

A GENERATIVE TRUTH:
THE *ADAEQUATIO MENTIS ET VITAE* AS MYSTERY OF FECUNDITY
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF MAURICE BLONDEL

Abstract

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This dissertation addresses the relation between truth and fruitfulness in the philosophy of Maurice Blondel (1861-1949). Asking how absolute truth accords with human life and its unfolding in freely willed action, it concludes that such action in fact belongs intrinsically to truth: action mediates between knower and known and does so fruitfully by realizing their unity in difference in a bond irreducible to the terms it joins. Action's fecundity is rooted analogically in the circumincessive communion that is divine, trinitarian acting. In its openness to Christian Revelation, Blondel's philosophy shows how truth as the union of intellect (*intellectus*) and its object (*rei*) is ultimately realized for man in the supernatural adequation of mind (*mentis*) and life (*vitae*)—that is, personal contemplation of divine life by participation in God's acting. Through the incarnate Word, divine truth in its eternal fruitfulness is communicated to man who, bearing God in himself by allowing God to act in him, is born to eternal life.

Chapter 1 characterizes truth as *adaequatio mentis et vitae* and presents two major Blondelian themes: the normative logic of the moral life and Christological mediation. Chapter 2 describes truth, fruitfulness, and their relation as given in *Action* (1893) and *La pensée* (1934). Chapter 3 approaches divine Thought, Being, and Acting as a "mystery of fecundity." While fecundity ordinarily refers to biological generation, Blondel uses the term analogically to express the generosity of absolute Being intrinsic to its self-knowledge. Being generates a consubstantial Word that expresses it by giving itself in turn. This "reciprocal fecundity" is itself substantial, such that Being is constituted as triune Spirit. Chapter 4 considers the creaturely fructification of a divine "loan" through free recognition of truth and its expansion in loving action. Chapter 5 ponders how incorporation into Christ's mystical Body enables man to participate in Truth.

This work offers an unprecedented consideration of fruitfulness in Blondel and helps show how fruitfulness, integral to Church teaching on the family as image of God, belongs intrinsically to truth. It also presents an understanding of truth as universally unitive and, precisely for this reason, inclusive of personal singularity.