

## GOING ON TO INTERVENE

The question left dangling before you ten days ago was, “What do you mean by conversion?” Our focus was, and is here, on reading lines 21–22 of *Method* 250, “... compatible with intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.” I wonder how many took up the challenge, of trying for a shift to ‘Interior Lighthouse’ exercising? I should not ask. But now I move to the oddities of the question. I quoted, above, seven words from Lonergan. Reading them properly is to be a lift towards the seeded poise of cyclically reaching for his meaning of these words. Later we find him pointing to his context of writing, the context lurking in his lightweight, light-read, Part One of *Method in Theology*: “one can go on”<sup>1</sup> to rewrite Part One. If you were, so to speak, already re-writing it, righting it to his meaning as you read *Method* from and “in” its astonishing beginning, then you might suspect that you are thus tuning into his meaning of “intellectual, moral and religious conversion” when you get to the bottom of page 250. You find luminously that you are not getting to the bottom of page 250. So, your meaning of “intellectual, moral and religious conversion” would be decently on the road to his. We may indeed say that it would be on the genetic road. But now consider the group of dialecticians doing this “1833” run in a particular “assembly” of some developed suggestions. That group—again think of the parallel with physics or some mature area (20th century classical or jazz music might help as illustrations)—must be assumed to have a common standard model, be together on the genetic road to the full, indeed, eschatological, meaning of “intellectual, moral and religious conversion.” Think of how unreal that assumption is at present: think of yourself first, then of the positions of the Lonergan leadership. Their stands on conversion are amazingly, shockingly fuzzy. Their stand in

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<sup>1</sup> *Method*, 287, line 19.

relation to these lines 18–33, well, is quite disgusting.<sup>2</sup> Doran’s stand re: 1833 is hilariously mistaken, but he is at least on the page!<sup>3</sup>

But now I wish you to tune into the joy of sensing a glorious lack of realism that haunts our efforts. So, I recall my teaching of a first-year honors course of mathematical physics in 1959–60. An advantage here is that my notes are available on the website.<sup>4</sup> These were pre-lecture notes for myself: I did not use them in class, but they were the core of the communication. But on the fringe were other possibilities of conversation and teaching, possibilities that we must begin to cherish if we are to get out of the shocking immoral mess of present theology and philosophy. Think, then, of some sharp student—I recall now a bright religious woman in that class—asking early on in the statics half of the course whether this stuff held in, was continuous into, the sub-atomic level. The asking was informed by a culture of seriousness. She knew that I was dealing with such stuff in a graduate class, the type of which she would enter in three or four years. She knew it was beyond her, a goal of a tough climb of understanding. And we would both bow to that wisdom in my push into what I call positive *haute vulgarization*: we both—indeed the entire class—knew what was “going on” in my suggestive sketching. We were not at all in the world of negative *haute vulgarization* described with magnificent brutality by Lonergan in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958–1964*.<sup>5</sup> Present theology and philosophy knows, senses, nothing of this.

Back we go now, perhaps minimally chastened, to those words of Lonergan “... compatible with intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.” What is he talking about here? He is talking about his InWithTo, and “compatibility” with that meaning requires

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<sup>2</sup> See, on my website, Patrick Brown, [FuSe 14B](#): “Some Notes on the Development of *Method*, 250”

<sup>3</sup> See, on the website, [Question 30](#), “The Trinity in History”: a precise mistake in his book of that title is the invention of a ninth specialty out of our text of interest: see Doran’s *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*, Volume 1, pp. 8, and 113–5. In the same series see [Question 36](#), “An Appeal to Fred Lawrence and Other Elders”—supplemented by [Lonergan Gatherings 11](#), on the same topic—for pointers on the geohistorical heuristics needed for our struggle with the meaning of conversion.

<sup>4</sup> [Website Article 7](#): “Mathematical Physics: Statics” and [Website Article 8](#): “Mathematical Physics: Dynamics.”

