

Humus 8 Crowe's *Theology of the Christian Word*¹

My interest in this good book is in its potential as a bridge, a potential that Fr. Crowe would enjoy being realized, and I surmise being realized beyond his hopes, so, perhaps, an instance of Lonergan's talk of "something better than was the reality."²

I have already related this book to the functional specialty history, something which Fr. Crowe intended it to illustrate, but I took it then to illustrate a scatteredness that needed to be corrected if we are to move towards talking functionally with precision.³ Here I wish us to pick up the book in its positive visioning. I do not, however, wish us to push forward in subtle detail: I cling to my Prelude style, here weaving round a single theme, leaving other Prelude pointings of Crowe to further little essays. I may happily begin where Crowe ends his book: "When you have a mountain to move, and only a spade and wheelbarrow to work with, you can either sit on your hands or you can put the spade to earth and move the first sod. Some day, if others have the same idea, the mountain will be moved - and restructured. Some day too, I hope, theology will be restructured according to a method that operates on the level of our times: this book is meant to be a spadeful of earth in the moving of that mountain."⁴

So I wish us to pause now over his brief Introduction - five compact pages. Think of me, of us perhaps to the extent that you are somehow with me, as a researcher, in the full sense that I have written about, operating with the Standard Model.⁵ Then the perspective contains the meaning of the symbols UV + GS.⁶ Even I, for all my decades of struggling, have only a vague grip on this: it is a presence of a mind set in the grip of a decently-developed universal viewpoint

¹F.E.Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History*, Paulist Press, New York, 1978. Quoted below as **Crowe**.

²*Method in Theology*, 251.

³*Cantower XXXVIII*, "Functional History", section 4, focuses on **Crowe**.

⁴**Crowe**, 149.

⁵The topic of *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*.

⁶On this, see *Prehumous 12*, "Functional History and Global Collaboration".

coupled with a filled-out heuristic of the best present Genetic Systematics.

The researcher turns to those five pages, and with that X-ray I, finds Crowe “on track”. How much on track? Are there new particles of meaning and metameaning there, that need cycling? The function of the researcher is to identify, have suspicions and hopes, and pass on the anomalous stuff to the group of interpreters. Perhaps there are elements here that are to stir up historical method, foundational reaching, pastoral care?

But these are further interests. I wish us only to note the attention of Crowe to the mix suggested by the symbols UV + GS. Dialectic, yes, is there as a perspective, going “to the roots of conflicting histories, interpretations, researches.”⁷ It is not just an isolated perspective of the fourth specialty. It is a shared perspective of the Tower of Able. But what I wish to be the heart of present cherishing is the manner in which Crowe has as central in his introduction the suggestion of “a sequence of ideas ordered genetically”⁸ “There will surely be no objection to the notion of a path through history, or even of calling it an organization of history when this is understood as the discovery of an intelligible sequence.”⁹

Yet the notion of a genetic systematics as the result of the seventh functional specialty is not easy to ingest. I still recall vividly, in the Toronto Centre in the 1970s, reading Lonergan, *De Intellectu et Methodo*, on the control of mathematics needed by its historian, leaping to this view. I continued to grapple with “the magnitude of the task” of “a complete restructuring of Catholic theology.”¹⁰ But only twenty five years later, I became clear on the recycling of contemporary genetic systematics within the “normative pattern of recurrent and related operations.”¹¹ Crowe’s pointing had been there, and read by me. I was an inadequate researcher. So, kindly reader, please be patient and fanciful with this little prelude and that prelude of Crowe.

⁷Crowe, 5.

⁸Crowe, 3.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Crowe, 148-49. The second piece is from Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, 161.

¹¹*Method in Theology*, 4