

(True Restoration is proud to present a translation of Bishop Tissier's lengthy article on the hermeneutics of Benedict XVI. Due to online formatting, the footnotes in the original document are endnotes in this edition. In his Afterword, the Bishop thanks Frs. Benoit de Jorna and Jean-Michel Gleize, two of the four men in the SSPX's delegation to Rome. Due to their consultation and collaboration in this lengthy article of Bishop Tissier, it is reasonable to assume that they share his concerns and conclusions, and that these important matters are being discussed in Rome.

Because this renders at over 80 pages, with over 200 citations, if reading and printing from your computer is burdensome, you may purchase a printed copy from True Restoration Press, which is flat bound for greater ease of study.)

## **Introduction**

Dr. Peter Chojnowski

Those who remain attached to the Catholic Faith as articulated by all the great dogmatic Councils of the Church are greatly indebted to His Excellency Bishop Bernard Tissier de Malerais for this article, published just last summer in the French Domican publication *Le Sel de la Terre* and just translated into English. The fight we are in for Catholic Tradition is not a fight over ceremonies and rituals, which some happen to like and others happen not to like. The Sacred Rites of the Church are “sacred” precisely because they express and apply to the concrete lives of the Faithful, the truths and grace which even God the Son did not “make up,” but were, rather, revealed to Him by His Father in Heaven. This article, which compares the theology of Josef Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) to that of the traditional theology of the Church as articulated by the Popes, the Fathers, and the Doctors, is truly a comprehensive study for all those interested in the doctrinal issues now being discussed behind closed doors. Since the Conciliar Church has decided to accept the personal theology of each new pope as its current interpretation of the fundamentals of the Faith, it is absolutely essential for real Catholics to understand the Modernist Revolution in its current stage. Please spread this article far and wide. The text is long, however, the reader should make it to the end in order to understand how the New Theology attempts to transform the most fundamental doctrines of the faith.

After reading this fascinating essay, anyone who thought that “reconciliation” between Catholic Tradition and Vatican II theology is right around the corner will have to think again!

January 2010

# Faith Imperiled by Reason: Benedict XVI's Hermeneutics

Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais

From La Sel de Terre, Issue 69, Summer 2009

Translated by C. Wilson

Translator's Note: I have decided rather to preserve the Bishop's slightly familiar writing style than to convert the tone of the article to something purely academic.

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## Foreword

This is Benedict XVI's hermeneutic[1]:

– First it is the hermeneutic which a pope proposes for the second Vatican Council so as to obtain for it, forty years after its conclusion, reception into the Church;

– Next it is the hermeneutic, very much like modern reason, which the Council and conciliar theologians propose for the faith of the Church, though these have opposed each other in a mutual exclusion since the Enlightenment, in order to reduce their opposition;

– Last, it is the hermeneutic of the thought of a pope and theologian who attempts to make faith reasonable to a reason trained to refuse it.

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The triple problem which, according to Benedict XVI, hermeneutic ought to have resolved at the Council and which it must still resolve today is the following:

1. Modern science, with the atomic bomb and a consumerist view of man, violates the prohibitions of morality. Science without conscience is nothing more than the ruin of the soul, said a philosopher. How to give science a conscience? The Church in the past was discredited in the eyes of science by its condemnation of Galileo; by what conditions can she hope to offer positivistic reason ethical norms and values?

2. Confronted by a laicized, ideologically plural society, how can the Church play her role as seed of unity? Certainly not by expecting to impose the reign of Christ, nor by restoring a false universalism and its intolerance, but by making an allowance for positivistic reason to challenge, in a fair competition, Christian values, duly purified and made palatable for the world which emerged after 1789, that is to say, after the Rights of Man.

3. Faced with 'world religions' better understood and more widespread, can the Church still claim exclusivity for her salvific values and a privileged status before the State? Certainly not. However, she wishes only to collaborate with other religions for the sake of world peace, by offering in concert with them, in a 'polyphonic correlation,' the values of the great religious traditions.

These three problems make no more than one: Joseph Ratzinger estimates that to a new epoch of history there must correspond a new relation between faith and reason:

"I would then willingly speak," he has said, "of a necessary form of correlation between reason and faith, which are called to a mutual purification and regeneration." [2]

Asking pardon of my reader for having perhaps anticipated my conclusion, with him I have just entered my subject by the back door.

## Introduction

Pope Benedict XVI's speech to the Roman curia on December 22, 2005 appeared to be the programmatic speech of a new pontiff, elected pope the preceding April 19. It closely resembles his inaugural encyclical.

I am going to try to extract its ideas from it by force, then to analyze them freely. I thus offer to my reader a route of exploration through the garden of conciliar theology. Three avenues emerge at once:

1. Forty years after the close of the Council, Benedict XVI recognized that 'the reception of the Council has taken place in a rather difficult manner.' Why? he asks himself. 'Well, it all depends on the just interpretation of the Council or – as we would say it today – on its just hermeneutic.' Side by side with a 'hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture' on the part of traditionalists and progressives, there is 'the hermeneutic of reform, of renewal in continuity.' This continuity is 'the continuity of a Church which is a unique entity. [...] It is an entity which grows with time and which develops itself, remaining always the same – the unique entity which is the people of God on its pilgrimage.

2. Such was the Council's intention: to guard the deposit of the Faith but to 'present [it] in a manner which corresponds to the need of our time' (John XXIII, opening speech to the Council). Benedict XVI explains:

This commitment with a view to expressing in a new fashion a determinate truth demands a new reflection upon it and a new vital connection with it [...]. The new way of speaking can only develop if it is born from a conscious understanding of the faith which is expressed and [...], on the other hand, if the reflection upon the faith demands equally that one live this faith.

3. Thus, to present a living faith, fruit of a vital new experience, was 'the program proposed by Pope John XXIII, extremely necessary, as it is precisely the synthesis of fidelity and of dynamism.'

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The Council's hermeneutic, then, stands upon three principles which follow one upon the next:

- The subject of faith, with his reason, is an integral part of the object of faith.
- Thus, he must look for a new vital connection of reason with faith.
- Hence there is implemented a synthesis of fidelity and dynamism.

What sort of synthesis is this? The Council explains: to college 'the requests of our times' and 'the values most prized by our contemporaries' and, after having 'purified' them, 'to bind them to their divine source' (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 11), that is to say, to introduce them to Christianity along with their philosophy. But to do this, the Church must for her part, as the Council determined it, 'to revisit and equally to correct certain historical decisions' (Benedict XVI, speech of December 22, 2005).

Such is the hermeneutical program which must be mutually imperative for reason and faith.

I will not attempt either an analysis or a synthesis of Benedict XVI's thought, of his inspiration so eclectic and mobile. Professor Jacob Schmutz, in twelve sessions with the Sorbonne University, during 2007-2008, detailed its components: secularization, Christianity as vera philosophia[3], the human personality irreducible in nature, the Enlightenment (Aufklärung) who need God to limit their passion for independence, the historical contingencies which keep the conscience from seeing, etc.

In this extremely rich body of thought, I will content myself with outlining an extremely reduced philosophical and theological course, according to the custom of the initiate, guided by the idea of hermeneutic as by Ariadne's thread.

In my progress, I will let Benedict XVI speak, sometimes commenting in a polemical manner, for I have chosen such a style with care for brevity, suitable to this unpretentious journal.

When I cite his writings earlier than his sovereign pontificate, I attribute them with all respect and truth to 'Joseph Ratzinger.' His work, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, reproduces the course of the young professor from Tübingen and, prepared in French in 1969, was reedited in 2005 with a preface from the author, who fundamentally confirms his writing: 'The fundamental orientation,' he wrote, 'was correct; that is why today I dare to place this book again in the reader's hands.'

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Several texts will whet my reader's hermeneutical appetite. They are a little compendium of the developments which follow.

### 1. Concerning the corrective revisitation of Tradition

My fundamental impulse, precisely from the Council, has always been to free the very heart of the faith from under any ossified strata, and to give this heart strength and dynamism.[4]

Vatican Council II, with its new definition of the relation between faith and the Church and certain essential elements of modern thought, has equally revisited and corrected certain historical decisions; but in this apparent discontinuity, it has in return maintained and deepened its essential nature and its true identity.[5]

### 2. Concerning the purifying assimilation of modern philosophy

To assimilate into Christianity [modern] ideas born into a new world, often hostile and even now charged with an alien spirit, supposes a labor in the depths, by which the permanent principles of Christianity would take up a new development in assimilating the valuable contributions of the modern world, after having decanted them, purifying according to need.[6]

Certainly the philosophy of being, the natural metaphysics of the human spirit serves as instrument of faith for making explicit what it contains implicitly[7]: on the other hand, no philosophy can pose as partner of faith in 'perfecting doctrine and faith like a philosophical invention for human minds.'[8]

# 1. The Hermeneutic of Continuity

The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today: the 'why' of hermeneutics

'What is constitutive of faith today?' Such is the question which Joseph Ratzinger posed in 1973, during a group ecumenical discussion, and which he posed as the first question of his book, *The Principles of Catholic Theology*.<sup>[9]</sup> 'The question is ill framed,' he amends; 'it would be more correct to ask himself what, out of the collapse of the past, still remains today a constitutive element.' The collapse is scientific, political, moral, even religious. Must one allow for a philosophy of history which accepts ruptures in faith as relevant, each thesis possessing its meaning as one moment from a whole? Thus, to paraphrase Ratzinger, 'Thomistic as well as Kantian interpretation of Christian fact each has its truth in its own historical epoch but only remains true if one abandons it when its hour is finished, so as to include it in a whole which one constructs as a novelty.'

Joseph Ratzinger seems to dismiss this dialectical method precisely because it results in a new truth. It is not necessary to synthesize irreconcilables, but to find what continuity exists between them. Let us then find what permanence of Christian faith there is in the fluctuations of philosophies which have wished to explain it. Such is the theme of the professor of Tübingen's work, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*.<sup>[10]</sup>

Since reason seems to evolve according to diverse philosophies and since the past of such an evolution adapts itself to the faith, the connection between faith and reason must be periodically revised so that it will always be possible to express the constant faith according to the concepts of contemporary man. This revision is the fruit of hermeneutic.

Faith at risk from philosophy

When Saint John, and the Holy Ghost who inspired him, chose the name 'Word,' in Greek Logos, to designate the person of the Son in the Holy Trinity, the word had been until then as ambiguous as possible. It commonly designated formulaic speech. Heraclitus, six centuries before John, spoke of a logos measuring everything, but that meant the fire which burns and consumed all. The stoics used this term to signify the intelligence of things, their seminal rational (logos spermatikos) which merged with the immanent principle of organization in the universe. Finally Philon (13 BC – 54 AD), a practicing Jew and Hellenist from Alexandria, saw in the logos the supreme intelligibility ordering the universe, but much inferior to the unknowable God – that of Abraham and of Moses.

John seizes a Greek word. He wrests it, in a manner of speaking, from those who have used it in ignorance or by mistake. From the first words of the prologue to his Gospel, he gives to it, he renders to it rather its absolute meaning. It is the eternal Son of God who is His word, His Logos, His Verbum. And this Word is incarnate [...]. Thus, the Revelation made to the Jews makes an effort, from its very beginnings, to express itself in the languages of Greek philosophy, without making any concession to it.<sup>[11]</sup>

Thus the faith expressed in human concepts is inspired Scripture; the faith explained in human concepts is theology, science of the faith; finally, the faith defined in human concepts is dogma. All these concepts have a plebian or philosophical origin, but they are only employed by faith once decanted and purified of all original, undesirable philosophical stench.

At the cost of what hesitations and what labors have the Fathers and the first councils resolved, when faced with heresies, to employ these philosophical terms and to forge new for-

mulae of faith so as to clarify the gift of revelation! The use of the philosophical term, *ousia* (substance), *hypostasis*, *prosôpon* (person), to speak the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and of the Incarnation is accompanied by a necessary 'process of purification and recasting' of the concepts which these words signify.

It is only once extracted from their philosophical system and modified by a maturation in depth, then sometimes at first condemned because of their still inadequate content (monarchy, person, consubstantial), then understood correctly, admitted at last and qualified for application (but only analogically), that these concepts can become carriers of the new consistency of the Christian faith.[12]

These facts demonstrate that, far from expressing itself in the philosophy of the epoch, the faith must extricate itself from false philosophies and itself forge its own concepts. But is this to be extricated from all philosophy and to rest itself on a simple 'common sense?' With Father Garrigou-Lagrange, I will further respond to this question by showing that dogmas express themselves in the language of the philosophy of being, which is nothing besides a scientific instance of that common knowledge

### Hermeneutics in the Patristic School

It was with repugnance, even, that the councils would consent to add precisions to the symbol of faith from the Council of Nicaea (325) which itself seemed sufficient to exclude every heresy. The council of Chalcedon (451), against the monophysite heresy, resolved to proceed to a definition (*horos*) of the faith, a novelty. A little after (458), the bishops would conclude that Chalcedon was no longer an extensive enough interpretation of Nicaea. The word, interpretation (*hèrmènéia*), was also used by Saint Hilary (Syn. 91) when speaking of the Fathers who, after Nicaea, had reverently interpreted the propriety of consubstantial. It was a matter neither of a new reading nor of a revision to the symbol of Nicaea, but of a more detailed explanation. Such is, in consequence, the meaning of the *hèrmènéia* achieved by Chalcedon. Later, one Vigilius of Thapsus would affirm that it was necessary, when faced with newly prepared heresies, to 'bring forth new decrees of such a type that, even so, whatever the preceding councils have defined against the heretics remains intact.' [13] Then, Maximus the Confessor declared that the Fathers of Constantinople had only confirmed the faith of Nicaea against those who sought to change it for themselves to their own meaning: for Maximus, Christ subsisting 'in two natures' is not 'another profession of faith' (*allon pistéôs symbolon*), but only a piercing (*tranoûntes*) look at Nicaea, which, by interpretations and subsequent fashionings (*épéxègoumenoi kai épéxergazoménoi*), must still be defended against deformative interpretations.[14]

Thus, the hermeneutic (*hèrmènéia*) that the Fathers practiced for the earlier magisterium was clarified as far as its end and as far as its form.

As far as the end, it is no matter of adapting a modern mentality, but of combating this modern mentality and of neutralizing the impression of modern philosophies upon the faith (it is in fact the characteristic of heretics to bring the faith to modern philosophical speculations which corrupt it). It is not any more a matter of justifying the old heretics in the name of a better comprehension of the Catholic formulae which have condemned them!

As far as the form, it is no matter of proposing modern principles in the name of the faith but of condemning them in the name of this same unchanged faith. In summary, the revisionist hermeneutic of Joseph Ratzinger is a stranger to the thought of the Fathers, There are, therefore, grounds for reviewing it radically.

## The Homogenous progress of dogmas

It belongs to Saint Vincent of Lérins to have taught, in the year 434, the homogenous development of dogma, always by increase in explicitness but never by mutation:

It is characteristic of progress that each thing be amplified in itself; it is characteristic of change, on the other hand, that something be transformed into something else. [...] Whenever some part of the essential seed grows in the course of time, then one rejoices in it and cultivates it with care, but one never changes the nature of the germ: then is added to it, certainly, its appearance, its form, its clarity, but the nature in each genus remains identical.[15]

In the same sense, in 1854 Pius XII, citing the same Vincent of Lérins in the bull defining the Immaculate Conception, and speaking of the ‘dogmas deposited with the Church,’ declared that she ‘devotes herself to polishing them in such a manner that these dogmas of heavenly doctrine receive proof, light, clarity, but retain fullness, integrity, propriety, and that they increase only in their genus, that is to say, in the same dogma, the same meaning and the same proposition’ [DS 2802].

According to this progress in clarity, dogmas do not progress in depth – a depth of which the Apostles have already received the plenitude – nor in truth, that is to say, in their aptness to that part of his mystery which God has revealed. The progress sought by theology and by the magisterium is that of a more precise expression of the divine mystery as it is, immutable as God is immutable. Concepts, always imperfect, could always be refined, but they would never fall out-of-date. A dogmatic formula, therefore, never has anything to do with, nor ever has to earn the vital reaction of the believing subject, but it would have everything to lose in doing so. It is rather that subject who must, on the contrary, efface himself and disappear before the objective content of dogma.

## Return to the objectivity of the Fathers and the councils

Far from being obliged to take on in turn the successive, temporary forms of human subjectivity, the dogmatic effort is a labor of perseverance for the sake of making revealed truth objective upon its base of the gifts of Scripture and Tradition. It is a work of purge from the subjective in favor of an objectivity as perfect as possible. This work of purification is not in the first place an extraction of the heterogeneous so as to regain the homogenous, even though it can be this when faced with heresies and doctrinal deviations. The essential operation of dogmatic development is the effort to reassemble what is dispersed, to condense the diffused, to eliminate metaphors as far as possible, to purify analogies so as to make them more suitable. Nicaea’s consubstantial and Trent’s transubstantiation come from such successful reductions.

Inevitably, dogmatic reduction deviates from scriptural depth: consubstantial will never have the depth of one word from Jesus, such as this: “Who sees me, sees the Father” (John 14, 9). In this word, what an introduction to an unfathomable abyss! What a source for interminable questions! What space for contemplation! And nonetheless, what progress in precision belongs to consubstantial! What a fountain of theological deductions! There is, it seems to me, Joseph Ratzinger’s whole gnoseological difficulty: torn between the dogmas which he must hold with an absolute stability and the inquisitive quest of his mobile spirit, Joseph Ratzinger never achieves the reconciliation of the two poles of his faith.[16]

When will the affirmation of the ‘I’ efface itself before the ‘Him’?

A new reflection by a new vital connection?

It is this effacement of the believing subject which Benedict XVI energetically refuses. For him, the evolution of the formulation of the faith is not the search for better precision, but the necessity of proposing a new and adapted formulation. It is novelty for novelty's sake. And the adaption is an adaption to the believer, not an adaption to the mystery. All this fits with John XXIII's syllogism, from the presentation of the program of Vatican II in his opening discourse:

From its renewed, serene and tranquil adherence to all the teaching of the Church in its integrity and its precision [...], the Christian, Catholic and apostolic spirit of the whole world waits a leap forward toward a doctrinal penetration and formation of consciences, in the most perfect correspondence of fidelity to the authentic doctrine, but also: this doctrine studied and explained through the forms of investigation and the literary formulation of modern thought. One, in fact, is the substance of the ancient faith from the depositum fidei, the other the formulation of its surface: and it is of the later that one must, if there be need, take great care, by weighing everything according to the forms and the proportions of a magisterium whose character is above all pastoral.[17]

Such indeed was the Council's task, Benedict XVI says: the modern reformulation of the faith; according to a modern method and following modern principles, then according to a new method and after new principles. For there is always method, on the one hand, and principles on the other. To apply this method and to adopt these principles should still be the Church's task forty years later:

It is clear that this commitment in view of expressing in a new manner a determinate truth needs a new reflection upon that very truth and a new vital connection with it. It is equally clear that the new way of speaking can only mature if it is born from a conscious comprehension (Verstehen) of the expressed truth, and that on the other hand the reflection upon the faith demands just as much that one live that faith.[18]

There is the whole revolution of the magisterium implemented by the Council. Preoccupation with the subject of faith supplants care for the object of faith. In place of simply seeking to make dogma precise and explicit, the new magisterium will seek to reformulate and adapt it. In place of adapting man to God, it wishes to adapt God to man. Do we not then have a subverted magisterium, an anti-magisterium?

The Method: Dilthey's historicist hermeneutics

Where to find the method for this adapted rereading of dogma? A German philosopher who has influenced German theology and whose mark is found upon Joseph Ratzinger must intervene: Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), father of hermeneutics and of historicism.

Hermeneutics, as we have seen, is the art of interpreting facts or documents.

Historicism then, wishes to consider the role of history in truth. For Dilthey, as for Schelling and Hegel who were idealists, truth is only understood in its history. But whereas for Schelling and Hegel truth develops by itself, in a well-known dialectical process, on the other hand, for Dilthey a distinction must be made:

– In physical sciences, development consists in explanation (Erklären), which is a purely rational function.

– But in human sciences, truth progresses by understanding (Verstehen) which includes the appetitive powers of the soul. Thus truth develops by the process of a vital reaction of the subject to the object, in accordance with the link of vital reaction between the historian, who looks into the facts of history, and the impact of history.

Thus, the emotive richness of the historian tends to enrich the object he studies. The subject enters into the object; it becomes a part of the object. History is charged with the energy of its readers' emotions and thus the judgments of the past are unceasingly colored by the vital reaction of the historian or of the reader. Now, it is at the end of each epoch that there fully appears the meaning of that epoch, Dilthey emphasizes, and this is very true; from there, at each such term, it is necessary to proceed to a new revision.

Let's apply this: the date 1962, that of the start of Vatican Council II, seemed the end of a modern epoch; thus one could then – and one was obliged to – revisit, revise all historical facts, the judgments of the past, especially concerning religion – so as to disengage from them significant facts and permanent principles, not without coloring them anew with the preoccupations and emotions of the present.

In this sense, Hans Georg Gadamer (born in 1900) judges that the true historical consciousness does not, for the interpreter, consist in wishing to get rid of its prejudices – that would be the worst of prejudices – but in becoming aware of them and in finding better ones. This is not a vicious circle, the hermeneuticists say; it is a healthy realism which is called 'the hermeneutical circle.'

Applied to the faith, this retrospective necessarily purifies the past from what was added in an adventitious manner to the nucleus of the faith, and this revision, this retrospective, necessarily aggregates to the faith the coloring of present preoccupations. There is, thus, a double process: on the one hand, a rereading of the past which is a purification of the past, a disengagement from its parasitic growths, a highlighting of its implicit presuppositions, a becoming conscious of its fleeting circumstances, a reckoning of the emotive reactions of the past or of the philosophies of the past; and on the other hand, it must be an enrichment of historical facts and ideas by the actual vital reaction, which depends on the new circumstances in the actual epoch, as well as upon the actual mentality and thus upon actual philosophy.

It is indeed to this hermeneutic that the expert on the Council, Joseph Ratzinger, invited the assembly in the editing of 'schema XIII,' which would become *Gaudium et spes*, in an article written before the fourth session of the Council. What he said there about moral principles applies as well to dogmatic ones:

The formulations of Christian ethics, which must be able to reach the real man, the one who lives in his time, necessarily takes on the coloration of that time. The general problem, the knowledge that truth is only historically formulated, arise in ethics with a particular acuity. Where does temporal conditioning stop and permanent begin, so that it can, as it must, cut out and detach the first so as to arrange its vital space in the second? There is a question which no one can ever settle in advance without equivocation: no epoch can in fact distinguish what abides from its own fleeting point of view. To recognize and practice it, it is thus still necessary always to engage in a new fight. Faced with all these difficulties, we must not expect too much from the conciliar text in this matter.[19]

Benedict XVI reclaims the purification of the Church's past

However uncertain and provisional it may be, this purification of the past is indeed what Benedict XVI reclaims for the Church, and this is a constant in his life. He says it himself:

My fundamental impulse, precisely from the Council, has always been to free the very heart of the faith from under any ossified strata, and to give this heart strength and dynamism. This impulse is the constant in my life.[20]

In his speech on December 22, 2005, Benedict XVI enumerates the purifications of the past implemented by Vatican II and he justified them against the reproach of ‘discontinuity’ while invoking historicism:

In the first place, it was necessary to define in a new way the relation between faith and modern sciences [...]. In the second place, it was necessary to define in a new way the link between the Church and the modern State, which accorded a place to citizens of diverse religions and ideologies [...]. This was bound in the third place to the problem of religious tolerance, a question which needed a new definition of the link between the Christian faith and the religions of the world.

