

**(51500DTE060) Regis69 1A<sup>1</sup>**

We begin with a diagnosis of the signs of the times, in order to say something about what I'm trying to do in these two weeks.

There is at the present time a new theology. It's a fact. It's something that has been developing over 100 or 150 years. It's resulted in an explosion. That fact I think is due not to any new revelation or new faith or new church, but to a change in Western culture. Theology is not just religion; it is reflection on religion. Reflection is a human activity. It occurs in different ways at different times. And we need a new theology not because we have a new religion but because the culture of the present time differs profoundly from the culture of the Middle Ages or of the time of the Renaissance and Reformation or of the subsequent centuries.

A very general indication of the differences that separate our culture from earlier cultures, without pretending to prove anything, just more or less give a feel for things, would begin from modern science. Modern science is not just more or better knowledge than is had in Aristotelian science. It is an entirely different concept of science. Aristotelian science is true and certain knowledge of things through their causes. Modern science is probable, not certain. It does not know about end, agent, matter, and form. It's a different concept of science.

Again, modern philosophy. Medieval philosophy and later philosophy fundamentally was a metaphysics. It knew an objective world. Modern philosophy draws upon different resources. It took a transcendental turn, to the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object. The existential turn is neither practical intellect nor speculative intellect; man is self-constituting. There is the personalist

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<sup>1</sup> The first part of the first lecture, corresponding to the introduction and part of chapter 1 of *Method in Theology*. The audio recording can be found at 51500A0E060.

turn, which pushes the existentialist still further. There is the historicist turn. Man is a creature of the time in which he lives. There are linguistic and phenomenological types of philosophy.

Thirdly, there is modern history. History used to be the presentation of exemplars of human living. The history that developed with the German Historical School – von Ranke, von Savigny, the Grimm brothers – made history something scientific. It asked questions about the past, insisted that history be based on contemporary sources, demanded that the historian find out just where his sources got their information. Modern culture is a culture aware of all cultures. There is an empirical notion of culture. You can talk about the culture of the Eskimos, and so on. Classicism had a normative notion of culture. There was one type of education, one type of culture. Religion was communicated through that culture. Now we have to communicate with people in all cultures and all classes.

There are modern religious studies. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the head of an institute on world religions at Harvard, has a book *The Meaning and End of Religion*. He points out that at the present time, if one is writing about Islam, one has to write about it in a way in which educated Muslims reading it will recognize their religion. The same holds for the other world religions. You don't write about them from your point of view. You must try to understand them. Consequently, in the Church at the present time, there are Secretariats for Christian Unity, for non-Christian religions, and even for dialoguing with atheists. There is an openness to other religions that just wasn't there before. Theology at the present time has to be able to go out beyond the boundaries of one's church and deal with others.

There is the problem of demythologization. Clement of Alexandria states that even though one reads it in scripture, one is not to think of the Father of all as standing up and sitting down, as having a right hand and a left, as having a face that now is angry and now is fierce and now is jealous and now is pleasant. Even in

the second century there is a philosophic demythologization of scripture. Fundamental problems at the present time have to do with whether and to what extent there is a need for a symbolic a historical demythologization of scripture. Those are fundamental problems that you're not going to get a solution to in the next couple of weeks. But our purpose here is to set up the tools with which such questions can be approached.

There is, then, a liberation from the Aristotelian notion of science, which is conducted in terms of necessity; and an ability to use resources of modern philosophic development, to combine religion with genuine historical study – the problem of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith – to move out of classicist suppositions into modern culture, for theology to relate profoundly to other religions, to have the tools to confront the problems of demythologization. That is in outline the problem with which we shall be trying to deal.

