a selective response to the classical criteriology, archaeological inquiry amounts to a psychoanalytic purge of the theological consciousness. Or, to put it differently, it represents a theological parallel to Heidegger's beginning his philosophical program with a negation, the "destruction of the house of ontology." It is only when the founding strata of the classical criteriology are

brought to the surface that the problematic which attends any contemporary theological appeal to specific norms can be experienced in its radicality. The classical criteriology tends to be of one piece, or, to change metaphors, a pattern created by a long series of upright dominoes. The archaeology will attempt to disclose the pattern. Interpreters of the Christian faith will have to decide whether or not to flick the first domino. Historically speaking, the row was toppled centuries ago.¹⁰²

Without ignoring the nuances, the classical criteriology is roughly coterminous with the house of authority, and the latter at its core connotes the Scripture principle. To affirm or impugn one is to affirm or impugn all three. In brief, the way of authority is a code word for certain features of classical Roman Catholic and Protestant ways of grounding truth claims:¹⁰³ "[it entails] some specifiable entity (Scripture, text, church father) whose truth character was an a priori quality. As an authority, the text could be a norm for truth but could not itself be subject to something outside itself to determine its truth."¹⁰⁴

Reverting for a moment to the language of social phenomenology, the essence of the way of authority is its inveterate displacement of "spheres of immediate evidence" (the sphere of "reality presentation") by vehicles of social persistence.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Farley contends that wherever it occurs, the central feature of the Scripture principle is this coincidence of written authority and vehicle of social identity and persistence.¹⁰⁶

Historically, the Scripture principle emerges out of the milieu of synagogal Judaism, not Israelite religion.¹⁰⁷ The dispersion and its manifold effects led to a new focus on written Torah. In Judaism, "Scripture" attains a fairly precise connotation: "[it] means a written deposit of the definitive and completed revelation of Yahweh to his people, the primary function of which is to be the source of community cultic and moral regulations (halakah)."¹⁰⁸

Farley argues that the Scripture principle was by no means required by the emergent Christianity of the first century. Christianity came close to transcending or even rejecting the Judaic Scripture principle.¹⁰⁹ The "self-conscious retention and confirmation" of the Scripture principle is incompatible with Farley's notion of ecclesiality.¹¹⁰ But for now we note simply that, with the necessary modifications, Christianity did retain the Scripture principle.¹¹¹ The assorted Christian modifications of Judaism's Scripture principle result in a new definition of Scripture.

Scripture means a two-part collection of writings which prefigures (the Old Testament) and describes (the New Testament) the central event of salvation history, the coming of the Messiah and the beginnings of the universal messianic community, which functions to control and measure the continuing traditioning event and proclaiming of that event to all nations.¹¹²

To sum up, in either context Holy Scripture refers to a collection of writings reflecting a normative period of revelation,¹¹³ the genre and function of which concerns divinely

given cultic and moral regulations for the life of the community.¹¹⁴

This Scripture principle is attended by several "middle axioms."¹¹⁵ Farley's definition is technical: "I am using the term to call attention to a stratum of presuppositions which mediates the founding stratum and the explicit criteria or authorities appealed to in self-conscious reflection or disputation."¹¹⁶ Perhaps most important, they are rooted in what Farley calls the "principle of identity," a foundational pillar of the house of authority.¹¹⁷ The principle postulates an identity between what God desires to communicate and what comes to expression in language in the interpretative act of the individual or community.¹¹⁸

The principle of identity has two sides. The objective side is God's disclosed will for the corporate life of His people. The "agential" side refers to the specific process of divine communication, which eventually finds expression in such notions as "prophets" and, most overtly, "inspiration."¹¹⁹ The recipient of God's disclosed will, or the bearer of His communication, becomes His de facto presence, the locus where His word/will can be perpetually found.¹²⁰

To summarize, the principle of identity involves interpreting the creaturely entity as the ersatz presence of the divine, a synthesis of divine intention and human interpretation into one content, and the explanation of that content by divine causal efficacy. The result is an identity of content between what is divinely willed (revealed) and what is humanly asserted.¹²¹

As part of the classical criteriology, Farley maintains that there are three "locations" of the divine-human identity. Without detailing their parallel development from oral tradition all the way through the church's magisterium, the three locations (or, perhaps better, the threefold location) are Scripture, the eventual written testimony to Jesus' word by his followers; orthodox dogma, the "definitive doctrinalization" of the apostolic testimony in the New Testament; and the church's teaching authority, a "definitive institution" arising as the "perennial guardian and interpreter" of Scripture and dogma.¹²² Scripture is the cornerstone of this foundation,¹²³ yet all three locations of divine-human identity presuppose and require the others.¹²⁴ In any case, the locus of divine-human identity--the authority--is itself the evidence (or location of evidence) for theological judgment and religious belief.¹²⁵

The middle axioms are likewise threefold. The middle axioms extend the principle of identity, and they too are part of the presuppositional strata of the classical criteriology. While they are not quite so readily surveyed as the locations of divine-human identity, they are the axiom of secondary representation, the axiom of leveling, and the axiom of immutability.¹²⁶ These three, in turn, are further rooted in two "founding presuppositions": salvation history and the periodization of history.¹²⁷

The first middle axiom, secondary representation, concerns the extension of identity to a secondary representative that functions as a vehicle of social persistence. Here the believer interprets the chronologically successive entity--a conciliar assertion or magisterial pronouncement--as a further locus of divine-human identity.¹²⁸ This axiom is central, and Farley explains it carefully:

The initial and most basic extension to a secondary representative occurs in the transition from a living, charismatic, authoritative figure to its persistence or revival in ongoing tradition. A second extension of representation occurs in the transition from oral tradition and its characteristic mode of duration (in cultic recital, in memorization) to written deposit. A third extension of representation occurs in the transition from written deposit to a definitive commentary on or interpretation of that deposit. A fourth extension, which can also take place concomitantly with other extensions, occurs in the emergence of an institution whose role is to maintain, protect, and purify the tradition and its ongoing interpretation. In all of these transitions, the original locus of identity between divinely willed content and human recipient is extended to entities (institutions, writings, oral traditions) that represent the original ersatz divine representative and thus have a secondary status.¹²⁹

The order of the middle axioms is important. In the second middle axiom the focus shifts from the content of the original identity to its vehicle.¹³⁰ Farley calls this shift "leveling": "the equal distribution of truth in the vehicle of communication"¹³¹--including its interior details and parts.¹³² Clearly, this means that each component of the way of authority is equally authoritative; furthermore, all ve-

hicles of divine authority are as internally veracious at one point as another.¹³³

Finally, the third middle axiom stipulates that the bearers of divinely communicated content, in whole and in part, are unchangably valid and applicable. This is Farley's principle of immutability, and it signals a permanence of the divine content extended even to interior details of the secondary representative.¹³⁴ This and the first two axioms together ground a notion of across-the-board inerrancy,¹³⁵ and they pave the way for a non-historical and inherently atomistic exegesis.¹³⁶

Only against this backdrop of the Scripture principle and its supporting middle axioms can one understand traditional theological method. In almost tautological fashion, Farley declares that theological method traditionally construed is criteriology.¹³⁷ This is really an admission that at key points within the classical criteriology there is simply little concern for or even consciousness of method.¹³⁸ In the "framework of authority" theology is not scientific, evidence-gathering inquiry; instead, it is the citation, exposition, and harmonizing of the relevant texts.¹³⁹ If one recalls the middle axioms sketched above, particularly the axiom of secondary representation, he will realize how circular the whole procedure can become--and thereby how it can claim immunity to any criticism, inquiry, or even the question of truth.¹⁴⁰ Once the secondary representation has tak-

en place (in other words, once a theological query has attained dogmatic resolution), this same theological and doctrinal "accomplishment" comes to enjoy the status of criterion, given, and evidence.¹⁴¹ Criterion and doctrinal formulation now coincide.¹⁴² Classical theological method is demonstration,¹⁴³ and the house of authority is soon an "impregnable castle."¹⁴⁴

. . . this way of authority locates evidences for judgments in vehicles of social persistence (authorities) rather than in immediate manifestation; it is in style and genre citation rather than inquiry; and, it restricts the question of truth to very formal operations.¹⁴⁵

Summarizing to this point, classical theology operated on a pre-critical, source-to-application model. Theological understanding is a simple matter. It describes a movement from a disclosed knowledge, facilitated by an acquaintance with the deposit of revelation, to the exhibition and application of the same.¹⁴⁶ Both Roman and Protestant orthodoxy assumed this method of authority. Within this mode of thought, the authorities (Scripture and/or tradition) function as or in place of evidential and critical ways of establishing truth claims. The theological enterprise was grounded in the deposit of divinely revealed truths. The single entity, theology, lent itself to various usages and purposes, among them exhibiting and defending truth and opposing heterodoxy.¹⁴⁷

The impregnable castle, Farley contends, was blown to bits with the advent of modernity. If one theme is obvious in Farley's work, from the popular Requiem for a Lost Piety (1966) to Theologia, it is his total and unrelenting rejection of the Scripture principle and with it the whole house of authority. This has self-evident import for theological prolegomena: "Our question is, how can theology proceed to make true judgments and back them up if it cannot draw on the features and concepts of the way of authority?"¹⁴⁸

At a straightforward historical level, the Scripture principle is crushed under the weight of emergent Biblical criticism. Farley does not challenge the claims of such as Lessing, Kierkegaard, or Troeltsch;¹⁴⁹ indeed, there can be no "mere authority" once critical method assumes academic hegemony. To retain the Scripture principle in this setting is "special pleading" or "ideology."¹⁵⁰ The historical-critical method, taken in undiluted form, desupernaturalizes and relativizes both the traditional authorities as well as the content of Christian faith,¹⁵¹ since the origin of the Biblical material is now recognized as a historical and not a supernatural process.¹⁵²

Once the house of authority has been destroyed, its theological content will soon be plundered. Attempts by church leaders to retain some residue of their traditional faith are doomed to failure.¹⁵³ At a very basic level, the history of modern theology is a salvage operation. Con-

stantly in retreat, Christian theologians have been, in Farley's words, "searching for the gold nugget somewhere in the network"; that is, they seek the remaining authoritative element that will not be destroyed by the next pronouncement of critical historians.¹⁵⁴

If the framework and presuppositions of the house of authority are not in operation, these writings cannot be regarded as "holy Scripture." That is, they cannot be differentiated from other writings as having their origin in a special divine act of inspiration which gives all their parts (passages, texts) the a priori quality of truth and authority.

We put the matter as clearly and bluntly as possible because it is our conviction that much of the confusion that attends modern theology is a result of ambiguity and vacillation on this point, symptomized in antinomies that attend the commitment to historical-critical methods and the Scripture principle. A number of unsolvable problems have occupied theologians as a result. One unsolvable problem attends the long and fruitless search for a new locus of authority in Scripture. This search acknowledges the discreditation of the old model of plenary inspiration and the a priori authority of all biblical passages. It looks for some residual authority, some nucleus in Scripture where a priori truth, the truth to which the church is subject, makes its last stand. Proposed are salvation history, revelatory events, a canon within the canon composed of Jesus Christ, justifying faith, and the like. The problem is simply that there is no such residue once the presuppositions of the Scripture principle are undercut.¹⁵⁵

The obstacles involved in any mix of historical consciousness with elements of the way of authority (this mix is roughly Farley's definition of neo-orthodoxy, as represented by the likes of Karl Barth and Karl Rahner)¹⁵⁶ are simply insurmountable.¹⁵⁷

There is much more to Farley's archaeology of the classical criteriology than the claim that historical-critical methodology debunks the Bible. The problem with the Scripture principle is not only its epistemological inadequacy. Within Farley's theological prolegomena the issue is much more fundamental: the Scripture principle is per se inimical to ecclesial existence.

The problem that attends this cornerstone of the classical criteriology is not simply a hermeneutical one, as expressed in this way: "We know from historical evidence that atomistic citation of Scripture is invalid so let us discover a more adequate set of rules by which to apply, interpret, believe in, and appropriate the texts of Scripture." The problem is the Scripture principle itself and its incompatibility with ecclesial existence.¹⁵⁸

In the face of this incompatibility, the retention of the Scripture principle leads to a series of antinomies and to inherently confusing ways of grounding theological judgments.¹⁵⁹ The most basic of these antinomies concerns the Scripture principle's conflict with a key feature of ecclesial existence, namely, the experience of salvation in a universally available mode.¹⁶⁰ This feature will be developed at greater length in the following section. Here we note simply that in both form and content the Scripture principle presents a host of impossible dilemmas.

First, Christianity's (unnecessary) appropriation of the Jewish Scripture principle signals a capitulation to the profound ethnicity of post-exilic Judaism.¹⁶¹ Farley goes so far as to assert that a universal religious community cannot

embrace the Jewish Scripture principle without contravening its own nature.¹⁶² He elaborates:

The Scripture principle can be workable if one grants the desirability of a continuation of a single ethnic community which perpetually adopts Scripture's regulations to its situation. But once a religious community accepts the validity of cultural pluralism, it cannot model itself on Scripture under the principles of identity and leveling. This is why the Christian movement has always been a hybrid phenomenon. It embraces the Scripture principle in full, with each age claiming to model its communal and individual life on Scripture. This can be done only by ignoring most of the actual contents of Scripture or by so interpreting selective parts that Scripture appears to be the authority.¹⁶³

This citation and its reference to the "actual contents" of the Bible point to the other problems Farley finds inherent in the Scripture principle. For instance, the royal metaphor noted earlier as an element of the Biblical history scheme entails a glut of "theodicy considerations." Farley argues that the royal metaphor involves a "willful nonsalvific presence" in most of history; or, on the assumption that God's will and action are universal, the evils of human history would have the same relation to God's causality as do His saving acts.¹⁶⁴

[The two alternatives] involve admitting either that God can but does not will to operate salvifically in all his creation or that he can and does determine all his creation and is thus the determiner of good and evil. Both alternatives retain the royal metaphor but abolish any meaningful affirmation of the goodness and love of God.¹⁶⁵

When the royal metaphor is coupled with the principle of identity, it is a short step to a charge of idolatry.

The house of authority can and has functioned as an ersatz god, especially when it attains institutional or hierarchical form.¹⁶⁶ When ecclesia is identified with an authoritative and definitive institution, the historical faith is susceptible to ethical imperialism and the domination of culture.¹⁶⁷ Such tendencies exist precisely because the classical criteriology places entities (whether individuals, writings, or institutions) outside "the network of multiple influences."¹⁶⁸

The foregoing is Farley's application of the phenomenological epoche to the classical way of authority, and it is a major theme of his theological prolegomena. Farley proposes his own thesis: "The Scripture principle does not offer a vehicle of duration that corresponds to ecclesial existence."¹⁶⁹ Quite obviously, the repudiation of the Scripture principle entails a further overhaul of the nature and method of those theologies that have long presupposed it. When theology flees the house of authority, it abandons its foundational materials: Heilsgeschichte, identity, canon, divine inspiration, "sacred" Scripture, inerrancy, and all the rest.¹⁷⁰ Its treasured methods soon follow: "the substitution of authority for evidence, the genre of citation, and the formalistic restriction of truth."¹⁷¹

Once the effects of this earthquake on faith's self-interpreted content have been felt,¹⁷² the remaining task is an examination of those features of ecclesia that necessari-

ly burst the old wineskins of the Scripture principle. The epoche and its bracketing are behind us. We seek now to apprehend the essence of ecclesial existence.

A Revisionist Alternative: Theology
As Ecclesial Reflection

Application of the phenomenological epoche to the classical criteriology has thoroughly discredited the traditional way of authority. Holy Scripture in traditional theology is the locus of divine-human identity, so that when one listens to the Biblical Word he hears the voice of God Himself.¹⁷³ Scripture and the other elements of the classical criteriology are nearly a sociological effort to survive the "dispersive effects" of historical transition. However, once this classical criteriology is cast into dogma, it absolutizes a particular historical achievement and the resolution of a specific epoch.¹⁷⁴ In the long run, this calcification led to a host of unacceptable intellectual sins, the nature of which is anything but venial: "[the way of authority] continues to foster obscurantism, dualisms in the human self, superstition, sexism, reality denial, legalism as a unifying piety and mindset."¹⁷⁵

Clearly, theology has to find a better way. Farley is convinced that the classical criteriology, despite its historical pretensions, is not a priori to what he calls the "immanent essence" of Christianity.¹⁷⁶ This claim is the basis for the constructive side of his prolegomena, which is

cast in fairly esoteric phenomenological dress. For example, he contends that "the post-epoche residue" is the matrix of "reality apprehensions" of the community of faith.¹⁷⁷ This becomes a little more transparent when one notes Farley's distinction between "concrete reality apprehensions" and criteriology. The former is concerned with religious knowledge and the latter with theological understanding and method.¹⁷⁸ Very simply, one can have reality apprehensions without the old way of authority. This means, in turn, that theological understanding remains a possibility too.¹⁷⁹

Vital to the above is Professor Farley's conviction that the mediating vehicle of religious insight is a "determinate historical community" (or "ecclesia," as described below).¹⁸⁰ A post-authority theology will ground its judgments in accessible "fields of evidence."¹⁸¹ Theology cannot be pursued above the "grid of life itself" because theological understanding is preceded by and grounded in the predispositions of faith.¹⁸² Also, the immediate apprehensions of faith occur pre-reflectively¹⁸³ and preinstitutionally;¹⁸⁴ they are mediated through the "distinctive sociality" of the ecclesial community.¹⁸⁵

Farley presupposes the primacy of this community as the locus of immediate apprehensions.¹⁸⁶ This is transitional to a specific pursuit of the "constitutive aspect" of

theology, an uncovering or apprehension (Wesenschau) of the essence of ecclesial existence.¹⁸⁷

Phenomenological theology's aim is to locate the immediate and founding apprehensions which accompany faith. Generally expressed, our thesis is that faith's apprehensions occur pre-reflectively and by means of an enduring participation in a form of corporate, historical existence which we are calling ecclesia. Specifically, we submit that the major clue guiding our search is provided by a nexus of interaction and interdependence between certain components of ecclesia.¹⁸⁸

Farley is very careful to stipulate from the outset that theological prolegomena itself cannot mediate the references and realities of theology.¹⁸⁹ Rather, theological method attempts to discover how the apprehensions that accompany participation in ecclesial existence will supply a reflection concerned with truth and culminating in understanding.¹⁹⁰

A post-authority theology will not be explication or citation of ossified propositional deposits.¹⁹¹ The "method" of phenomenological theology is reflective: "an attempt to penetrate and open up matters which are present but hidden."¹⁹² At one level, the goal of such reflection is the "situation of faith," what Farley calls the components and structures that facilitate the reality-apprehensions of faith.¹⁹³ For this reason, "authorities" cannot be the key to the situation of reality apprehension. Instead, in a theology informed by the categories of social phenomenology

the terms are reversed and the situation of reality-apprehension defines and illumines the authorities.¹⁹⁴

. . . phenomenological theology must precede theological criteriology. This is not because "phenomenology" precedes such, but because the question of the mode of givenness of the object is that which should found decisions about authorities and norms, not vice versa.¹⁹⁵

The genre of theology Farley proposes is reflective inquiry.¹⁹⁶ Commensurate with the scientific mentality in general,¹⁹⁷ theology as inquiry is not content to exegete authorities relativized by historical consciousness.¹⁹⁸ Theology is devoted to the interrogation of appropriate--and multiple--fields of evidence.¹⁹⁹ Because theological inquiry is a process, it simply cannot occur within the framework of the classical criteriology.²⁰⁰

By way of preliminary introduction, theology as reflective inquiry has three dimensions: portraiture, truth discernment, and praxis discernment.²⁰¹ The first two dimensions are considered in Ecclesial Reflection. The third --"theology as it occurs in and toward specific biographical and social situations"²⁰²--awaits systematic development.

Portraiture is the first "moment" of theological reflection.²⁰³ It is the historical description of ecclesial existence.²⁰⁴ Portraiture is both historical and theological in character. Historically, it tries to portray a genuine, corporate historical existence. Theologically, though, it depicts this historical reality in its "ideal and entelecha-

ic" aspects:²⁰⁵ " . . . theological portraiture attempts to grasp the relative origin of ecclesial existence in the sense of describing the event(s) and person(s) to whose causal efficacy the new kind of historical existence owes its being."²⁰⁶

Hermeneutics is integral to theological portraiture. Farley is adamant that portraiture is not concerned with Christianity qua Christianity.²⁰⁷ The hermeneutical task is one of "disengagement": "to disengage the symbolic universe of faith from its territorial and landed-meaning framework."²⁰⁸ One seeks to "see through" the latter to the former.²⁰⁹ To the extent that one succeeds--as the symbolic universe is "mapped"--ecclesiality comes increasingly into view.²¹⁰

Hence, the focus of theological portraiture is ecclesiality.²¹¹ It may well avail itself of historical studies of Christianity. But what will emerge from these efforts is, in Farley's words, "a type of corporate existence."²¹² So far the terms "ecclesial existence" and "ecclesiality" have been used sparingly, and only when the same point could not be made with different vocables. However, they become central at this point. These concepts are so important to Farley's overall scheme that he can define theology itself as "ecclesial reflective inquiry."²¹³

Ecclesiality is a mode of corporate historical existence, which is undergoing redemption under universal condi-

tions.²¹⁴ The three underscored terms signal the quintessential features of ecclesiality. Ecclesia and ecclesiality are definitely not synonymous with their counterparts in the traditional way of authority, church and Christianity.²¹⁵ At their best, the latter pair may be vehicles of the former. Ecclesiality and ecclesia are comprehensive types; they are partly actual and partly ideal/teleological notions.²¹⁶ All too often, the institutional concepts of Christianity and church have inhibited the eschatological features of ecclesia and ecclesiality.

To say that ecclesiality is a mode of corporate existence is tautological. More specifically, a distinctive "intersubjectivity" is involved,²¹⁷ which moves beyond mere self-identity.²¹⁸ In more phenomenological jargon, what Farley calls "depth sociality" is at work. This concept inquires into the meanings or meaning-acts ("mutually intended meanings") which occur between the persons of this community, and without which people relate to this community as an aggregate of strangers.²¹⁹ Still, this does not exhaust the significance of this feature. For Farley, faith's "cognitive dimension" is founded in this community participation; therefore, theology's "given and ground" commence there.²²⁰

Perhaps above all, ecclesiality is redemptive existence. Ecclesia is thus a mode of existence that is "alienation-in-transition-to-redemption:"²²¹ "What it means

to be ecclesia in any time is the envisioning of the stranger (the weak, suffering, oppressed other) through the imagery of redemptive existence."²²² Correspondingly, ecclesia is ideally a community that has a redemptive effect on its environment.²²³ This "modification" of existence "toward" redemption--the possibly cumbersome expression points up its incomplete and eschatological dimension²²⁴--is as close as Farley will come to "essence of Christianity" language. Note very well, he is not referring to a historically unchanging kernel vis-a-vis a changing husk in the manner of Harnack.²²⁵ Theological portraiture as Farley envisions it is a perpetually changing enterprise, the aim of which is ecclesiality. So conceived, ecclesial existence, the "kingdom of God," connotes a process:²²⁶ "a way in which the spaces of any culture become open to redemptively transforming power."²²⁷

Redemption has both negative and positive aspects. Negatively, redemption reduces the inclination and need of a person to secure himself, which further involves founding one's own meaning and telos by "absolutizing attachments" to temporal, worldly entities.²²⁸ Positively, redemption transforms an idolatrous²²⁹ way of "being-in-the-world": "The world and its contents are grasped as not-the-eternal and dependent-on-the-eternal. Replacing enmity and fear are wonder, awe, and concern toward worldly entities, an empathetic, emotive appreciation of them, as part of the network

of created being."²³⁰ In more traditional language, redemption shows how the human world is and how it can be in contrast to sin.²³¹ Moreover, redemption effects a new mode of being-in-the-world as the presence of the eternal and so ends the pursuit of a "mundane remover of chaos."²³² This dovetails with Farley's stated purpose in Ecclesial Man: "to illustrate the appresence of God to redemptive existence."²³³

If redemption signals the participation in co-intentionalities of freedom and obligation instead of idolatry and flight,²³⁴ it is important to recognize that redemptive existence occurs in the ecclesial community in connection with the particular "mythos" (gospel) of this community. Ideally, the mythos and gospel govern the way the community endures over time. This means, in turn, that tradition and "traditioning" are one aspect of the redemptive nature of the ecclesial community.²³⁵ Involved here is what Farley calls "ecclesial process": "an ever-moving horizon of redemptive activity."²³⁶ This is an "ideal-historical" term describing the community's persistence through time as an occurrence of redemption. Hence, it approximates the synoptic gospels' designation "kingdom of God."²³⁷

Ecclesial process and its related notion of "ecclesial corporate memory" naturally introduce the question of the relationship of redemption's "originating event" to its (redemption's) occurrence in the ecclesial community. Farley

insists that redemption has a "historical" character insofar as it occurs as the historical occurs ("in the network of reciprocal interrelations and interactions").²³⁸ The theologian will be concerned, among other things, with a study of the originating event, its appropriate "linguistic unit" and written account, and its institutionalization.

The "originating event" effected universalization of the ethnic "Torah community" and gave redemptive existence its new focus. Its "initiating center" is the person of Jesus of Nazareth--His message, ministry, death, and renewed presence.²³⁹ The primitive gospel is the announcement that in and through this Jesus, salvation is now available to everyone.²⁴⁰ It is "normative," Farley avers, not in the sense of authoritative--"the community's attempt to make all subsequent events and empirical religious communities representations or limitations of the original one"²⁴¹--but rather definitive for the self-interpretation of future historical expressions of the same type of corporate existence.²⁴²

The concepts of social and ecclesial duration are at work here. Social duration is the antithesis of historical indifference, since some stratum of its past is recalled and revived as part of the society's present.²⁴³ The decisive feature of specifically ecclesial duration is the remembrance and celebration of the originating, normative event.²⁴⁴ As such, it is the perpetuation of ecclesial existence:²⁴⁵ "[including] the originating universalizing event,

the ecclesial community (and its intersubjectivity), and the experienced and proclaimed salvation."²⁴⁶

Duration and persistence invariably occur through vehicles (written and institutional) and activities.²⁴⁷ Here the written vehicles emerge as central to theological portraiture. First in sequence is the literature of the faith of Israel. Its unique contribution to theological portraiture is the expression of the faith's "symbolic universe," one which constitutes ecclesial existence.²⁴⁸ Most important, however, is Kerygma: "the literature of the initial transition to ecclesiality."²⁴⁹ By virtue of this transitional role, and because it conveys the "paradigm of ecclesiality," it enjoys a certain primacy.²⁵⁰ Its normative function is to attest the originating events of ecclesial existence.²⁵¹

There is, then, a literature that attended the transition to ecclesial existence which records, even if the purpose of the author was specific and occasional, various moments of the transition from the perspective of belief-ful participation in the transition. This literature, written from faith, records the events of ecclesial origin. For this reason it has the character of kerygma.²⁵²

This literature is not to be confused with the canonical New Testament of the classical way of authority.²⁵³ One need not take refuge in "theories of inspiration,"²⁵⁴ nor is one troubled by historical "uncertainties" in the gospels.²⁵⁵ Such matters are never at issue: ". . . when the collection of authoritative writings is submitted to ecclesiality, the

resulting function of that collection in the community bursts the Scripture principle altogether."²⁵⁶

Theological portraiture cannot properly approach the literature of the faith of Israel or the third literature, "Interpretation," apart from the paradigm of kerygma.²⁵⁷ "Interpretation" as a vehicle of ecclesial duration and self-identity²⁵⁸ signals the community's efforts to formulate the Christian mythos at levels of belief, understanding, and knowledge. The literature of Interpretation has the character of "doctrinalization,"²⁵⁹ and it is unified by the community's effort to understand the Christian mythos.²⁶⁰ A set of writings does not determine the ecclesial community's proper duration. On the contrary, the duration appropriate to this kind of faith and social existence will determine how the writings function in this community.²⁶¹

In summary, these literatures have two central uses in theological reflection. First, they preserve the historical reality of ecclesial existence, so that its symbolic universe can become a continuing occasion for salvific transformation. They "make available" ecclesial existence as a historical entity. Second, their decisive and central function occurs in theological portraiture, simply because these literatures express the symbolic universe of ecclesial existence in its most comprehensive and enduring fashion.²⁶² With the closing of the house of authority, the hermeneutic "seeing through" that attends theological portraiture is no

longer concerned with rules for interpreting discrete texts. Now theological reflection deals with literature pertinent to the depiction of ecclesial existence.²⁶³

Along with the linguistic and written expressions of ecclesial duration, there is finally institutionalization. Farley argues that ecclesia requires some form of institutionalization, but he insists as well that the specific forms are not intrinsic to ecclesia per se.²⁶⁴ While the term "church" combines intersubjectivity, sociality, and institutional structure,²⁶⁵ Farley is exploring an "ideal-actual" entity in ecclesiality; therefore, no contemporary branch of Christendom can be normative for the inquiry. They all represent a plurality of historical actualizations that in fact contradict ecclesiality, and thus they have a "highly tenuous relation" to ecclesial existence.²⁶⁶ Positively, of course, the principal function of institutionalization is to enable a social entity to persist through time.²⁶⁷

Farley's disqualification of any historical or contemporary group as the embodiment of ecclesia is not to be dismissed as idle polemic. His point involves not only the vehicles of persistence for a normative event.²⁶⁸ Rather, we are here coming to the core of ecclesia as universalized redemptive existence.

Heretofore we have not paid sufficient attention to this feature, but it is basic to every aspect of Farley's

prolegomena. Farley's work is a portraiture of ecclesial existence, which means a "universalized modality" of divine redemptive presence.²⁶⁹ The universality is temporal, social, and religious; or, in other words, it cannot be limited to any epoch, socio-cultural group, or institutional religion. This is quite consistent with the repudiation of the Scripture principle and its concomitant postulate of "selective intervention."²⁷⁰ Ecclesial existence abolishes salvation history in the traditional sense, since its universalism abolishes all ethnic and national conditions of redemption²⁷¹--"provincial" or "determinate" times and spaces.²⁷² Very simply, redemptive existence literally demands (Farley's word) the negation of all such boundaries.²⁷³

The universal element refers both to the negative fact that no specific human cultural entity (language, land, nation, sex, epoch) is an indispensable condition for the redemptive presence of God and to the positive fact that redemption applies potentially to all the environments or life-worlds in which human beings have their being.²⁷⁴

Professor Farley is quite aware of the inherent differences between his portraiture and the corollaries of the classical criteriology. He argues that the classical criteriology presumes both the periodization of revelation-redemption and the "restriction" of revelation to an earlier epoch. Normative revelation occurred in the past in connection with a singular, definitive epoch. Farley contends,

however, that this periodization is by no means intrinsic to revelation itself.

There is nothing in the nature of revelation as such which necessarily restricts it to specific periods of time. In fact, the opposite is closer to the truth. For if revelation is a disclosive activity of God, one would expect that activity to be rooted in God's very nature and therefore characteristic of the ongoing relation between God and being. If revelation is a concomitant of God's redemptive activity, it has no independent or primary status in theology. If this is the case, revelation will occur as long as redemptive activity occurs. Revelation-redemption describes a constant relation between a loving and merciful God and a fragile and fallen world.²⁷⁵

What dare not be overlooked in the above citation is the implicit relativization of the incarnation as a kairotic moment of revelatory activity. Farley does refer to "originating events" and, more specifically, to their "initiating center."²⁷⁶ He tentatively asserts in Ecclesial Man that "elements" in the teaching and public ministry of Jesus "anticipate" ecclesia: "The message of the kingdom of God is so cast that it transcends the salvation-history framework of the holy nation and the holy city."²⁷⁷ In Ecclesial Reflection he defines the originating event as one that at once effects the universalization of the "Torah community" and the new focus of redemptive existence. The initiating center is the Christ-event as defined above.²⁷⁸ But this declaration is followed immediately by an important addition: ". . . as the event effecting a transition to a new kind of historical-corporate existence, it also includes the

transition of Jesus' accomplishment into kerygma and ecclesial community."²⁷⁹ The difficulty is apparent when one realizes that the "ecclesial community," as elsewhere defined, can exist without any overt ties to the apostolic church.²⁸⁰

If the originative events are not hapax, as they are in classical Christianity, can they still be declared normative? Farley maintains that the events in question are normative because of their "historical actuality"²⁸¹--"an actualization of redemptive possibilities and world relationships"²⁸²--and the redemptive transformation they effect.²⁸³ The events from which ecclesiality arises are unified by precisely this capacity to signal a transition to a "new mode" of redemptive existence.²⁸⁴ "They are the events which effected a new condition of redemptive existence; thus their content is, ever after, the content of what ecclesial existence requires to remain a distinctive historical type."²⁸⁵ Significantly, Farley observes that any comprehensive treatment of redemption would be necessarily Christological.²⁸⁶

To reiterate, the originating event (the ministry of Jesus, its impact on a small band of disciples, the Gentile mission) is normative insofar as its result is a mode of corporate existence that offers universally accessible redemption.²⁸⁷ The linguistic vehicles of theological portraiture will ideally capture the revelatory, trans-historical character of the events. The "story"²⁸⁸ and "images"²⁸⁹

pressed into service will facilitate proclamation and "celebrative remembering."²⁹⁰

Faith, Farley says, describes the way in which men and women live in and toward God and toward the world under the impact of redemption.²⁹¹ Its "intrinsic feature" in the light of ecclesiality reflects a corresponding universality: "[it is] the unrestricted reach of the perceptiveness which redemption effects."²⁹² Indeed, faith is directed to realities that transcend the behaviors, experiences, or images of any historical religion, including Christianity.²⁹³ The "references of faith" are those realities of faith as "carried" by the images and doctrinalizations of the ecclesial community. Their matrix and unity is ecclesiality itself—"a universalized form of redemptive community."²⁹⁴ Farley is convinced that it is possible to penetrate the matrix of faith, and this is the object of second-order reflection within the context of phenomenological theology.²⁹⁵

If the first moment of theological reflection is portraiture, wherein ecclesiality comes into view as a historical entity, the second moment moves beyond these principally hermeneutical aspects to the question of truth.²⁹⁶ Farley variously calls this second moment "truth discernment" or theological judgment.²⁹⁷ The abandonment of the gutted house of authority does not free the theologian from his responsibility to make theological judgments. To be sure, judg-

ments attend all "critical-cognitive" and "reality-oriented" enterprises.²⁹⁸

In keeping with his phenomenological orientation, Farley appropriates a fourth theory of truth--the traditional, threefold typology includes the correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic/operational--to serve this moment of theological reflection. Begun by Husserl and developed by Martin Heidegger, he terms it the "disclosure" approach to truth.²⁹⁹ It emphasizes the essence of truth and the "region of its occurrence" and not primarily the bearers of truth (the statements and language).³⁰⁰ Farley does not simply discount the traditional typology; his approach is much more carefully nuanced. His argument is that judgments are true when their claims can be grounded in "world structural" and "as-such" references.³⁰¹

My own inclination is to retain two fundamental features of truth proffered by these [traditional] theories. The first discloses truth as a predicate of judgments, hence, the possibility of true and false judgments. That which gives a judgment this predicate is the degree to which the judgment expresses "how the world is." The second feature of truth indicates what in fact must happen for "how the world is" to obtain a judgmental expression, namely, a reality disclosure. These two features may help explain why language about truth is equivocal. Thus the problem of truth is at one time the problem of how reality comes forth, occurs, is manifest--in short, the problem of grounding, of evidence, warrants, and verification. At another time the problem of truth is the problem of types of statements, their qualities, references, and relations.³⁰²

Farley's theological portraiture identified three dimensions of "ecclesial universals": "ecclesiality's global

reference, the human problematic of sin and the reality of redemption, and the transcendent."³⁰³ Early Christian literature presupposes the imagery and narrative described by Paul Ricoeur as the Adamic myth, and it complements the same with its "story of Jesus."³⁰⁴

. . . the Christian faith involves a depiction of human existence by way of images of human evil, reconciliation, the world, hope, and transcendence. This intended imagery is a constitutive feature of the community of faith or ecclesia. Second, this imagery is not merely a collection of representations in a world-view, but expresses an experiential dimension which is finally unified in the motif of redemption. In other words, one component of the community of faith is an individually experienced alteration of existence toward redemption. Third, the matrix of this experience is a determinate intersubjectivity, a specific structure of co-intentions which makes the faith-community distinctive as a community.³⁰⁵

Evil and redemption are thus motifs in the Adam-Gospel story, and they are intended as being at least in some way universal.³⁰⁶ Moreover, if ecclesiality is at once a faith and a universal modality of redemption,³⁰⁷ any circumvention of the truth question is illicit.³⁰⁸ Truth-intentions or reality-intentions are of necessity "immanent" in faith, in the ecclesial community, and in theological portraiture:³⁰⁹ "If there is no relation between the primary symbol's references and how the world really is in both general structure and discreteness, there is no way the symbol can be an agent of transformation except in the most accidental and arbitrary sense."³¹⁰

Not only are truth questions unavoidable, every dimension of theology occurs under their "propulsion."³¹¹ The truth-intentions become explicit in faith's reflection.³¹² Specifically, theology reviews the truth-intentions endemic to faith, and it evaluates their claims about "how the world is" and the evidence for these claims.³¹³ In this express movement to theological judgment, two questions are always in view. First, what "grounds" a theological claim as true, and how does this grounding take place? Second, how is the ground present in appropriate fields of evidence?³¹⁴

Professor Farley acknowledges an indebtedness to Bernard Lonergan as he offers four "general features" of judgment, which mutatis mutandis persist in theological judgment as well.

The first is the reference of the judgment to reality, to "how the world is," to what is the case. This reference can be to how the world is in fact or in structure. Because of the element of structure, some theological judgments are a priori in character. Second, because of this reference to something as itself, to something as such, judgments have a universal character. This does not mean that the reference itself is to something global or worldwide. Negatively expressed, it means that the reference is not simply correlative to a single apprehending subject. Its as such character makes it available in principle. In short, the references of true judgments have an intersubjective availability.

Furthermore, however fleeting, however historically relative these references are, their intersubjective availability gives them a nonrelative aspect. . . .

Third, all true judgments make a claim, thus implying the appropriateness of evidence. Reasons-for are an immanent meaning stratum of true judgments. The fields of evidence that supply reasons for, for instance, numbers, the historical past, or human behavior set the criteria for the judgment.

Hence, the third feature of judgment is the presence as part of the judgment's proper environment of criteria.

Finally, the judgment is not born ex nihilo but represents a transition or moment in the cognitive process. The transition is from meaning-oriented insight or apprehension of the reference to understanding.³¹⁵

To render the theological application still more overt, because a distinctive "as suchness" and universality accompanies the ecclesial universals, a theological judgment seeks to identify and formulate this "immanent universality."³¹⁶ Therefore, the movement to theological judgment is one of discerning "potential candidates" for ecclesial universals in their present setting in ecclesiality, and proceeding to a formulation (or abandonment) of these candidates by uncovering their "as-such" (or world structural) elements.³¹⁷

In this light, Farley can describe theology itself as an effort to bring pre-theological, apprehended verities to formulation. These formulations are "intended" as true by interrogating pertinent fields of evidence. Theological judgments require the interrogation of fields of evidence and are therefore correlative with such evidence. Because it aspires to formulation that states a truth-intention, theology can be further--and more tersely--defined as "a reflection toward making judgments."³¹⁸

In a post-authority milieu, therefore, one's criteria are no longer the venerated traditions but fields of evi-

dence, of which Farley proposes two categories. First, there is the ecclesial "symbolic universe," the Adamic-Gospel paradigm, and the corresponding "depth social structure" of ecclesial existence. The second field includes descriptions of ecclesial existence from a specific (parochial) confessional standpoint, wherein a faith community consults its own corporate experience and determinacy in a confessional way. Here confession aims to give motive and unity to historical description.³¹⁹

The culmination of judgment as evidence-oriented inquiry and a claim-making enterprise is understanding. True judgment and understanding are correlative. Like its correlate, understanding too has four "moments" or "aspects." First, it is able to disentangle references from arbitrary or inappropriate trappings of world-view or language. Second, understanding entails insight into what Farley calls the conditions of a reality's occurrence (for example, historical origin, "ontological genesis," or transcendent possibility). Third, understanding involves grasping these references in their own "interior constitutive structure," their aspects, their interrelationship, and their unity. Fourth, understanding grasps the subject at hand in its appropriate place: ". . . in its own 'world,' the environment proper to its being, function, and meaning, and also in its place in the world, the interrelationship between it and its 'world' and other environments."³²⁰ Together, these features

demonstrate that understanding has a historical character. In practice, this means that as it is correlated with the rendering of judgments, understanding is an ongoing and perpetually incomplete set of insights.³²¹

The culmination of this theological reflection, in both the movements of portraiture and truth discernment, is ecclesial existence. Disclosure and discernment enable one to perceive the realities of evil as well as the possibilities of redemption.³²² Moreover, ecclesial existence is not a once-for-all treasure to be discovered; rather, it is a living, changing reality that can be portrayed through many types of inquiries.³²³ Ecclesial reflection in its several dimensions is therefore progressive, and it has a distinctly dialectical character.³²⁴ Ecclesiality or ecclesial existence persists and is perpetuated as theology describes the way in which the ecclesial community is the vehicle of redemption through its "traditioning," through its retention of the Adamic-Gospel mythos of redemption, through its function as a social setting for the actual occurrence of redemption, and finally through its role in world transformation (praxis).³²⁵

Archimedean Point or Positivist Cul-de-sac?

At one level a critique of the theological prolegomena of Edward Farley is difficult. The social phenomenology he appropriates is complex and calls for an expertise that ex-

ceeds all but a few systematic theologians (and, for that matter, even many working philosophers). But on another level the very use of social phenomenology on such a massive scale presents its own set of fundamental problems. For Farley it is axiomatic that the house of authority--both a rough synonym for the Scripture principle and, it must be acknowledged, for classical Christianity as well--lies in ruins. Therefore, if systematic theology is to proceed at all, something has to replace the Old and New Testaments as the vital source of theological substance. The Biblical material is not abandoned, but it is relegated to fodder for ecclesial symbolism. Some of its own symbolism is retained (for example, redemption and universality), but at least an equal amount is not only ignored but even categorically rejected as well (for example, atonement with its attendant theological backdrop; and, perhaps most consistently, any and every allusion to election or particularism).

The major premise of Farley's enterprise is that Biblical authority is a time-bound, contemporarily limited relic, and one now useless for grounding a traditional dogmatic theology. From this premise Farley draws his conclusions with nearly Aristotelian precision. Biblical theology, even if not all its categories, is gone. A theologically appropriated social phenomenology has now taken its place. This major premise is, for Farley, incontestable. Therefore, virtually any criticism from a traditional orien-

tation is precluded. Theologians who acknowledge modernity and still retain their basic faith commitment are scored for their inconsistency and pigeonholed as neo-orthodox. Critiques can be discounted or ignored if they come from people who are trying to retrieve cherished personal effects from the rubble of the house of authority. The Scripture principle is to Farley what the opinio legis is to Luther, Melanchthon, and their compatriots.

In fairness, Farley cannot be accused of scuttling Biblical theology simply because he found the categories of phenomenology more enticing. Farley confronted Biblical criticism already in Requiem for a Lost Piety. New attitudes toward Holy Scripture were simply something with which the contemporary Christian has to contend, and in this booklet he proposed that most of the traditional Protestant pieties are now meaningless to contemporary Christians.³²⁶

What Farley ventures in Ecclesial Man and particularly in Ecclesial Reflection is an approach to theology that he had earlier described as "non-historical." Writing some years before the publication of Ecclesial Man, he was already rejecting "the logic of sovereignty," which is roughly equivalent to the "royal metaphor" discounted in Ecclesial Reflection. This early article, "Jesus Christ in Historical and Non-Historical Schemes," helpfully and dispassionately identifies the issue between historical and non-historical theological models.

Historical and non-historical theological schemes are two very different models or pictures of God and created being. The one expresses a logic of sovereign will according to which created being is on the way toward a complete actualization of the plans of the artificer. The other expresses an everlasting dialectic of struggle within being, a struggle which may be escaped or endured, but which never ends as long as there is anything at all. The fundamental articles, doctrines, and events of the Christian faith take on different meanings and functions within these two differing pictures. Not only the analysis of the religious situation, evil and salvation, but also the function of the central religious figure, is fundamentally different within the two schemes. Strictly speaking, a historically indispensable figure is possible only within the historical scheme.³²⁷

It is hard to exaggerate the issues at stake in this seemingly perpetual debate. Moreover, any reading of Ecclesial Reflection will highlight Farley's preference for a non-historical scheme.

Farley argues that theological reflection is still meaningful because it is not an antiquarian phenomenon but is a perennial dimension of faith itself. In addition, pre-critical ways of interpreting theology are not integral either to its existence or vitality.³²⁸ In this regard, Farley has positioned himself to discount any criticism emanating from house of authority premises. But a further problem necessarily arises. Is Farley open to fundamental or foundational questions from a phenomenological point of departure as well? Do these questions involve something more than just individual aspects of his interpretation or appropriation of Husserl?

Amid the details of Husserl's phenomenology, several features are basic. By Farley's own estimation, the minimal features of phenomenological method are essence analysis and intentionality.³²⁹ Along with these two, one might add (and, to be sure, Farley does not exclude this) Husserl's insistence that the phenomenological method requires the suspension or "bracketing" of "the natural attitude."³³⁰ This reflects the ideal of freedom from metaphysical and/or existential presuppositions as outlined earlier in this chapter. The phenomenological epoche claims nothing that is not evident by a direct, immanent reference to consciousness. This ego cogito is the Archimedean point, the starting point for a transcendental philosophy.³³¹

Farley would surely deny this application, yet one cannot help but wonder whether his wholesale appropriation of historical-critical methodology does not ignore this call to initial freedom from presuppositions. Farley's critique of the house of authority reflects the most radical conclusions of historical criticism. Frankly, the long and sometimes tedious "historical archaeology" in Ecclesial Reflection (Part One) reads like recycled Wellhausen and Bultmann. The Jesuit reviewer Avery Dulles, himself not disposed to party-line orthodoxy for its own sake, notes that this part of Farley's work amounts to "a caricature built out of the worst tendencies of a now discredited theology."³³²

Simply put, Farley is reluctant to bracket Ernst Troeltsch and his triad of criticism, analogy, and correlation.³³³ Is this criticism really relevant at a methodological level? It certainly is when one notes the stark metaphysical presuppositions latent in Troeltsch's axioms. Further, it should not be overlooked--and Farley's own observation in this regard has been duly noted--that phenomenology has been appropriated most readily by those working within the history of religions school. Is this coincidence, or does it reflect a natural affinity?

Coupled with Farley's hypercriticism is a propensity for highly idiosyncratic language. Much of the traditional theological vocabulary is jettisoned in favor of Farley's own technical jargon. Farley identifies such matters as redemptive knowledge of God by divine initiative as an "essentially gnostic formulation,"³³⁴ and he approaches ridicule when it comes to the traditional notion of an "inner testimony of the Holy Spirit," likening such pneumatic insight to science fiction.³³⁵ One wonders how much is gained by Farley's circumlocutions of accepted terms and whether, in fact, his theology is itself not a new manifestation of gnosticism. While intellectual difficulty is not a valid criticism of a theological orientation, obscurity is; and along these lines one can scarcely envision many converts to Farley's ecclesiality.

Edward Farley is very consistent about his definition of ecclesiality as a corporate, universalized, redemptive existence.

Although it does involve human individuals, ecclesiality itself is a corporate existence, a community with its own distinctive intersubjectivity, a distinctive kind of coinherence of selves in each other. As a redemptive existence, ecclesiality connotes some breaking of the hold of evil on the individual and social human self, an experience and interpretation of evil initially formulated by the faith of Israel and continuing as a substructure of ecclesiality. As a universalized existence, ecclesiality coincides with no discernible form of human sociality (a nation, race, ethnic group); thus none of these can have the status of an exclusive condition of redemption.³³⁶

These three features, Farley insists, indicate the nature of the originating event necessary to ecclesiality. It must be an event whose outcome was a community or corporate existence. Further, to signal the historical transition the event has to be one of universalization. "The founding event is that set of subevents and persons whose telos and outcome was the creation of a universalized, redemptive existence."³³⁷

This paragraph is instructive insofar as it implies (at very least) the question of the extent to which Farley's ecclesiality demands--or even has a place for--Christology. To appropriate Luther's principle, does Farley's scheme "necessitate Christ"? At one level the answer is surely affirmative. We have noted previously that the features of ecclesiality combine to offer a historical and not a mythi-

cal figure.³³⁸ Farley does work with the Christ-event, and he does so beyond a mere consideration of ecclesial origins. Ecclesial existence is a historical phenomenon.

At the same time, the issue is aggravated by Farley's equal insistence that one cannot "reduce" the essence of Christianity (and all that this admittedly ambiguous hold-over from Harnack entails) to the constitutive features of this historical religion.³³⁹ The obvious and rigorous historical criticism, the brazen denunciation of the "scandal of particularity"³⁴⁰ as part of the repugnant "monarchical metaphor" and logic of triumph,³⁴¹ coupled with an insistence on the historical dimension of ecclesiality, all combine to produce a paradoxical milieu at best ambivalent to Christology. History and Christology may still be important, but in what sense?

Portraiture of ecclesial origins is the first step in theological reflection. But given Farley's pervasive use of historical criticism, the conclusion seems inescapable that he is more concerned about present and future manifestations of ecclesiality than he is about the incarnation. While it is not developed in Ecclesial Reflection, one anticipates a Christology much more functional than ontological in character. The person of Christ is an invaluable paradigm or object lesson, for He embodies and inculcates the essential aspects of ecclesial existence.

Farley thus seeks to retain the historical character of theology without the undesirable encumbrances of historical Christianity. Given his antipathy toward any logic of sovereignty, a non-historical scheme is inevitable, and the consequences for Christology are dramatic.

My thesis is that in the non-historical scheme, such a figure is always dispensable and "merely historical." I mean by "dispensable" that one can understand the basic elements in the religious situation without reference to the so-called central religious figure. The reason should be clear. In a non-historical scheme those basic elements are enduring structures, relations, or possibilities. If God is in some way the source of power or illumination, this must mean an ever-present dimension or depth of being. Insofar as any one figure is referred to in connection with salvation, he can only be a symbol of that continuing and always available source, or an instance of the actualization of that power, or a teacher and embodiment of crucial insights concerning the perennial elements of the tragic situation. Even if the central religious figure is an actual human being in history, the decisive thing is always the residue, the effects, or the symbolic content. The figure himself is dispensable in that nothing can possibly happen in the interpretation of such a figure, even to the point of asserting his non-existence, which would decisively affect crucial elements in the religious situation.³⁴²

Christology qua Christology is impossible in the non-historical scheme. If an inquiry purports to deal with Christ but from a non-historical vantage point, it amounts to anthropology and a truncated soteriology. "The minimum conditions for a Christology must be the existence of a historical figure within the accompanying teleological-temporal framework."³⁴³

Further, along with these Christological strictures comes a related hermeneutical problem. Farley would perhaps demur from this assessment too, yet in light of his at least implicit affinities for Bultmann on a presuppositional level,³⁴⁴ the only evident hermeneutical criterion is the extent to which story and imagery or myth and doctrine correspond to his definition of ecclesiality as corporate, universalized, redemptive existence.

Clearly, Christology is the first casualty of the abandonment of theology's primary historical grid. Farley finds the logic of sovereignty so nefarious that he is willing at very least to transpose the fundamental articles, doctrines, and events of the Christian faith.³⁴⁵ Much is made of the images of God as love, the reality of human evil, and the reality of creaturely contingency and freedom. These, he says, are part of the immanent essence of "the ecclesial symbolic universe."³⁴⁶ Traditional salvation-history frameworks simply cannot cope with the theodicy issue arising from "the element of specific interventions." Classical responses are "theological rhetorical devices" that can do nothing to lessen the problem.³⁴⁷

Not surprisingly, one finds comparatively little mention of eschatology in Ecclesial Reflection. To be sure, the purpose of that work is to delineate prolegomena or theological method. Perhaps Farley can recast eschatology in phenomenological categories. Yet it seems difficult, for

one reticent to talk about God's specific intervention in the universe He has created,³⁴⁸ to talk meaningfully about resurrection, hope, eternal life, or beatific vision. Surely it is not reactionary to ask, with Jürgen Moltmann, whether this loss of eschatology as a medium of theological thinking is not still the condition that facilitates an adaptation of Christianity to its environment and, as a result, a surrender of faith itself.³⁴⁹

Does Farley attain the Archimedean point sought by Husserl? Has his application of the phenomenological epoche and attempts at Wesenschau led to a more compelling vision of theology and its method?

Quite obviously, when one avails himself so thoroughly of phenomenology in the elaboration of his theological method, he assumes its liabilities as well as its benefits. The most persistent of these liabilities, and ones acknowledged by Farley himself, are its natural propensities to restrict theology to the confines of immanence. Can phenomenology prescind its formal and descriptive roles and its preoccupation with intentional acts? At a much more basic level, can it--without significant modification--make room for the kind of transcendence with which "theo"-logy is self-evidently concerned? Does it not inexorably entail the collapsing of theology into a voracious anthropology?³⁵⁰ Farley's virtual hermeneutical positivism over against theology's classical authorities (whether Scripture, tradition, or magisterium)

is finally an unsatisfactory response to these questions. Moreover, one is left asking in what sense the use of phenomenology for constructive theology is any less arbitrary than Tillich's appropriation of existentialism or a liberationist's appropriation of Marx.

There is in Farley a self-consistency, but it is a consistency set within carefully defined boundaries. Because he does not subject his own critical tools to objective examination, they share the fate of A. J. Ayer's self-defeating principle of verification. To quote Karl Rahner, admittedly out of context, "they are continually sharpening knives and no longer have anything to cut."³⁵¹

Farley is well aware of such criticisms. But for him the alternatives--and his choice--are clear. He is nothing if not brutally honest. For him traditional authority is constrictive. The intellectual and spiritual demands of classical Christianity are too onerous. There is a certain courage involved in facing conclusions from which other theologians retreat behind much more blatant inconsistencies of method. If Farley's prolegomena is finally not compelling, his intellectual integrity and his almost dramatic confrontation of fundamental issues certainly is.

NOTES

¹In the major works on which this chapter is based (see below), Farley never refers to The Transcendence of God (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958). See Carl F. H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, vol. 5, God Who Stands and Stays, Part One (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 272, 287-288.

²Royce Gordon Gruenler, The Inexhaustible God: Biblical Faith and the Challenge of Process Theism (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), p. 9.

³Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 10.

⁴Edward Farley, Ecclesial Reflection: An Anatomy of Theological Method (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. xiii.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ecclesial Reflection, p. 195. See also Theologia, p. 197.

⁷Theologia, pp. 151, 153, 156.

⁸Ibid., pp. 197, 198.

⁹Ibid., pp. 164, 178.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 197.

¹¹Ibid., p. 162.

¹²Edward Farley, Ecclesial Man: A Social Phenomenology of Faith and Reality (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 85.

¹³Ibid., p. xvi.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 16; see also Theologia, p. 17.

¹⁵Ecclesial Man, p. 14.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁷Ecclesial Reflection, p. xiii.

¹⁸Theologia, p. 172; Ecclesial Reflection, p. 129.

¹⁹Ecclesial Man, p. 150.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Theologia, p. 162.

²²Ecclesial Reflection, p. 195.

²³Ibid., p. xvi.

²⁴Ecclesial Man, p. 13.

²⁵Ibid., p. xvi.

²⁶Ibid., p. 223.

²⁷Ecclesial Reflection, p. xii.

²⁸Ibid., p. xiv.

²⁹Ibid., p. xv.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ecclesial Man, p. 15.

³²Ibid., p. 26.

³³For a discussion of the gradual propagation of Husserl's phenomenology, see Ibid., pp. 242-243.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 235, 244.

³⁵Diogenes Allen, Philosophy for Understanding Theology (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), p. 255. See also John Macquarrie, Twentieth Century Religious Thought: The Frontiers of Philosophy and Theology, 1900-1980, rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), pp. 218-219; Stanley T. Sutphin, Options in Contemporary Theology (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1977), pp. 142-150.

³⁶Ecclesial Man, p. 235.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 229.

³⁹Ibid., p. 233.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 30.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 32.

⁴³Ibid., p. 29.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 24.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 21.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 19, 54. See also p. 21: "The conditions of faith's apprehensions are created in a very special situation which involves both redemption and a specific form of human corporate existence (ecclesia). Establishing the possibility of faith's cognitivity means setting forth this special situation."

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 51.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 232.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 22: "We have insisted that phenomenological theology cannot itself restore faith's present-day reality-loss. We mean by this that no reflective enterprise funds itself. Reflection is never simply about itself, but is always turned toward something given to it."

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Allen, p. 256.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Max Farber, The Aims of Phenomenology: The Motives, Methods, and Impact of Husserl's Thought (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. 44.

⁵⁵Allen, p. 256.

⁵⁶Ecclesial Man, p. 28.

⁵⁷Jerome A. Shaffer, Philosophy of Mind (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 23. A very accessible

overview of Franz Brentano and his significance for the phenomenological movement is Reinhardt Grossmann, Phenomenology and Existentialism: An Introduction (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 29-67.

⁵⁸Allen, p. 257.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ecclesial Man, pp. 68, 112-113; Allen, p. 268. See also Edward Farley, "Phenomenological Theology and the Problem of Metaphysics," Man and World 12 (1979):502: "The very meaning of intentionality is that the ego cogito in turning back to itself discovers that its immanent acts and processes (Erlebnisse) are correlative with the worldly contents to which they are ordered. What the transcendent reduction yields is an ego cogito ordered to perpetually given worldly contents and world horizon. This is the step Descartes did not take and phenomenology does. . . . The transcendental realm is not simply consciousness (that is, mental act, structure) but is a bipolar realm. And the two poles, noesis and noema, are mental acts and processes and their worldly contents. . . . The general nature of the relation between the intending or noetic pole and the worldly pole is that of meaning. We might say the distinctive way the human being has the world or has the world as contents is in acts of meaning, for it is in such that worldly contents are unified, grasped as persisting, noticed in the foreground, named."

⁶¹Allen, p. 258; see also Farley, "Phenomenological Theology and the Problem of Metaphysics," pp. 499-500.

⁶²Farber, p. 45; Allen, p. 259.

⁶³Farber, p. 30.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 42.

⁶⁵Ecclesial Man, p. 42.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 71.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 72-73.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 74.

⁶⁹Allen, p. 260.

⁷⁰Ecclesial Man, p. 79.

⁷¹Allen, p. 260.

⁷²Ibid., p. 261.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ecclesial Man, p. 80.

⁷⁵Allen, p. 261.

⁷⁶Edmund Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1962; German original, 1913), pp. 155-167, 194-197.

⁷⁷Allen, p. 261.

⁷⁸Ecclesial Man, p. 267.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 38-39.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. xiii. See also Ecclesial Reflection, p. 142: "'Social phenomenology' refers to the attempt to apprehend the ideal elements, structures, and interrelations within a social phenomenon. It investigates some actual type of human sociality on the assumption that the very act of 'meaning' that type, of 'having it in mind,' involves grasping its distinguishing essential features."

⁸¹Ecclesial Man, p. 44.

⁸²Ibid., p. 45.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 94-95.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 99-100.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 54.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 92-93.

⁸⁷Ecclesial Reflection, p. 358.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 176-177.

⁸⁹Ecclesial Man, p. 33.

⁹⁰Theologia, p. 90.

⁹¹Ecclesial Man, p. 120.

⁹²Ecclesial Reflection, p. 282.

⁹³Ibid., pp. 166-167, 171.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 78. See also a much condensed version of this critique in Edward Farley and Peter C. Hodgson, "Scripture and Tradition," in Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks, ed. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, 2d ed., rev. and enlarged (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 61-87.

⁹⁵Ecclesial Reflection, p. xvii.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 21, 25, 33, 93-94. See especially pp. 93-94: "God continues to be a living presence in the church, granting, in addition to Scripture, a definitive commentary and to the church a definitive structure and interpretive power to keep doctrine pure. If one grants the end--God's accomplished salvific operation in the church --one should then grant the means necessary to prevent that being turned over to Satan or to contingency. Such is the logic of the triumphant church. It assumes the royal metaphor of God's relation to the world in which patriarchs, prophets, exile, incarnation, apostolic witness, and dogma all occur as God's teleological disposal of history. Thus the logic of triumph is the temporal aspect of the salvation history scheme."

⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 144, 145-146, 151-152.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 129.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 130, 135, 140, 153.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰³Theologia, p. 26.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ecclesial Reflection, p. 111.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 57, 143-144.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 50, 51.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 58, 63.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 74.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 65, 153.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 74.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 79.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 60-61, 63.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 30. Farley acknowledges that his use of the concept "middle axioms" differs from that of its originator, John Bennett. Bennett uses middle axioms in connection with ethics, and for him they are a further specification of very general rules.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 165.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 36.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 40.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 38.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 49, 105.

¹²³Ibid., p. 82.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 84.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 110.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 40.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 63.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 42.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 41.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 43.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 40.

¹³²Ibid., p. 49.

¹³³Ibid., pp. 78, 113.

¹³⁴Ibid., pp. 40, 45-46, 49, 78.

¹³⁵Ibid., pp. 46, 81, 96.

¹³⁶Ibid., pp. 78, 113. See also pp. 69-70: ". . . the various axioms of the Scripture principle: identity (it is God's very communication), secondary representation (a series of extensions of identity to ever-new traditions of interpretation), periodization (history and revelation occurring in the past), leveling (the equality of authority distributed in literary units), and universal applicability of an immutable, everlastingly valid content."

¹³⁷Ecclesial Man, p. 6.

¹³⁸Ecclesial Reflection, p. 27.

¹³⁹Ibid., pp. 27, 100, 112-113, 116-117.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 116-117.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 165.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁴⁶Theologia, p. 142, 162-163. See also Ecclesial Reflection, p. 172.

¹⁴⁷Theologia, p. 142. See also Ecclesial Reflection, p. 107: ". . . theology is used here in the narrower sense of a self-conscious attempt at critical and constructive interpretations (judgments) of the faith in the church."

¹⁴⁸Ecclesial Reflection, p. 172. See also p. 194: "Thus is posed the problem of tradition for theological method. What happens to theology's material contentful reference, the symbolically rich and determinate past, when the way of authority disappears?"

¹⁴⁹Ecclesial Man, p. 7: "Since the knowledge of a saving content cannot depend on the probabilities of empirical investigation, and since historical content is known only in the mode of probability, that content cannot be both historical and necessary to faith. If faith has a 'cognitive' dimension, it cannot be directed to historical content."

¹⁵⁰Theologia, p. 198.

¹⁵¹Ecclesial Man, p. 5.

¹⁵²Ecclesial Reflection, p. 137.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 138-139.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 272-273. See also Ecclesial Man, p. 6.

¹⁵⁶Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 139, 244, 335.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 274. See also p. 194: "If historical method discredits the house of authority by exposing the historical and therefore relative character of its contents (of biblical books, church councils, the canonical principle, the magisterium), the price it pays is simply the relativization of everything. There may be a historical faith called Christianity, but it has no essence or core or residue which, eluding relativizing, offers a material theological given."

¹⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 151-152.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 153.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 147-152.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 151.

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 156.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.: "Essential to any salvation history view . . . is that God wills a definite end and accomplishes his will toward his creation. And this poses a dilemma of such serious magnitude as to discredit the salvation history framework in its Israelite and Christian versions. There are two key issues involved in this dilemma: determinism and indeterminism, and the scope of God's salvific work as universal or provincial."

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁶⁷Ecclesial Man, p. 215.

- ¹⁶⁸Ecclesial Reflection, p. 138.
- ¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 144.
- ¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 171.
- ¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 166.
- ¹⁷²Ibid.
- ¹⁷³Ibid., p. 63.
- ¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 118.
- ¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 168.
- ¹⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 132, 168.
- ¹⁷⁷Ecclesial Man, pp. 71-72.
- ¹⁷⁸Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 172-173; Ecclesial Man,
p. 8.
- ¹⁷⁹Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 172-173.
- ¹⁸⁰Ibid.
- ¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 178.
- ¹⁸²Theologia, p. 165.
- ¹⁸³Ecclesial Man, p. 86.
- ¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 93.
- ¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 86.
- ¹⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 8, 9.
- ¹⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 43, 75.
- ¹⁸⁸Ibid., p. 127.
- ¹⁸⁹Ecclesial Reflection, p. xvi.
- ¹⁹⁰Ibid., p. 173. An important technical term in phenomenology at this point (and at others) is "appresence": "the function of a presentation proper as motivating the experiential positing of something else as present along with the strictly presented object." So Dorian Cairns in Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld, 1984), p. 31.

¹⁹¹Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 178-179.

¹⁹²Ecclesial Man, p. 70.

¹⁹³Ibid., pp. 70-71.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 55-56.

¹⁹⁶Ecclesial Reflection, p. 180.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 180, 182.

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 113.

²⁰¹Ibid., pp. xviii, 306.

²⁰²Ibid., p. xviii.

²⁰³Ibid., p. 303.

²⁰⁴Theologia, p. 202.

²⁰⁵Ecclesial Reflection, p. 289.

²⁰⁶Ibid., p. 206.

²⁰⁷Ibid., p. 215.

²⁰⁸Ibid., p. 328.

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 292. See also p. 212: "In fact, theological portraiture is not so much an applying of clear criteria worked out in advance as it is the gradual discernment of a historical type emerging out of a rather vast field of evidence."

²¹⁰Ibid., p. 213.

²¹¹Ibid., pp. 198, 205.

²¹²Ibid., p. 205.

²¹³Ibid., p. 183.

²¹⁴Ibid., p. 207.

- ²¹⁵Theologia, p. 25; Ecclesial Reflection, p. 205.
- ²¹⁶Ecclesial Reflection, p. 205.
- ²¹⁷Ecclesial Man, pp. xiv, 159.
- ²¹⁸Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 297-298.
- ²¹⁹Ibid., pp. 213-214.
- ²²⁰Ibid., p. 199.
- ²²¹Ecclesial Man, p. 141.
- ²²²Ibid., p. 174.
- ²²³Theologia, p. 176.
- ²²⁴Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 127, 28.
- ²²⁵Ecclesial Man, p. 14; Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 154, 204-205.
- ²²⁶Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 204-205.
- ²²⁷Ibid., p. 260; see also p. 265, and Ecclesial Man, p. 152.
- ²²⁸Ecclesial Reflection, p. 229.
- ²²⁹See Ecclesial Man, p. 143: "Idolatry is the attempt on the part of man to secure himself against refused chaos and to transcend his vulnerability by means of something in his environment. Therefore, anything can serve as an idol, including the divine apprehended in the mode of something in the surrounding world."
- ²³⁰Ecclesial Reflection, p. 229.
- ²³¹Ibid., pp. 213-214.
- ²³²Ibid., p. 234.
- ²³³Ecclesial Man, p. 226.
- ²³⁴Ibid., p. 209.
- ²³⁵Theologia, pp. 176-177.
- ²³⁶Ecclesial Reflection, p. 315.

²³⁷Ibid., p. 250.

²³⁸Ibid., p. 246.

²³⁹Ibid., p. 229.

²⁴⁰Ibid., p. 270.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 249.

²⁴²Ibid., pp. 224, 274.

²⁴³Ibid., pp. 218, 362-363.

²⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 222, 249.

²⁴⁵Ibid., p. 220.

²⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 221, 229.

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 218.

²⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 327-328.

²⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 326-327.

²⁵⁰Ibid.

²⁵¹Ibid., p. 277.

²⁵²Ibid., p. 276.

²⁵³Ibid., p. 277.

²⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 148-149.

²⁵⁵Ibid., p. 280.

²⁵⁶Ibid., p. xvii.

²⁵⁷Ibid., p. 327.

²⁵⁸Ibid., p. 291.

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 329.

²⁶⁰Ibid. See also Ecclesial Man, pp. 121-122 regarding Farley's interrelated use of "myth," "doctrine," and "piety": "Our proposal is that myth itself is not the most original layer of religious imagery but the product of an attempt to translate such into the inclusive and objective world-view of a given age. Accordingly, when the image,

'Jesus died for our sins,' is translated by means of feudal concepts of relationships, we have a cosmologization whose linguistic expression is a myth. When this amalgam of image and myth is subjected to the requirements of truth and knowledge, it reappears in the form of conceptuality which takes on a certain authority in the community of faith. When this happens, we have a conceptualized deposit of image-myth which functions as a measure for institutional loyalty, and this is doctrine. When the tradition in the sense of the story and image is translated into the sanctions, principles, customs, and taboos for life and worship in the everyday world, we have piety."

²⁶¹Ecclesial Reflection, p. 218.

²⁶²Ibid., pp. 323-324; see also pp. 278-280.

²⁶³Ibid., pp. 324-325.

²⁶⁴Ecclesial Man, p. 180.

²⁶⁵Ibid., p. 179.

²⁶⁶Ecclesial Reflection, p. 277.

²⁶⁷Ibid., p. 250.

²⁶⁸See Ibid., pp. 267-268 for the factors requisite to the persistence of a normative event.

²⁶⁹Ibid., p. 290.

²⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 145-146, 149, 162.

²⁷¹Ibid., p. 155.

²⁷²Ibid., pp. 185, 239.

²⁷³Ecclesial Man, pp. 171, 219-220.

²⁷⁴Ecclesial Reflection, p. 252.

²⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 32-33.

²⁷⁶Ibid., p. 229.

²⁷⁷Ecclesial Man, p. 172.

²⁷⁸Ecclesial Reflection, p. 229.

²⁷⁹Ibid.

²⁸⁰See *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

²⁸¹See *Ibid.*, pp. 210, 281.

²⁸²*Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

²⁸³*Ibid.*

²⁸⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 244-245.

²⁸⁵*Ibid.*, p. 208.

²⁸⁶*Ecclesial Man*, p. 146.

²⁸⁷*Ecclesial Reflection*, pp. 207-208.

²⁸⁸*Ecclesial Man*, p. 117.

²⁸⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

²⁹⁰*Ecclesial Reflection*, pp. 209-210; see also pp. 217,
272.

²⁹¹*Theologia*, p. 156.

²⁹²*Ecclesial Man*, p. 215.

²⁹³*Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁹⁴*Theologia*, pp. 165-166.

²⁹⁵*Ecclesial Man*, pp. 77-78.

²⁹⁶*Ecclesial Reflection*, p. 301.

²⁹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 333.

²⁹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 181.

²⁹⁹The relevant Heidegger material appears in the essay "On the Essence of Truth," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977), pp. 117-141.

³⁰⁰*Ecclesial Reflection*, p. 304.

³⁰¹*Ibid.*, p. 344.

³⁰²*Ibid.*, p. 304.

³⁰³*Ibid.*, pp. 310-311.

³⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 71, 270. See also p. 21: "Taken for granted throughout early Christian literature is what Paul Ricoeur calls the Adamic myth. Adamic myth refers to that comprehensive account of the human problem and predicament characteristic of the faith of Israel. Its classical canonical expression is the Adam story of the early chapters of Genesis. . . . We have then in the Adamic myth, the world maker, the dependent but good creation, the sinful human being exiled from his or her proper place in the presence of God." The relevant materials from Ricoeur are found in The Symbolism of Evil, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), especially pp. 232-278. An appreciation of Ricoeur's view of myth is vitally important here: "The myth is something other than an explanation of the world, of its history and its destiny. It expresses in terms of the world, indeed of what is beyond the world, or of a second world, the understanding that man has of himself through relation with the fundamental and the limit of his existence . . . It expresses in an objective language the understanding that man has of his dependence in regard to what lies at the limit and the origin of his world." From Le conflit des interpretations as quoted by Karol Wojtyla, Toward a Philosophy of Praxis, ed. Alfred Bloch and George T. Czuczka (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 98-99. See also the summary discussion of Ricoeur in Sutphin, pp. 150-159.

³⁰⁵Ecclesial Man, p. 108.

³⁰⁶Ecclesial Reflection, p. 188.

³⁰⁷Ibid., p. 292.

³⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 293-294.

³⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 302, 304.

³¹⁰Ibid., pp. 321-322; see also pp. 293-294, and especially pp. 184-185: "It would be misleading if we described ecclesial reflection so as to suggest there is an indifference to truth in the prereflective situation where the paramount realities appear. . . . Thus, faith as it occurs in ecclesial existence and is expressive of a modification in the direction of redemption is not simply indifferent to the question of the status of the realities which attend that modification. Faith, as a truth-intention in itself, is not indifferent to whether or not its paramount reality is fictional."

³¹¹Ibid., p. 302.

³¹²Ibid.

³¹³Ibid., pp. 333-334.

³¹⁴Ibid., p. 305.

³¹⁵Ibid., pp. 305-306.

³¹⁶Ibid., p. 337.

³¹⁷Ibid., pp. 334-335.

³¹⁸Ibid., p. 183.

³¹⁹Ibid., pp. 183, 186-187.

³²⁰Ibid., p. 334.

³²¹Ibid.

³²²Ibid., pp. 278, 293.

³²³Ibid., p. xvi.

³²⁴Ibid., pp. 186-188.

³²⁵Theologia, p. 189; Ecclesial Man, p. 125.

³²⁶Edward Farley, Requiem for a Lost Piety: The Contemporary Search for the Christian Life (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 21.

³²⁷Edward Farley, "Jesus Christ in Historical and Non-Historical Schemes," Perspective, 9 (Spring 1968):77.

³²⁸Theologia, pp. 170-171.

³²⁹Ecclesial Man, p. 29.

³³⁰Farber, p. 42; and Husserl, p. 39.

³³¹Farber, pp. 52, 64.

³³²Avery Dulles, S.J., review of Ecclesial Reflection: An Anatomy of Theological Method, by Edward Farley, in Theological Studies 44 (March 1983):144-145.

³³³See Edgar Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 55-56; and especially Anthony C. Thiselton, The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 69-74.

³³⁴Ecclesial Man, pp. 130-131.

³³⁵Ibid., p. 230.

³³⁶Ecclesial Reflection, pp. 222-223.

³³⁷Ibid.

³³⁸Ecclesial Man, p. 220.

³³⁹Ibid., p. 15.

³⁴⁰The "scandal of particularity" can be most simply defined as special revelation at a particular time and place. See Horace D. Hummel, "The Outside Limits of Lutheran Confessionalism in Contemporary Biblical Interpretation," The Springfielder 36 (June 1972):38.

³⁴¹Ecclesial Reflection, p. 157.

³⁴²"Jesus Christ in Historical and Non-Historical Schemes," pp. 71-72.

³⁴³Ibid., p. 78.

³⁴⁴The most accessible introduction to the presuppositions of Rudolf Bultmann is probably his essay "New Testament and Mythology: The Problem of Demythologizing the New Testament Proclamation," in "New Testament and Mythology" and Other Basic Writings, trans. and ed. Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 1-43.

³⁴⁵"Jesus Christ in Historical and Non-Historical Schemes," pp. 78-79.

³⁴⁶Ecclesial Reflection, p. 157.

³⁴⁷Ibid.

³⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 157-165.

³⁴⁹Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology, trans. James W. Leitch (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 41.

³⁵⁰Ecclesial Man, pp. 29, 35. For similar critiques of phenomenology along these lines, see Bernard Lonergan, In-sight: A Study of Human Understanding (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1957), p. 415; and Langdon Gilkey, Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language

(Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), pp. 242, 244.

³⁵¹Quoted in Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, vol. 1, Prolegomena: The Relation of Theology to Modern Thought Forms, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 53.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have surveyed and assessed three distinctive ways of doing theology in the context of the contemporary intellectual milieu. Their efforts are united by the conviction that the Enlightenment's advent of historical consciousness marks a point of no return in prolegomena; nevertheless, inevitable methodological transitions do not signal the demise of theology itself. Theology can, does, and must cope with modernity. Its efforts to cope with the shift from a classical to an empirical culture, to use Lonergan's language, do more to unify current theological models than traditional confessional barriers have done to divide them. Indeed, the prolegomena explored in these chapters, ostensibly representing the prevailing traditions since the sixteenth century and (at least in the cases of Lonergan and Thieliicke) assuredly reflecting the same, all devote more attention to recent philosophical emphases than they do to long-standing parochial differences.¹

Bernard Lonergan's key works in theological prolegomena pay the most overt and painstaking attention to method, defining it as "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results."² This definition corresponds to his definition of theology:

"A theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of religion in that matrix."³ As David Tracy has correctly observed, Lonergan's efforts in theological method are designed both to address the issues raised by historical consciousness and the emergence of numerous specializations in every modern field of study.⁴

The prolegomena of Helmut Thielicke is quite explicit in its identification of theology's guiding or integrating motif and consistent in the reiteration of fundamental themes. His methodological procedures are more translucent. The Gospel is a divine message, yet it also has a human address. The issue for post-Enlightenment theologians is whether to begin anthropologically with the recipients or theologically with the message. The former Cartesian approach, rooted in existential and hermeneutical concerns, almost always accommodates the kerygma to its audience. Thielicke's alternative is a non-Cartesian theology of the Holy Spirit. The God who gives (and is) the message effects the transition from the divine message to the human recipient. As He presents this message, God "constitutes" the hearers as true recipients both in intellectual apprehension and in personal, relational appropriation to its truth. The Word of God and the Creator Spirit are correlative: "[Together they bring] about the death of the self-encircling self and the creation of the self in Christ that is theonomously instead of autonomously oriented."⁵

The personal and relational themes that pervade Thieliicke's The Evangelical Faith are much less in evidence in the major revisionist works of Edward Farley.⁶ Farley's foe is classical Christianity; the major foil is divine and Biblical authority. The house of authority, with its Heilsgeschichte superintended by a sovereign God and disclosed in inspired Scripture, is reconstructed. Farley substitutes a temporal process of reflective inquiry by the ecclesial community. Such post-authority theology reinterprets the symbols, stories, and mythos of the Biblical tradition for today. Working from a distinctive application of Edmund Husserl's social phenomenology, Farley emphasizes human freedom and autonomy in his process of ecclesial reflection, from which arise humanly expressed and controlled ecclesial universals. However one might be disposed toward his program, Farley's theology is a sincere attempt effectively to reconstruct the Christian kerygma for the modern world and thereby to take seriously human freedom and consciousness vis-à-vis a moribund New Testament faith.⁷

As these pages are written by one working within the context of confessional Lutheranism, the guiding theological accents will differ from the mediation of nature and grace characteristic of classical and contemporary Romanism⁸ and from the absolute sovereignty of God or "union with Christ" emphases of Calvinism.⁹ This is stated not in order to argue for any mutual exclusivity, or even necessarily to cham-

pion a uniquely Lutheran leit-motiv. The present writer is convinced that there is sound exegetical basis for a distinctively Lutheran dogmatics; however, the elaboration of this Biblical and theological rationale would itself require the development of a full-blown prolegomena.

A dogmatics written within the Lutheran theological tradition will begin with the merciful self-disclosure of God in the person of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ Its favored conceptual categories are drawn largely (but certainly not exclusively) from the apostle Paul and his pervasive unfolding of "justification" as the most compelling description of the pardon secured at the cross and empty tomb of Jesus.¹¹ Moreover, it emphasizes in radical fashion the Law/Gospel polarity as the appropriate communicative vehicle both for exposing human fallenness and for declaring God's promise of unconditional absolution.¹² Save for these evangelical verities, which will suffuse any Lutheran prolegomena along with the dogmatic loci themselves, systematic theology is more pathological than doxological in character.¹³

Creation, fall, redemption, sanctification, restoration, Christian hope are all realities for Lutheran dogmatics; and they cannot be reduced to metaphor or symbol without a massive overhaul of the corpus doctrinae. Lutheran dogmatics insists, for example, that sin and fall represent the willful, personal rebellion of creature against Creator; and this relational estrangement is not a cipher

for human finitude, anxiety, or social exploitation. Similarly, the New Testament atonement is the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ to appease the wrath and judgment of God; it dare not be relegated to the status of a humanitarian object lesson.

These and other examples have led some Lutheran theologians to speak of a "realist ontology" as it pertains to the traditional conceptual Vorbild. Simply stated, God and His saving actions are ontologically antecedent to one's conceptualization of them. To be of use to the church, a pattern of theology will conform to what God is like in Himself and to what He has accomplished according to His own self-revelation.¹⁴

According to this classic Christian model, God is real, the creator and sustainer of all that exists; He is really Triune (an immanent, not just an economic Trinity); the first Adam really fell and his sin was really imputed to the whole human race; the Son of God really became incarnate; He really suffered and died and rose again; the atonement is real; heaven is real; hell is real; forgiveness and justification are real, not just metaphors for something else. Unless all this is included in our theological Vorbild, there is nothing left of our Christianity and our Gospel, except words, empty words, impotent words, words without referents and without meaning, like tinsel on a discarded Christmas tree, or bridgework on a corpse.¹⁵

Quite clearly, these assertions--reflected as early as Melancthon's Augsburg Confession¹⁶--preclude any hermeneutic that would countenance a dichotomy between Historie (what actually happened) and Geschichte (events of significance) as these terms are sometimes applied to the saving

acts of God narrated in the Biblical record. While the vocables themselves are ambiguous and the distinction between them often innocuous (as it is here), what cannot be permitted is an evangelically lethal disjunction that would affirm the latter and allow the former to be shrouded in a mist of obscurity.¹⁷

Raising the scepter of hermeneutics at once entails the role to be accorded historical-critical methodology, which is almost invariably regarded as an indispensable feature of an academically credible theology. The literature on historical criticism is already immense and still growing; and the issues revolve around the definition of the term itself, the possibility of objective internal and external controls,¹⁸ and qualifications of the rigorous principles set down by Ernst Troeltsch and practiced by the likes of Rudolf Bultmann and, one might add, Edward Farley.¹⁹ A historical method seems both inevitable and altogether necessary. But what will be excluded is a critical principle that permits a cross-examination of the text, wherein the exegete will either impugn or confirm the canonical record--and thus irretrievably concede the sola Scriptura.²⁰ To the extent that a historical-critical method imposes alien categories on Scripture, it will be rejected. An appropriate historical method will interpret Biblical history on the basis of the grammar of the inspired text itself.²¹

These hermeneutical strictures in turn reflect the venerable revelation/reason debates. Following Anselm's definition of theology as "faith seeking understanding," reason plays an ineluctable and even welcome role in the theological enterprise. But this role, in the language of the orthodox dogmaticians, will be ministerial and not magisterial. Of the three men discussed in this thesis, Helmut Thielicke pays the most explicit attention to this question; and his response runs along fairly traditional lines. In the wake of Genesis 3, there can be no indifferent reason, or ratio per se. Since the fall we contend with rebellious or normative reason, which permits the principles of thought to control what is thought. Only the Holy Spirit can effect a receptive reason, one which will assume a servant's function under the authority of God and His self-revelation as an organ of perception and expression.²² Clearly, Gerhard Ebeling is correct when he observes that a fruitful study of theology presupposes a living relationship to its subject and a "loving empathy."²³

Bound up with the positions taken above is a correspondence theory of truth rooted in an affirmation of God's revelation as propositional. This connection is almost self-evident. Yet those who work cheerfully within the context of classical Christianity and its traditional theological models do themselves a profound disservice if, for apologetic reasons or to refute neo-orthodoxy, they defend

correspondence and propositional views to the exclusion of all competitors. Coherence and pragmatic/operational theories of truth, along with understandings of revelation as personal encounter, event, or narrative, serve a very salutary objective in the tasks of dogmatics.²⁴ When the various models of truth and revelation are preserved in proper balance, doctrinal statements will amount to much more than a catalogue of albeit accurate assertions. Along with their usual--and indispensable--functions in the service of the church's identity, catechesis, and integrity,²⁵ doctrinal statements can and should have an expressive and evocative role. Not only will they express the faith of those who confess them, they can also intensify or instill faith in those to whom they are addressed.²⁶ Hence, George Lindbeck's threefold typology of doctrine as "cognitive-propositional," "experiential-expressive," and "cultural-linguistic" (Lindbeck's preference) are not mutually exclusive.²⁷

Whenever theological affirmations are made, as they will be in any meaningful dogmatic enterprise, the counter-proposition is necessarily excluded. Assertion, as the Formula of Concord recognizes by example, assumes antithesis. This is true not only at the level of individual articles of faith but at the comprehensive level of Vorbild as well. A proclamation of the New Testament Gospel and a consistent articulation of the Christian pattern of dogma can-

not admit competitors. Edward Farley faces these implications most squarely, and he candidly scuttles the classical Christian model in favor of an overt universalism. Helmut Thielicke recognizes the problem, and he notes that apokatastasis can never become a doctrine--unless, of course, one is willing to annul the unconditional urgency of the present hour of decision consistently reiterated in the teachings of Jesus.²⁸ Theodicy dilemmas will have to wait for eschatological resolution.²⁹ Bernard Lonergan responds to the issue with his own theory of religion with affinities for the "anonymous Christian" views of Karl Rahner.³⁰ Finally, as these pages are written from within the Lutheran tradition, it seems difficult to retain a Law/Gospel preaching in any eschatologically meaningful sense of these terms if universalism is maintained.

A writer such as Edward Farley would read these pages and declare first that we have begged many of the contemporary questions and, second, that we have retreated to the familiar security of the house of authority and thus ignored a "paradigm shift" now centuries in development.³¹ Theology as scientia means something much different than it did for St. Thomas,³² and for many it is now a discipline emancipated from all traditional authorities. To the extent that it retains these authorities,³³ it forfeits any scientific character. Here Thielicke's comments cited in Chapter Two are most apropos. Theology passes from science to ideology

only to the extent that it refuses even to acknowledge and examine its own assumptions. Farley's comments notwithstanding, such an open and honest examination does not inexorably lead to their repudiation. It is disingenuous for some writers to champion the skeptical conclusions of exegetes as "assured results" and then score their more positive conclusions (for example, concerning Biblical history, or a synchronic rather than diachronic view of its theology) as inconsistent or special pleading.

From the three subjects of this dissertation, we encounter ways of confronting modernity that are at once unified and disparate. Each realizes that theology cannot proceed as though the Enlightenment was a transient phenomenon. Its impact was swift, pronounced, and permanent. The veil has been rent, and theology can no longer dwell in a holy of holies hermetically protected from all sources of possible defilement. Lonergan, Thieliicke, and Farley find this situation not daunting but invigorating, not one from which theology must flee but one which must be constructively engaged.

Their respective engagements with contemporary culture do reflect significant differences. Bernard Lonergan affirms substantially the Roman Catholic tradition; and he integrates a cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics into a transcendental method involving eight interdependent functional specialties. He teaches even the casual

reader that methodological diversity is endemic to contemporary theology. Helmut Thielicke reminds us that a theology attentive to the New Testament kerygma will stress personal and relational (coram Deo) considerations. By contrast, Edward Farley finds all the major theological traditions intellectually and spiritually deficient. In their stead, he offers a reconstruction of Christian imagery in phenomenological dress.

Whether it be positively, through affirmation, or indirectly, through features of their thought that provoke our dissent, Lonergan, Thielicke, and Farley succeed in exposing the issues involved in a current theological response to Jesus' call to love Him with all of one's heart, soul, and mind.

NOTES

¹Representative theological analyses of the modern epoch appear, for example, in Hans Küng, On Being a Christian, trans. Edward Quinn (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1976), pp. 25-116; and Langdon Gilkey, Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), pp. 31-71.

²Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., Method in Theology (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), p. 4.

³Ibid., p. 11.

⁴David Tracy, The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986), p. 15.

⁵See Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "Helmut Thielicke," in A Handbook of Christian Theologians, enlarged ed., ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), pp. 555-556.

⁶The comparative absence of such themes is evidenced by Farley's article, "Psychotherapy and Human Evil: Toward a Theory of Differentiation," in Crosscurrents in Phenomenology, Selected Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, No. 7; ed. Ronald Bruzina and Bruce Wilshire (The Hague/Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), pp. 211-230. Here Farley barely mentions sin and never considers human evil as a matter of active rebellion against God resulting in our estrangement from Him.

⁷Royce Gordon Gruenler, The Inexhaustible God: Biblical Faith and the Challenge of Process Theism (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), p. 9. A comparable but not identical effort is proposed by Gordon D. Kaufman, An Essay in Theological Method, rev. ed., American Academy of Religion Studies in Religion, No. 11 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 21-41, especially p. 32. Kaufman contends that first-order religious language (pertaining to matters of faith or religious experience itself) and secondorder critical reflection, exposition, and articulation do not exhaust the tasks of systematic theology. Kaufman sounds a

call for third-order deliberate construction or even reconstruction of the concept and images of God.

The linguistic distinction between first-order and second-order assertions has been the source of no little consternation, particularly within Roman Catholic theology. A first-order assertion refers directly to a reality. One is dealing with a second-order assertion when the statement refers directly to another statement. The second-order proposition is more reflective, but it is in no way inferior. Indeed, a second-order assertion may have greater "ontological density" and value than a first-order assertion (e.g., homoousios at Nicea). See the conversations between Edward Schillebeeckx and the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Ted Schoof, ed., The Schillebeeckx Case: Official Exchange of letters and documents in the investigation of Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1976-1980, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), pp. 55-56.

⁸This is a recurrent observation in the writings of moral theologian Charles E. Curran. See Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), pp. 6-7; and explicitly in "Social Ethics: Agenda for the Future," in Toward Vatican III: The Work That Needs to Be Done, ed. David Tracy, with Hans Küng and Johann B. Metz (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), pp. 149-151.

⁹See Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," The Sixteenth Century Journal 18 (Summer 1987):191-199. The relevant materials from John Calvin himself are in the Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 1, Chapter XVI; in The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. 20, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 200-210. A contemporary example of a theologian working within this tradition who devotes a chapter near the outset of his dogmatics to the sovereignty of God is Donald Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, vol. 1, God, Authority, and Salvation (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978), 24-50. Another representative evangelical author, Millard Erickson, seemingly works without any single unifying motif. See his Christian Theology, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983-1985), 1:30-33.

¹⁰See the comparable statement by Eberhard Jüngel, in God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism, trans. Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), pp. 12-14.

¹¹This is said not to slight any of the other New Testament linguistic conceptualizations of Christ's work. It simply recognizes the Lutheran Confessions' consistent emphasis on justification as the starting point for an authentically Lutheran approach to theology. See, for example, Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV, 2, 156-158; XII, 2-3, 10; Smalcald Articles II, i, 1-5; in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, trans. and ed. by Theodore G. Tappert, in collaboration with Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, and Arthur Carl Piepkorn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959).

¹²Note here Luther's programmatic statement in his "Commentary on Psalm 51" of 1538: "This is the twofold theological knowledge which David teaches in this psalm, so that the content of the psalm is the theological knowledge of man and also the theological knowledge of God. Let no one, therefore, ponder the Divine Majesty, what God has done and how mighty He is; or think of man as the master of his property, the way the lawyer does; or of his health, the way the physician does. But let him think of man as sinner. The proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and condemned, and God the Justifier and Savior of man the sinner. Whatever is asked or discussed in theology outside this subject, is error and poison. All Scripture points to this, that God commends his kindness to us and in His Son restores to righteousness and life the nature that has fallen into sin and condemnation." From Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. 12: Selected Psalms I, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), p. 311. Note also Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV, 5-6; XII, 53; Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, V, 1; and C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, trans. W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928).

¹³While Francis Pieper's prolegomena (in Christian Dogmatics, Vol. 1 [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950; German ed. 1924]) unambiguously asserts the normative authority of Holy Scripture and Christianity's proclamation of salvation by grace alone (contra all other religions), one does not always hear as forcefully as one might like that all of theology is an exposition of this Gospel and that all articles of faith are interdependent precisely because of their relationship to the one doctrine of the Gospel. This insistence--and a clear statement of the same in one's prolegomena--is more important than subsidiary questions as to whether one follows a synthetic, analytic, or "history of salvation" outline (and these are not major issues for Pieper either--fidelity to the Reformation solus is). Typical examples of classical Lutheran prolegomena are offered by Heinrich Schmid, Doctrinal Theology of the Evan-

gelical Lutheran Church, 3d ed., revised, trans. by Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1899; reprint, 1961), pp. 15-102. Schmid's anthology includes the locus de scriptura in his "introduction." For a handy survey of two other modern Lutheran approaches, see Ronald F. Thiemann, "Toward a Theology of Creation: A Response to Gustaf Wingren," in Creation and Method: Critical Essays on Christocentric Theology, ed. Henry Vander Goot (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981), pp. 119-136; and, in the same volume, Michael Root, "Creation, Redemption, and the Limits of System: A Study of Regin Prenter" (pp. 13-28). Finally, for all its usefulness, the overwhelming pervasiveness of the Gospel through every locus of dogmatics is not sufficiently evident in Carl E. Braaten's "Prolegomena to Christian Dogmatics," in Christian Dogmatics, Vol. 1, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

¹⁴Robert D. Preus, "Perennial Problems in the Doctrine of Justification," Concordia Theological Quarterly 45 (July 1981):175-176. For a different view, or a least assertions with potentially different implications, see Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 42-44, 64-67, 101-109.

¹⁵Preus, pp. 175-176.

¹⁶The Lutheran Confessions note, for example, that God wahrhaftiglich ist Gott (Augsburg Confession I, 2), our fallen condition is vere peccatum (Augsburg Confession II, 2), Jesus Christ is vere Deus, vere homo, and vere resurrexit (Augsburg Confession III, 2, 4), and His body and blood in the Lord's Supper is vere adsint (Augsburg Confession X, 1). See Hans Lietzmann, ed., Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsbургischen Konfession 1930 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1967), pp. 51, 53, 54, 64. These examples are enumerated by Preus, p. 174.

¹⁷H. Richard Niebuhr's celebrated distinction between "internal" and "external" history is scarcely an improvement. See The Meaning of Revelation (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1941), pp. 44-66.

¹⁸The inability of historical criticism to offer any criterion for the discernment of a (requisite) canon within the canon is virtually the thesis of Gerhard Maier, The End of the Historical-Critical Method, trans. Edwin W. Leverenz and Rudolph F. Norden (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977).

¹⁹One example of a mediating position within Lutheran circles is Peter Stuhlmacher's notion of "consent," in Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Toward a Hermeneutics of Consent, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

²⁰This has long been the claim of Samuel H. Nafzger. See "Scripture and Word of God," in Studies in Lutheran Hermeneutics, ed. John Reumann, in collaboration with Samuel H. Nafzger and Harold H. Ditmanson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 107-126. In the same volume, see also the essays by Ralph A. Bohlmann, "Confessional Biblical Interpretation: Some Basic Principles" (pp. 189-213); and Kurt E. Marquart, "The Incompatibility between Historical-Critical Theology and the Lutheran Confessions" (pp. 313-333). Perhaps the most perceptive treatments of the implications of historical criticism are offered by Van A. Harvey, The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), pp. 4-37; and Gerhard Ebeling, "The Significance of the Critical Historical Method for Church and Theology in Protestantism," in Word and Faith, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1963), pp. 17-61.

²¹Horace D. Hummel, The Word Becoming Flesh: An Introduction to the Origin, Purpose, and Meaning of the Old Testament (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), p. 559.

²²Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, vol. 2, The Doctrine of God and of Christ, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 269.

²³Gerhard Ebeling, The Study of Theology, trans. Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 46.

²⁴A most accessible discussion of these issues is offered by Avery Dulles, S.J., in Models of Revelation (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1983). A provocative contemporary treatment is Ronald F. Thiemann's Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), especially pp. 2-7, 9-15, 112-140. An interesting defense of revelation as propositional (as well as personal) is Ronald H. Nash's The Word of God and the Mind of Man (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982). Nash avails himself of the patristic Logos doctrine to support his contention of the natural affinity between the ontic and noetic spheres (see especially pp. 59-69).

²⁵These are enumerated by Carl E. Braaten in the
aforecited "Prolegomena to Christian Dogmatics," p. 55.

²⁶Avery Dulles, S.J., The Survival of Dogma: Faith, Authority, and Dogma in a Changing World (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), pp. 195-196. For similar sentiments, see Carl J. Peter, "Doctrine and the Future: Some Suggestions," in Toward Vatican III: The Work That Needs to Be Done, pp. 45-54.

²⁷George A. Lindbeck, The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), pp. 16-18, for his first statement of the three models.

²⁸Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, vol. 3, Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Third Article of the Creed; The Manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the Word, the Church, the Religions, and the Last Things, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 455-456, 412-413.

²⁹Helmut Thielicke, Theological Ethics, vol. 1, Foundations, ed. William H. Lazareth (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 427. See also Thomas F. Torrance, The Ground and Grammar of Theology (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1980), 107-108.

³⁰Lonergan's theory of religion is described by Lindbeck, p. 31.

³¹This is described by David Tracy in "Theological Method," in Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks, ed. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, 2d ed., rev. and enlarged (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 52-59. The terminology, of course, is borrowed from Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

³²Classically stated by St. Thomas in Summa Theologiae, Prima Pars, Question 1, Article 1, in Nature and Grace: Selections from the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas, in The Library of Christian Classics Ichthus Edition, trans. and ed. A. M. Fairweather (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), pp. 35-36. See the relevant discussion of "Theology" along sympathetic Thomistic lines by Karl Rahner in Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986), pp. 1686-1695; and, more generally, Rahner's Science and Christian Faith, vol. 21, Theological Investigations, trans. Hugo M. Riley (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1988), 3-112.

³³Here it matters little whether one is working within a Protestant context, which claims to be normed by Scripture alone, or within a Roman orbit, with its accent on Scripture and tradition. Tradition for Catholic theology is both a process and a product, that is, it is the process and development whereby revealed truth derived from the preaching of Jesus and the apostles is transmitted by the church with the aid of the Holy Spirit. See the relevant article in Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, Dictionary of Theology, 2d rev. ed. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 506-508; and David H. Kelsey, The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 94-97.

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