It is clear – Benedict XVI concedes – that in all these sectors of which the collection forms a singular question, there could emerge a certain form of discontinuity in which, nevertheless, once the diverse distinctions between concrete historical circumstances and their demands were established, it would appear that the continuity of principles had not been abandoned.

In this process of novelty in continuity – Benedict XVI justifies himself – we should learn to understand more concretely first of all that the decisions of the Church concerning contingent facts – for example, certain concrete forms of liberalism – must necessarily be themselves contingent because they refer to a specific reality, in itself changeable: It was necessary to learn to recognize that, in such decisions, only the principles express the enduring aspect, while remaining in the background and motivating decisions from within. On the other hand, the concrete forms are not as permanent; they depend on the historical situation and can thus be submitted to changes.

Benedict XVI illustrates his proof by the example of religious liberty:

Vatican Council II – he says – with the new definition of the relation between the faith of the Church and certain essential elements of modern thought, has revisited and likewise corrected certain historical decisions, but in this apparent discontinuity, it has in turn maintained and deepened its essential nature and its true identity.

Vatican Council II, recognizing and making its own through the decree on religious liberty an essential principle of the modern State, has captured anew the deepest patrimony of the Church.[21]

When hermeneutics begins to distort history

If only Benedict XVI would allow me to protest this distortion of history! The popes of the 19th century have condemned religious liberty, not only on account of the indifferentism of its promoters, but in itself:

– because it is not a natural right of man: Pius IX said that it is not a ‘*proprium cujuscumque hominis jus*,’[22] and Leo XIII said that it is not one of the ‘*jura quae homini natura dederit*.’[23]

– and because it proceeds from ‘an altogether distorted idea of the State,’[24] the idea of a State which would rather not have the duty of protecting the true religion against the expan-

sion of religious error.

These two motives for condemnation are absolutely general; they follow from the truth of Christ and of his Church, from the duty of the State to recognize it, and from its indirect duty to promote the eternal salvation of the citizens, not, indeed, by constraining them to believe in spite of themselves, but by protecting them against the influence of socially professed error, all things taught by Pius IX and Leo XIII.

If today, circumstances having changed, religious plurality demands, in the name of political prudence, civil measures for tolerance even of legal equality between diverse cults, religious liberty as a natural right of the person, in the name of justice, should not be invoked. It remains a condemned error. The doctrine of the faith is immutable, even if its complete application is impeded by the malice of the times. And on the day when circumstances return to normal, to those of Christianity, the same practical application of repression of false cults must be made, as in the time of the Syllabus. Let's remember that circumstance which change application (consequent circumstances) do not affect the content of doctrine.

We must say the same thing concerning circumstances which prompt the magisterium to intervene (antecedent circumstances). That religious liberty had in 1965 a personalist context, very different from the context of aggressiveness that it had a hundred years earlier in 1864, at the time of the Syllabus, does not change its intrinsic malice. The circumstances of 1864 certainly caused Pius IX to act, but they did not affect the content of the condemnation that he set down for religious liberty. Should a new Luther arise in 2017, even without his attaching as in 1517 his 95 theses to the door of the collegial church of Wittenberg, he would be condemned in the very terms of 500 years before.[25] Let us reject then the equivocation between 'circumstantial' decision and prudential, provisional, fallible, reformable, correctible decision in matters of doctrine.

#### A new Thomas Aquinas

By consequence the purification of the past of the Church, the revision of 'certain of her historical decisions,' such as those which Benedict XVI proposes, is false and artificial. It is to be feared that the same goes for the assimilation by the Church's doctrine of the philosophies of the temps, which is promoted by the same Benedict XVI in his speech to the curia in 2005. Benedict XVI praises Saint Thomas Aquinas for having, in the 13th century, reconciled and allied faith and the new philosophy of his epoch. This new Thomas Aquinas says: Voilà, I am going to make for you the theory of alliance which the Council has attempted between faith and modern reason. I summarize.

Here are the pope's exact words:

When, in the 13th century, Aristotelian thought entered into contact with Medieval Christianity, formed by the Platonic tradition, and when faith and reason were at risk of entering into an irreconcilable opposition, it was Saint Thomas Aquinas who played the role of mediator in the new encounter between faith and philosophy, thus placing faith in a positive relation with the form of reason dominant in his epoch. [...] With Vatican Council II the moment when a new reflection of this type was necessary arrived. [...] Let us read it and welcome it, guided by a just hermeneutic.[26]

In short, Saint Thomas did not condemn Aristotelianism, despite its dangers, but he knew how to welcome, purify and establish it 'in a positive relation with the faith.' – This is very exact. – Very well, then, Vatican II did analogously; it did not condemn personalism, but it knew how to receive it, and, in return for some purifications, 'how thus to place the faith in a positive

relation with the dominant form of reason' in the 20th century, how to integrate personalism into the vision of the Church. – Stay to see whether this integration is possible.

## 2. Joseph Ratzinger's Philosophical Itinerary

From Kant to Heidegger: a seminarian's intellectual itinerary

What then is this 'dominant form of reason' which seduced the young Ratzinger and challenged his faith, so much so that he must exert himself heroically to reconcile them? Just like what he studied as a young cleric, it comes out of the agnosticism of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

For the philosopher of Königsberg, our universal ideas do not take their necessity from the nature of things, which is unknowable, but from reason alone and from its innate 'a priori categories' of substance, causality, etc. Reason alone gives its structure and intelligibility to the real.

We only know a priori [that is to say, in a necessary manner] those things which we put there ourselves [Kant affirms].[27]

Modern physical science already followed this idealism with fruit by maintaining that the nature of the physical world remains opaque to reason and that we can only have mathematical and symbolic representations for it, in scientific hypotheses, works of reason, which force nature to appear before its tribunal so as to constrain it, by experimentation, to confirm the judge's a priori. Once confirmed, the hypothesis is declared scientific theory, but it remains nonetheless a provisory and always perfectible hypothesis.

Kant wants to apply this rationalism to the knowledge of the operations of the intelligence itself upon the givens of sensible knowledge. It is our understanding, he says, which applies its a priori categories to things.

He does not see that the real beings most immediately perceived by the intelligence, such as being itself, or substance, or the essence of a thing, are on the contrary intelligible by the simple abstraction which the intellect operates on them from the givens of sensible experience. In particular, the first thing known by our intelligence is the being of sensible things:

What is first conceived by the intellect is being; for everything is capable of being known according as it is in act [...]. This is why being is the proper object of the intellect; it is thus the first intelligible, as sound is the first object of hearing.[28]

And upon this apprehension of being is founded the natural knowledge of the first principles: being is not non-being; everything which happens has a cause; every agent acts for an end; all nature is made for something, etc.

On the contrary, the consequences of the Kantian 'unknowing' or agnosticism are catastrophic: being as being is unknowable; the analogy of being is indecipherable and the principle of causality has no metaphysical value; thus one cannot prove the existence of God from the things of the world, and any such analogy between creature and Creator is unknowable, even blasphemous.

Kantian agnosticism, father of modernism.

Consequently, reason cannot know either the existence or the perfections of God. This agnosticism even so incurs this reproach from Wisdom:

Deranged by nature are all men in whom there is not the knowledge of God and who, from

visible goods, have not known how to understand He who is, nor, by the consideration of his works, how to recognize by analogy Who is their creator.[29]

Likewise, since the analogy with God is impossible, the revealed analogies which unveil for us his supernatural mysteries are just metaphors; consequently, every word of God can only be allegorical, and all human discourse concerning God, inversely, can only be mythological. This is the same principle of modernism condemned by Saint Pius X a century later: evangelical facts result from fabrications, and dogmas from a transfiguration of reality because of religious need. Dogmas have a practical and moral meaning which answers to our religious needs, while their intellectual meaning is derivative and subordinated. Their generative principle is within man; it is the principle of immanence.[30] For example, for Kant, already, the Trinity symbolize the union in a single being of three qualities of goodness, holiness and justice; the incarnate Son of God is no supernatural being; he is a moral ideal, that of a heroic man.[31] Therefore, dogmas are nothing more than symbols of states of soul.

The autonomy of practical reason, mother of the Rights of Man-without-God

On the other hand, in morality, according to common sense, human nature and its natural operations are defined by their ends, just as the nature and way of using a washing machine are what they are by their end. Well, Kant rejects the principle of finality itself, true and thereby the knowledge of our nature. He ignores that this nature is made for happiness and that true happiness consists in seeing God, who is the sovereign Good. Moreover, he denies the analogy between the sensible good, object of desire, and the genuine good, the will's goal according to the perennial philosophy. The notion of the good is not acquired from sensible experience, and the existence of the sovereign Good is unknowable. Then what about morality? For Kant, a good act is not that which has an object and an end conformed to (unknowable) human nature and which of itself ordains man to the last end, but it is to act independently of every object and every end, out of pure duty, which is pure good will:

A good will is good not because of what it effects or accomplishes, nor because of its fitness to attain some proposed end; it is good only through its willing, i.e., it is good in itself.[32]

This is really the refusal of the final cause, the negation of the good as the end of our acts and the exclusion of God as sovereign Good and sovereign legislator. It is the proclamation of 'the autonomy of practical reason.' It is the German theory for the French Rights of Man in 1789. It is man taking the place of God.

Kantian virtue acts so as to 'maintain in a person his humanity with its dignity.'[33] And as any such virtue, quasi stoical, does not coincide here below with happiness, it postulates the existence of a God who makes remuneration in the next life, a provisional and hypothetic Deus ex machina, concerning whom 'one can only affirm that he exists apart from the rational thought of man.'[34]

Reconciling the Enlightenment with Christianity

Even if he seems to reprove such a 'religion within the limits of reason alone,' Joseph Ratzinger admires Kant, the philosopher par excellence from the Enlightenment. He salutes 'the enormous effort' of one who knew how 'to bring out the category of the good' – that beats everything! – He proclaimed the current import of the Enlightenment, in his discourse at Subiaco, on April 1, 2005, one month before becoming pope. He analyzed the contemporary

culture of the Enlightenment as being that of the rights of liberty, of which he enumerated the principles while adding:

– “This canon of Enlightenment culture, though far from being complete, contains important values from which, as Christians, we cannot and we must not disassociate ourselves. [...] Undoubtedly, we have come to important acquisitions which can aspire to a universal value: the established point that religion cannot be imposed by the State but can only be welcomed into liberty; respect for the fundamental rights of man, which are the same for all; separation of powers and the control of power.”

– But, Joseph Ratzinger nonetheless objects, this Enlightenment culture is a secular culture, without God, anti-metaphysical because positivist, and based upon an auto-limitation of practical reason by which ‘man allows for no instance of morality independent from his self-interest.’ Consequently, ‘there exists contradictory Rights of Man, as for example the opposition between a woman’s wish for freedom and the embryo’s right to life. [...] An ideology confused with liberty leads to a dogmatism always very hostile to liberty.’[35] By its absolute, this ‘radical Enlightenment culture’ is opposed to Christian culture.[36]

– How to overcome this opposition? Here is the synthesis.

On the one hand, Christianity, religion of logos, according to reason, must rediscover its roots in the first philosophy from the Enlightenment, which was its cradle and which, abandoning myth, sought for truth, goodness and the one God. In return for this, this nascent Christianity ‘refused to the State the right to regard religion as a part of the political order, postulating thus the liberty of the faith.’[37]

On the other hand, Enlightenment culture must return to its Christian roots. But of course: proclaiming the dignity of man, a Christian truth, ‘Enlightenment philosophy has a Christian origin, and it is not haphazardly that it was rightly born in the domain of the Christian faith’ (sic).

This, moreover, the future Benedict XVI underlines, was the work of the Council, its fundamental intention, exposed in its declaration concerning ‘the Church in the modern-day world,’ *Gaudium et Spes*:

[The Council] has placed in evidence this profound correspondence between Christianity and the Enlightenment, trying to arrive at a true reconciliation between the Church and modernity, which is the great patrimony which each of the two parties must safeguard.[38]

To do this, Kant, in spite of his agnosticism, must be taken into account, the future pope judges: every man, even the unbelievers, can postulate the existence of God:

Kant denied that God can be known within the limits of pure reason, but at the same time he represented God, liberty and immortality, as so many postulates of practical reason, without which, he said in perfect agreement with himself, no moral act is possible. Does not the contemporary situation of the world make us think again that he might have been right?[39]

In search of a new realist philosophy

From his first love, never renounced, for Kant, the intellectual itinerary of a young seminarian from Freising led Joseph Ratzinger to modern German philosophy. He recounts it in his memoirs. Counseled by my elder, Alfred Läpple, he said, ‘I read two volumes of the philosophical

foundations for Steinbüchel's moral theology, a new edition of which had just been prepared.'

[In this book, he continues,] I found first of all an excellent introduction to the thought of Heidegger and Jaspers, as well as to the philosophies of Nietzsche, Klages and Bergson. For me, Steinbüchel's work, *The Revolution of Thought*, was nearly the most important. Just as one believes in physical power so as to abandon a mechanistic conception and establish a new opening into the unknown and consequently into 'the known Unknown,' God, so one can note, in philosophy, a new return to the metaphysics made inaccessible after Kant.

We know that the physicist Werner Karl Heisenberg (1901-1976) elaborated in 1927 a theory concerning the statistical position of atomic and molecular particles known by the name of the 'uncertainty principle.' In 1963, our professor of physical sciences in Paris, Monsieur Buisson, mocked the application, that certain ill-advised philosophers wanted to make of this principle, to substance and nature, which must henceforth be considered indeterminate and thus instable! It is unbelievable to see how the confusion between substance and quantity can have put the pseudo-philosophers, and even the pseudo-theologians, in a whirl for fifty years.

Steinbüchel, who began by studying Hegel and socialism, exemplified in the cited work the blossoming of personalism essentially due to Ferdinand Ebner, who also acted for him as a turning point in his intellectual development. The discovery of personalism, which we find realized with a new force of conviction in the great Jewish thinker, Martin Buber, was for me a marked intellectual experience; this personalism was by itself linked in my eyes to the thought of Saint Augustine, which I discovered in the *Confessions*, with all his human passion and depth.[40]

Relapse into idealism: Husserl

The turning point of modern thought is marked by phenomenology. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a professor at various German universities, wanted to react against Kantian idealism and come 'to things themselves.' Very well. But to reach undeniable truth, he practiced a sort of methodical doubt, 'epochè,'[41] which in Greek signifies the suspension of judgment, and he 'struck into nothingness' whatever was not 'authentic.' He did not deny the existence of external things, but he put it 'between parentheses': thus experience was 'reduced' to what is 'give,' to what appears, to what manifests itself 'authentically.' Well, the demand of this process lead Husserl to profess provisionally the contrary of what he had expected: it is no longer the thing external to the spirit which is absolutely real, but it is the 'given,' that is to say, the reality of my act of aiming at my mental object, in which I know myself to be thinking something.

For consciousness – Husserl says – the given is essentially the same thing, whether the represented object exist, or whether it be imagined or even perhaps absurd.[42]

It is clear in any case that everything which is in the world of things is, by principle, only a presumed reality for me. On the contrary, myself [...], or if you like the actuality of my existence, is an absolute reality. [...] Consciousness considered in its purity must be held by a system of being closed on itself, by an absolute system of being.[43]

Curiously, we find at the same time in modernism, the same disinterest in reality applied to religion: the reality of the mysteries of the faith matters little; what is important is that they express the religious problems and needs of the believer and help him to resolve them or to

fulfill them. It was Alfred Loisy (1857-1940), Husserl's exact contemporary, who undertook this 'reduction' on the part of dogma. These ideas were in the air. With Husserl and his extreme crisis of idealism, the 'turning point of thought' evoked by Joseph Ratzinger was still problematic.

### Heidegger's existentialism

Let us understand the atmosphere of fresh air that existentialism, such as that of Heidegger, professor at Fribourg-en-Brigsau, can bring. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) wanted to avoid Husserl's relapse into idealism; he consecrated himself to beings, whose existence – the fact that they are cast into existence – calls out to us. At last, you say, here we leave the ideal and plunge again into the real! Alas! Being above all is the person and the general conditions for his affirmation. For existentialism in general, to exist is to have oneself abandon what one is not, by a free choice of destiny; in this sense, 'existence precedes essence,' becoming precedes being. To define the nature of things is determinism. – Kantian agnosticism is alive and well! The difference is that being defines itself by its action, as in Maurice Blondel (1861-1949).

For Heidegger, the subject is not constituted statically, by its nature, but by its dynamism, by its connections with others. Cast into existence and exposed to the abrupt impression 'of finding myself there' and to the feeling of 'dereliction,' I deliver myself from my anguishes by casting ahead, by accepting my destiny courageously and by making the decision to assume my place in the world, to 'exceed myself,' by giving my whole self to others who exist with me and by granting them authentic being.

Joseph Ratzinger will apply the idea of excelling oneself as accomplishment of self to Christology: Christ will be the man who completely excels, by the hypostatic union, and again, differently, by the cross.

### Max Scheler's philosophy of values

Another of Husserl's disciples, Max Scheler (1874-1928), a professor at Frankfurt, is the founder of the philosophy of values. According to this theory, human and community life is directed not by principles – which reason abstracts from the experience of things and which are founded on human nature, its finality and its Author – but by a state of spirit, a sense of life and of existence, which is nonetheless illuminated by immutable and transcendental values, which are imposed a priori (as Kant would say): liberty, person, dignity, truth, justice, concord, solidarity. These are the ideals, the many ideas which should live in action, in commitment to the serve of others and by which all should commune, differently however according to cultures and religions.

The Council, John Paul II and Benedict XVI are imbued with this philosophy of values.

The Council proposed before all to judge by its light (of the faith) the values most prized by our contemporaries and reconnect them to their divine source. For these values, in so far as they proceed from the human genius, are very good.[44]

The Church should not be the only promoter of values in civil society. [...] Ecclesiastical participation in the life of the country, by an open dialogue with all other forces, guarantees to Italian society an irreplaceable contribution of great moral and civil inspiration.[45]

It would be absurd to wish to turn backwards, to a Christian political system [...]. We do not

hope to impose Catholicism on the West. But we do wish that the fundamental values of Christianity and the liberal values dominant in the world today could meet and become fertile mutually.[46]

This is to suppress the final cause along with the efficient cause of man and of society, and to construct politics on pure Kantian formalism.

### Personalism and communion of persons

Scheler is the originator of a Christian existentialism or personalism. On the basis of the same confusion between being and act which is characteristic of Blondel and Heidegger, Scheler affirms that the 'I' results from the synthesis of all my vital phenomena of knowledge, instinct, emotion, passion, especially love – a synthesis which transcends each of these phenomena by an 'unknowable something more' In this superior value the person discovers itself as 'the concret unity of being in its acts.' The person exists in his acts.

Love makes the person reach his 'highest value,' in an intersubjectivity where love shares in the life of the other and makes them interdependent. The Council was inspired by this to declare:

Man, the only creature upon the earth that God willed for its own sake, can only find himself fully in the disinterested gift of himself.[47]

There is the phenomenological view of charity, most characteristic of Scheler. But the danger is to reduce the redemption to an act of divine solidarity. Joseph Ratzinger will fall into this failing. Max Scheler goes only to the point of affirming that God has need of communicating himself to others, otherwise the disinterested solidarity which is the essence of love would not be authentic in Him. Joseph Ratzinger will apply this excess of intersubjectivity to the processions of the divine persons in the Trinity.

According to Scheler, the person is not only individual and 'unrepeatable,' but also plural and communal. It is of his essence to become part of a community which is a *Miteinander*, a 'living with,' a communion of experience.

Karol Wojtyła (1929-2005), the future Pope John Paul II, was an ardent disciple of Scheler, for whom he wished to supply his nonexistent[48] ethics, without correcting his metaphysics of the person. For Wojtyła, 'the person determines himself by his communion (or participation, communication, *Teilhabe*) with other persons.'[49] The person is relation, or tissue of relations.

Isn't this nonsense? The person, philosophically speaking, is a substance par excellence and not an accident or a collection of accidents. "The person is most perfect in its nature," Saint Thomas explains.[50] It is evident that this 'perfection' is to subsist in itself and not in any other. Invaluable then is Boethius' definition of person, maintained by Saint Thomas: "Hoc nomen persona significat subsistentem in aliqua natura intellectuali: the name 'person' signifies a being subsisting in an intellectual nature."[51]

Well, abandoning such healthy realism, all personalism adopts the relational definition of the person. And the application of this definition to social life seems to flow from the source: communion, Wojtyła said, is not anything which reaches the person from the exterior, but the very act of the person, which energizes it and reveals to it, through unity with the other, its interiority as a person.[52] The Council picks up this idea:

The social character of man becomes apparent by the fact that there is an interdependence

between the growth of the person and the development of society itself. In fact the human person [...a Thomistic interpolation] is and must be the principle, the subject and the end of all institutions. Social life is not therefore for man something superfluous: as it is by exchange with others, by the reciprocity of services, by dialogue with his brothers that man grows according to all his capacities and can answer to his vocation. [Gaudium et spes, #25, § 1]

We will see further this application of this principle to the Church and to political society: if the person itself constitutes society, it follows that one could even have economics as the final cause for society, unless the person be first made the end of society.

The dialogue of 'I and Thou' according to Martin Buber

Joseph Ratzinger has recounted how, by means of reading Steinbüchel, he made the acquaintance of 'the great Jewish thinker, Martin Buber.' [53] 'The discovery of personalism [...] realized with a new force of conviction' in Buber was for Ratzinger 'a marked spiritual experience.' [54]

The central work of Martin Buber (1878-1965), *I and Thou* (*Ich und Du*, 1923), places relation at the beginning of human existence.

This relation is either 'I-it,' as in the technical sphere, or 'I-thou.' The 'I-it,' in human relations, reduces a fellow man to a thing, considered as a mere object or a simple means. On the contrary, the 'I-thou' establishes with another a reciprocity, a dialogue, which supposes that I, at the same time as the other, am a subject. Buber is the thinker of intersubjectivity. If the 'I-it' is necessary or useful for the functioning of the world, only the 'I-thou' sets free the ultimate truth of man and thus opens a true relation between man and God, the eternal Thou. [55]

The relation to others, who hold the common nature of man, is important, with its power, authority, influence, appeal, invitation, answer, obedience, but the danger is to make this relation the constituent of the person, when it is only one of its perfections. Besides, in this matter Buber discovered nothing, since already Aristotle (384-322 BC) set friendship as the virtue which crowns intellectual life and happiness. He defined it as 'a mutual love founded on the communication of some good,' [56] as Saint Thomas (1225-1274) said, which, going even beyond Buber, makes charity (love of God) a true friendship:

As there is a certain communication of man with God, according as he communicates to us his beatitude, this communication must be founded upon a certain affection. Concerning this communication it is said in the first epistle to the Corinthians (1, 9): "God is faithful, by whom you are called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." In fact, the love founded upon this communication is charity. It is thus manifest that charity is a certain friendship of man for God. [57]

Moreover, the danger, in the religious domain, is to confuse this charity with faith and to make faith in God a dialogue of the believer with a God who 'cries out to him,' making an abstraction from the conceptual content of the faith, that is to say, from the truths that God has revealed – not to me, but to the prophets and Apostles – and that the Church teaches. See how Buber himself confuses Revelation, experience, encounter, faith and reciprocal relation.