Now, what I shall have to say regards, not theology but method in theology. Theology is a reflection on religion. Method is a reflection on theology. What is one doing when one is doing theology? That is the question. We will not be solving any theological problems – about original sin or the virgin birth or the divinity of Christ or any other theological question. We're constructing the machinery for handling questions. We begin with the topic of method.<sup>2</sup>

## **Chapter 1 Method**

Thought on method in general runs in three channels. The first and most spontaneous thought about method is that it is not a science but an art. It is not something that is communicated in books or lectures; it is something that is learnt in a laboratory or in a seminar. It consists in watching the concrete examples of

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<sup>2</sup> At this point Lonergan begins relying heavily on the manuscript of chapter 1 of *Method in Theology* as completed to the date of these lectures.

someone who knows how to do it, performing in his presence, listening to his critique of how you do things, and gradually catching on to the way that things are done. Now, that notion of method is true with regard to any initial attack of the problem of method. Methodical thought about method is always reflection about what has been done and what has been achieved. Again, the laboratory and the seminar are the places in which the finer points of investigation in specialized areas are learnt, and it is the only way that these are learnt.

However, there is a second approach to method. It consists in analyzing the conspicuously successful science. Aristotle took mathematics, arithmetic, geometry as the successful science; they alone were science properly so-called; anything else was science by courtesy; it was not really science. There was a certain amount of contingency involved in the object. Theology as it had been conceived in the Middle Ages is analogously a science as the problem stands in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*.<sup>3</sup> Again at the present time, it is not mathematics that is thought to be the science, but natural science — physics, chemistry, and biology — they are sciences properly so-called; anything else is science by sort of courtesy. Insofar as they are similar to natural science, they are scientific; insofar as they are dissimilar, they have a lower place in the pecking-order.

Now, with regard to the Aristotelian approach, at the present time not even mathematics is science in the sense that Aristotle saw it; the modern mathematician is only too happy if he can show that his axioms are not contradictory; he does not believe that they are necessary; what the foundations of mathematics are, mathematicians do not agree on; they certainly do not hold the Aristotelian position that mathematics consists in necessary, self-evident propositions; if they

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<sup>3</sup> This is an interpretation of the meaning of a rather convoluted sentence in Lonergan's delivery. – R.D.

can prove they are not contradictory, they believe that they are getting on very far indeed.

Now, these notions of science leave the inferior sciences, those that do not follow the model, that differ from it, in a rather helpless position. They are given an ideal to which they cannot conform, and they are given no direction insofar as they differ. So there has to be a third approach to the problem of method; and this means working out, getting hold of, what is most fundamental of all in any field; getting hold of what we are going to call a transcendental method, and then showing how it can be applied in different fields, adapted to different fields. In that way one will have a method which is not just partial, but that has a fundamental foundation. There is a basic method that can be adapted to any field; and that is going to be our approach.

First of all, we shall work out a preliminary notion: what is meant by a method; secondly, we will work out a basic pattern of operations of the human mind itself at any time or place; thirdly, we shall formulate the notion, how you get hold of the notion, of a transcendental method; and fourthly, we shall apply it in a general way to theology.

## **1 A Preliminary Notion**

First of all, with regard to the preliminary notion. I would insist on explaining the definition. Method is a normative pattern of related and recurrent operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.

There are, then, distinct operations. Each of them is related to the others. The relations form a pattern. The pattern is normative; it is the right way to do it. The operations can be repeated in the pattern over and over and over again; they are recurrent. The results of repeating the operations in the pattern are cumulative

and progressive; you are not doing the same thing over and over again, you are moving on.

Such is the general definition of method. Now, what are the operations? Their relations?

There is a spirit of inquiry; scientists praise the spirit of inquiry. They praise observation and description. They praise people who can present problems, see where the problems are. They praise discovery; that's the big thing; hypothesis, forming hypotheses, working out the suppositions and the implications of the hypothesis. Discovery yields only hypothesis; it doesn't give you the whole story. Devising experiments, checking the implications of the hypothesis against the results of the experiments; and when the results confirm the hypothesis, you begin to feel a little safer; when they do not, you have to think out a new hypothesis, move on: you have to make a new discovery; the wheels start turning.

