This book provides an opportunity for a Lonergan student to explore the heuristic efficacy of his generalized empirical method. By limiting discourse to terms and relations derived from empirical elements in one’s conscious intentionality, various explanatory accounts emerge. Of these accounts, three are here selected for reflection on eschaton: (1) the problem of time in physics; (2) being in love in an unrestricted fashion; and (3) the dramatic pattern of experience. These respectively correspond to the three chapters of this book, namely, to Walter Kasper’s focus on dual eschatology, to Gerald O’Collins’ eightfold configuration of love in human and Christian experience, and to Raymond Brown’s hermeneutics on Mt 27:51-53 and related passages.

1. KASPER: DUAL ESCHATOLOGY

In eight comprehensive pages, Kasper reviews the eschatological thinking of more than a dozen modern scholars who throw light on the duality of individual eschatology at death and general eschatology at the “end of time.” (His reference to Cullmann suggests that the problem arises from dichotomizing time as either “linear” or “cyclical.”) By concentrating on Christology,

a convergence is reached in the positions of Rahner, von Balthasar, Ratzinger, Greshake and Lohfink.

But even in this convergence towards the Christological solution, Kasper sees "philosophical" (i.e. cosmological) difficulties for modern man trying to integrate in his scientific mindset his beliefs in Christ, the church, the intermediate state, the last judgment, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

It may be helpful to approach the cosmological difficulties about time by recalling Lonergan’s treatment of physics that defines time as an "ordered totality of concrete durations."² Allowing full generality to the way a totality of concrete durations can be mathematically ordered, time may be conceived by a geometrician as linear, cyclical, spiral or in any mode that can express the experiential before/after sequence.

To apply this definition to God’s eternity or to life everlasting is to go beyond physics. But perhaps it can heuristically ground the analogy between time and eternity. For example, spiral time, insofar as it integrates some features implied in the concepts of both linear and cyclical time (assumed in Cullmann’s dichotomy to be impossible), can include a vertical axis perpendicular to the mean plane of curvilinear cycles. Thus eternity can be represented by this axis equidistant from any point of the ascending spiral. In Kasper’s formulation, eternity is "equally proximate to every age." It is equally proximate to Abraham’s lifetime, to primitive Christianity and to parousia. Whether or not spiral time eventually comes to an end, its axis can be endless and need not express any before/after sequence. Moreover, this mathematical concept of a vertical axis can fulfill any need to exclude a before/after sequence in the biblical concept of the Eternal Word and in the Christological identification of Alpha with Omega. Furthermore, the problem of an "intermediate state" in dual eschatology as discussed by Kasper need not be a "logical prerequisite" in the concept of a frame of reference containing a vertical axis and an ascending spiral: the axis is equidistant from any point in time. Finally, the "communion of saints,"

understood as the solidarity among those in heaven, in purgatory and on earth, can be conceived as continuity in the common frame of reference for the spiral and its axis.

These cosmological concepts may help the modern mind harmonize biblical and traditional eschatology with scientific modes of thought.

2. O'COLLINS: IN THE END, LOVE

The cosmological concepts described above may also help fulfill the need seen by O'Collins for an “interface between science and theology.” Despite the scholarly detachment with which he summarizes the staggering data of cosmic evolution, he can barely hide his having fallen deeply in love with creation and its Creator. There is enough evidence in the muted rhapsody of his last twelve pages to indicate that he has appropriated his theological consciousness in accordance with his concluding reference (to Rom 5:5) that divine love has been poured into his heart. However the preceding five pages may be efforts to balance his contemplative elation with expressions of aridity about pre-conciliar eschatology based on “faith seeking understanding.”

Suddenly, he transposes to a higher key: he reaches up towards an act of “love seeking understanding.” Of course, faith, hope and love are inseparable in a subject that has experienced the religious conversion that Lonergan defines as a state of “being in love in an unrestrained fashion.”3 But he feels that this state still has to be explicitated systematically by post-conciliar eschatology.

The systematization enumerates eight qualities of love as seen (he claims) “in the light of our human and Christian experience,” but undoubtedly first verified empirically in his own personal consciousness while meditating on the Ignatian Contemplatio ad Amorem. Love is creative, reasonable, delights in the beloved, redemptive, self-revealing, reconciling, merciful and coincides with beauty. Such love greatly enriches the systematic under-

standing of *eschata*. (For example, an individual’s purgatory, conceived as the “living flame of love” experienced and analyzed by St. John of the Cross, may enrich this systematic understanding.)

3. BROWN: EVENTS WHEN JESUS DIED

Systematization can facilitate a heart-to-heart communication when the conscious intentionality of one in love succeeds in discerning the intent of the literary form in which events are perceived and expressed.

The expression here considered by Brown is the quatrain of Matthew (27:51-53) where, at the death of Jesus, the veil of the sanctuary is rent from top to bottom, the earth is shaken, the rocks rent, the tombs opened, and the bodies of the fallen-asleep holy ones raised. These events are perceived by participants and eye-witnesses, and their reaction was a mixture of fear and faith. The experiential pattern of these reactions is seen by Brown as a “dramatization in quasi-poetic format illustrating the way that theology was understood in popular circles in the late first Christian century.”

How was theology then understood? Without hesitation, Brown’s answer points to *eschaton* in 20 pages of cross-references to other biblical, traditional and systematic insights: the death of Jesus is “an eschatological event anticipating the final times and God’s judgment on the world.” Perhaps Brown considers these 20 pages as a mere outline of the materials that he has amassed and so adds 37 footnotes referring scholarly readers to sources that can and should be analyzed in greater detail. These are more than enough for a one-semester course in eschatology.

But even without reading the vast amount of material referred to, I personally accept the eschatological meaning of the events in Matthew’s quatrain on the basis of Brown’s brilliant record in hermeneutics. Furthermore, my glad cry of “eureka!” feels like an invitation to broaden the use of Lonergan’s “dramatic pattern of experience” in interpreting other events in general history.

4. GALVIN: EDITOR-INTEGRATOR

What led Galvin as editor to select these diverse insights of Kasper, O'Collins and Brown? Suitability is not a complete explanation. Neither is the move of eschatology from "the periphery of theological discourse to the heart of theological interest." I like to think that Galvin, desirous to integrate these three chapters into one book, notices a prophetic intent emerging in the experiential pattern immanent in the book. Something analogously named "inevitability of form" seems to be taking over. Does this somehow correspond to the predictability emergent in the pneumatological "infrastructure" proposed by Lonergan in his heuristic schema? But this is a topic for further study by those interested in Lonergan's method.