Revelation is the experience which swoops down on man in an unexpected manner [...]. This experience is an encounter with an eternal Thou, with an Altogether-Other who addresses himself to me, who calls me by my name [...]. The image of encounter precisely translates the essence of religious experience. The Thou as an active and not objectifiable presence, comes

to meet me and expects for me my establishment in the faith of reciprocal relation.[58]

It is to be feared that Joseph Ratzinger made this confusion between faith, Revelation and reciprocal relation, and that he also abstracted from the content of the faith, that is to say, from revealed truths. It is this that the continuation of my exposé will try to elucidate, first by examining Joseph Ratzinger's theological itinerary, then by a more precise study of the notion of faith which the future Benedict XVI developed in the course of his career. But before that, let's look at one last philosopher who interested the student in Munich.

'Going Out of Self' according to Karl Jaspers

By Joseph Ratzinger's own avowal, there was in fact another existentialist and personalist, Jaspers, who marked the young philosopher of Freising.

Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), a professor at Heidelberg, resembles a Christian existentialist and personalist, although he did not know how to reflect on the personality of God. He proposed an natural analogy for charity toward fellow men: communion. He is in fact less original in comparison with Scheler and Heidegger. He notes the experience of loving communication, made out of respect for the mysterious personality of the 'other' whom one even so wishes to touch and to whom one wishes to give oneself. This going out of self (Ek-Stase) towards others would furnish to Joseph Ratzinger a philosophical substratum for the considerations of Dionysius' mystical e He v efdsgsftheology concerning the ecstatic love of the soul for God and for a new interpretation of the redemptive love of Christ, as 'going out of myself,' in reaction to the pessimism of Heidegger for whom 'going out of self' is the solution for the anguish of an existence doomed to death.

Christ – Joseph Ratzinger will teach at Tübingen – is fully anthropocentric, fully ordained to man, because he was radically theocentric, in yielding the ego, and by this fact the being of man, to God. Then, in the measure by which this exodus of love is the 'Ek-Stase' of man outside of himself, an ecstasy by which he is extended forwards infinitely outside of himself and thus opened, is drawn beyond his apparent possibilities for development – in this very measure adoration [sacrifice] is simultaneously cross, suffering and heartbreak, the death of the grain of wheat which can bring forth no fruit until it passes through death.[59]

Is this not to effect a personalist or existentialist reinterpretation of the redemption? The cross should not be the torture of Jesus on the wood of the cross; without doubt it is not, as with Heidegger, an extension into the future so as to escape the present; but it is the extension outside of self for the sake of love which 'shatters, opens, crucifies and sunders.' [60] In this fatally naturalistic perspective, where is sin? Where is atonement?

The danger of wishing, with Heidegger or Jaspers, to find natural and existential bases for supernatural realities is that of succumbing to a temptation all too natural for a spirit which seeks to reconcile 'modern reason' with the Christian faith: to cause, in place of an aspiring analogy, a debasing reduction of supernatural mysteries. Was this not the process of Gnostic heresies?

Jaspers exceeds the rest in the fault of confusing natural with supernatural. His method of 'paradoxes' consists in finding for the apparent contradictions of the natural order supernatural solutions. John Paul II seems to have given in to this fault in his encyclical on August 6, 1993, concerning the norm of morality: his letter presents itself as the modern solution for a modern antinomy:

How can obedience to universal and immutable moral norms respect the unique and unrepeatable character of a person and not violate its liberty and dignity?[61]

Dignity is considered in a personalist manner, as inviolability, and not in a Thomist manner, as virtue. Thus, to a false problem, a false solution:

The crucified Christ reveals the authentic meaning of liberty: the total gift of self. [VS 85]

The gift of self in the service of God and of one's brothers [accomplishes] the full revelation of the inseparable link between liberty and truth. [VS 87]

This is true on the supernatural level. But isn't it disproportionate to give a philosophical question a supernatural, theological solution: the cross? The true solution of the antinomy is the Thomistic: liberty is the faculty which pursues the good; and it is the role of moral law to indicate what is this good, and that's all.

This false antinomy reveals a subjectivist philosophy's incapacity to pose true questions. How to grasp the mystery of God, if the intellect has that for its first object? How, not being, but the thinking subject or the questioned subject? If the notion of being does not allow one to climb again by analogy from created beings to the first Being? One is forced into the immanent genesis of dogmas, according to the modernist theory condemned by Pascendi. How to grasp the notion of good, the ratio boni, if thought cannot climb by analogy from sensible good to moral good? If the intellect does not know human nature and its ends, and the last end? One is condemned to the ethics of the person, the ethics of the inviolable subject or rather that of the subsistent relation. On all sides, there is an impasse.

### 3. Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Itinerary

Joseph Ratzinger's philosophical itinerary is then an impasse, because it abandons the road of the philosophy of being. Will the theological itinerary of the same Ratzinger leave that impasse? Will it find a way which leads to the first Being, to his infinite perfections, to his supernatural mysteries?

To answer this question, it is first necessary to situate the professor of Tübingen in the context of German theology, dependent on the celebrated school of theology in the university of that very city.

Living Tradition, continuous Revelation, according to the school of Tübingen

According to the founder of the Catholic school of Tübingen, Johann Sebastian von Drey (1777-1853), historical development is explained by a vital spiritual principle:

What encloses the various historical epochs into a united whole or what sets them in opposition to each other is a certain spirit which, at determined times, concludes historical development with a unity filled with life: this is the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age.

[This spirit is constructive:] acting by going out of itself, it draws everything around itself like the center of a circle, which reduces opposition and reorganizes in accordance with itself whatever is conformed to it.[62]

The affinity of this thought to Dilthey's is striking, but for Drey, the *Zeitgeist* is nothing besides the spirit of Christ. The theologian's faith transfigures the philosopher's naturalism. In his *Apologetik* (1838), Drey explains how evolution is necessary to Christianity, insofar as it is a historical phenomenon and insofar as it is Revelation. Here is how Geiselman summarizes Drey:

Christian Revelation is life, originally divine life – a life which, without interruption, increases from its original core towards its plenitude within the universal Church. As uninterrupted divine life, Revelation is not a completed gift, deposited, so to speak, in the cradle of the church and transmitted by human hands. It is this very Revelation, which, like all life, moves and continues of itself.[63]

Its movement is auto-movement, thanks to that portion of spiritual force which has dwelt in it since its origin, to know God's essential force and also his action, which, without failing, continues to act and to lead his creation towards its perfection.[64]

Revelation, living Tradition and evolution of dogma

This idea of Revelation, which 'no longer appeared simply as the transmission of truths addressed to the intellect, but as the historical action of God, in which Truth unveils itself little by little,'[65] would have been the thesis concerning Saint Bonaventure presented by Joseph Ratzinger in 1956 for his State authorization as a university professor. The author pretended that the Seraphic Doctor had seen in Revelation, not an ensemble of truths, but an act (which is not exclusive), and that 'the concept of "Revelation" always implies the subject who receives it'[66]: the Church thus forms a part of the concept of Revelation, that is to say, a part of Revelation itself. Similarly, the candidate for authorization maintained that 'to Scripture belongs the subject who understands it [the Church] – Scripture with which we have already

given the essential meaning of Tradition.’[67] And Joseph Ratzinger tells just how his thesis-director, professor Michael Schmaus, ‘did not at all see in these theses a faithful reconstruction of Bonaventure’s thought [...] but a dangerous modernism, well on the way to turning the concept of Revelation into a subjective notion.’[68]

Well, this idea of Revelation as a divine intervention in history, which also was not closed by the death of the last of the Apostles, but which continues in the Church which is its receptive subject, had been rejected meanwhile, after Drey and before Loisy, by the Roman magisterium: Revelation is not any divine intervention, but only a pronouncement from God, ‘locutio Dei,’[69] not to the whole Church, but to ‘the holy men of God’ (1 P 1, 21), the prophets and Apostles’; the truth which it contains ‘was complete with the Apostles’[70]; it is not perfectible,[71] but is a ‘divine deposit’ confided to the magisterium of the Church ‘so that it might guard it as sacred and set it out faithfully.’[72]

The ‘Revelation transmitted by the Apostles, or the deposit of the faith’[73] does at all times experience progress, not indeed in its content, of which the Apostles possessed the plenitude as well as the plenitude of understanding[74], but in its explanation, by a ‘more ample interpretation’[75] or a clearer ‘distinction,’[76] that is to say, by a passage from implicit to explicit[77] of that same deposit of faith closed at the death of the last of the Apostles.

Certainly, God continues to intervene in human history: the conversion of the emperor Constantine, the evangelization of America, the pontificate of Pope Saint Pius X were as milestones among so many others in God’s providential action, but they do not have the value of divine Revelation. Here a very important distinction must be made: a progressive Revelation from God is undeniable in the Old Testament and even in the New until the death of Saint John. After that, public Revelation ended. Neither God nor anyone else could add anything whatsoever to it, as Saint John said in the Apocalypse:

For I testify to everyone that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from these things that are written in this book. [Apoc. 22, 18-19]

Without doubt, as Saint Thomas says, ‘in each epoch, the Church never lacks men filled with the spirit of prophecy, not indeed to draw out a new doctrine of faith, but for the direction of human acts.’[78] These are the subjects and instruments of private revelations. If, therefore, anyone supposes that public Revelation is continued in the Church by the prophetic charism of its members or of the hierarchy, he falls into error. Here as elsewhere, Saint Thomas is a sure guide. Speaking of the Old Testament, he teaches that there has effectively been an increase in the articles of faith, not as regards their substance, but as regards their explanation:

As regards the substance of articles of faith, there has been no increase in these articles according to the succession of time, because all the later ones are believed to have been already contained in the faith of the early Fathers albeit implicitly. But as regards their explanation, the number of articles has increased: because certain among them have been explicitly understood by the successors, which were not explicitly understood by the first. Thus, the Lord said to Moses in Exodus: ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob and my name of Adonai I did not tell them.’ And the Apostle says: ‘the mystery of Christ...in other generations was not known...as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets’ (Ep. 3, 4-5)[79]

There is no parallel but only analogy between the time of Revelation and the time of the Church, between progressive Revelation, on the one hand, and progressive development of Christian dogma, on the other. Thus Saint Bonaventure must be interpreted. Until Christ and the Apostles, Revelation itself was developed while passing from implicit to explicit; after the Apostles, Revelation being terminated, its understanding, its application and its proposal by the Church are developed while passing from implicit to explicit.

We could summarize this in Latin: *Ante Christum, creverunt articula fidei quia magis ac magis explicite a Deo revelata sunt; post Christum vero et apostolos, creverunt quidem articula fidei quia magis ac magis explicite tradita sunt ab Ecclesia.*[80]

Tradition, a living interpretation of the Bible

The historicism in Joseph Ratzinger's concept of Tradition presupposes his subjectivism. The mystery of God is not an object; it is a person, an I who speaks to a Thou. The I who speaks is only perceived by a Thou who listens. This relation is inscribed in the notion of Tradition. Tradition, consequently, is nothing besides the living interpretation of Scripture:

There can be no pure *sola scriptura* ('by Scripture alone'). To Scripture belongs the subject who understands it – Scripture by which is already given to us the essential meaning of Tradition.[81]

This requires explanation. For idealist thought, the crude thing is unknown; it is the object (that is to say, the thought thing) which is known. For Kant, the subject forms a part of the object, imposing on it his a priori categories, his own coloring. For Husserl, the thought object is simply the correlative for the thinking subject, independent of the thing. Joseph Ratzinger would find an application of this idealism in Scripture and Tradition: crude Scripture is unintelligible; it must be 'understood' by the Church as subject, which is its correlative, and which interprets it in its own manner; in this sense, 'there can never be Scripture alone,' in rebuttal of what Luther pretended with his '*sola scriptura*.'

In fact, Joseph Ratzinger is here inspired by Martin Buber,[82] for whom the essence of the Decalogue is a summons: the summons of the human Thou by the divine I: 'Thou shalt not have strange gods before me...' (Ex. 20, 3). Interpretation of the Bible relives the experience of this summons. In this sense, there is no *sola scriptura* since there is always the summons, today in the Church.

The truth is that it is the Church who gives an authentic interpretation for the Bible. But this is not because she is 'the understanding subject,' but because she is its judge: 'It belongs to her to judge concerning the true meaning and interpretation of Holy Scripture.'[83] And to sustain this judgment, the Church has another source of faith: Tradition, that is to say, the truths of faith and morals received by the Apostles from the very mouth of Christ or from the holy Ghost, which have been transmitted from them to us without alteration, as though from hand to hand.[84] The witnesses for Tradition are the holy Fathers, the liturgy, the dispersed and unanimous magisterium of the bishops and the magisterium of councils and popes. All these voices succeed each other, but Tradition in essence is immutable.

It is because it is immutable that it can be a rule for the faith, because elastic rules are no rules at all. It is therefore insofar as it is immutable that Tradition is a rule of interpretation for the Bible; there is no actual reading of the Bible, different from yesterday's, which can suffer Scripture to undergo a 'process of reinterpretation and of amplification,' as Benedict XVI pretends.[85]

Immutable in itself, Tradition progresses in becoming more explicit. Here is a truth which Vat-

ican Council II, in its constitution *Dei verbum* concerning divine Revelation, has obscured by alleging an historical progress for Tradition in ‘its perception’ and in ‘its understanding’ of the things revealed by God, and an ‘incessant tendency of the Church towards the plenitude of divine truth’ – things absolutely impossible, as I have shown. I cite:

This Tradition, which comes from the Apostles, progresses in the Church, with the assistance of the Holy Ghost: in fact, the collection of things as well as the words transmitted increases, whether by the contemplation and study of believers who meditate upon them in their heart (see Luke, 2, 19 and 51), or by deep understanding of spiritual things which they experience, or by the predication of those who, with Episcopal succession, receive a certain charism of truth. Thus, the Church, while the centuries pass, tends constantly towards the plenitude of divine truth, until the words of God are accomplished in her. [*Dei verbum*, # 8]

I have already let you understand how doctrinal progress in becoming explicit is inversely proportional to progress in depth of understanding, which does not exist absolutely since, as Saint Thomas says:

The Apostles were most fully instructed in the mysteries: just as they received before anyone else in time, so they received more abundantly than anyone else. Such is the interpretation of the gloss on this passage of the Epistle to the Romans (8, 23): ‘It is we ourselves who have the first-fruits of the Spirit.’ [...] Those who were closer to Christ, whether before him, like John the Baptist, or after him, like the Apostles, knew more fully the mysteries of the faith.[86]

Who in the Church could surpass the Apostles in understanding of the faith? It is inevitable that this in-depth understanding should decrease among their successors, despite being teachers of the faith provided with the charism of truth, excluding the several lights who are the doctors of the Church. This sane realism has given place, in the Council, to the illusion of necessary progress towards a pretended plenitude, which did not belong to the Apostles.

The doctrine of faith as experience of God

It is not only the idea of Tradition, but also that of Revelation, which Joseph Ratzinger revises either in light of his idealism or in light of his personalism.

Thus, concerning Revelation, considered as somehow actual, Joseph Ratzinger is of the opinion that ‘the concept of “Revelation” always implies the subject who receives it.’[87] The author supposes wrongly that the receiving subject is the believer, or the Church, and not only the Apostles; he falls into a Protestant error.

Concerning theology, Joseph Ratzinger judges that ‘pure objectivity does not exist,’ no more in theology than in physics. Just as in physics ‘the observer himself forms a part of the experience, and ‘in his response there is always some part of the question posed and of the questioner,’ so in theology ‘whoever engages in the experience receives an answer which not only reflects God but also our own question; it teaches us something concerning God by refraction through our own being.’[88]

Concerning the faith itself, Joseph Ratzinger assures us that pure objectivity is not even possible:

When someone pretends to provide an objective response, free from all passion, a response, in fact, which surpasses the prejudices of pious persons, a purely scientific piece of information [about God], let us declare that he deceives himself. This kind of objectivity is outside the

capacities of man. He cannot question and exist as a mere observer. As such, he would never learn anything. To perceive the reality 'God,' he must equally engage in the experience of God, the experience that we call faith. Only the one who engages in it can learn; only by participating in the experience is it possible to pose a question truly and to receive a response.[89]

I object that, if to have faith an 'experience of God' is necessary, very few Christians have faith. Faith, adherence of the intellect to the divine mystery is a thing requisite for salvation; but the life of faith, *ex fide*, as Saint Paul said, is a normal, desirable thing, but not equally necessary; and in any case, the experience of God is not requisite for it.

But above all, if one defines faith as 'experience of God,' one repeats the modernist heresy, which consecrates every religion as true, since all pretend to have some authentic experience of the divine.[90]

Finally, concerning the magisterium of the Church, Joseph Ratzinger has as well a dialectic vision or, let us say, one conversational with its decisions, which must be, according to him, answers to the believers questions or the result of his experimentation with God:

Dogmatic formulae themselves – for example, one nature in three Persons – include this refraction through the human; they reflect in our example man at the end of antiquity who inquired and experimented with the philosophical categories from the end of antiquity, these categories determining the point of view from which he poses his questions.[91]

Let me first say just one word about the Kantian substratum for this problem.

Just as the physicist, Kant said, even before Claude Bernard, selects phenomena and submits them to the experience which he has rationally conceived, so as to obtain from them an answer which confirms the a priori of his theory, so the philosopher must question phenomena – objects of spontaneous experience – while applying to them the a priori categories of his understanding – making thought objects of them – so as to verify their pertinence for these ends.

Just as easily could all science of necessity be a reflection, not only of such things as appear to us (phenomena), but even of the spirit which imposes on them its modes by which they are represented to itself.[92]

One could in fact allow that the long and difficult adaptation of the concepts of dogma so as to proclaim them adequately is a kind of experimentation practiced by the Church. But by doing so, it is neither God nor his mystery that are thus challenged, but rather human concepts. It is not reason – ancient or medieval – which 'experiments with God,' but rather divine faith which 'experiments with reason.'

This being established, the fundamental problem remains: does our intellect reach the being of things, yes or no? Is truth objective? Is there a philosophy of the real? Are the concepts chosen and polished by the faith concepts of a particular, historical philosophy: Platonist, Aristotelian, Thomist, Kantian, personalist? Or rather are they more simply the concepts of the most elementary philosophy of being, that of common sense?

I mean by common sense the spontaneous exercise of the intellect, which reaches the being of the things of natural reality so as to find in them certain causes and certain principles. For example, reason spontaneously affirms that, besides the coming into being of a reality, there is in that reality something which abides (principle of substance). Or again: every agent acts for an end (principle of finality).

To the proposed question, I have already sketched above the answer, but it must be demonstrated.

## Common sense, philosophy of being and dogmatic formulae

To limit ourselves to the dogma of the divine Trinity, the principle mystery is the reconciliation of the divine unity with the real distinction of the three divine Persons. Let us examine the concepts which express better and better the mysterious antinomy.

The confession of faith in its primitive simplicity is this: 'I believe in one God, the Father almighty, and in Jesus Christ his only son, and in the Holy Ghost.' This expresses the mystery clearly but still imperfectly. The heresies of the first three centuries dismissed the true meaning of this formula, either by denying the real distinction of the Three (Sabellius), or by denying the divinity of the Son (Arius), or that of the Holy Ghost (Macedonius), or by professing in opposition three gods (tritheism). This last error was condemned in 262 by a letter of Pope Dionysius. [93]

The Council of Nicea (325) clarified the dogma against the Arians, not only under a negative form by anathema, but in a positive manner, by expanding the apostolic symbol with the development of the idea of filiation and generation: 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, of the Father's substance [...], begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.' [94] Here appears the notion of 'substance,' which remains in the domain of common sense, but also the judgment of 'consubstantial' (homoousios), which already surpasses what expression the common sense can give to the shared divinity of the Father and Son.

Later, the first Council of Constantinople (381) clarified the divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, the second Council of Constantinople (553) clarified in its turn 'that it is necessary to adore one deity in three subsistences or persons.' [95] This was an anathema, but it positively determined what must be believed. Besides the abstract terms of nature and substance ('mian physin ètoi ousian: a single nature or substance'), the formula utilized the concrete terms of subsistence and person ('en trisin hypostasesin ègoun prosôpois: in three subsistences or persons'), the first of which, 'subsistence' (or hypostasis), was already a developed philosophical notion, since it had been precisely distinguished from 'substance' (or ousia).

To continue, the eleventh private council of Toledo (675) distinguished the divine persons from each other by naming them in relation to each other: 'In the relative names of the Persons, the Father is linked to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Ghost comes from the two others. And although, according to these relations, three Persons are affirmed, yet one still believes in only one nature or substance.' [96] From then on it has been believed that there are in God three real relations which characterize and number the persons.

At the council of Lyon (1274) was defined, by the Filioque, the procession of the Holy Spirit from both Father and Son (Dz 463). In 1441, the Council of Florence, in its decree for the Jacobites, gave the final expression of dogmatic progress concerning the Trinity: There is a distinction of persons by their relations of origin; their unity is total 'wherever there is no opposition of relation' [97]; the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son as from a single principle; and the persons are present in each other (circuminsession) (Dz 703-704). It is evident that the notions of 'relative nomenclature,' of 'opposition of relation,' of principle without principle,' 'principle from principle' and 'unique principle' surpass the level of common sense and denote a philosophy, and a well-developed philosophy, but a philosophy which cannot be specifically named.

Even later, the Church, by the voice of Pius IX, condemned in 1857 the explanation of the Trinity made by Anton Günther (1783-1863). The person being 'consciousness of myself,' said the later, the two divine processions of the word and of love must be reinterpreted as being three intellectual processions: consciousness of the thinking self, consciousness of the thought self and the correlation between the two. This is Husserl before the fact. Pius IX

declared this explanation to be ‘an aberrance from the Catholic faith and from the true explanation of unity in the divine substance’ (Dz 1655). Pius IX’s act contained an implicit approbation of the definition of person made by Boethius (470-525): ‘a person is an individual substance of a rational nature,’ a definition which surpasses common sense and which is coherent with the philosophy of being, though opposite to personalist philosophy, which confuses metaphysical personality and psychological personality.

I will conclude with Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange:

- The dogmatic formulae developed by the Church contain concepts which surpass common sense.
- These formulae and concepts belong to the philosophy of being, which maintains that the intellect knows, not primarily its own act, but first being.
- These concepts are all the same accessible to the common sense, insofar as it is the philosophy of being in its rudimentary state.
- This amounts to saying that the concepts of dogmatic formulae belong to the philosophy of being, which is the scientific instance of common sense.
- It follows from this, and is verified by facts, that idealist philosophies, which reject the philosophy of being, do away with the common sense and become inept for explaining dogma.
- Finally, the philosophy of being, suitable for proclaiming dogma, is not a ‘particular philosophy,’ nor a system, but rather the philosophy of all time, the philosophia perennis, to cite Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), the philosophy inherited from Plato and Aristotle. Here is a beautiful witness offered to this philosophy of being by Henri Bergson (1859-1941), who, without being a Thomist, was not for all that ignorant of the great Greeks or of Saint Thomas:

Of the immense edifice constructed by them, a solid framework still remains, and this framework draws the grand outlines of a metaphysics which is, we believe, the natural metaphysics of the human intellect.[98]

- The final reason for the suitability of the philosophy of being for developing dogma is their pre-established harmony, as was shown by Newman.