These operations are recurrent; they also are related. It is inquiry that transforms mere looking into observation; and an observation sets down and describes just what one sees, and nothing that you do not see: observations and descriptions. And observations and descriptions can conflict; you get problems; and you get the 'Eureka!' of Archimedes, make a discovery; you see a way of getting around the thing; and it is just an insight; insights are a dime a dozen; you need an awful lot of them before you get something with a balanced view. So you express your insights not dogmatically, but hypothetically: it might be this. And the 'it might be this' has to be stated with all its suppositions and implications. Then you go on. You have this beautiful hypothesis, and then you begin checking: are those suppositions and implications really verified? You do more observing, and when you cannot observe, you do experiments. And this process goes on over and over and over again: it is progressive and cumulative; when the results are

unhappy, not fitting your hypothesis, then you have new problems and you need new hypotheses.

Such, very roughly, is the notion of method in the natural sciences. It is not nearly precise enough to guide people in their investigations in the natural sciences, yet it gives us a clue as to what we mean by a method. And while it is not precise enough for the natural sciences, it is too specific to be transferred to the human sciences: you do not experiment on human beings.

Now, let's make a few remarks about that notion of method. First of all, it is not a set of rules; people sometimes think of method as a set of rules, and anyone, no matter how obtuse, if he follows these rules, is bound to get perfect results. Now our concept of method is something totally different from that: we are not giving any rules at all; and a set of rules which can be followed blindly by anyone is not going to give you discoveries, it is not going to give you progress, it is not going to give you cumulative results. You need intelligence to make discoveries. You need intelligence to synthesize present results with all previous learning. Discovery and synthesis are not going to be obtained by any set of rules; all you can do with regard to them is set up ways of performing, of acting, that statistically will lead to discoveries. Discovery is not something that follows from observing rules; it is something that can be more likely under certain circumstances than others. A set of rules that can be followed blindly by anyone would work fine for the New Method Laundry, or for the assembly line: not otherwise.

Again, what we are offering in the notion of method consists not in rules but in a pattern, a normative patterns of operations, from which rules can be derived. The emphasis is not on what is derived; it is on the normative pattern, which is fundamental.

Further, the operations under consideration are not only logical operations. We are considering operations that are logical: description, formulating hypothesis,

working out suppositions, working out implications: those are logical operations, but method does not consist only in logical operations. It considers in other operations that are non-logical: observation, discovery, inquiry, experiment, synthesis, verification. That is a series of operations that are not logical, in the proper sense of logic. When one is dealing only with logical operations, one is in the Greek world that is static and immutable. It is not metaphysics that gives rise to the static world view; it is logic; and logic that is taken alone, all by itself. Again, you can have movement, a system that is movement, within logic: Hegel wanted to put lots of movement into logic; the result is that he has a closed system, logical, within which is included a dialectical movement, but it is a closed system. Modern science is dynamic. It is dynamic because it includes both logical operations and non-logical operations. The logical operations consolidate what has been achieved. Theory as it is constituted at the present time, hypothetical additions to that theory with all the presuppositions and implications: that is the logical side. But what keeps the science on the move, what makes logic just a cross-section at any particular time, is the presence of the non-logical operations: inquiry, observation, discovery, experimentation, verification: that is what keeps the science moving forward, the non-logical operations. Method combines both the logical and the non-logical.

So much for our preliminary notion of what a method is. It is a normative pattern of related and recurrent operations, with cumulative and progressive results.

## **2 The Basic Pattern of Operations**

Now, we have to get hold of the basic pattern of operations, and getting hold of this is something that each one has to do for himself. The operations in question



are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, kinesthesia (the sense of movement), imagining, feeling, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, speaking, doing, writing. We will assume some familiarity with at least some of these terms, and we ask about their pattern. Through discovering the pattern, we come to know these operations in their relations to one another. In other words, we attain an insight into the nature of the operations, we get hold of the pattern, and reach experiment.