<sup>5</sup> *CWL 6*, pp. 121 and 155.

that the meaning of both first-year students and the leaders in the field-search should be in genetic alignment with that meaning. “Compatibility” then echoes the full methodological poise of his meaning of “Comparison” pointed to twice on the same page 250.

But LOL, have I not lost you here? As I could lose my first year eager nun? But the losing is so declinefully different. She is InWithTo seeking, in the particular context of physics, a greater Width of With, a second Person minding: all this in spontaneous clouded initial meaning. You, on the other hand, are trapped in what has developed counterpositionally through two millennia of Christianity, “the arrogance of omniscient common sense.”<sup>6</sup> She, along with the others in that class, in each year to follow, will “gradually come to understand how arduous is their task.”<sup>7</sup> And while I am on the topic of backup, you might recall the lead-in comment of three different recent articles of mine:

Paul? In the Garden of Jesus, not a new or second Adam: an InWithTo new creation that yet was there, Bigbang Class-ping. Now in Your garden, Guarding, Double Big-Banged, I tune thornily—and tend and guard and bind and greet.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965–1980, CWL 17*, “Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response,” 370.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 382: please ingest how this page 382 and its context back up my push away from a cozy “minimum core” (382, note 36) for Lonergan’s statement, and push towards a fresh take on “Christian dynamics of history.” *Ibid.*, 381, end.

<sup>8</sup> A little fiction here hear: Lonergan puzzling about Paul, and echoing Rilke. I am thinking of the broad context fermented forward by the brilliant Albert Schweitzer, with his *Quest for the Historical Jesus of 1906* and his *Paul-quest* of later years. I have his *Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: A&C Black, 1931) open before me, at the final chapter, “The Permanent Elements in Paul’s Mysticism,” and you might muse of the geohistorical heuristic that could connect Paul, him, and Lonergan as you read a few quotations. The chapter starts: “Paul vindicated for all time the rights of thought in Christianity” (376); “Paul is the patron-saint of thought in Christianity. And all those who think to serve the faith in Jesus by destroying the freedom of thought would do well to keep out of his way.” (377)

The three articles mentioned are: (i) [Disputing Quests 10](#), “Paul’s Epistles and Functional Systematics”; (ii) “*Insight* and the Trivialization of History”; and (iii) “*Insight* and the Interior Lighthouse.”<sup>10</sup>

Finally, there is the backup of the conclusion of Lonergan’s largely descriptive presentation of “The Divine Missions” which needs to be climbed, beyond Lonergan, explanatorily and self-explanatorily, to have us poised fully in the communal task of “Comparison.” Venture into that final paragraph that begins, “In this state, therefore, the divine persons are in the just and the just are in the divine persons,”<sup>11</sup> if you wish to begin to sort out the In, With and To, in their surprising connection to the three conversions mentioned by Lonergan. Might you begin to sniff how “arduous the task” is of reading the final words in that treatise, words about the fullness of “intellectual, moral and religious conversion”?

For the glory of the Father is this, that just as he eternally speaks the Word in truth and through the word breathes forth Love in holiness, so also in the fullness of time he sent his incarnate Son in truth so that by believing in the Word we might within-speak words and understand, and through the Word he sent the Spirit of the Word in holiness so that joined to the Spirit in love and made living members of the body of Christ we might cry out, “Abba, Father.”<sup>12</sup>

I pause here, door-molecule-opening, in our sixteen-year adventure. Would not April Fools’ Day—Easter Sunday—be a good day for a fresh intervention in this historical process?

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<sup>9</sup> *Divyadaan. Journal of Education and Philosophy*, 28, no. 1, 105–32.

<sup>10</sup> *Divyadaan* 28, no. 2, 2017, 277–300.

<sup>11</sup> *The Triune God. Systematics, CWL* 12, 519.

<sup>12</sup> Note my juggling with the Latin, ‘we might within-speak true words and understand,’ an effort to deliver us from the faulty translation in the text.