Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.

The Incarnate Word, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 8. Translated by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. Edited by Robert M. Doran and Jeremy D. Wilkins. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016. Pp. xxviii + 863. Pb, \$48.95, Hb, \$115.

The editors address this critical edition of *De verbo incarnato* to readers possessing or aspiring to attain a scholarly-oriented appreciation of Lonergan's philosophical, theological, and methodological contributions. Collaborating with a careful translator, the editors present facing pages of the Latin autograph and an annotated English translation for the first four parts of a course text published between 1960 and 1964 by the Gregorian University in Rome; they also append two sections of earlier editions that underwent significant revisions. The editors reserve a concluding part addressing the topic of redemption to be bound with a translation of *De redemptione*, a supplement to the original five-part course text, for the forthcoming volume nine of the *Collected Works*. Relying upon prior editions for textual clarifications, the editors identify an especially productive moment in Lonergan's evolving theological enterprise where he engages his early analysis of human consciousness and cognition to advance a Thomistic Christology that anticipates demands for a theology that is more historical, open to cultural diversity, and responsive to insight about the social nature of human language and discourse. Although this frequently technical text will not appeal immediately to an extensive audience, the editors provide an accessible and truly invaluable resource for those addressing a broader readership that seeks a creative synthesis of a traditional Christian theology and a critically appropriated contemporary anthropology.

As a reader of John Henry Newman, Lonergan appropriates and transposes Newman's distinction between apprehension and assent by engaging in an analysis of intentional, self-transcending self-presence in human cognition. He refines and promotes the collaboration between reason and faith that places the human person before a sacred mystery that remains beyond the grasp of human understanding. Lonergan's intentionality analysis both affords reflexive control over the meaning generated by theological inquiry and contributes to the analogous elucidation of faith mysteries. Following the format of a course manual, he addresses the scriptural witness to Jesus Christ as divine, human and one, and the doctrinal clarifications that arise in the deliberations of the Ecumenical Councils. Although the manual format leads him to refer to "a *proof* from a text properly understood" (51), he differentiates schematic patterns of scriptural witness figured through words, titles, sensible presentations, and imaginative representations from the acts of understanding that contour the believer's act of faith assent. No less, his investigation of

doctrinal development through the conflicts of history is refracted by his clear appreciation of the differentiation and interrelation of dialectical doctrinal affirmation and progressive hypothetical theological understanding.

While Lonergan locates his theological contribution unambiguously within the horizon of scriptural witness and the bounds of the doctrinal clarifications put forward by the Councils, he advances his constructive Christological interpretations by keeping both ontological and psychological analyses in active interplay as he clarifies how one personal act of divine existence could be understood to unify a divine nature by which the Incarnate Word is God and a human nature, by which the Incarnate Word is human. By way of a contribution to an advancing ontological analysis, he clarifies that the *secondary act of existence* of the assumed human nature is an external predication contingently dependent upon the simple act of divine existence that is identical to divine essence (463). By way of a contribution to an advancing psychological analysis, he proposes that the one divine person is self-present in the operations of both divine and human natures, constituting two consciousnesses, two ways of being self-present in one divine identity (371). Both contributions turn on a clarification that comes forward from Lonergan's cognitional theory, whereby essential nature is considered as a postulated act of understanding distinct from the act of judgment that verifies the frequency and distribution of its occurrence, a clarification applied analogously in *De verbo incarnato* as Lonergan relates distinct human and divine natures in appropriate manners to one divine act of existence.

In the fourth part of *De verbo incarnato*, Lonergan sheds light upon these dense theological clarifications of faith teachings by exploring further the operations of the human nature assumed by the Divine Word. Beyond presenting a cogent, metaphysical account of the historically embedded transformation of the natural capacities of the assumed human nature effected by sanctifying grace, Lonergan begins to explore the conscious human mediation of the self-presence of a divine person. He elucidates how Jesus gradually developed and realized his human capacity to know and speak the ineffable mystery of his divine identity and act in history to realize his redemptive mission. Although contemporary readers may find the assumed metaphysical horizon challenging, some readers will notice that Lonergan is reaching toward a more comprehensive viewpoint from which to reconstruct his account of the personal or hypostatic union of the two distinct natures; an extension that remains difficult to articulate, effect and evaluate due to the inevitable confluence and even confusion of necessary intellectual development with the unavoidable, ultimate excess of sacred meaning being addressed.

Recognizing such difficulties, Lonergan visits methodological issues throughout his text and in subsequent years redoubles his efforts to refine theological methodology; in doing so, he develops a more thorough and consistent intentionality analysis that takes fuller account of the intersubjective, constitutive and expressive dimensions of meaning, historical movements and consciousness, and cultural and religious pluralism. Appreciating the continuing importance of the scriptural and doctrinal sources addressed and the theological achievements attained by works such as *De verbo incarnato*, he promotes transposing and further developing these contributions in the terms and relations of an enhanced understanding of human meaning; this would constitute a more adequate social anthropology that presents a fuller appreciation of the human nature assumed by the Incarnate Word in the hypostatic union. Although Lonergan continued to write short articles that offered glimpses of such a transposed and developed Christology, he did not return to produce a systematic, monograph-length treatment. This task is left to other scholars, who might well find in *De verbo incarnato* a most valuable resource.

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DOI 10.1163/22141332-00402008-23