

The final step deals with a further predictable objection. If we grant that Christianity is reasonably reasonable, surely something other than Catholicism, with its obsessions with authority and dogma, would be a more rational choice? Against this, Williams argues that Catholicism has what the Buddhists call 'the lineage', and that it speaks with genuine authority. Therefore, he continues, he would need a very argument *not* to be a Catholic. He looked but he did not find one.

In this final step, Williams's sharp analytical acumen wanes somewhat. There is an overwhelming sense that he has made up his mind that Catholicism is true and many of his arguments will appear somewhat rash. This is not to say that Williams avoids difficult issues or is happy with easy options. Virtually all the difficulties in Catholicism are addressed, and the intellectual honesty of his search for a faith has a wonderfully authentic ring. But many of his remarks on other denominations, especially Anglicanism, will fail to carry conviction outside Catholic circles, and he might even come to regret them in time. Yet, paradoxically, it is in this section that the book's most valuable intuitions are found. Williams is an able philosopher, and his arguments have a painstaking rigour worthy of the best Thomist scholarship. As a good Thomist, however, Williams is also deeply Augustinian, always aware that faith is a gift, and that in the concordance between nature and grace, reason and faith, the initiative always comes from God. In this context, his honest referral to the Church in matters of faith, morality and revelation carries genuine conviction.

The book has an unusually long epigraph. It is the memorable passage where Helena, in Evelyn Waugh's historical novel of the same name, kneels in front of the crib to pray on the feast of the Epiphany. After calling the Magi her 'special patrons', she prays for 'all late-comers...all who have a tedious journey to make to the truth,...the learned, the oblique, the delicate', asking that they may not be 'quite forgotten at the Throne of God when the simple come into their kingdom'. It is one of the high points of 20th-century English prose. Those unfortunate readers who have not managed to shed a tear while reading it may still have a chance to do so after reading this book.

FERNANDO CERVANTES

THE ONTOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTITUTION OF CHRIST by Bernard Lonergan. Translated by Michael G. Shields. *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 7. Toronto University Press, Toronto, 2002. Pp. xvii + 295.

This volume contains the shortest of three theological treatises that Lonergan wrote during his years as professor of dogmatics at the Gregorian University in Rome. The original Latin text and its translation are conveniently arranged on facing pages. Lonergan's lapidary style and the highly technical character of his argument called for a close translation, and Michael Shields has provided an excellent one. The only

liberties he takes in the interest of decent contemporary English are such as till not be likely to mislead readers who cannot consult the Latin.

When the first edition of *De Constitutione Christi* was published in 1956, Lonergan had only recently stopped writing *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. His intention had been that *Insight* would lead to an examination of theological as well as scientific and philosophical understanding, but the book had to be finished off with a kind of Pisgah view so that he could take up his new duties in Rome. Thus for clues as to what he thought specifically theological understanding might be, there is only his own theological performance to turn to, and the best place to turn is probably this little treatise. Here Lonergan sets out to understand—not to establish it, defend it, or discover its origins, but to discern its inherent intelligibility—a single Christian doctrine, namely the Chalcedonian definition: by his incarnation the eternal Word has united, in his one person, both divine and human natures.

For Lonergan, to understand is always to grasp many things in a single view. In this case the understanding he aims for is not imaginative, commonsensical, or devotional but solely theoretical. The components of an intelligent grasp of the meaning of Chalcedon include answers to such questions as: What exactly is meant by the term *person* and the term *one*? What are the constituents of a finite, human person? In what way do such terms and their relations apply to a divine person, and in what way do they not? It is unfortunate that because of the basic vocabulary Lonergan uses in the ontological parts of his analysis, it can be construed as nothing more than a last gasp of neo-Scholastic metaphysics. But that was the language his students knew, and in fact he uses the received terms with his own meaning—the meaning expounded in *Insight*.

Conventional though much of the terminology is, the content is not. Lonergan's own assessment of his achievement in *De Constitutione Christi* was that he had "solved the problem of Christ's consciousness," and the sixth and final part of the book, on Christ's psychological constitution, is probably the one that will prove to be most significant. Even if the unity and duality of the incarnate Word can be understood together in ontological terms, personhood is far more likely to be conceived today in terms of mind and heart, subject and subjectivity, identity and consciousness. Lonergan's argument is that the doctrine of the hypostatic union, accurately understood and transposed, is an affirmation of one divine subject of both a divine and a human consciousness. These two consciousnesses, like Chalcedon's "natures," are without confusion or change, division or separation. To arrive at this basic position, Lonergan considers how the three who are God can be conceived as conscious; having arrived at it, he goes on to address issues concerning how and whether Christ, precisely as human, could know he was truly God.

All this hinges on the way in which consciousness itself is conceived. On that cardinal point, *Constitution of Christ* offers far and away

Loneragan's clearest and most convincing discussion—better than anything he wrote in English. Consciousness can be conceived as *perception*, as not a few theologians, to say nothing of phenomenologists, have done; or it can be conceived instead as *experience*, which is Lonergan's position. At issue is the very reality of the psychological subject, and bound up with it are central questions not only of Christology but of Trinitarian theology. Without attempting to explain the distinction Lonergan draws between the two conceptions, suffice it to say that the (mistaken) notion of consciousness as perception leads, for example, to the quasi-Nestorian opinion of the incarnation as involving an "assumed man," or to the conclusion that it was not really God the Son who suffered on the cross.

But to acclaim this book, or for that matter dismiss it, because it reinforces an orthodoxy would be to miss its primary point. The theology Lonergan offers here is not dogmatics or apologetics. It is what his *Method in Theology* he would call the functional specialty "systematics"—or at least it is moving in that direction. Its one and only intention is to shed light, to make connections, to promote orderly, intelligent insight. For reasons of pedagogical necessity, Lonergan had to work within an idiom that, since he wrote, has all but vanished. Some of the problems he addresses have perhaps vanished along with it. Certainly the questions that give Christology its momentum today seem far removed from many of the questions Lonergan was asking fifty years ago. Possibly, though, the way he goes about answering them in this book can nevertheless contribute to current discussion by suggesting why they might be important questions to ask.

CHARLES HEFLING

WOMEN AND CHRISTIANITY, vol.2, THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD AD 1000-1500 by Mary T. Malone, *The Columba Press, Dublin, 2001, Pp.298, £9.99 pbk.*

This volume looks at the history of women in relation to Christianity and it discusses many of the issues important for women's history in the medieval period. Questions of marriage and celibacy, authority in the Church, heresy, prostitution and the many different forms taken by women's spirituality during the years 1000-1500 are studied. To address these issues, Malone's chapters are either concerned with a general overview of particular themes, or deal more specifically with particular individuals and places. The book begins with a very helpful dateline and introduction, and ends with a select bibliography that would prove useful to the general reader in search of further information.

One of the primary issues during the first two centuries of the millennium was the question over who wielded administrative control within the Church. Malone points out that at the beginning of the period, the Church was still primarily lay-owned, by feudal lords, aristocratic lay monks and nuns, and that bishops were not necessarily in administrative