Now, it is quite simple to be familiar with seeing: all you have to do is open and close your eyes and you change your experience; and the difference is the act of seeing. If you can move from a place that is quiet to a place that is noisy, then you experience hearing and not hearing. You can pin down sensitive operations fairly simply: you touch and do not touch, and you know the difference between touching and not touching.

But the higher operations are not turned off and on that easily. And it is because they are not turned off and on that easily that people have difficulty pinning down their experience of these things. People will say you can have an experience of seeing and not seeing, but you cannot have experience of an insight, of an act of understanding, a spiritual operation. And of course you do not have an experience of it unless you are having an insight. And an insight results from an effort to understand something that you did not understand before.

Now we will do an experiment on having an insight.

In Euclid's *Elements*, in this edition, the first problem of the first book, is how to construct an equilateral triangle on a given base in a given plane; and there is a step in his solution that cannot be justified on Euclid's definitions, his axioms, or his postulates. Euclid had an insight there, and everyone up to about a century ago has had an insight there, and was perfectly right. But there is no way of

formulating that insight in Euclidean terms. And a modern geometer, who presents not non-Euclidean but Euclidean geometry, has to use an entirely different set of definitions and so on to set up Euclidean geometry, because he does not admit unacknowledged insights: you cannot do higher mathematics at the present time without knowing what your basis is. You have to have everything explicit; you must have no unacknowledged insights. So we will let you all have the unacknowledged insight, and then we'll ask you where it is.

(Diagram)

The Euclidean solution: given a base  $AB$ , the plane of the blackboard, how do you construct an equilateral triangle? You take centre  $A$ , radius  $AB$  and draw a circle; again, you take centre  $B$ , radius  $BA$ , and draw a circle; intersect at point  $C$ , join  $CA$  and  $CB$ , join the lines, and you have an equilateral triangle; because radii of the same circle are equal, these two lines are equal; the radii of the same circle are equal, these two lines are equal; things equal to the same thing are equal to one another; all three sides are equal, you have an equilateral triangle in the given plane.

Where is the fallacy? They intersect. There is no way of showing on Euclidean premises that these two circles intersect. But you can see that they must, because circles that do not intersect are either outside one another, or one is inside the other. For them to be outside one another, the distance between their centers has to be greater than the sum of their radii; for them to be inside one another, the distance between their centers has to be less than the difference of their radii. But here the distance between the centers is just half the sum of the radii, so that the two circles will have to intersect. But there is no way of showing that on Euclidean premises. And it is something far too precise to be made into an axiom. A modern presentation of Euclidean geometry has an axiom in terms of either inclusion or betweenness.

Now, that is the neatest demonstration of the fact of insight. It is a non-conceptual act; you cannot express that insight in Euclidean terms. You have to go on to a new expression of geometry, so there is something that is non-conceptual, the basic concepts, that occurs with regard to sensible presentations: you see something in the sensible presentations that enables you to do something; and these insights can be more numerous, they can be unacknowledged, and give you correct mathematical results, but if you have a really big mathematical structure, you have to have them all made explicit.

What is meant by insight? It is that I catch on to something. Insight is a matter of catching on, seeing the point, getting the trick: I've got it, I've got hold of it. My book *Insight* is a series of exercises in catching on to the things that happen in you, when you are coming to know, when you are learning. And unless one gets these things for oneself, one will be talking about Lonergan, one will not be doing one's own thinking. You have to get them for yourself, in your own experience, to be working on your own. Otherwise, you are like the blind man reading a book about color; there is something fundamentally missing in his grasp of what is being said. He does not really know about what is being talked about. So you have to have your own experience, attend to your own experience of acts of meaning, of the effort to understand and of inquiry, of acts of understanding, of defining; you have to be doing a certain amount of original thinking; even though it is not right, still you are doing it. And similarly with regard to reflecting. Asking 'Is that so?' is an entirely different attitude from trying to understand. And with regard to reflective understanding, what precisely is meant by the metaphors, 'marshalling and weighing the evidence?' All that I went through in *Insight*, and I just have to point out to you the necessity of a personal self-appropriation of your own operations. That is the presupposition, the fundamental presupposition, your apprehension of what is going to be talked about in these next two weeks.