The power of assimilation, driving force of doctrinal progress, according to Newman

It was John Henry Newman (1801-1890) who first made a driving force for doctrinal development reside in the assimilation by Catholic doctrine of elements foreign to Revelation, that is to say, of philosophical principles. But, as an idealist, he saw in this assimilation a general sign of correct progress of ideas:

The facts and opinions which until now have been considered under other connections and were grouped around other centers are from now on gradually attracted by a new influence and submitted to a new sovereign. They are modified, reconsidered, set aside according to each case. A new element of order and of composition has entered among them; and its life is proved by a capacity for expansion, without introducing any disorder or dissolution.

The process of deduction, of conservation, of assimilation, of purification, of molding, a unitive process, is the essence of a fruitful development and is its third distinctive mark.[99]

And Newman gives an example, a unique example of such a fruitful assimilation: the assimilation by Catholic theology of the philosophical principle of instrumental causality. This assimilation

ilation, he says, results from an antecedent affinity between the revealed truth and the natural reality.

That an idea becomes more willingly coalescent with some rather than with others does not indicate that it has been unduly influenced, that is to say, corrupted by them, but that there was an antecedent affinity between them. At the least, one must admit here that, when the Gospel speaks of a virtue going out of Our Lord (Luke, 6, 19) or of the cure that he effected with mud that his lips had moistened (John 9, 6), these facts offer examples, not of the perversion of Christianity, but of its affinity with notions exterior to it.[100]

This nice text allows us to evoke the fruitfulness of the assimilation by Christian doctrine of the principle of instrumental causality: one can think about the efficacy of grace in the sacred humanity of Jesus as instrument of his divinity, first in his passion, then in the mass and in the sacraments, which Saint Thomas taught and which the Council of Trent utilized to define the action *ex opere operato* of the sacraments.[101]

One can also think, on the other hand, about the sterility to which Protestantism condemned itself by refusing this assimilation: the so-called Christ is the sole cause of grace without any instrument or mediation. Vatican Council II, likewise, was sterilized by refusing, in 1963, according to the counsel of the experts Rahner and Ratzinger, to proclaim the blessed Virgin 'Mediatrice of all graces,' because, they said, such a title 'would result in unimaginable evils from the ecumenical point of view.'[102]

On the contrary, in Catholicism, the principle of instrumental causality has been the revealer of multiple faces of Christian dogma, which, without it, would have remained veiled in the depth of mystery and would have escaped the explicit knowledge of the faith.

Without doubt, assimilation, by dogma or by theology, of philosophical principles has no resemblance to the growth of living beings through nutrition, that is to say, by intussusception! [103] Progress is made by a comparison of one proposition of faith (some one of Jesus' miracles) with a judgment of reason (instrumental causality) which lends him its humble light, so as to draw from it a theological conclusion which will aid in clarifying dogma. In the progress of the science of the faith, the premise of reason is only an instrument for the premise of faith, an auxiliary of faith, for disengaging what exists in a virtual state, or even already in an actually implicit state – I will not go into the secret of this distinction. What must be understood is that the truth of reason cannot be included in the faith, but that it can be 'assimilated' by faith only as a tool for investigation and precision.

But what matters to us is the final rational for this pre-established harmony between dogma and philosophy. It is that, according to the philosophy of being, through our concepts the intellect reaches the being of things and, by analogy, can know something of the first Being, God. And we certify with admiration that what the philosophy of being says concerning the perfections of the first Being is in exact accordance with what Revelation unveils for us. On the other hand, what in God surpasses the capacity of every created intellect is supernaturally revealed to us, is expressed in human language and may be developed in the concepts of the philosophy of being.

The suitability of this philosophy for proclaiming and causing dogma to progress is an indication of its truth. On the contrary, the unsuitability of idealist philosophies for doing this is the indication of their falsehood.

Far from pledging allegiance to our concepts, Revelation judges and uses them

If the philosophy of being can express and develop dogma, it is also, and this must be emphas-

ized, because that dogma, or Revelation, has judged and purified its concepts, extracting them from particular philosophies or from what Benedict XVI calls ‘the dominant form of reason’ in an epoch. The whole endeavor of Saint Thomas was to purify Aristotle of his bad Arabic interpreters, to join to him elements of Platonism, and to correct him again by the light of Revelation, so as to make of him the instrument of choice for theology and dogma. Some excellent authors further clarify this conclusion.

It is only once extracted from their philosophical system and modified by a maturation in depth, then sometimes at first condemned because of their as yet inadequate terminology (monarchy, person, consubstantial), then correctly understood, at last recognized and qualified as applicable – but only analogically – that these concepts could become bearers of the new substance of the Christian faith.[104]

It is by placing in the light of Revelation the notions developed by pagan philosophy that the Church has remained faithful to the Gospel and has made progress in the formulation of the faith.[105] [And she has resisted, I add, the attacks of that philosophy – still poorly developed.]

Far from pledging its allegiance to these concepts, the Church uses them in her service; she uses them as in every realm a superior uses an inferior, in the philosophic sense of the word, that is to say, by ordaining it to its end. Supernature uses nature. Before using these concepts and these terms in his service, Christ, through the Church, judges and approves them according to a wholly divine light, which does not have time for its measurement, but immutable eternity. These concepts, evidently inadequate, could always be made more precise; they will never become outdated.

Dogma thus defines cannot allow itself to be assimilated by human thought in a perpetual evolution; this evolution would only be a corruption. On the contrary it is [dogma] which wishes to assimilate to itself this human thought which only changes unceasingly because it dies everyday; it wishes to assimilate it to itself so as to communicate to it while here below something of the immutable life of God. The great believer is he whose intellect is basically more passive toward God, who vivifies it.[106]

In light of our analysis of the role of the philosophy of being in the development of dogma, a role so well clarified by the three others whom I just cited, how defective and relativistic appears the idea that Benedict XVI has concerning the ‘encounter between faith and philosophy.’

When in the XIII century – he says – by the intermediation of Jewish and Arabic philosophers, Aristotelian thought entered into contact medieval Christianity, and faith and reason were at risk of entering an irreconcilable opposition, it was above all Saint Thomas Aquinas who played the role of mediator in the new encounter between faith and philosophy [with Aristotelian philosophy], thus setting the faith in a positive relation with the dominant form of reason in his age.[107]

According to Benedict XVI, the task determined by Vatican Council III, in accordance with the program sketched by John XXIII, was none other than today to set the faith in a positive relation with modern idealist philosophy, in order to suppress the deplorable antagonism between faith and modern reason, and to implement in sacred doctrine a new leap forward. Very well, let us see how Joseph Ratzinger himself, following this program which was also his own, has

employed these 'dominant' philosophies of the 1950's to reread several articles of the Creed and to expose the three great mysteries of the faith. Let us first watch the exegete comment on three articles from the Creed, two of which are evangelical facts.

## 4. An Existentialist Exegesis of the Gospel

Nominated, in the summer of 1966, as professor of dogmatic theology in the illustrious faculty of Catholic theology at the university of Tübingen, Joseph Ratzinger was confronted with an introduction to Heidegger's theology of existentialism by the protestant Rudolph Bultmann. In his courses for winter 1966-1967, he 'tried to fight against the existentialist reduction' of doctrines concerning God and concerning Christ.[108] My reader will judge whether this combat was victorious; its content figures in the work prepared in 1968 under the title *Einführung in das Christentum* (The Christian Faith Yesterday and Today[109]). Among other things, the author there comments upon three articles from the Apostle's Creed, two of which are among the facts narrated by the Gospel.

'He Descended into Hell'

'No other article of faith [...] is as strange to our modern consciousness.'[110]

– But no! Let us not eliminate this article: 'It represents the experience of our age,' that of dereliction [Heidegger's theme], dereliction through God's absence (Ratzinger clarifies), of which Jesus had experience on the cross: 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matt 27, 46) [111]

– Thus, this article of faith explains 'that Jesus has crossed through the door of our ultimate solitude, that he has entered, by means of his Passion, into the abyss of our dereliction.' The limbo of the Saints of the Old Testament visited by Jesus (this limbo is passed over in silence) is the sign that where no other word can reach us, e there He is. Thus, hell is overcome, or more exactly, death which previously was hell is no longer so [...] since within death dwells love.'[112]

'He rose again from the dead'

– Man is doomed to death (p. 214) (another theme of Heidegger's). Can Christ be made an exception?

– In fact, this article corresponds to the desire for love, 'which aspires to eternity' (p. 214); because 'love is stronger than death.' (Canticle 8, 9) Thus, man 'can only survive by continuing to subsist in another' (p. 214), in that Other 'who is' (p. 215), He, 'the God of the living [...]; I am in fact more myself in Him than when I try to be simply myself' (p. 215). (Notice the Platonism: I would be more real in God than in myself).

– Thus, in presenting himself really 'from the outside' to the disciples [very well], Jesus 'shows himself powerful enough to prove to them [...] that in him, the power of love is manifestly stronger than the power of death' (p. 220)

The conclusion that one must logically draw: the reanimation of Christ's body on Easter morning was not necessary; Christ's 'survival' by the force of his love suffices; and this survival is guaranteed to be ours by love... – This does not reassure me concerning the reality of my future resurrection.

'He ascended into heaven'

– 'To speak of the ascension into heaven or the descent into hell reflects, in the eyes of our generation awakened by Bultmann's critique, the image of a world of three levels which we call mythical and that we consider as definitively outdated' (p. 221). The earth is round; there is neither top nor bottom.

– ‘This [outdated] conception certainly furnished images by which the faith represented its mysteries, but it is also certain that it [this conception] does not constitute the essence of asserted reality’ (p. 221). The reality is that there are ‘two poles.’

– Thus, the reader concludes logically, Christ’s ascension was not in the dimensions of the cosmos, but in the dimensions of human existence. In the same way that the descent into hell represents the plunge into ‘the zone of solitude of love refused’ (p. 222), the ascension of Christ ‘evokes [sic] the other pole of human existence: contact with all other men through contact with divine love, so that human existence can find in some way its geometric place in the intimacy of God’ (p. 222).

The reality of Evangelical facts put between parentheses

The physical reality of the mysteries is neither described nor commented upon, it is neither affirmed nor denied – save that of the ascension, which seems quite denied; very simply it does not have any interest, it is put in parentheses, as Husserl would do, because it is not the ‘reality.’ ‘For consciousness,’ said the phenomenologist of Freiburg, the given is a thing essentially the same, whether the represented object exist or whether it be imagined or even perhaps absurd.”[113] By this account, little matters the historical reality of the Gospel; what matters is that the scriptural symbols of descent, resurrection and ascension and the dogmas which correspond to them should be able to explain the interior experience of the man of the 20th or 21st century. Joseph Ratzinger simply gives to this experience a Christian substance drawn from several parts of the Gospel: the dereliction of the cross. Thus Christianized, the existentialist rereading of the dogma is confirmed: the truth of the facts of the Gospel, the truth of dogma – it is their power of evoking the existential problems of the present epoch. Such is the movement toward introversion effected by the ‘new type’ of modernism.

Existentialist exegesis, a divinatory art

There must be a free movement for the vital creation of a new understanding of Scripture. Exegesis becomes a divinatory art: it divines what God never meant to signify: the historical sense being denied or ostracized, the divined sense rests on nothing. Well, the whole secondary meaning of Scripture, as St. Thomas explains, ‘is founded on the first meaning and presuppose it.’[114] Thus, to take again the Gospel as commented upon by Joseph Ratzinger, man’s escape outside the zone of dereliction into a geometrical place within the presence of God presupposes, to be an understanding of Scripture, Jesus’ physical ascension – ‘He was lifted up as they watched, and a cloud hid him from their eyes’[115] – as its foundation. Consequently, denying or passing over the literal sense in silence is the ruin of all exegesis.

Such was the fault of Origen: persuaded that the moral or spiritual sense of Scripture was the principal, he neglected to explain the literal sense and sank into an arbitrary allegorical interpretation.[116] Saint Jerome rose in force against this deviation and begged a correspondent: ‘Distance yourself from the heresy of Origen!’[117] And Cardinal Billot, who cites this test, shows how Alfred Loisy, commenting on Saint John, wishes that the multiplication of loaves were only a symbol of the Eucharist, the historical fact being no more than a fiction.[118]

Joseph Ratzinger – this is patent after what we have read – falls into Origen’s fault, a ‘heresy’ according to Saint Jerome, and he risks falling into the heresy characterized by Loisy.

Exegesis can become, in turn, a pure art of deconstruction: in the mystery which possesses us, the ascension is no more than a purely verbal poetic allegory; under the appearance of the deeds and gestures of Christ, it directly explains the moral fact of the soul’s return to God.

Exegesis becomes, when all is said and done, an art of free creation according to the road of immanence denounced by Saint Pius X: the ‘transfiguration,’ by holy writ, of its religious sen-

timents into fabulous facts, and in turn, the demythologization of evangelical facts by the exegete.[119]

### A Historicist Hermeneutic

But exegesis becomes above all, thanks to history, a historicist hermeneutic.

Every word of weight – writes the exegete Pontiff – contains much more than is in the author’s consciousness; it surpasses the instant when it was pronounced and it will mature in the process of history and of faith.[120]

Is this possible? Saint Paul’s high principles of wisdom were known by him in all their elevation and also in all their potency (in potentia) for application. They had no need of ‘maturation’ but simply of being preached and meditated, so as to be applied to the varied circumstances which the Apostle did not have in mind (in actu).

An author, following the exegete, does not speak only from himself, but he speaks ‘in potency,’ ‘in a common history which bears him and in which are secretly present possibilities for his future. The process of interpretation and amplification of words would not be possible if there were not already present in the words themselves such intrinsic starting-points.’[121] If it was a matter of progress in distinction and precision, as Saint Vincent of Lerins allows, this would be just. But the words, ‘interpretation and amplification of words’ are revelatory: for Joseph Ratzinger it is a matter of progress effected by the play of vital reactions from believers in successive epochs, according to the idealist and historicist principle. This is the dream of a living, evolving Tradition, contrary to the essential immutability of Tradition. Pius XII, in his encyclical *Humani generis* of August 12, 1950, had condemned the penetration of the ‘system of evolution’ and of the philosophies of existentialism and of historicism into dogma. One must believe that, seventeen years having elapsed and Vatican II having passed over all this, Joseph Ratzinger did not feel himself bound by this new Syllabus, which stated among other things:

The fiction of this evolution, causing the rejection of everything absolute, constant and immutable, has opened the way for a new, aberrant philosophy, which, going beyond idealism, immanentism and pragmatism, is named existentialism, because, neglecting the immutable essences of things, it only concerns itself with the existence of each. To this is added a false historicism which, only attaching itself to the events of human life, overthrows the foundations of all truth and of all absolute law in the domain of philosophy and even more in that of Christian dogma.[122]

Thus was condemned not only living, evolving Tradition, but also the existentialist rereading of dogma and the very method of historicist revisionism of doctrine and faith. The whole future Joseph Ratzinger was analyzed and condemned in advance.

One understands that the exegetical audacities of professor Joseph Ratzinger, even before his *Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today* (1968), had very soon frightened the Roman theologians, if one believes Cardinal Cottier concerning the rest of them. This man confided in his biography, embellished with a brief commentary, the recent propositions of a witness whom he does not name but who has not invented the fact:

Recently was reported to me the word of a eminent professor of Rome, who had written certain preparatory texts [for the Council] and had said later to his students, while speaking of

Ratzinger, 'this young theologian will do much evil to the Church!' – This is marvelous, no?  
[123]

Marvelous or tragic? Has the young theologian of yesterday made his act of contrition?

## 5. Hermeneutic of Three Great Christian Dogmas

We will leave here the domain of exegesis so as to enter the vaster domain of theology and of theological explanation of dogma. According to Saint Anselm (1033-1109), theology is faith in search of understanding, *fides quaerens intellectum*. Could it give to us moderns a modern understanding of dogmas? Yes, Joseph Ratzinger answers, and ‘the answer will not only reflect God, but also our own [modern] question: it will teach us something about God by refraction from our own [modern] being.’[124] Here, first of all, is the modern attempt at refraction of the divine through the human, which the theologian of Tübingen undertook for the dogmas of the Trinity, the incarnation and the redemption.

The dogma of the Trinity reviewed by personalism

‘For a positive understanding of the mystery,’ look at the title; there the thesis is set forth thus: ‘The paradox, “one nature, three persons,” is a result of the concept of the person.’

We are thus warned that we are going to have an explanation of the dogma dependent upon a particular philosophy and not the doctrine mastering and employing the philosophy of being. And the author continues: ‘[The paradox] must be understood as an implication internal to the concept of person.’[125]

And here is the reasoning:

– According to the Christian philosopher from the end of the antiquity, Boethius (470-525), the person is an individual substance of a rational nature. Based on this, to confess God to be a personal being and to be three persons is to confess one subsistent in three substances.

– Antithesis: but this substantialist affirmation, opposed to progress, of the person necessarily engenders by its absolute exactly its opposite. According to Max Scheler (1874-1928), the person is the concrete unity of being in its acts, and it attains its supreme value in the love of other persons, that is to say, in participation with the reality of the other: this intersubjectivity in fact helps the person to achieve objectivity in itself. Karol Wojtyła, Scheler’s disciple, saw the characteristic feature of the person in the tissue of the relations of communion (*Teilhabe*) which relates it to others, and the perfection of the person in acts of the communion of reality. Similarly, for Martin Buber, the ultimate truth of the human is found in the ‘I-Thou’ relation.

– Synthesis: the ontological view, opposed to progress, of the person is conformed neither to modern experience nor to its modes of investigation, which see the person not as a distinct being, but as a ‘being-among.’

To recognize God as person is thus necessarily to recognize as a nature demanding relations, as ‘communication,’ as fecundity [...]. A being absolutely one, who was without origin or term of relation, would not be a person. Person in absolute singularity does not exist. This emerges already from the words which have give birth to the concept of the person: the Greek word *prosôpon* literally means ‘to look towards’; the prefix *pros* (= directed towards) implies relation as a constitutive element. Likewise for the Latin word *persona*: to resonate through, again the prefix *per* (= through, towards) explains the relation, but this time as a relation in speech. In other words, if the Absolute be a person, he should not be an absolute singularity. In that way, in the concept of person is necessarily implied the surpassing of singularity.[126]

Of course, the author emphasizes that the term of person is only applied to God by an analogy which respects ‘the infinite difference between the personal being of God and the personal being of man’ (p. 115). But I note that by the reasoning of this theologian is demonstrated that the trinity of persons (or at least their plurality) comes from the personality of God. Well, that

God must be personal is a truth of simple natural reason. Thus is demonstrated the plurality of divine persons by natural reason, which is impossible and heretical.

This disorder was avoided by Saint Thomas. With him, the divine persons as relations are the summit, not the starting-point, of his treatise on the Trinity. In his *Summa Theologica*, the holy doctor sets out from the divine unity and, upon the givens of faith, he establishes that there is in God a first immanent procession, an intellectual procession, that of the Word. Then, by analogy with the human soul created in the image of God, in which there is an immanent procession of love, the holy doctor deduces that all this supports the thought that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Word according to a procession of love. Finally, he deduces from this that there are in God real relations, subsistent[127] and distinct: paternity, filiation and spiration; and he concludes that these three relations constitute the three divine persons which Revelation teaches to us: in fact, he explains, the name of person signifies the distinction, while in God there is only distinction by the relations of origin, so that the three persons are these three subsistent relations.[128] This singular deduction occurs entirely within the faith; it sets out from a truth of faith, the processions, so as to end in clarifying this other truth of faith, the three persons.

The success of the philosophy of person as substance with Thomas and the failure with Benedict of the philosophy of person as relation confirms the truth of the first and the falsehood of the second. What a pity that the young Ratzinger was turned aside from Saint Thomas during his studies as a seminarian, as he relates:

This personalism was of itself linked in my eyes to the thought of Saint Augustine, which I discovered in the *Confessions*, with all his passion and his human depth. On the other hand, I hardly understood Saint Thomas Aquinas, whose crystalline logic appeared to me to be too much closed in on itself, too impersonal and too stereotypical.[129]

The fact, however, is that Saint Thomas asked many more questions than his master Saint Augustine, but that, differently from the latter, he asked them in crystalline order and had a crystalline answer for all. Joseph Ratzinger would prefer to remain among questions and to search without ceasing for other answers less crystalline.

The equivocation of the perpetual search for truth.

Joseph Ratzinger has explained his love for Saint Augustine, born from his readings as a seminarian:

I have been from the beginning – he said to Peter Seewald – very vividly interested by Saint Augustine, as counterweight, so to speak, to Saint Thomas Aquinas[...]. What moved me [...] was the freshness and vivacity of his thought. Scholasticism has its grandeur, but all there is very impersonal. There is need of a certain time in order to enter it and discover in it its interior tension. With Augustine, on the contrary, the impassioned, suffering, questioning man is directly there, and one can identify oneself with him.[130]

If Saint Thomas is the genius of synthesis, his beloved master Saint Augustine is the genius of analysis. A synthesis is always more arid than an analysis, and more attractive search for the lure of the unknown and for the discounted discovery. Henri-Irenee Marrou, another devotee of Saint Augustine, well describes the very lively movement of the great doctor's thought:

[Still more than his memory of innumerable treasures], the power of his speculative genius

must be celebrated, which knew how to detect that there was, here or there, a problem, how to pose it, then how to cling to it, to push it to the extreme, to face one by one the difficulties which arise, and not to declare itself too soon satisfied. It is a moving spectacle to see this great thought make itself clear and to express itself by groping about at the cost of immense efforts.[131]

But the Church, in declaring Saint Thomas her ‘Common Doctor,’ invites her sons not to remain groping, but to progress to the synthesis, an effort which ought to cost them much. There is the very effort which seems to have been renounced by Joseph Ratzinger, whose faith as whose theology is characterized, like that of the innovators, not by the stability of assent, but by the mobility of perpetual seeking. He seems to have suffered the malady of all those philosophers who, elevating becoming above being, unceasing doubt above certitude, the quest above possession, find their paradigm in Gotthold Lessing (1729-1781), German poet and skeptic philosopher, follower of the Enlightenment, from whom there is here a famous passage:

It is not truth, which is or is thought to be possessed, but the sincere effort that is made so as to attain it, which gives value to a man. For it is not by possession but by search for the truth that he develops those energies which alone constitute his ever-increasing perfection. Possession renders the spirit stagnant, indolent, prideful. If God, in his right hand, hold enclosed all truth, and in his left hand the impulse always in motion towards truth, it must be at the cost of my eternal wandering; if he say to me: “Choose!” I would incline myself humbly before his left hand and would say, “Father, give me this! Pure truth is for you alone.” (Lessing, *Samtliche Schriften*, X, 206, cited by Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, X, Rousseau and Revolution, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1967, p. 512)

In place of humility, what refined pride! The subject prefers himself to the object. One is in total subjectivism, and this is irreconcilable with religion, which wills the submission of the creature to the Creator. Is there nothing of this pride in Joseph Ratzinger’s infatuation with personalism and its inquiry, and in the distaste that he has for Thomist philosophy and its simple supports?

The dogma of the incarnation, revised by Heidegger’s existentialism

The ‘refraction of the divine through the human’ is again sought by Joseph Ratzinger in the dogma of the incarnation, revised in light of existentialism. Existentialist philosophy will be used, the process of immanence will be borrowed and the method of historicism will be practiced. The principle of immanence says that the object of faith comes from within us and the method of historicism says that there is a necessary reinterpretation of dogma.

Here is how the dogma of the incarnation is presented after the theologian Joseph Ratzinger, in his book, *The Christian Faith*, of 1968, according to the schema of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

– Thesis: the philosopher Boethius, at the end of antiquity, has defined the person, the human person, as ‘an individual substance of a rational nature,’ allowing the development of the dogma of the two natures in the single person of Jesus Christ, defined at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. There is the thesis; it is classical. Boethius, Christian philosopher, has illuminated the notion of person and has helped the dogma of Chalcedon to develop. Very good.

– Antithesis: today, Boethius is surpassed by Martin Heidegger, German existentialist, who sees in the person a ‘going beyond self,’ which is more conformed to experience than is subsistence in an intellectual nature. He prefers to go beyond self. We realize our person in surpassing ourselves; there is the definition of person according to Heidegger.

–Synthesis: the God-man, whose divinity we profess in the Credo, logically no longer has need of being considered as God made man. He is the man who ‘in tending infinitely beyond himself, totally surpassed himself and by this truly exists; he is one with the infinite, Jesus Christ.’[132] I repeat: it is necessary to believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, but – this is logically implied – there is no need to consider him as God made man. No, it must be supposed that, in tending infinitely beyond himself, Jesus totally surpasses himself and, thereby, truly exists. He is one with the infinite, Jesus Christ. Thus, it is man who surpasses himself, who auto-accomplishes himself and who becomes divine. There is the mystery of the incarnation reinterpreted in the light of existentialism and historicism simultaneously.

A logical consequence of this reinterpretation of the incarnation could be that the blessed Virgin is no longer the Mother of God, but that she is only the mother of a man who becomes divine. One risks falling into Nestorius’ heresy, condemned in 425 by the council of Ephesus in these terms:

If anyone should confess that the Emmanuel is not God in truth and that for this reason the Blessed Virgin is not Mother of God (because she has physically engendered the Word of God made flesh), let him be anathema. [DS 252]

Someone might say that Boethius has been surpassed and that Heidegger must be preferred because Boethius’ experience has been surpassed; Martin Heidegger’s experience is ‘a new vital link’ to the person; it corresponds to our actual problems, to our actual psychological problems: how to overcome egoism? One conquers it by going beyond self. Jesus Christ has conquered egoism, radically, by infinitely surpassing himself, by uniting himself to the infinite.

It seems to me all the same that the incarnation is above all the abasement of the Son of God, if I believe Saint Paul: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man.’ (Phil. 2, 6-7) Evidently, going beyond self is, in the regard of the moderns, more valuable than humbling self. However, the true improvement of man by the incarnation is clarified by the Fathers: “God made himself man so that man might be made God,’ that is to say, might be divinized by sanctifying grace.

Henri de Lubac, twenty years before Joseph Ratzinger, had already attempted a personalist and humanist reinterpretation of the incarnation, but with person as ‘consciousness of self’:

By Christ, the person become adult, the man emerges definitively before the universe, he takes full consciousness of himself. From now on, even before the triumphal cry: *Agnosce o christiane dignitatem tuam* [Know, o Christian, your worth] (St. Leo), it will be possible to celebrate the dignity of man: *dignitatem conditionis humanae* [the worth of the human condition]. The precept of the sage: ‘Know thyself,’ assumes a new meaning. Each man, in saying ‘I,’ pronounces something absolute, something definitive.[133]

Thus, the incarnation of the Son of God becomes the pedestal for human pride. The absolute person, independent of his acts, without consideration of his virtues or his vices, abstraction being made from his restoration or not in the supernatural order, saw his inalienable dignity

magnified by God made man. We have here a fine example of the ‘humanist turn’ or ‘anthropology’ of theology, put into practice by Karl Rahner in Germany and by Henri de Lubac in France.

Joseph Ratzinger's theological anthropologism is a very near neighbor to this: in place of person as consciousness of self, he opts for person as going beyond self.

But the ‘conscious comprehension of expressed truth’ of dogma is pursued with this author by a new understanding of the dogma of redemption.

The dogma of the redemption reviewed by Christian existentialism

It was Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) who was the instrument of this revision. According to this French philosopher, a Christian existentialist, disinterest and unconditional availability in regard to another, to the other, causes its entire ontological density to adhere to our ego. In this, Marcel is disciple of Scheler and neighbor to Buber.

According to Marcel, devotion, by its absolute, unveils the person of the absolute Being who is God, alone capable of explaining this experience by guaranteeing to it its value.[134] It follows that Christ, by his gift of his life for men, is the emblem of this revelatory gift of self from God.

The dialectical structure of the reasoning is Joseph Ratzinger's in his work, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*. I summarize the process of the theologian of Tübingen's thought: again it has the schema of thesis, antithesis, synthesis.

– Since Saint Anselm (1033-1109), Christian piety has seen in the cross an expiatory sacrifice. But this is a pessimistic piety. For the rest, the New Testament did not say that man reconciled himself to God, but that it was God who reconciled man (2 Cor. 5, 18; Col. 1, 22) by offering him his love. That God needed from his Son ‘a human sacrifice,’ is a cruelty which is not conformed to the ‘message of love’ in the New Testament.[135]

– But this negation, by its absolute, engenders its contrary (antithesis): a whole series of New Testament texts (1 Pet. 2, 24; Col. 1, 13-14; 1 John 1, 7; 1 John 2, 2) affirms a satisfaction and a penal substitution offered by Jesus in our place to God his Father, ‘such that we see reappear all that we just dismissed.’[136]

– Thus (synthesis), on the cross Jesus indeed was substituted for us, not to pay a debt, nor to suffer a penalty, but to ‘love in our place’ (p. 202). Thus, the thesis reconquers, enriched by the antithesis, in the synthesis.

We note well that here as in the dialectic of G.W. F. Hegel (1770-1831), the antithesis and the thesis, rather than contradictories, both make a part of the truth. The antithesis is not a simple objection which one may resolve by its elimination or by retaining its bit of truth; no, it is a contradictory truth which one resolves by its integration.[137] If this be so, truth, and the truth of faith equally, is subject of a continual and indefinite evolution: at each synthesis, the human spirit will always find new antitheses to oppose it, so as to effect ‘new syntheses’ (*Gaudium et spes*, #5, §3). The result for redemption is that ‘the Christian sacrifice is nothing other than exodus of for the sake of, consisting of a departure from self, accomplished wholly in the man who is entirely in exodus, surpassing himself by love.’[138]

There is thus need of making a ‘rereading’ of the New Testament (Benedict XVI, first address, April 20, 2005), conforming to modern sensibility and to the existentialist ‘mode of investigation and of formulation,’ as is demanded by ‘a new reflection on truth and a new vital link with it’ (Benedict XVI, December 22, 2005). At the end of this ‘process of reinterpretation and amplification of words,’ the passion of Jesus Christ no longer causes our salvation by means of merit, not by means of satisfaction, nor by means of sacrifice, nor by means of efficient causality,[139] but by the example of the absolute gift of self (a Platonic idea?), and by the

appeal of offered love, a mode of causality which J. G. Fichte wanted to call 'spiritual,' irreducible to efficiency and finality.

From this revolution in the idea of expiation, and thus in the very axis of religious reality, the Christian cult and all Christian existence also themselves received a new orientation.[140]

This was professed in 1967, printed in 1968, and finally realized in 1969 by the new mass, the new priesthood, the new Christianity without enemies, without combat, without reparation, without renunciation, without sacrifice, without propitiation.

Satisfaction, the tact of divine mercy

It is however true that charity is the soul of the redemptive passion of Jesus. But Joseph Ratzinger sins by angelism in placing between parentheses, by a pocketing worthy of Husserl, the reality of Christ's sufferings and their role in the redemption. Did not Isaiah, however, describe Christ as 'the man of sorrows [...], stricken by God, wounded for our iniquities, bruised for our sins,' adding that 'the chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his bruises we are healed' (Is. 53, 3-5)?

In the sinner, Saint Thomas explains, there is a formal element, *aversio a Deo* (the fact of his turning away from God), and a material element, *conversio ad creaturam* (the fact of his turning towards a creature and adhering to it in a disordered fashion). The charity and obedience with which Jesus offered his sufferings compensate by a superabundant satisfaction for the *aversio a Deo* of all humanity; but as for the adherence to creatures, its disorder can only be repaired by a pain voluntarily undergone: this is Jesus' penal satisfaction, offered to God his Father in our place, and by which all our satisfactions hold their value.[141]

Thus, far from having suppressed all offering of satisfaction to God by man, the Redeemer has been, says Saint Thomas, our 'satisfier,' whose sacrifice we offer in the Eucharist. Man is thus rendered capable of redeeming himself. In this work, Saint Leo the Great says,[142] God did justly and mercifully at the same time. God does not snatch man from his slavery to the devil by an act of main strength, but by a work of equality, that is to say of compensation. It is, says Saint Thomas, on God's part a greater mercy to offer to man the possibility of redeeming himself, than to redeem him by simple 'condonement'[143] of the penalty, without demanding any compensation. This contributes to man's dignity the ability to redeem himself.[144] Not, indeed, that man redeems himself of himself, but he receives it from God to give it back to him. What we give to God is always 'de tuis donis et datis' ('from those things which you have given us' – Roman Canon). And even if our gift procures nothing for God, who has no need of our goods (Psalm 15, 2) in order to be infinitely happy, it is nevertheless owed to God in strict justice – and not only in 'metaphorical' justice,[145] which is the interior good order of our faculties – as our contribution to the reparation of the order injured by sin. There are in these truths a sublime metaphysics refused by Joseph Ratzinger, who only sees love in the cross. We must reject in the name of the faith this dematerialization of the cross.

A denial worse than Luther's

The error of the neo-modernists does not consist in affirming the primacy of charity in the redemption – Saint Thomas did it before them – but it is that heresy which consists in denying that the redemption is an act of justice. See the denials of Joseph Ratzinger:

For a great number of Christians, and above all for those who do only know the faith from

afar, the cross situates itself within a mechanism of right wronged and reestablished. [...] This is the manner in which God's justice, infinitely offended, is reconciled anew by an infinite satisfaction. [...]

Thus the cross appears to express an attitude of God demanding a rigorous equivalency between right and credit; and at the same time one retains the feeling that this equivalency and this compensation rests in spite of all upon a fiction. [...] He [God] gifts first secretly with the left hand what he takes back solemnly with the right. [...] The infinite satisfaction that God seems to demand thus takes on an aspect doubly unsettling. [...]

Certain devotional texts seem to suggest that the Christian faith in the cross represents to itself a God whose inexorable justice has claimed its human sacrifice, the sacrifice of his own son. And one turns in horror from a justice whose somber wrath steals all credibility from the message of love.[146]

But the series of denials is not closed; it relentlessly prosecutes the satisfaction of Jesus Christ and the offering that we renew in the mass:

It is not man who approaches God to bring him a compensatory offering.[147]

The cross [...] is not the work of reconciliation that humanity offers to an angered God.[148] [What becomes, on account of these denials, of the propitiatory nature of the sacrifice of the mass?]

Adoration in Christianity consists first in a welcome that is cognizant of the salvific action of God. [What becomes of the mass, sacramental renewal of the salvific action of Calvary?] [...] In this cult, it is not human actions which are offered to God; it consists rather in that with which a man lets himself be filled. [...] We do not glorify God in bringing to him what is so-called ours – as if all this did not already appertain to him – but in accepting his gifts. [...] The Christian sacrifice does not consist in giving to God something that he would not possess without us.[149]

He has offered himself. He has taken from men their offerings so as to substitute his own person offered in sacrifice, his own ego.[150]

If the text affirms in spite of everything that Jesus accomplished the reconciliation by his blood (Heb. 9, 12), this is not to be understood as a material gift, as a means of expiation quantitatively measured. [...] The essence of the Christian cult does not consist in the offering of things. [...] The Christian cult [...] consists in a new form of substitution, included in this love: to know that Christ has loved for us and that we let ourselves be seized by him. This cult signifies thus that we put aside our own attempts at justification.[151]

There is in these repeated denials from Joseph Ratzinger a repetition of the Protestant heresy: Jesus has done all, man has nothing to do or to offer for his redemption. Hence, the sacrifice of the mass is rendered superfluous, detrimental to the work of the cross; it is only an 'adoration.' [152] How would it be a propitiatory sacrifice?

Well, to this heresy another is added: the denial of the expiatory and satisfactory virtue of the sacrifice of the cross itself. This denial is a heresy worse than Luther's. At least Luther believed in the expiation of Calvary. Here is his profession of faith:

I believe that Jesus Christ is not only true God, generated by the Father from all eternity, but

also true man, born of the Virgin Mary; that he is my lord and that he has redeemed me and delivered me from all my sins, from death and from slavery to the devil, me who was lost and damned, and that he has truly acquitted me and earned, not with silver and gold, but with his precious blood and by his sufferings and his innocent death, that I might belong entirely to him and that, living under his empire, I might serve him in perpetual justice, innocence and liberty, and like him, who rose again from the dead, live and reign into the age of ages. This is what I firmly believe.[153]

Which of the two is Christian? The one who affirms with a powerful inspiration the efficacy of the sufferings and blood of Christ for redeeming us, or the one who denies it? Who is the Christian? The one who confesses, with Saint Thomas, the expiation, satisfaction and efficiency of Christ's passion, or the one who, inspired by existentialism, denies these things? It is true that Joseph Ratzinger recognizes in Jesus on the cross the gift of his own person and compensatory love; but why does he refuse to admit the complementary truths? Why does he profess diminished truths? – Because divine justice does not please modern man. At the end, Gadamer is right: just like the historian who wants to rewrite history, the theologian who wants to rethink the faith is always the accomplice of his prejudices.

The ambition of hermeneutics to enrich religious truth and to engender its progress by a philosophical rereading is thus a staggering failure. It results rather in an impoverishment, which is a heresy.[154] This attempt had already been stigmatized by Pius IX in 1846 in these terms:

On those men who rave so miserably falls with much justice the reproach which Tertullian made in his time against the philosophers 'who presented a stoic, Platonic, dialectic Christianity.'[155]

Nihil novi sub sole (Nothing new under the sun, Eccl. 1, 10).

But this new Christianity in the last analysis rests upon a misunderstanding of divine justice and upon an existentialist reduction of sin. It is this which we must examine in order to reach the bottom.

#### Existentialist sin

A stoic or Platonic neo-Christianity is a Christianity purged of sin. Joseph Ratzinger's language is symptomatic: Christ has not reconciled the sinner, but he has reconciled man. For the rest, in his Christian Faith, the author almost never mentions the word sin, sin in the article of the Credo, 'I believe in the remission of sin,' hardly mentioned and commented upon in half a page (p. 240). The only serious mention of sin: when Joseph Ratzinger sets forth Saint Anselm's doctrine concerning Christ's vicarious satisfaction:

By the sin of man, who is directed against God, the order of justice has been injured in an infinite manner. There is behind this affirmation, Ratzinger comments, the idea that the offense is the measure of the one who is offended: the offense made against a beggar leads to other consequences that that made against a head of State. The weight of the offense depends on the one who undergoes it. God being infinite, the offense which is made against him on the part of humanity by sin has an infinite weight. The injured right must be reestablished, because God is the God of order and justice; he is justice itself.[156]

Hence the necessity, if God wishes culpable humanity itself to repair its sin, for a leader offering in the name of all humanity a satisfaction which, seeing the dignity of his life, would have

an infinite value and would thus be sufficient compensation: only the life of a God-man would have this virtue.[157]

Well, Joseph Ratzinger, while indeed recognizing that ‘this theory [sic] contains decisive intuitions, as much from a biblical point of view as from a generally human point of view’ and that ‘it is worthy of consideration’ (p. 157), accuses him of schematizing and deforming the perspectives, and of presenting God ‘under a disquieting light’ (p. 158). – No, he says, Christ is not such a satisfier acquitting men of a debt of sin; it is the gratuitous gift of his Ego ‘for’ men:

His vocation is simply to be for others. It is the call to this ‘for the sake of,’ in which man courageously renounces himself, ceases to cling to himself, so as to risk the leap into infinity, which alone permits him to find himself.[158]

It would be neither a question of a ‘work separated from himself’ which Christ must accomplish, not a ‘performance’ that God demands from his incarnate Son; no, Jesus of Nazareth is simply ‘the exemplary man,’ who by his example helps man to surpass himself and thereby to find himself (p. 158-159).

In this theory, what becomes of sin? It is ‘the incapacity to love,’[159] it is egoism, withdrawal into oneself. Culpability is the man bent back on himself (p. 198), in ‘the self-satisfied attitude, consisting in letting himself simply live’ (p. 240), the one who ‘simply abandons himself to his natural gravity’ (p. 241). Redemption consists in Jesus’ leading man to go out of self, to conquer egoism, to stand erect: ‘His justice is grace; it is active justice, which readjusts the bent man, which straightens him, which sets him straight’ (p. 198).

It is exactly right that Christ’s justice straightens the sinner, corrects the disorder of sin, frees charity within the love of God and neighbor: ‘God, [...] infuse in our hearts the sentiment of our love, so that loving you in all and above all [...]’[160] But is this what Joseph Ratzinger wishes to say?

Whatever it may be, it conceals this capital truth: sin is first formally an insubordination of man under the law of God, a break in the ordination of man to God. This first ordination, realized by sanctifying grace, was the source of the submission of powers lower in the soul than reason, and this double ordination, exterior and interior, constituted original justice, which was lost by original sin. This lost sanctifying grace for man and inflicted on his nature the quadruple wound of ignorance, malice, weakness and concupiscence,[161] wounds which remain even after baptism.

Well, as all human nature, common to every man, was thus despoiled of the gratuitous gift of grace and wounded in its natural faculties, it is necessary that the Redeemer accomplish an act which, not limited to affecting each man in the sequence of ages, embraces all humanity in a single stroke. This was not possible by mere force of example or by attraction; this must be by the virtue of satisfaction and of redemption, which are works of a juridical nature.

As I have already said, according to Leo and Saint Thomas, God could have repaired humanity by the simple condonement of his debt, by a general amnesty; but man would quickly have fallen again into sin and this would have accomplished nothing! Thus God’s prudence and his free will chose a plan more onerous for God and more honorable and advantageous for man. This plan of unfathomable wisdom was that the Son of God made man should suffer the passion and die upon the cross, offering thus a perfect and superabundant satisfaction for God’s justice and meriting for all men the grace of pardon, because of the dignity of his life, which was that of the God-man, and because of the immensity of charity with which he suffered, and the universality of the sufferings that he assumed (see III, q. 48, a. 2). And from the merits and satisfactions of Christ follow the good works – charitable acts and sacrifices – of Christians.

Thus, in Jesus Christ, one of our own, it would be humanity which would rise up, and, joining its holy labors to those of its leader, it would cooperate actively in its own raising. "Thanks be to God for his ineffable gift!" (2 Cor. 9, 15).

Far, therefore, from assuming a 'disquieting aspect,' the God's care for our redemption by ourselves, in virtue of the merits and satisfactions of Jesus Christ, is the proof of God's delicate respect for his creature, and the demonstration of a superior mercy.

There is the mystery which Joseph Ratzinger, alas, seems not to have assimilated. Why then? One is constrained to ask himself if he has not lost the sense of sin, lost the sense of God, of the God of infinite majesty. Does he forget the 'dimitte nobis debita nostra' from the Pater Noster (Matt. 6, 12)? Does he not admit the infinite debt contracted before God by a single mortal sin? Does he not then understand God's care that an infinite reparation be offered him on the part of sinners? Hell, moreover, is not for him a punishment inflicted by God, but only the outcome of love refused, 'a solitude into which no longer penetrates the word of love.' [162] Joseph Ratzinger's religion is shortened. Sin is no longer a debt, it is a shortage. This is existentialist sin.

Well, Joseph Ratzinger declares, 'from the revolution in the idea of expiation, the Christian cult receives a new orientation.' [163]

The priesthood reduced to the power of teaching

This new cult will be the new mass.

The mass becomes, according to the request of Dom Odo Casel, Benedictine monk of Maria Laach, the common celebration of faith. It is no longer a thing offered to God; it is no longer an action separate from that of the people; it is an action of interpersonal communion. It is a common experience of the faith, the celebration of the high deeds of Jesus. 'It is only a matter of making remembrance,' says the Missal for the flower of faithful French speakers in 1972. On the other side, in parallel, according to Joseph Ratzinger, the priesthood 'has surpassed the level of polemic' which, at the council of Trent, had shrunk the vision of the priesthood by seeing in the priest a mere maker of sacrifices (session XXIII, decree on the sacrament of Orders). The council of Trent shrunk the global vision of priesthood; Vatican II broadened the perspectives. Joseph Ratzinger tells us:

Vatican II has, by chance, surpassed the polemical level and has drawn a complete and positive picture of the position of the Church as regards the priesthood where were equally welcomed the requests of the Reform. [164]

You read aright: the requests of the Protestant 'Reform,' which saw the priest as the man of God's word, of the preaching of the Gospel; this one point is all.

So then, Joseph Ratzinger continues:

In the last analysis, the totality of the problem of priesthood comes down to the question of the power of teaching the Church in a universal manner. [165]

Thus he brings the whole priesthood back to the power of teaching the Church. He will not deny sacrifice, simply he says: "Everything comes down to the power of teaching the Church." Logically, even the offering of the mass by the priest at the altar must be reread in the perspective of teaching the word of God. The priesthood must be revisited, as also sacrifice, as also consecration: this is nothing other than the celebration of the high deeds of Christ, his incarnation, his passion, his resurrection, his ascension, lived in common under the presidency

of the priest, as Dom Casel pretended. The priesthood has been revised. The priest is become the organizer of the celebration and of the communal life of the faith.

This is only a parenthesis to show how Joseph Ratzinger's existentialist and personalist ideas, from 1967, concerning redemption and priesthood, that is to say, concerning Christ the High Priest, have been effectively applied in 1969, in the new mass.

But this new Christianity will necessarily assume a social form, on the one hand in the spiritual society of the Church, and on the other hand in the temporal city. What then will be its ecclesiology, and what will become of Christ the King?

## 6. Personalism and Ecclesiology

The trouble of putting a little weight upon the manner in which personalism has penetrated ecclesiology, that is to say, the theology of the Church, would here be worthwhile.

The Church, communion in charity

Applied to the spiritual society, the Church, Scheler, Buber and Wojtyla's personalism, which I analyzed in chapter II, makes the Church seem to be a simple communion in charity, by lessening the fundamental communion in the true faith. From there emerged ecumenism, even expanded to all religions, as in the colorful gathering at Assisi on October 27, 1986, which gathered the representatives of the 'world religions,' if not to pray together, at least to 'be together to pray.'

'The creaturely unity' of the 'human family,' John Paul II assures us, is greater than differences in faith, which come from a 'human fact.' 'Differences are an element made less important by a link in unity which, on the contrary, is radical, fundamental and dominant.' [166] Indeed, men are all issue of Adam, in whom they recognize their common father, and by him they form one family. Besides, by the fact that man is created in the image of God, that is to say, endowed with intelligence, he is capable, differing from other animals, of tying the bonds of amity with all like him. There thus exists in potency a certain universal fraternity between all men. [167]

However, original sin and, later, the sin of Babel have broken up the human family into a mass of 'familiae gentium peccati vulnere disagregatae (families of nations broken apart by the wound of sin),' as says the collect for the feast of Christ the King.

In order to make real the universal brotherhood between all men, there must be a reparatory principle which can embrace all humanity.

Well, for such a principle, there is only one option: Christ. 'For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' [168] (I Cor. 3, 11)

The beautiful collect of Easter Thursday brings out well the natural contrast and the supernatural synthesis between the universality of nations and the unity of faith:

God, who has reunited the diversity of nations in the confession of your name, give to those who are reborn by the fount of Baptism the unity of the faith in their spirits and of piety in their actions, through Our Lord, Jesus Christ. [169]

There is no other universal society possible than the Church, or perhaps Christianity. The beautiful invocation *Veni Sancte Spiritus* proclaims this:

Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of thy faithful and inkindle in them the fire of thy love, who, beyond the diversity of tongues, has reunited the nations in the unity of the faith. [170]

It is the Holy Ghost, bond of charity between Father and Son, who is also the driving force behind a unity for all diverse people, by reassembling them in the unity of the faith. Upon this unity of faith is founded the supernatural fraternity of Christians, of which Jesus said: 'All you are brethren [...] for one is your father who is in heaven.' (Matt. 23, 8-9) [171]

But the pure communion of charity, in which, according to the personalists, the Church consists, does not limit itself to eliding the faith; it also lessens the hierarchy. However, if the Church is a combatant and pilgrim here below, it is because she is not yet in her final state; upon this earth, she always has a finality: eternal salvation. It is this end which gives its form

to the multitude of believers and makes of them a single organized multitude; it is this end which, also, demands a human efficient cause for this end: the Church is thus necessarily hierarchic. It is this which causes one of the differences with the Church in heaven. The Church of the blessed, already attained to man's ultimate end, possessing God without possibility of loss, has no more need of hierarchy. She has only a hierarchy of saints, saints great and small, under the Blessed Virgin Mary and under Christ, the only head, who subjugates them and unites them all to God his Father.

The conciliar idea of the Church as 'the people of God' tends also to falsify what remains of the hierarchy. Which is seen solely as a diversity of 'ministers' among the people of God, already essentially constituted by the communion of charity between members, and not as a distinction of divine institution, constitutive of the very establishment of the Church.

The faithful of Church, says the new cod of Canon Law, are those who, in so far as they are incorporated in Christ by Baptism, are constituted in the people of God and who, for this reason, being made participants after their own manner in the sacerdotal, prophetic and royal function of Christ, are called to exercise, each according to his own condition, the mission which God has confided to the Church so that she may accomplish it in the world.[172]

Personalism is the root of the religious democracy which is the Church of communion. That the new code of Canon Law, which I just cited, consecrated this revolution, John Paul II did not hide in its promulgation on January 25, 1983. He describes thus what he himself called the 'new ecclesiology':

Among the elements which express the Church's own true image, he writes in his apostolic constitution, there are those which must above all be reckoned up: the doctrine of the Church as the people of God (cf *Lumen gentium*, #2); that of authority, hierarchic just as service is; the doctrine of the Church as a communion, which consequently establishes the relations which must exist between the particular Church and the universal, between collegiality and primacy.[173]

The Church of Christ 'subsists' in the Catholic Church

To this ill-defined communion of the members of the Church is joined the idea of a more or less full communion with non-Catholics, from the fact of the 'ecclesial elements' which these keep despite their separation. It was during the Council that Pastor Wilhelm Schmidt would suggest to Joseph Ratzinger to have done with the affirmation of identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church, an identity reaffirmed by Pius XII in *Mystici corporis* (# 13) and *Divini Redemptoris* (DS 2319). The formula proposed by the pastor, and which Joseph Ratzinger transmitted to the German bishops, was that in place of saying, 'The Church of Christ is the Catholic Church,' it should be said, "The Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church.' The reporter for the doctrinal commission explained that: Subsistit in was employed in place of est, so that the expression would harmonize better with the affirmation of ecclesial elements which exist elsewhere.' 'This is unacceptable,' Mgr. Luigi Carli protested in the conciliar court, for one could believe that the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church are two distinct realities, the first abiding in the latter as in a subject.'

From then on, the conciliar teaching would recognize in separated 'Churches and ecclesial communities' an 'ecclesial nature' and the constitution *Lumen gentium* concerning the Church would adopt the Subsistit in, while the declaration *Unitatis redintegratio* concerning ecumenism would recognize, contrary to the whole Tradition, that 'these Churches and ecclesial com-

munities are in no way deprived of significance in the mystery of salvation; the Spirit of Christ in fact not refusing to serve itself by them as means of salvation' (UR, #3). – An impossible thing, as Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre explained to Vatican II, in a few luminous lines filed with the secretary of the Council in November 1963:

A community, in so far as it is a separated community, cannot enjoy the Holy Ghost's assistance, since its separation is a resistance to the Holy Ghost. He cannot act directly upon souls or use means which, of themselves, bear any sign of separation.[174]

Cardinal Ratzinger himself explained the *subsistit in*: The Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church; it is not said to subsist elsewhere.

By the word *subsistit*, the Council wished to express the singularity and not the multiplicity of the Catholic Church: The Church exists as a subject in historical reality.[175]

Thus, the *subsistit* would signify that the permanence of the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church. This explanation does not reflect the real intention for change. For the rest, Joseph Ratzinger, in the same text, clarifies:

The difference between *subsistit* and *est* reinforces, however, the tragedy of ecclesial division. Although the Church should be only one and subsists in a single subject, ecclesial realities exist outside of this subject: true local churches and diverse ecclesial communities. Since sin is a contradiction, one cannot, in the last analysis, fully resolve from a logical point of view this difference between *subsistit* and *est*. In the paradox of difference between singularity and concretization in the Church, on the one hand, and the existence of ecclesial reality outside the unique subject, on the other, is reflected the contradictory character of human sin, the contradiction of division. This division is something totally different from relativistic dialectic [...] in which the division of Christians loses its dolorous aspect and, in reality, is not a fracture, but only the manifestation of many variations on a single theme, in which the variations have reason, after a certain manner, and again do not have reason.[176]

In reality, sin introduces its contradiction in the will only, which revolts against the principles – here the principle of unity: “Thou art Peter and upon this rock, I will build my Church” (Matt. 16, 18). But the principle remains untouched, without any internal contradiction. It is the unrepentant denial of the principle of non-contradiction which introduces a contradiction into understanding and into the principles; sin would never come to be, if sin were not contrary to the understanding of the first principles.

The truth is that the churches and separated communities have no ‘ecclesial nature,’ since they lack either hierarchic communion with the Roman pontiff, or communion with the Catholic faith. The notion of communion invoked by Joseph Ratzinger is in this regard entirely adequate. Commenting upon what Saint John said concerning the communion of charity through Christ with the Father (1 John 1, 3-4), the cardinal says:

Here appeared in the very first place the starting-point for ‘communion’: the encounter with the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who, by the Church’s announcement, came among men. Thus was born the communion of men with each other, and that in its turn was founded upon communion with the one and triune God. Communion with God is accessed by the intermediation of this realization of the communion of God with man, which is Jesus Christ in his person; the encounter with Christ creates a communion with him and thus with the Father, in the Holy

Spirit.[177]

The new notion of communion as ‘encounter’ proposed by Joseph Ratzinger is evidently attributal to Martin Buber’s personalism, for whom the intersubjective ‘I-Thou’ relation sets free the ultimate truth of the human and opens to the true relation between man and God, the eternal Thou. Christianized by Joseph Ratzinger, is this communion-encounter the communion of charity? We don’t know. It is in any case neither communion in faith, nor hierarchical communion, which are however the two essential components of the Church.

## 7. Political and Social Personalism

If, from the Church, we pass to the city, we will see the disintegration which personalism causes, in political society first, and then in social life.

### Personalism and political society

According to the theory which considers the person as a tissue of relations, as society itself is relation, it follows that the person would be its own end unto itself in society; it would be the end of society; the good of the person-communion would identify itself with the good of the political city.

According to philosophy of Aristotle and Saint Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, the good of the person does not constitute the common good of the city: this common good is 'an added good' which will make the person attain to an added perfection. To this common good the person must ordain himself as to his temporal end, as potency is ordained to act. This classical conception allows it to be justified that the person must sometimes sacrifice his own goods – and even his life – for the common good of the city. In short, the person finds his temporal perfection in ordaining himself to the end of the political community.

The personalist conception deprives political society of a proper finality which transcends the good of its members who are persons. The whole postconciliar magisterium, or what holds its place, would make of common good a collection of the rights of the person, of rights' of which there is as yet no complete catalogue, and which appears sometimes contradictory,' as Joseph Ratzinger avows.[178]

The Thomist, later personalist, philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) came to the aid of this theory by distinguishing two things in man. On the one hand, he should be an individual, ordained to the political community as to his end, as the part is to the whole. On the other hand, his is a person who transcends the city and who is not a mere part of its whole.

In reality, this distinction is specious: it is only true that in the supernatural order, where the person is elevated by sanctifying grace above his nature; but it is false in the natural order where the person is only an individual of a rational nature, making one part of the whole of reasonable natures, and consequently ordained to this whole as a part to its whole. This is however very simple; it is simply a matter of applying the principle of totality: the part is for the whole. Certainly this principle may be modified, according to the fact that the city is not a substantial whole but a whole of order between substances, but this modification does not suppress the necessary and natural ordination of the person to the city, in the temporal order, as to its end.

Thus, the definition of the person as a tissue of relations, by abandoning Boethius' definition, leads to the denial of final causality for political society. One finds in conciliar politics the same lacuna of the final cause that one finds, in individual ethics, with Kant and all Enlightenment philosophy.

### Personalism applied to marriage and chastity

A last application of personalism will be made by the Council to marriage and chastity.

Let us first consider sexuality and the virtue of chastity. The new 'catechism of the Catholic church' patronized by Cardinal Ratzinger makes chastity 'the successful integration of sexuality into the person,' that is to say, 'in the relation of person to person by an entire mutual gift [...] of the man and the woman,'[179] without reference to the first and proper end of sexuality, which is procreation, or reference to sin and to concupiscence.

The disappearance of the end implies ignorance of the nature of things. Thus, the nature of carnal desire (*appetitus venereus*) is passed over in silence, though Saint Thomas said of it that ‘it is especially connatural to us since it is ordained to the conservation of the nature [...] and thus, if it be nourished, it will increased to a higher degree [...] and thus at that higher degree it will have need of being checked’ (*castigatus*, chastised, from which comes chastity’s name).[180]

The tendency to abstract from the final cause and the nature of things is constant in personalism and in philosophies issued from Kant. Joseph Ratzinger’s intellectual itinerary is marked by this agnosticism.

Here is the truth: God, author and redeemer of human nature, is the legislator of conjugal society. It is he who willed marriage to be fruitful, for the propagation of mankind: ‘Increased and multiply,’ as he commanded the first human couple (*Gen. 1, 28*). The morality of marriage is dominated by this end: procreation. The traditional code of Canon Law decrees that ‘the primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of children’ and that ‘the secondary end is mutual help and a remedy for concupiscence’ (*canon 1013*). Contraception and sterilization are immoral because they divert the conjugal act from its end, just as is periodic continence without grave reason, which diverts the conjugal state from its end. Well, personalism will corrupt this objective principles with subjectivism.

[According to the Council, procreation – or the refusal to procreate – ] must be determined by objective criteria [very good] drawn from the nature of the person and of his acts, criteria which respect, in a context of true love, the total significance of a reciprocal gift and of a procreation worthy of man; an impossible thing if conjugal chastity is not practiced with a loyal heart.[181]

A first glance, this text withers subjectivism and calls for objectivity. In reality, it is the contrary. Is not the ‘nature of the person’ (*barbarism*) the intellectuality of human nature, capable of proportioning its acts by good reason? Where is the individuality of the person [which is common in him with the beasts], and what should give foundation to his moral autonomy (*I. Kant; Marc Sangnier and le Sillon*[182])? Or rather is this the intersubjective relation of the ‘I-Thou’ dialogue (*Martin Buber*), or the amorous, interpersonal relation, which is ‘the disinterested impulse towards a person as such’ (*Max Scheler*)? According to this philosophy of values, love ‘possesses in itself its own finality.’[183] The objective order of beings and of ends, according to Pius XII’s expression, is not taken into account.

If nature, said Pius XII, had had exclusively in view, or at least in the first place, a reciprocal gift and possession of the spouses in joy and in love, and if it had regulated this act solely so as to make as happy as possible their personal experience, and not for the end of spurring them on in service of life, the Creator would have adopted another plan in the formation and constitution of the natural act. But, this act is on the contrary entirely subordinated and ordained to the great law of the generation and education of the child, ‘*generatio et education prolis*,’ that is to say, to the accomplishment of the first end of marriage, origin and source of life.[184]

Well, denying Pius XII and the natural order, the new code of Canon Law places ‘the good of the spouses’ before ‘the procreation and education of children’ (*canon 1055*). This inversion of the ends of marriage is an open door to free unions and to pacs, to contraception and abortion. Imbued with underlying relational personalism, a professor René Frydman envisages the human embryo ‘as a being of becoming, who takes the status of person when he enters the

couple's plan.'[185] If thus the mother does not feel any relation to the infant which she carries within her, it is no person and may be eliminated.

Has not Joseph Ratzinger on his own part taught – certainly with no view for abortion, but the principle is set out there – that ‘a being [...] which has neither origin nor term of relation would not be a person?’ (See above, p. 58 in the original or p. 39 here)

The pretended civilization of love is a civilization of death. Christ the King, legislator of nature, being rejected, Christianity runs towards physical extinction. There is the ultimate outcome of personalism.

## 8. Christ the King Re-envisioned by Personalism

The political kingship of Jesus is the consequence of his divinity. If this man, Jesus Christ, is God, then he is king. Not only the Church is submitted to him as to the head from whom she receives all spiritual influence, but civil society itself, in the temporal order which is its own, must be submitted to his government. Indeed, Christ does not himself directly exercise this temporal government, but he leaves it to his retainers who exercise it in his name (Pius XI, encyclical *Quas primas*, December 11, 1925)

Political implications of man's ultimate end

Well, all human things, spiritual with temporal, are ordained to the only and unique last end, eternal beatitude, otherwise called, because of sin, eternal salvation. And Christ was incarnated and suffered his passion precisely so as to lead men to this ultimate end.

It follows from the singularity of the last end that civil society, or the city, is willed by God, not only so as to assure for men here below 'the good life according to virtue' (Aristotle), but 'so that, by this virtuous life, they may reach to enjoyment of God.' [186] It follows that the temporal common good, the proper end of the State, must be ordained to the last end of man, eternal beatitude. This ordination is only indirect because temporal means are not proportionate for obtaining a supernatural effect. From this ordination follows that the State's duty 'of procuring [in the temporal order] the good life of the multitude, according as it is necessary to make them obtain celestial beatitude; that is to say that it must prescribe what leads them there and, in the measure possible, forbid what is contrary to it.' [187] In this consists the State's ministerial function in regard to the Church, since celestial beatitude, or the salvation of souls, is the proper end of the Church.

Even if the application of these principles depends on the historical conditions of societies, whether unanimously Christian, or religiously plural, or laicized, or non-Christian, the principles remain. They are in particular the foundation of two sentences of Pius IX. The first, in his encyclical *Quanta cura*, attributes to the well-constituted State the office of reprimanding 'the violators of the Catholic religion.' [188] The second, in the *Syllabus*, does not recognize for immigrants into Christian countries any right to exercise freely their dissident cult (DS 2978). These sentences suppose a Christian state; they are conditioned for that state, but the principles which underlie them are timeless and remain.

What will Vatican Council II do? – Christ the King will also be purified in a historicist and personalist vision. This is no longer existentialism, this French personalism, with Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950) and Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), both Catholics.

Religious liberty purified by the help of Emmanuel Mounier

A first revision, postulated by philosophical progress, affects the human person; then a second, postulated by the meaning of history, will affect the State, in the ties that the person and the State have with religion. Let us first consider the person.

– Thesis. Felicité de Lamennais (1782-1864) was condemned in 1832 by Gregory XVI's encyclical *Mirari vos*, for having understood that for each freedom of conscience and of opinions must be recognized, for the advantage of religion, and that the Church must be separated from the State (Dz 1613-1615). In this freedom of conscience was included the freedom of cult for each.

– Antithesis. To Lamennais was lacking the necessary tool for introducing freedom of cult ‘into Christianity.’ [189] Gregory XVI, attributing a ‘putrid source of indifferentism’ to this freedom, did not know how to see the Christian root of that same freedom. This tool, which must purify religious liberty from all stench of indifferentism, was procured by Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950): it is the dignity of the human person.

The freedom of cult, Vatican II will say, is one of the ‘values most prized by our contemporaries’; ‘proceeding from the human genius, which is a gift of God, it is very good.’ It is only there ‘to retie them to their divine source’; but ‘tainted by the corruption of mankind, it has been diverted from the requisite order; it thus has need of correction’ (*Gaudium et spes*, # 11, § 2).

Joseph Ratzinger took up again this synthesis twenty years later: religious liberty is one of the ‘least tested values from two centuries of liberal culture’ [190]; today it may be ‘purified and corrected’ (Congar and Ratzinger), if, in place of making it rest on the moving sand of freedom of conscience, founded on religious indifference, it be founded upon the solid rock of ‘the nature of the person’ (John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, August 6, 1993, # 50). According to Mounier, the person constitutes himself by his free action, responsible ‘by virtue of his own choices.’ According to Maritain, the dignity of the person demands ‘his freedom of exulting in its risks and perils.’

– Synthesis. The result of this correction is the religious liberty proclaimed by Vatican II (declaration *Dignitatis humanae*, # 2). The person who, in religious areas, ‘acts according the consciousness of his duty’ or who, in the exercise of his religious cult, is supposed to be in search of truth – even if it is not so in fact – is worthy of respect and consequently has a right for freedom in exercising his cult. This synthesis is the product of a double process: purification of the past condemnation, that supported by Gregory XVI and Pius IX, and assimilation of the present philosophical thesis, that of personalism from the 1950s. This double process of purification-assimilation the same method of hermeneutics, from Dilthey to Gadamer.

It is however evident that for the objective criterion of Christ, the Council has substituted the subjective criterion of the ‘truth of man.’ It was John Paul II who clarified this criterion in *Veritatis Splendor*, #40. He made reference to *Gaudium et spes*, #41, which speaks of the ‘essential truth of man’ (§ 1), and which says that ‘the Gospel [...] scrupulously respects the dignity of the conscience and its free choice’ (§ 2). In the end, the moving sand of the conscience remains the foundation.

Jacque Maritain’s vitally Christian lay civilization

If we consider now the State in its ties to religion, the same process is applied, thanks to the idea of ‘historic climes’ from the philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), the apostle of a ‘new Christianity’ which would be the modern ‘analog’ to medieval Christianity.

– Medieval Christianity was characterized by the maximum constraint for a theocratic social order, by a univocal application of principles at the cost of the person, an application which lasted fifteen centuries, from Constantine to Robespierre.

– To this past historical ideal must today succeed a ‘new Christianity,’ which will be analogically a Christianity, taking new circumstances into account. This Christianity will be characterized by maximum freedom in service of the person and his ‘freedom for exultation.’ This is the only ‘concrete historical ideal’ of our modern epoch.[191] – The origin of this thought

with Drey and Dilthey is striking. – On supposes moreover that, just like the philosopher, the State is become agnostic: it does not constitute an instance capable of recognizing the divinity of Jesus Christ.[192]

– It follows that the social reign of Christ can be, must be no more what it has been. Now there must be ‘a lay society of Christian inspiration’ (Maritain). This will be an open, even positive, laity, spiritual animated by ‘the ethical values religions’ (Vatican II, *Dignitatis humanae*, n. 4; Benedict XVI, December 22, 2005). In a world religiously plural, the dignity of the person appeared already to Mounier ‘the only base adapted to a generous union of good wills.’[193]

### Sophistic refutations

In adopting this political personalism, the conciliar Church adopts Masonic ideology and renounces the preaching of Christ, king of nations. Man takes the place of God. But the trouble of examining Benedict XVI’s argument is worthwhile.

– The separation of Church and State appears to Benedict XVI to be ‘the new recovery of the Church’s deepest patrimony’ (Speech of December 22, 2005). – Answer: the deepest patrimony of the Church is the submission of the State to Christ the King.

– ‘In praying for emperors but refusing to adore them, the Church has clearly rejected state-religion’ (Ibid.). – Answer: it has rejected the false state-religion!

– ‘The martyrs of the primitive Church died for their faith in the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ, and precisely thus they died for liberty of conscience and for the freedom to profess their faith’ (Ibid.). – Answer: they died for the freedom of the true faith and against liberty of conscience! The Church’s authentic patrimony is not ‘freedom’ but the truth of Jesus Christ and the Church.

– ‘Freedom of religion must be considered [...] as an intrinsic consequence of the truth which cannot be imposed from without, but which must be adopted by man only through the process of conviction’ (Ibid.). – Answer: although the faith must not be imposed on a person who has reached the age of reason (for the Baptism of children is a legitimate and praiseworthy custom), however, there is one good constraint, that which protects the Catholic faith against the contagion of error and which preserves the unity of the Christian city in peaceful communion of this faith, communion which is the source of true temporal peace.[194]

– ‘The modern State accords a place to citizens of diverse religions and ideologies, behaving towards these religions in an impartial fashion and assuming simply the responsibility for an ordered and tolerant coexistence between citizens and for their freedom to exercise their religion’ (Ibid.). This type of modern State, offered by ‘the American revolution’ and by the inspiration of the Enlightenment, would found itself on the separation of the two powers, spiritual (of the Church) and temporal (of the State), according to the words of Christ: ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s’ (Matt 23, 21). – Answer: however what must not be forgotten is what Caesar owes to God! The distinction of the two powers does not logically imply their separation, but rather their subordination: that Caesar has obligation to Christ, and not to Allah or to Buddha. Otherwise, as well deduce from the distinction of body and soul their separation, and that would be death. What legal

implication of Christ and his Church's truth there must be is the constant teaching of the popes, of Leo XIII, for example in his encyclical *Immortale Dei* from November 1, 1885:

Hheads of State must keep the name of God holy and place among the number of their chief duties that of favoring religion, of protecting it by their kindness, of shielding it with an authority that teaches law, and of decreeing nothing which may be contrary to its integrity. [195]

Then, Leo XIII clarified that by religion he meant 'the true relation.' Finally he exposed the doctrine of tolerance: false religions are an evil which one can tolerate 'in view of a good to be attained or an ill to be prevented,' [196] if necessary by according a civil right to their cult, but without ever recognizing a natural right for them.[197] For this would be to deny the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The conciliar right of the person for religious freedom is thus a lack of faith. In upholding this right, Benedict XVI lacks faith.

## 9. Benedict XVI's Personalist Faith

How to explain this lack of faith? Here is a theologian, a cardinal, a pope, who is disinterested in the reality of the incarnation, who practices a 'pocketing' of the materiality of the redemption and who denies the royalty of Our Lord Jesus Christ. – It is that he has a personalist faith. I will attempt to demonstrate this.

Faith, encounter, presence and love

You never find, when Joseph Ratzinger speaks of faith, any mention either of the object of faith (revealed truths) or of the motive of faith (the authority of a supremely true God). This is not denied, but it is never evoked. In place of this, you find the initial impact, the encounter, the interpersonal relation with Jesus and the meaning that this encounter gives to life. Nothing of this is false, but this is not faith; it is a personalist view of faith.

The theologian of Tübingen comments thus upon 'I believe [...] in Jesus Christ':

The Christian faith is an encounter with the man Jesus, and it discovers in such an encounter that the meaning of the world is a person. Jesus is the witness of God, or better, he is the presence of the eternal himself in this world. In his life and by his total gift of himself for men, the meaning of life is revealed as a presence, under the form of love, which loves me also and which causes life to be worth the pain of living.[198]

Encounter, presence, love,...this is not faith, and it hides the object of faith.

In our Credo, Joseph Ratzinger, writes, the central formula does not say, 'I believe in something,' but 'I believe in You.' – The affirmation is true; we do believe in Jesus Christ, a living person (his divinity must still be believed); but is not the denial ('I do not believe in something') heretical? For it denies the object of faith, the articles of faith, the twelve articles of the Apostle's creed.

Having become prefect of the sacred congregation for the Doctrine of the faith, Joseph Ratzinger thus describes Catholicism:

It is a matter of entering into a structure of life, and this englobes the plan of our life in its totality. Here is why, I believe, one can never express it in words. Naturally, one can designate essential points.[199]

And faith is to believe in an event, but hardly in a conceptual content:

To become Christian, he says, the essential thing is to believe in this event: God entered into the world, and he acted; it is thus an action, a reality, not only a configuration of ideas.[200]

An elder and friend of Benedict XVI has furnished this very realistic testimony concerning Joseph Ratzinger's anti-conceptualism:

Ratzinger has always been angry against this impulse which pushes one to consider truth as an object which one possesses and must defend. He does not feel at his ease with neoscholastic definitions, which appear to him as barriers: that what is contained in the definition should be truth and what is outside only error. [...] The truth is a Thou who loves first of all. According to him, God cannot be known because he is the summum bonum which a person seizes and demonstrates by exact formulae, but because he is a Thou who comes to the encounter and

makes himself known.[201]

This faith without the truths of faith, without dogmas, or at least which depreciates them, is the personalist reduction of what had been Joseph Ratzinger's childhood faith. His faith became, in the manner of Max Scheler and Martin Buber, encounter with the 'Thou' of Christ. His faith is also a 'fundamental decision to perceive God and to welcome him,' as with Gabriel Marcel, for whom faith is a strictly personal event, and in this sense incommunicable. The Catholic faith is thus set aside. Faith, firm adherence of the intellect to revealed truths, is passed over in silence. The authority of God who reveals is fatally replaced by the religious experience of each.

#### Philosophical experimentation and mystical experience

For the rest, is the faith-encounter a mystical experience? 'God exists, I have met him,' André Frossard titled his narration of his conversion to the Christian faith, an undeniably authentic grace. But to rely essentially upon an encounter or on an impression of an interrogation – this can lead to illusion. The true mystic goes beyond emotions: the mystery of the incarnation was accomplished in the Virgin Mary without her feeling what it was; all was done in pure faith. The taste of Christ which communicates the gifts of wisdom and understanding is not perceptible to sense: thus, it is founded on true faith and corroborates truth faith. As to what are the riches that grace gives mystically to faith, it is necessary to reaffirm what Father Marin Sola teaches:

The sole objective source of all supernatural knowledge is the truth of faith: *Accedentem ad Deum oportet credere* (he who wishes to reach God must believe), Saint Paul says (Heb. 11, 6). From this is born the essential dependency and the subordination of speculative theology or mystical theology in regard to the revealed deposit and the authority of the Church. By the intuitive view from the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mystical theology can seize truth more or more quickly, but it cannot attain more of it than what the revealed deposit has always contained implicitly.[202]

This established, it must be said that faith which wants 'to experiment with God' in concepts of either existentialist or personalist philosophy has nothing to do with mystical theology! For the depth of the mystery is one thing, before which the mystic stops admiringly, but another is the intensity of emotion by which the idealist is stopped in his interpersonal relation with Christ.

Saint Pius X, in *Pascendi*, has, however, underlined how emotion and experience are more likely to trouble the faith which gives them basis.

Let us return, in fact, for a moment, he writes to the bishops, to this pernicious doctrine of agnosticism. The whole issue being concluded concerning God on the side of intelligence, the modernists try hard to open another on the side of sentiment and action. A vain attempt [...]. What common sense says is that emotion and everything that captivates the soul, far from favoring the discovery of the truth, hobbles it [...]. As far as experience goes, what does it add to it? Absolutely nothing, besides a certain intensity which influences a conviction proportionate to the reality of the object. Well, these two things do not cause sentiment to be anything but sentiment; they do not take away its character, which is to trick it if intellect do not guide it; on the contrary, they confirm and aggravate this character, because the more intense a sentiment, the more it is a sentiment.[203]

The difference between the true believer, mystical at times, and the false believer, multiform idealist, consists in this: the mystic effaces self before the mystery and makes himself only an adorer; the idealist affirms himself as the 'I' correlative to the 'Thou,' as the subject who enters into an interaction with the object of his faith. Personalism affirms itself also as a subject who enters into interrelation with another subject, the Wholly-Other. – On the contrary, the contemplative theologian, and likewise the preacher or teacher, like Saint Thomas Aquinas, 'does not have the goal of making a confidence to his hearers of the sentiments which rise in the soul of the doctor of contemplated truth, but to set free that very truth.' [204]

#### Divine authority replaced by human authority

If, with the philosophies issued from Kant, one admits that the subject is a part of the object, then the believer is part of faith. By the same blow, the formal motive of faith (divine revealing authority) makes way for human experience, deprived of authority and source of illusion. You see how Benedict XVI, in his encyclical *Spe salvi* from November 30, 2007, in # 7, no longer understands the beautiful definition that Saint Paul gave for faith: 'Fides est substantia sperandarum rerum, argumentum non apparentium (faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the proof of things which are invisible' (Heb. 11, 1). What, then, is that 'proof of things invisible' if not the authority of God who reveals these things? And is it not on this divine authority alone that the certitude of the believer rests? We adhere, says Vatican Council I, to divine truth 'propter auctoritatem Dei revelantis' (because of the authority of God revealing – Dz 1789 and 1811). Well, it is very necessary to note that all this escapes Benedict XVI. There is a temptation, in the actual encyclicals as in modern preaching, to present the evangelical message as the preacher's personal witness, provided by his personal reactions. This is a confusion. Only the Apostles were 'witnesses'; only they had witnessed what they had touched, seen and heard. Hear, for example, the witness of Saint John the Apostle:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the word of life. For the life was manifested: and we have seen and do bear witness and declare unto you the life eternal, which was with the Father and hath appeared to us. That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you: that you also may have fellowship with us and our fellowship may be with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you, that you may rejoice and your joy may be full. [1 John 1, 1-4]

But the Apostles' successors, the bishops and priests who assisted them in the holy preaching, are not witnesses of the evangelical facts, like the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ; they are simply messengers, transmitters, of a sacred deposit which they have received and which they must deliver as it was. The force of conviction for the faith which they put into proclaiming the divine message is indeed necessary for moving the passions and will of their hearers, but it will not affect the content of this divine message, any more than their state of soul in its intersubjective relation with God.

Take care, Mgr Marcel Lefebvre said to his priests, to tendency, this shortcoming of considering faith as a science and seeking to penetrate the great mysteries of the faith by our human intelligence, trying to understand these mysteries in the same way as those which are attached to medicine or to the other human sciences. This would be a great obstacle, in place of a help for souls' belief. For the faith consists in adhering to these truths because of the authority of

God who reveals them to us, and not because of the knowledge that we can have of it.[205]

To adhere to the mysteries of God because of the light of my own search, or because of the heat of my interpersonal relation with Christ, the link between my 'I' and his 'Thou' is to acquire an opinion of the mystery, in place of adhering to it very firmly with divine faith:

Those who address the Church to demand the faith, says Mgr. Lefebvre to priests, already have that conviction that the faith which you must give them comes from God. If thus they already submit themselves to the authority of God, they will demand no more than one thing: that someone teach them what God has said. [...] Then it will be necessary to affirm the truths of faith. The faithful await this because, in this affirmation of the faith, it is God's entire authority which passes through you. It is not your gratuitous opinion. It is not your authority that you set out, but God's authority.[206]

## 10. Skeptical Supermodernism

To conclude, I would like to say that today we are dealing with a modernism renovated and perfected. The modernists considered dogmas to be products of religious experience, and as mere symbols serving to renovate this experience unceasingly. A century later, the immanent providence of all the divine mysteries is no longer affirmed. They are simply put between parentheses so as to seek for them only an existentialist or personalist vital significance. No longer are denied either dogmas or the decisions of the past magisterium, but they are revisited so as to have for them a 'conscious understanding' which was lacking to past popes and doctors, an understanding (*Verstehen*) purificatrice from past, pretended circumstance and assimilatrice of present circumstance. No one becomes an atheist or heretic openly; no, simply, thanks to the tool of modern philosophy, the real Trinity is rethought, the real incarnation is disincarnated, the real redemption is sublimated, Christ the real King is relativized; will the real God be replaced next?

An inaugural anti-program

Immanuel Kant, imbued with his agnosticism, wrote in 1793 a work entitled *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, in which he already considered dogmas as mere symbols of moral ideas.

A hundred years after, following liberal Protestants Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Adolf Harnack (1851-1930), a priest, Catholic but soon excommunicated, Alfred Loisy (1857-1940) held the same theories, denounced by Pius X in 1907, in *Pascendi*.

And then, a hundred years after *Pascendi*, in 2007, there are Catholic theologians, one of whom has become pope, who, imbued with the philosophy of Kant and that of the 19th and 20th centuries, of Hegel, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Scheler, Jaspers, Buber, Marcel, Mounier and Maritain, have the ambition of purifying, correcting, enriching the doctrine of the faith and of engendering its progress by its actualized philosophical reinterpretation.

In the Middle Ages, Saint Thomas Aquinas happily resolved what seemed then an antinomy: to effect a synthesis of the Christian faith and the philosophy of Aristotle. In the 20th century, it seems it feel again to Vatican Council II and to its theologians, to make a synthesis between faith and the new philosophy. Should we be as happy with the 'I' (or the 'I-Thou') philosophy as formerly with the philosophy of being? Are the philosophies of auto-coherence or of inter-subjectivity as fruitful as that of the order of beings and ends?

These theologians, or rather these philosophers, have in part effected this process of synthesis in the Council, and as that has not been a success – they admit it – unrepentantly they wish to pursue its application. Benedict XVI has renewed the theory and has proclaimed again that program in his speech of December 22, 2005.

Well, if it is true, as Joseph Ratzinger wrote in his *Principles of Theology*, that Vatican II, through *Gaudium et spes*, has announced a kind of 'counter-Syllabus' insofar as the conciliar text 'represents an attempt at an official reconciliation of the Church with the world, such as it has become since 1789,'[207] then it is true that the speech of December 22, 2005, which proposed the theory of the reconciliation and mutual fecundation of revealed faith with agnostic reason, is the anti-program of Pope Benedict XVI's inaugural quasi-encyclical.

In so doing, the advocates of such an anti-program disincarnate, uncrucify and uncrown Jesus Christ with more ferocity than Kant and Loisy. But their subjective faith is 'in the hold of the flood of doubt' of which Joseph Ratzinger spoke in his work, *Christian Faith*.[208]

A resigned and demoralized skepticism

This faith believes by encountering God in place of believing simply in him. This faith believes by entering into interaction with God in place of adhering simply to his mystery. This faith frees itself by its experience of God, in place of relying upon the authority of God who reveals. This faith is made fragile by its human reason.

It is in the grip of doubt, for Joseph Ratzinger says that the believer, like the unbeliever, is always menaced by doubt concerning his position: 'The believer will always be threatened by unbelief and the unbeliever will always be threatened by faith.' [209]

In a world without God, in peril of losing itself, can such a believer still propose eternal salvation and, as source of salvation, the 'God of Our Lord Jesus Christ?' Alas, no! He can only propose the guarantee of the values and norms drawn from the Enlightenment – which are the Rights of Man – a God considered nominally as the creative Reason of the universe and conventionally called the dispenser of the Rights of Man.

Is this hypothetical God different from the ideal God postulated, according to Immanuel Kant, by ethics? A God, as the same Kant avowed, 'of whom no one knows how to affirm that he exists outside of man's rational thought?' [210]

It is this provisional God of the Rights of Man that the Church must preach to the Muslims, according to the wish expressed by Benedict XVI on his return from Turkey, so as to make them effect an update of Islam thanks to the Enlightenment, in place of converting them to 'the true Light which enlightens every man.' (Concerning this wish, I refer my reader to my afterword.) At bottom, it is the religion of the Enlightenment which agrees the best with humanity today.

In the time of the Enlightenment, there was a search to establish universal laws valuable even if God did not exist; today, Joseph Ratzinger counsels, it is necessary to invert the order of this speech and say:

Even the one who does not succeed in finding the way of accepting God must seek to live and to direct his life as if God existed. [211]

There is the social solution for bringing order into the world: 'Man must seek to live and to organize his life as if God existed,' not because God does exist and because Jesus Christ is God, no. This is the last outcome of modernism. Modernism leads to skepticism, that is to say, to Christians who are no longer sure of what they believe; they content themselves with advising: act as if you believed!

It seems to me that this skepticism is no stranger to the pessimism which Joseph Ratzinger's confidence made to Peter Seewald in 1996 reveals, and which was inspired by the conciliar idealism of the Church conceived as 'the messianic people [...] who often keep the appearance of a little flock' (Lumen gentium, # 9b), a Church as 'seed of unity' and which must be 'like the sacrament of unity for mankind' (Lumen gentium, # 1 and 9c):

Perhaps we must say goodbye to the idea of the Church reuniting all peoples. It is possible that we are on the sill of a new era, constituted very differently, of the Church's history, in which Christianity will exist rather under the sign of the grain mustard, in little groups apparently without importance, but which live intensely in order to fight against evil and implant the good in the world; who open the door to God. [212]

At the Council, on the subject of the schema for the missions, presented in October 1965, Father Maurice Queguiner, superior general of the society of foreign missions in Paris, had reacted to such an opinion: 'It is important,' he said, 'to drive back in an explicit manner the

opinion of those who condemn the Church to be no more than a little entity, the least in the world' (146th general congregation). This was a man of faith, a missionary.

Faced with skepticism, the remedy is found in Saint Thomas Aquinas

The lack of faith which, on the contrary, Benedict XVI suffers, is explained by his hermeneutic. His mutual reinterpretation of faith by idealist reason and of reason by modernist faith is only complicity.

His philosophy is no longer an instrument of faith in search of understanding, but the partner of faith, in order to impose on it his emotional whims. By his agnosticism, ignoring nature and its finalities, it replaces nature with the person and suppresses final and efficient causes, returning to full barbarism.

As far as his faith, it is only a symbolic rereading of dogmas according to the postulates of modern sensibility. Thus, Christ is more a man sublimated than a God incarnated. Sin does not offend God and the sinner does not redeem himself. Redemption, without defined end or agent, no longer effects justice towards God. God being no long the last end of the city, Christ the King is a historic error to be repaired by democracy and laicity. Such is the result of Benedict XVI's hermeneutic.

A century before, in his inaugural encyclical *E supremi apostolatus*, his predecessor Saint Pius X described 'the profound malady which torments mankind': 'it is,' he said, 'as regards God, abandonment and apostasy.'

But 'the hermeneutics of the Council and of Benedict XVI,' as I call them by convenience, lead to something more serious than simple loss of faith; they lead to the establishment of another religion, made of a shaky faith in God and of a faith reassured by man and by is inalienable and inviolable dignity. Man takes the place of God (2 Thess. 3, 3-17) both within and without the sanctuary. The mystery of iniquity develops in broad daylight.

God wishes that we should oppose ourselves to this diabolical disorientation. Let us arm ourselves. Against the revisions of hermeneutics and the doubts of agnosticism, let us equip ourselves with a great, preventative remedy.

To keep the faith stable and supernatural, 'firm assent of the intellect to the divine truth received from without, by the very authority of this divine truth,' the great protective remedy is Saint Thomas Aquinas, from whom comes this beautiful definition of faith.

In fact, it is because this objective, Catholic faith harmonizes perfectly which the philosophy of being set forth by Saint Thomas Aquinas, that Pope Saint Pius X prescribed to future priests 'the study of the philosophy which the Angelic Doctor has bequeathed to us' (Saint Pius X, *motu proprio Doctoris angelici*, June 29, 1914).

Faced with the impiety of those who pretend, by hermeneutics, 'to detach from ossified layers of the past the deepest patrimony of the Church,' let us take again into account the motto of the order of venerable Claude François Poullart de Places, of whom we are the heirs by the intermediation of venerable Father Henri Le Floch and of His Excellency Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre:

A pious clerk, without knowledge, has a blind zeal; a knowing clerk, without piety is at risk of becoming a heretic and a rebel against the Church.

Let us combine in ourselves piety (respect for the Church's Tradition) with science (Thomist theology), so as to be neither blind men nor rebels. May the Virgin Mary, Immaculate in the faith, aid us in this:

She is the shield of faith, the pillar of the supernatural order. – She is neither liberal, nor modernist, nor ecumenist. She is allergic to all errors and with greater reason to heresies and to apostasy.[213]

This is also a question of taste: to skeptical furor, we prefer Thomist fervor.

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## Epilogue: Hermeneutic of the last ends

Forty years separate Joseph Ratzinger's Christian Faith and Benedict XVI's *Spe salvi* (encyclical of November 30, 2007). Has the theologian pontiff retracted his past opinions? Has he changed his method?

Retractions

Yes, Benedict XVI seems to have changed his opinion concerning the redemption and passion of Christ:

Man has for God a value so great that he made himself man so as to be able to sympathize with man in a very real manner, in flesh and blood, as is shown to us in the account of the passion of Christ. [*Spe salvi*, # 39]

This stain (of sin) has already been destroyed in the passion of Christ. [*Spe salvi*, # 47]

If 'the East ignore the purifying and expiative suffering of souls in the next life' (# 48), as Benedict XVI says, this would signify that for him the West does not ignore it at all.

But, alas, the offering of daily pains, that he recommends in *Spe salvi*, is seen by him more as a compassion than as a properly so-called expiation, which would have an 'unhealthy' aspect:

The thought of being able to offer up little everyday pains [...], attributing to them a meaning, was a form of devotion, perhaps less in practice today, but not so long ago still very widespread. In this devotion, there were certainly things exaggerated and perhaps even unhealthy, but it is necessary to ask whether something essential, which could be a help, was not in some way contained in it. What does the word 'offer' wish to say? These persons were convinced that their little pains could be attached to Christ's great compassion and thus would enter the treasury of compassion which mankind needs, (and) [...] contribute to the economy of good, of love between men. Perhaps we could ask ourselves truly is such a thing could not become again a judicious perspective for us. [*Spe salvi*, #40]

The timidity of that 'perhaps' and the nostalgia denoted by those repeated uses of the past tense only goes to reinforce the evidence of change in religion: the offering of pains is no longer either reparative or expiative, for that was exaggerated and unhealthy; it is only a care for compassion, a spirit of solidarity, that is to say, of fraternal participation in the sufferings of men, which humanity needs in order to leave the solitude of the lack of love. It is under this title of solidarity alone that the new religion 'could perhaps' salvage this offering of pains, though duly review and corrected by a 'hermeneutic right.'

To wish to flee or to suppress suffering, Benedict XVI adds, is 'to sink into an empty existence,' where is found 'the obscure feeling of a lack of meaning and of solitude':

It is not the act of dodging suffering, of fleeing before sorrow, which cures man, but the capacity of accepting tribulations and of maturing through them, of finding meaning in them by union with Christ, who suffered with an infinite love. [*Spe salvi*, # 37]

But what is this 'meaning?' Why did Christ suffer? Benedict XVI is quiet about this. – Jesus Christ suffered to expiate our sins: there is what the new religion rejects; it absolutely excludes the treasury of Christ's superabundant merits and satisfactions.

At base, Benedict XVI notes down no repentance, he never reaches acceptance of the mystery of the redemption, the mystery of ransom by suffering. The demands of divine justice always cause him fear; he is victim of the emotionality of his time. And this emotionality continues by a progress which must lead the doctrine of the faith to ‘new syntheses,’ as the Council said:

Mankind passes from a rather static notion of the order of things to a more dynamic and evolutionary conception; from there is born a new problem, immense, which provokes us to new analyses and new syntheses. [Gaudium et spes, # 5, § 3]

By this, the Church officially opened its doors to Marxism. It is in fidelity to this spirit from the Council that leading theologians embraced Teilhard de Chardin’s evolutionism and existentially reinterpreted the mystery of the redemption. Thus, the Bishop of Metz, Paul Schmitt, dared to declare at Saint-Avold in September of 1967:

The mutation of the civilization in which we live influences changes not only in our behavior, but even in the conception that we make for ourselves of creation as much as of the salvation brought by Jesus Christ.[214]

And it was as a reader and disciple of Joseph Ratzinger in his Christian Faith that the bishop of Arras, Gérard Huyghe, in the collective catechism entitled The Bishops Speak the Faith of the Church, dared write, in 1978:

The door of entrance into the mystery of Jesus’ suffering must not be mistaken. In other times this mystery was presented as a simple (and fearful) juridical method. God (the Father!), having undergone an infinite offense (why?) by the sin of man, would only agree to pardon men after an infinite ‘satisfaction’ (what a horrible word). [A citation of Christian Faith follows: Could God demand the death of his own Son?] God wishes no one’s death, either as chastisement, or as means of redemption. It was not the act of God that death entered into the world through sin.

There is only one door for opening it, only one door of love. Thus, we can dismiss all explanation of the passion in which Christ is not deeply integral to the human condition [...], with the condition of unhappy man. [...] This love joins man, the whole man whatever he is, even if he be executioner, and radically changes his destiny. If the key of love be not taken, the right meaning, the correct and spontaneous feeling, is offended: how can anyone open himself to a God who is not a Father, who does not love, a Moloch who expects his ration of blood, of sufferings and of victims?[215]

Thus the hermeneutics practiced by Joseph Ratzinger have poisoned the catechesis of redemption. You see how a German bishop, Mgr. Zollitsch again in a television broadcast of May 2009 preached the redemption as a divine solidarity with unhappy, wounded humanity.[216] A week later, he outlined a retraction in his diocesan bulletin. But Benedict XVI, on his side, has never shown sign of repentance.

Limbo reinterpreted by hermeneutics

The Fathers’ interpretation or *hèrmènéia*, we have seen, only lent the philosophy of being to the faith as an instrument, without posing any opinion, philosophic or otherwise, besides the faith. On the contrary, modern hermeneutics argue for feelings: it poses in antithesis to traditional faith the sentimental impression of the contemporary epoch and infers from this ‘new

syntheses.’

Limbo is the victim of this. The common doctrine of the Church, not defined, certainly, but commonly admitted, teaches that the souls of infants who die unbaptized are, by reason of the original sin from which they have not been purified, deprived of the beatific vision of God, but are, by reason of their lack of all personal sin, exempt from the fires of hell, in a state or place called limbo.

Well, here is the point of departure for hermeneutic reasoning:

Parents [of infants who die without baptism] suffer great grief [...] and it is found more and more difficult to accept the fact that God is just and merciful if he excludes from eternal happiness children who have no personal sins, whether they are Christians or non-Christians [sic]. [217]

This sentimental premise is amplified in a theological assertion which looks for its justification in a scriptural text cited out of context:

Where sin has abounded, grace has superabounded (Rom. 5, 20). There is the absolute [sic] teaching of Scripture; but the doctrine of Limbo seems to restrain this superabundance [# 91]. But are there not other scriptural texts which affirm, ad rem, the universality of original sin and the necessity of Baptism for salvation?

Tradition and the documents of the magisterium which reaffirmed this necessity must be interpreted [# 7].

There must be a hermeneutic reflection concerning the manner in which the witnesses of biblical Tradition [sic], the Fathers of the Church, the magisterium, the theologians have read and employed biblical texts [# 10].

In other words, traditional *hèrmènèia* is too simplistic; it deduced Limbo too abruptly from the assertion that only baptism effaces original sin. Hermeneutics must be preferred, in which the reaction of the subject, believing in the word of God in the 21st century, his ‘new reflection’ and his new ‘vital bond’ with it, result in a ‘synthesis of fidelity and dynamism’ which will be the ‘correct interpretation’ (see the speech on December 22, 2005).

Thus, hermeneutics purify *hèrmènèia* from its primitive naivety and enrich it with the values of its emotive reactions – for which it makes an effort to find the echo in the Bible, by citing texts from it completely out of their context; a disgrace! – This is why the status of reason is not at all the same in the Thomist reading of Revelation and in the hermeneutic rereading. In the first, reason, purified of all subjectivity is a simple instrument for making the faith more explicit; in the second, reason, impregnated with subjectivity, sets itself up as a partner for faith and imposes on it its whims. Instead of magnifying glasses, hermeneutics recommends tinted and distorted glasses.

Well, the shape of these glasses, their tint, the whim of this reason are, fatally, the dominant shape, tint, whim of the epoch. This contemporary whim is neither science nor scientism; it is sentimentalism.

O theologians who twist texts, false spirits full of shrewdness, emotional enemies of truth, flowing with feelings and arid of faith! You reread and revisit the Tradition of the Church with your prejudices of today and you declare haughtily that this revision rediscovers ‘the deepest patrimony of the Church.’ On the contrary, you ought to find this patrimony in the Tradition of the Church, its constant practice and its invariable teaching, by bringing forth the high principles and by them condemning your prejudices of today.

## Death, a remedy

Traditionally, death is the separation of the soul and the body, and the end of human life upon earth: it is the greatest temporal evil and the most feared. Death is not against nature, since all composite being is dissoluble and since God only preserved our first parents in the terrestrial paradise from it by a gratuitous preternatural gift. But it is, in fact, the penalty of sin: ‘Do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God commanded Adam, for the day on which you eat of it, you will die the death’ (Gen. 2, 17).

This vision of death must be revised by existentialism. One of Saint Ambrose’s sermons, is only existentialist sermon, appears opportunely:

Death, the bishop of Milan says there, is not natural, but it is become so; for from the beginning, God did not create death; he gave it to us as a remedy [...] for transgression; the life of men becomes miserable in its daily work and by insupportable tears. A term must be set for his unhappiness, so that death may render to him what life had lost.[218]

In fact, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) affirms, ‘Better is death than a bitter life: and everlasting rest than continual sickness’ (Eccl./Sir. 30, 17). – Still, eternal rest, whose enemy, like the enemy of life, is sin, must be merited,

And Benedict XVI underlines the existentialist paradox of death:

On the one hand, we should not wish to die [...], while on the other we also do not desire to continue this limited existence, and the world was not even created in this perspective [Spe salvi, #11].

I would say that this paradox does not exist. Provided that it be without too terrible infirmities, what man does not want to continue living? The paradox is false because it fails to mention that death is the wages of sin: ‘stipendium enim peccati mors’ (Rom. 6, 23). Without doubt, it is more positive to see death as the remedy of our temporality than as a sanction for our malice. Religion is thereby rendered more acceptable for our fragile generation. But why hide from ourselves that Jesus, by the cross, has made of death a remedy, a truth: the expiation for sin?

## Eternal life, immersion in love

Eternal life, Benedict XVI teaches, is not ‘an interminable life,’ an idea ‘which causes fear’; it is, as Saint Augustine said, ‘the happy life.’ In what does this consist?

It is a matter, Benedict XVI explains, of the moment of immersion in the ocean of infinite love, in which time – before and after – no longer exists [...], an immersion always renewed in the immensity of being, while we are simply filled with joy [Spe salvi, #12].

Why this condition ‘it is a matter of?’ What is that ‘ocean of infinite love?’ What is that ‘immensity of being?’ One is not very reassured by these images nor by their dimensions. It is only on the following page that we learn that heaven is ‘to live with God forever.’ – It is true that eternal life, begun on earth by sanctifying grace, is a life with God; but what has changed in heaven? Is it only the ‘forever?’

Benedict XVI does not even feel capable, if not of giving a definition of heaven, at least of

giving an exact description of it! Why does he conceal from us that the life of heaven is the vision of God himself, the vision facing God, God seen face to face, 'facie ad faciem' (1 Cor. 13, 12), that is to say, without created intermediary? It is Saint John, the Apostle of love, who teaches: 'We know that when he shall appear we shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is' (1 John 3, 2). Saint Paul explains that in faith, knowledge, as 'through a glass, in a dark manner' (1 Cor. 13, 12), will be succeeded by the immediate vision of God. It is this view which will beatify the souls of the elect.

But is this view perhaps too precise for the spirit of Benedict XVI, recalcitrant in all definition? In any case, the pontiff clarifies one precondition for the happy life: it is not to live isolated from others, as Henri de Lubac showed, he said. From the Fathers, Lubac would have proved that 'salvation has always been considered a communal reality' (Spe salvi, #14).

[The happy life] thus presupposes an exodus from the prison of my own self, because it is only in the opening of this universal subject [others] that also opens the sight of the source of joy, of love itself, of God [Spe salvi, #14].

Collective salvation according to Henri de Lubac

The French theologian honored by Spe salvi has in fact reinterpreted the dogma, 'no salvation outside of the Church,' by invoking a collective salvation: no salvation for the individual without a community of salvation. This would remain quite traditional. But it is not only this. There will be no need for every infidel to enter in good time into the bosom of the Church; it suffices that each and every one of them make up a part of that humanity which is on the way to unity thanks to Christianity:

How then would there be salvation for the members, if by some impossibility the body was not itself saved? But the salvation for this body – for humanity – consists in receiving the form of Christ, and this is only done by means of the Catholic Church. [...] Is it not she, finally, who is charged with realizing, for as many as lend themselves to her, the spiritual unification of all men? Thus, this Church, which, as the invisible body of Christ, identifies itself with final salvation, as a visible, historical institution is the providential means of this salvation. 'In her alone is mankind remade and recreated' (St. Augustine, ep. 118, #33, PL 33, 448). [219]

Saint Augustine does not, however, speak of the unity of mankind, but of its recreation and this is more than a nuance. Does Father de Lubac judge it easier to impress the form of Christ upon the collectivity of humanity than to impress it by Baptism upon each of millions of souls to be saved? This would be a brilliant Platonic solution.

Another solution, more elegant, is proposed by the scurrilous[220] Jesuit: each of the millions of human beings has been and has still his role in the preparation of the Gospel throughout the centuries, despite the groping 'of research, of laborious elaborations, of partial anticipations, of correct natural inventions, and of still imperfect solutions' (p. 172). These living stones of the scaffolding for the building of the body of Christ will not be rejected 'once the edifice is achieved' (p. 172):

Providentially indispensable to the building of the Body of Christ, the 'infidels' must benefit in their manner from the vital exchanges of this Body. By an extension of the dogma of the communion of saints, it thus seems just to think that, since they are not themselves places in the normal conditions for salvation, they could nevertheless obtain this salvation in virtue of the

mysterious ties which unify them to the faithful. In short, they could be saved because they make up an integrated part of the humanity which will be saved.[221]

This is no longer Platonism; this is theological fiction: to an imaginary preparation for the Gospel within paganism, a meritorious virtue of grace is attributed, in favor of the obscure artisans of this preparation. But can the recompense of an imaginary elaboration be anything other than an imaginary grace?

The sentimental care for enlarging the door of salvation, because the Church has become a little flock, makes reason a vagabond in the imagination. Benedict XVI makes a similar attempt to lessen the pains of Purgatory. Let's see.

### Purgatory diminished

Benedict XVI welcomes 'the old Jewish idea of an intermediary condition between death and resurrection,' that is, a state 'in which the judgment is yet lacking' and in which souls 'already undergo punishment [...] or on the contrary already rejoice in the provisional forms of beatitude' (Spe salvi, #45).

This is, very simply, to repeat Pope John XXII's error, condemned ex cathedra by his successor Benedict XII, defining that the souls of the just, 'immediately after their death and purification [...], for those who should have need of it, [...] have been, are and will be in heaven, in the Kingdom of heaven, and in the heavenly paradise with Christ, united to the company of the holy angels.' [222]

In this [intermediary] state, Benedict XVI continues, are possibilities for purification and healing which make the soul ripe for communion with God. The primitive Church took up these conceptions, from which finally the Western Church [he wants to say Catholic] developed little by little the doctrine of Purgatory [Spe salvi, #45].

To this heresy of the intermediary state (mixture of the old Jewish sheol and the Limbo of the Patriarchs) and to this theory of Purgatory with its old Jewish origin, Benedict XVI proposes a modern alternative which decidedly pleases him better:

Certain recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which burns and at the same time saves may be Christ himself, the Judge and Savior. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgment; before his eyes all falsehood vanishes. It is the encounter with him which, burning us, transforms us and frees us to become truly ourselves [Spe salvi, # 47].

There is no question of a lingering debt to be acquitted, nor of a temporal penalty to be purged; he ignores that it is about this purification: might it be from sin? Whatever it may be, it is a liberation for the sake of becoming oneself anew; it is an existentialist transformation:

Christ's regard, the beating of his heart heals us thanks to transformation indeed sorrowful, 'as by fire,' as Saint Paul said (I Cor. 3, 12-15). Nevertheless, it is a happy suffering, in which the holy power of love penetrates us like a flame [Spe salvi, #47].

I thought that the suffering of Purgatory was first a certain penalty of displeasure: the delay of access to the beatific vision, and besides that a penalty of fire, inflicted by God to purify the soul from its inordinate attachments to creatures. Is this explanation, which accords so well with the nature of sin – aversion from God and adherence to creatures – to clear for Benedict

XVI? It is simply that the fire of love avails more to destroy ‘the filth’ of the soul, than a fire inflicted by the sovereign judge! Purgatory becomes quite sympathetic, since the same fire of love there destroys, as on earth, the stains on the soul. – However the saints are not of this opinion; they have the faith, and they understand, like Saint Theresa of Lisieux, that ‘the fire of love is more sanctifying than the fire of purgatory’: that it is not thus the same fire. Indeed, the advantage of the theory patronized by the pontiff is that this instantaneous purification through Christ’s regard enormously shortens Purgatory, with regard to our hurried generation. Here is a handy Christianity. Here is an ‘easier’ religion, such as was conceived by an English reformer. Here is the ‘reign of God,’ Kant would say, ‘in which the faith of the Church is overcome and replaced by religious faith, that is, by simple rational faith.’[223] For the rest, Kant adds, ‘if Christianity should cease to be likeable [...], one would necessarily see [...] the heart of the majority of men incited to aversion and revolt against it.’[224] (Texts cited by Spe salvi # 19, without the pontiff’s remarking that Kant justifies this and, in so doing, without condemning him.)

Benedict XVI however clarifies something concerning this instantaneous Purgatory:

We cannot calculate with this world’s chronological measures the duration of this burning which transforms. The transforming moment of this encounter escapes all terrestrial chronometry. It is the time of the heart, the time of passage into communion with God in the body of Christ [Spe salvi, #47].

Thus it is confirmed that Purgatory is a moment, a passage. There is no longer any question of remaining ‘in purgatory until the end of the world,’ as Our Lady dared to say to Lucia at Fatima, May 13, 1917, concerning a certain Amelia.[225] Decidedly, this new religion is more reassuring.

#### A humanistic particular judgment

God’s judgment is hope, Benedict XVI affirms: as much because he is justice as because he is grace. If he were only grace which make everything earthly insignificant, God would still owe to us an answer to the question concerning justice. If he were pure justice, in the end he could be for us no more than a motive of fear [Spe salvi, #47].

I regret to contradict these reflections which seem to make good sense. No, if divine justice is desirable, it is not because it gives recompense to the ‘earthly,’ but to our merits, that is to say, our good works accomplished in the state of grace. But Benedict XVI precisely does not believe in merit:

God’s reign is a gift, and rightly because of this it is great and beautiful, and it constitutes the answer to hope. And we cannot – to employ classical terminology – ‘merit’ heaven thanks to ‘our good works.’ It is always more than what we merit. [...] Nevertheless, with all our consciousness of the ‘super-value’ of ‘heaven,’ it remains not the less always true that our acts are not indifferent before God [Spe salvi, # 35].

Let us remind ourselves of the anathema of the Council of Trent”

If anyone say that man, justified by his good works, does not truly merit [...] eternal life [...], let him be anathema.[226]

Likewise, if the divine justice of judgment ‘causes us fear,’ it is not because it could be ‘pure justice,’ but rather because it can inflict pains upon us, the eternal pain of those who die in the state of mortal sin and the pains of Purgatory for the rest.

But all these distinctions exceed Benedict XVI, as we will again note; his theology is diminished and hazy; the distinction between natural and supernatural is too large and too clear for his eye.

#### The fundamental option, economy of mortal sin

According to the tradition doctrine of the faith, by a single mortal sin, in fact the soul loses sanctifying grace (DS 1544) and merits eternal hell; while venial sin only merits a temporal penalty, perhaps expiated by any good work.

This distinction, however, is not conformed to the feelings of our contemporaries. (By whose fault? – The conciliar clergy’s!) They judge that, setting aside war criminals and the authors of genocide, with whom ‘everything is a lie’ and who have ‘lived for hate,’ and setting aside the saints ‘who let themselves be totally penetrated by God’ and have ‘totally opened themselves to their neighbor,’ there is ‘the norm,’ that of ‘the most part of men,’ in whom good and bad are present at the same time and sometimes evil more than good. But despite this:

In the greatest depth of their being remains a final, interior opening to truth, to love, to God. However, in the concrete choices of life, this is covered [...] by compromises with evil. Much filth covers purity, the thirst for which nonetheless endures and which, despite this, emerges always anew out of any baseness and remains present in the soul [Spe salvi, # 46].

In this theory, there are no longer the just man and the unjust (theologically), no longer the state of grace and the state of mortal sin. All sin or state of sin gives way to salvation, provided that the fundamental option be guarded by God, by ‘the thirst for purity,’ ‘the interior opening to truth, love, God.’ In this case, ‘the Christian experience built upon Jesus Christ’ is a ‘foundation which can no longer be removed’ (#46). Such a soul could be saved by passing through the fire which consumes evil deeds (Ibid., I Cor. 3, 12).

In the final account, Benedict XVI republishes the Protestant error of ‘man at once just and sinful.’ He also republishes the theory that was however condemned by his predecessor John Paul II in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* (# 63-68), that of the fundamental good option, which keeps particular, sinful choices from interrupting the relation with God. Against this error, John Paul II reaffirmed the distinction between mortal and venial sin (VS 69-70). Benedict XVI’s religion is decidedly more convenient.

#### Hell, a state of soul

“Hell is other people,” said John-Paul Sartre. Benedict XVI takes the counter-stance against this diabolical egoism. Hell is irrevocable egoism, that of those who ‘have totally destroyed in themselves the desire for the truth and availability of love.’ He explains:

In such individuals, there would no longer be anything remediable and the destruction of good would be irrevocable: it is this which is indicated by the word hell [Spe salvi, # 45].

Here is an equivocation. It is necessary to clarify that the one in a state of mortal sin already is in a state of damnation, but that this damnation is not irrevocable as after death. This then is hell, place and state of souls damned at once by their fault and by the sentence of the just

Judge. If this distinction is lacking, the equivocation of mixing the state of the sinner's revocable damnation and the state and place of hell's irrevocable damnation remains.

And for want of knowing of what one is talking, one puts hells into the conditional: it 'would be' the state of a man irremediably closed to truth and bent back on himself. It is disquieting for the egoists that we all are, but who is entirely egoist? To sum up, who can be truly in hell? By such a manner, hell is a state of soul.

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As a fruit of his hermeneutics, Benedict XVI's religion is a religion which presents itself as very likeable, but it is a religion in the conditional.

## Afterword: Christianity and Enlightenment

A fragile equilibrium

I have mentioned the wish expressed by Benedict XVI, after his return from Turkey, on December 22, 2006, before the members of the Roman curia, of seeing Islam update itself with the help of the Enlightenment, a process effected in the Church by Vatican II, ‘at the end of a long and difficult search,’ the pontiff avowed, explaining:

It is a matter of the attitude that the community of faithful must adopt when faced with the convictions and demands which are affirmed in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. On the one hand, we must oppose ourselves to the dictatorship of positivist reason, which excludes God and the life of community and of public organization, thus depriving man of his specific criteria for measurement.

On the other hand, it is necessary to welcome the true conquests of Enlightenment philosophy, the Rights of Man and in particular the liberty of the faith and of its exercise, by recognizing in them equally essential elements for the authenticity of religion.[227]

Leaving to the reader the care of appreciating the justice of the free exercise of ‘faiths,’ the advantage of ‘the authenticity’ of Islam, and the degree of realism in the opening of Islam to the Enlightenment rather than the conversion of Muslims to the true Light ‘which enlightens all men’ (John 1, 9), I will consider the nature of the welcome, by the Church of Vatican II, for the quintessence of the Enlightenment: the Rights of Man. Joseph Ratzinger describes this recent welcome as an ‘acquisition’ and a ‘balance’:

The problem of the 1960s was of acquiring the better values expressed by two centuries of ‘liberal’ culture. These are in fact the values which, even if they are born outside the Church, can find their place, purified and corrected, in its vision of the world. It is what has been done. But it is necessary to admit that some hopes doubtless too naïve have been deceived. It is a matter of finding a new equilibrium.[228]

This text is an implicit citation of Yves Congar’s texts which I have quoted in my introduction, to which I send my reader. Father Congar proposed as early as 1938 (and in his work from 1950 for a ‘true reform of the Church’[229]), Christianity’s assimilation of ‘valuable contributions’ from the modern world, after the Church has ‘decanted and at need purified’ them. This is what the Council attempted, but in fact has this synthesis not been assisted to an unstable and not yet attained equilibrium? In fact, does not the one who says the word equilibrium suppose an engagement of forces between two antagonists?

This is what seems to me to emerge from one of Joseph Ratzinger’s conferences treating exactly of a mutual purification and a correlation of Christianity and the Enlightenment.[230] – I summarize this text:

1. On the one hand, religion should make positivistic rationality hear reason by causing it to admit, in science as in politics, ‘the challenge and the chance of faith in God, who is in person the creative Reason of the universe.’[231] Positivist reason should not even be asked to accept natural right – whose legislator is God, author of human nature:

This instrument [J. Ratzinger judges] is unhappily blunted, and it is why I prefer not to lean upon it in this debate.

The idea of natural right presupposes a concept of nature where nature and reason interpenetrate each other, in which nature herself is rational. This vision of nature collapsed when the theory of evolution triumphed. Nature as such may not be rational, even if there are in it rational behaviors. There is the diagnostic which is addressed to us from this very moment, and which seems impossible today to contradict [p. 25].

But is human nature not rational for God who conceived it and affixed to it its ends? Is it not rational for man, who, by his natural reason, apprehends his natural inclinations as good and thus as ends to be attained by his action?[232]

It is necessary to suppose that Joseph Ratzinger is incapable of grasping such an argument, no so much because he adopts the evolutionary antithesis which he sets forth, but because he refuses the idea of finality and the notion of final cause.

However, he does consent to admit as a base for natural right what would be the Rights of Man:

As the ultimate element of natural right, which would wish to be in its depth a reasonable right – in any case, in modern times – the Rights of Man are put in place. They are incomprehensible without the presupposition that man as man, by virtue of his simple membership of the species ‘man,’ is a subject of rights, which his being itself bears in itself for values and norms – which are a matter of discovery and not of invention [p. 25].

My readers will be indignant, I hope, at this ‘human species’ without knowable nature, which serves as a foundation, not for rights (to what really is right, because this is suited to human nature and its ends), but as a foundation for a ‘subject of rights,’ who says only ‘I have the right,’ without knowing first to what he has a right nor from what he holds this ‘I have the right.’ He will be indignant too at this ‘values’ which, without being the order owed to the end suited to the nature, are all the same ‘values maintained by themselves, issued from the essence of the human and thus inviolable by all those who possess this essence’ (p. 21). He will be indignant then at those ‘norms’ which apparently have no author, not even that God who is however ‘the creative Reason of the universe.’ He will be indignant at last that those ‘values and norms’ must be, according to Joseph Ratzinger, completed, limited by a list of the ‘duties of man.’ Is this the Decalogue? Instead of the norms of natural right following naturally from the commandments of God, one has duties as a man, antagonistic and regulatory to one’s rights:

Perhaps today the doctrine of the Rights of Man must be completed by a doctrine of the duties of man and the limits of man, and that is what could, in spite of everything, help to renew the question of knowing whether there can be a reason to nature and thus a reasonable right. [...] For Christians, they would deal with creation and with Creator. In the Indian world, it would correspond to the notion of dharma, to the internal causality of being; in Chinese tradition, it is the idea of the celestial orders. [p. 25].

Is the Creator no longer the supreme and unique legislator of nature? He is only the police for the Rights of Man? Between the Christian faith (or other religious traditions) and the Enlightenment (and its Rights of Man), the assimilation dreamed up by Yves Congar, the acquisition wished by Joseph Ratzinger, the equilibrium called for by Benedict XVI prove itself to be a trial of strength.

2. On the other hand, