

Futurology 9

The Resurrection of God

This particular subsection of my final effort to invite and initiate collaboration in theology ends with a glorious roar what came in like a lion, talking of Thomas and of heavenly genitals. But the ending is only a whisper. The whisper, of course, is continuous with what I intended. To point towards features of the first functional specialty that relate to eschatology, to *De Novissimis* in the old style in which both Lonergan and I were educated. We began with a snippet from his own class text and with a snippet about the same topic from our conversations in Dublin in 1961, when I had just finished suffering through the course *De Novissimis*. I have wandered rather casually through various zones and books in these nine essays, but my rambles were dominated by the symbol of Fr. Boyer giving a hint to Lonergan that lead him to move into a thesis on *Grace and Freedom*.

The issue raised by my title—a significant shortening of N.T. Wright’s title, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*¹—is the issue of the final state of being,² and it is raised in a provocative manner. Might it be my bestest Boyer nudge? What is provocative about it, with its double sense of “of,” is an intimation of a certain brilliance of God’s achievement, *Kabod Yahveh*, in twirling the lower ground of loneliness into an everlastingly incomplete mesh with the Upper Ground of loneliness.³ It is a brief capturing of that strange sentence of mine used twice before here.⁴ “If the beheaded Lavoisier could manage to blink without his fuller thing-body,⁵ what might we do when weaved into the neurodynamics of the risen Jesus, a circuminceding chemistry of more than a hundred billion of us, flexing our glory-light round without the need of plants or animals, bread or wine or arks or quarks, in a ClapsedHimSaid, ‘This is My Body’?”

With that nudge I associate the text of Thomas taken from the final chapter of *Contra Gentiles*, quoted already.⁶ I quote it again in this new final context.

The incorruptible form bestows an incorruptible being on the body in spite of its composition from contraries, because in respect to corruption the

¹ Fortress Press, 2003.

² This is the issue raised in those final chapters of Thomas’s *Contra Gentiles* that we have dipped into.

³ I introduced the name, *ground of loneliness*, around 1975, in the Epilogue to *The Shaping of the Foundations*.

⁴ It first occurred at the end of *Futurology* 4 and was repeated at the beginning of *Futurology* 7.

⁵ I am not here pitching for the truth of the legend regarding Lavoisier’s apprentice counting 12 blinks. I am rather pitching for a serious searching for truth about the human thing being everlastingly a growing glorious human thing, without say, limbs, liver or lights.

⁶ At note 10 of *Futurology* 4, “Thomas Aquinas and Eschatology”.

matter of the human body will be entirely subject to the human soul. But the glory and power of the soul elevated to the divine vision will add something more ample to the body united to itself. For this body will be entirely subject to the soul—the divine power will achieve this—not only in regard to its being, but also in regard to its action, passion, movements, and bodily qualities. Therefore, just as the soul which enjoys the divine vision will be filled with a kind of spiritual lightness, so by a certain overflow from the soul to the body, the body will in its own way put on the lightness of glory.⁷

But what is this new final context? It is the context that I have weaved together in these nine essays, and that I wish to shabbily crown here with two quotations—again, handed to you Boyer-style—one from Moltmann and one from N. T. Wright.⁸

Prior to deciding on this brief ending I had ploughed through the ninety pages of Moltmann that I felt were on topic, heavy reading that certainly calls for critical recycling. How much would be profitably lifted into the first specialty? That is the type of issue I have been raising in these essays. The style of my raising is what is important in this: my focus is methodological.⁹ So, strategically, I cut back my dealings with the two authors to two quotations, which I present immediately.

“Resurrection” thus comes to mean “life after death,” which (on an optimistic view at least) means “living in heaven,” quite possibly “becoming an angel.” That, many readers think, is what Jesus is then affirming in his discussion with the Sadducees. But to approach the text with that set of ideas in one’s head is like looking at the picture of Jerome while thinking of Daniel in the lions’ den. We cannot stress too strongly that this whole complex of ideas, developed so massively and many-sidedly over the years, was simply not in the heads or hearts of either Jesus or the Sadducees, or indeed the Pharisees, or indeed ordinary Jews or pagans in the first century. One might as well assume when Herod wanted music playing in his court he had to choose between Hayden, Mozart and Beethoven. Within the Jewish tradition, at least, “heaven” was not, and did not become until some while

⁷ See note 26 in the Prologue.

⁸ Originally I had intended including pieces regarding resurrection from the various books that I had used in these essays but it finally seemed more appropriate to cut back.

⁹ This is a claim made regularly by Lonergan in *Method in Theology*. Here my claim is more complex and precise. It envisages the maturing of the global science, where the standard model is relatively settled as FS + GS + UV and shifts are not through messy muddlings but *per se* generated by feedback through output of FSs and C₉ being attended to by members and allies of FS₁. So “cumulative and progressive results” (*Method*, 4 & 5) are to take place in a new omnidisciplinary control of meaning.

after the first century, a regular designation for the place where the righteous went either immediately after death or at some stage thereafter.¹⁰

Next there is the piece from Moltmann.

We have employed in various ways the concept of “progressive revelation.” It derives from Richard Rothe and Ernst Troelisch, and means in both writers that the impulse of the Christian spirit in the history of the West links up again and again with the spirit of the modern age and produces progressively better views of the world and of life. The progressive development of the kingdom of the Redeemer is the constantly progressing revelation of that kingdom’s absolute truth and perfection. “Progressive revelation” here means that the revelation becomes progressive in the progress of the human spirit, or that the progress of the human spirit can be interpreted as the self-movement of the absolute Spirit.¹¹

You have now my Boyer-style pick from these two serious thinkers. Before getting my final pointing, my abrupt ending, I would note that my push has been towards replacing the Hegelian shadow from the end of the Moltmann quotation in favor of the progress of the human spirit through the Clasp of the Relative Spirit.¹²

Finally, then, my one-sided Boyer-style conversation with you, with Scripture scholars, with theologians of hope, leads me to ask—was it not implicit in the exchange that Roman day between Boyer and Lonergan?—about the “set of ideas in one’s head.” Your head, Thomas’s head, Jesus’s head, the Godhead?

That asking brings us right round to my asking, my pleading, in those last two little books of mine, *The Road to Religious Reality* and *Futurology Express*, for the massive lift in theology for which Lonergan gave his life. The pleading takes a particular form here, in our asking about our “destiny.”¹³ But I ask about our talk about our destiny, and that confronts you and other students of Lonergan with an about turn, an (about)³ turn. *The Road to Religious Reality* lifts—but does it, for you?—Moltmann’s reflections on progressive revelation into the quite new methodological context that would locate “the progressive development of the kingdom of the Redeemer,” of “the mystical body” in the task of *Comparison* named on

¹⁰ *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 417-18. I have omitted Wright’s footnotes.

¹¹ *The Theology of Hope*, 225-26.

¹² *Insight 722*’s conclusion needs to be placed incarnately within the Tower prayer **W**₃.

¹³ *Method in Theology*, 291, line 11; 292, line 16.

page 250 of *Method in Theology*. And it lifts the task of N.T. Wright into the quite new methodological context of the need of “understanding the object,”¹⁴ **resurrection**, if one is to talk scientifically about it and about people’s talk about it.¹⁵ So we move into the reach of *Futurology Express*: how to come to know the future of the tadpole, the mustard seed, of history, when we have never seen the frog, the mustard tree.

We end up hovering over the elusive meaning of that brilliant paragraph, 60910, that invites us, in its concluding words, to fuse everything into a single explanation, Explanation.¹⁶ Need I go on? No: I need to finally stop.

Is my proposal utopian? It asks merely for creativity, for an interdisciplinary theory that at first will be denounced as absurd, then will be admitted to be true but obvious and insignificant, and perhaps finally be regarded as so important that its adversaries will claim that they themselves discovered it.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 156.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ I am, of course, recalling that paragraph 60910, but in its fullest context.

¹⁷ B. Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection*, 108 and *Macrodynamic Analysis: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, *CWL*, 15, 106.