Well, I gave you a list of operations, and I gave you a few hints on how to get hold of them. Now we'll start talking about them. And first of all, these operations that I listed – seeing, hearing, etc. – are transitive: they have objects. They have objects in a grammatical sense: I see the microphone; the microphone is the object of seeing. But they have objects in a psychological sense: seeing makes the microphone present to me; by seeing, there is an object not only of the verb 'to see,' a grammatical object. There is an object to the psychological act of seeing. By the operation, one becomes aware of the object. And that becoming aware of the object is what is meant by the word 'intend,' the noun 'intention,' the adjective 'intentional.' Intentionality is the relation of an act to an object.

Now, that's just one dimension of the operations I mentioned. There is another dimension. The operations are the operations of an operator named the subject. The subject is subject in a grammatical sense: I see the microphone. But also in a psychological sense: by the act of seeing the microphone, I am also present to myself. I do not see when I am sound asleep, when I am in a coma, when I have been knocked unconscious. And it is inasmuch as I am seeing and hearing and touching and so on, that I am conscious. By the operations, I am present to myself, and the operations are present to me. Seeing the microphone is not just intentional; it also is conscious, and by consciousness is meant my presence to myself and the presence of the operation to me.

There is a double dimension, then, to each of the operations: they have objects in a grammatical and a psychological sense; they have subjects in a grammatical and a psychological sense. The psychological sense in which they have objects is 'intend,' 'intention,' 'intentional'; and the psychological sense in which on the side of the subject is 'conscious,' 'consciousness.'

Now, you will note that I said 'presence' and 'aware' with regard to both; but we have to eliminate that ambiguity. The presence of the object is the presence

of what is intended, what is looked at, what is grasped, what is thought, what is affirmed, what is denied; it is present on the side of the object. Presence in the other sense of the word is presence in virtue of attending, intending: it is active presence, the other is a passive presence. And you can give your whole attention to the object, and be present to yourself at the same time, because there are two ends to one and the same operation, or set of operations. Again, insofar as you are attending to the object, your presence to yourself is peripheral; but if you shift from what is attended to, to the attending, you discover that your presence to yourself is central and the object is peripheral.

There is the word ‘introspection,’ and it can be very misleading. Literally, it means ‘looking within’: intro = within; spection = looking; and if you try to look within, all that happens is that you turn off the object and nothing happens: you get a blank. What you have to do is enlarge your span of attention: not merely feel the table, but notice that you are feeling; not merely see the microphone, but notice that you’re seeing. It’s not just microphone but seeing microphone, me seeing microphone. You expand your field of attention, and the conscious side comes into view, as well as the objective side.

Finally, just as from the data of sense – a very solid table, light brown, six feet by three feet, etc. – we move from what we see up through inquiry, insight, formulating, judging, to statements about what we see, and just as there is that process from the sensible realm through the whole series of operations up to judgments and decisions, so too we can take our start from the data of consciousness, begin from the data of consciousness, from oneself as experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding, to statements about oneself experiencing, understanding, deciding, judging: and in that way one brings to light, one objectifies, the pattern of one’s cognitional and volitional operations.

Now, we will have to say something about the various states of consciousness, the levels of consciousness.

In the dream state, our conscious and intentional acts are fragmentary and obscure. When we wake up, consciousness expands on four levels. There is an empirical level of outer and inner experience: the level of data, the data of sense and the data of consciousness.

### The Process of Expanding Consciousness

Evaluation, Decision, Responsibility, Freedom

#### DELIBERATION

Reflective Understanding, Marshalling and weighing evidence, Judgment

#### REFLECTION

Insights, Concepts

#### INQUIRY

Data of sense and consciousness

#### OPERATORS

There is a schematic model of the different levels of consciousness. The lowest level, the data of sense; an operator, inquiry, something that changes the level. If you are just on the level of data of sense, you are lying on the beach, looking at the clouds, without a thought in your head. You start inquiring; you move up to the intellectual level: you combine the intellectual level with the sense level; and you have insights, acts of understanding, in the subject, and you pin them down in conceptions. And is my understanding right? Is it just a bright idea, or have I really got hold of something? Reflection, the second operator, moves you up to the third level of consciousness, where there occurs reflective understanding:

marshaling and weighing the evidence; and, in the light of the evidence, saying, 'this is so, this is not so, it probably is so, it might be so,' etc.: judging. And after you have made your judgments, well, what are we going to do about it? And various possibilities are grasped by inquiry and reflection; and there comes the question which shoves you up to the fourth level, deliberation: Is it worthwhile? Is it really good or just apparently good? You move to the fourth level of consciousness, the level of responsibility and freedom, where you deliberate, evaluate, decide. And performing all these operations – they are all conscious – you expand your attention to include not only the object, but also the subject operating; and you discover these four levels in yourself. That is the thing to do; you are able to operate on your own when you have done that.

So there are the two movements: there is the movement upwards, and that deals with the external world; but you can take consciousness of these operations as your starting point, and by taking consciousness of these operations as your starting point you can discover in yourself the basic pattern of operations that we are talking about. Self-appropriation is getting that stuff out of a book and finding it in yourself, identifying those acts in your own performance.

Now, let's consider the different levels, and note that there is a qualitative difference in the subject as he moves from one level to the next. On the first, empirical level of sensing as such, there is no conspicuous difference between men and the higher animals: they have senses too. But insofar as we move on to the next level, we start asking questions: what, why, how, what for? Children ask an endless flow of questions, all the time, and parents say, 'You're too young to understand that yet.' They're asking questions that presuppose other answers. They have not yet learned how to learn. That flow of questions: the sensible can be understood; and now, this second level of consciousness: on the first level, we are spontaneous; on the second level, we are intelligent. We want to understand;

we become actually intelligent insofar as we do understand; and when we understand, we talk and act intelligently. The sensible is intelligible: it can be understood; but on that second level of consciousness, we are not merely something that can be understood: we are intelligent, the active side of that business of intelligibility.

On the third level: I remember once speaking to a group of psychiatrists in the general hospital in Halifax, talking about insight: and one of them said, ‘Well, our patients get all sorts of insights, but they’re wrong!’ There is the third level of reflection: Is that so? Insights are a dime a dozen; but if you have a lot of insights, it does not mean you are bright; or you may be bright, you may not, however, be right. On that third level, things are entirely different than on the second level; you are trying to understand, and having a great time with every insight that comes along; on the third level you are detached, disinterested: is it so or is it not so? You are not a gambler taking a plunge; you want to find out just what the evidence is, size it up accurately, and if the judgment conforms exactly to the evidence, you are rational. On the second level, you are intelligent; on the third level, consciousness takes on a new dimension, of rationality, reasonableness: I say yes or no just according to what the evidence is. Moreover, your standard on the third level is an absolute: I work it out as the virtually unconditioned (*Insight*, chapter 10); you are confronted with an absolute; modern science is a glorious achievement, but is it true? No scientist will say that: it is the best available opinion at the present time: we know a lot of things that are quite wrong, we are quite certain about them; but is science true? Well, anything can be revised; science is an ongoing process: I am absolutely certain that I have my hands on this table: common sense can be certain, but not science. And they are both confronted with the same absolute. Finally, on the fourth level, the level of freedom and responsibility – it is on the fourth level that we exist as persons, that we are free and responsible, that we love and hate.



This is the level on which we exist as persons in the everyday world. We are conscious subjects, conscious of ourselves as free and responsible: we decide for ourselves exactly what we are to make of ourselves. In all of this it is important to note the qualitative differences between the levels.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Beginning with the words 'This is the level,' another voice reports what Lonergan said to end of this first lecture.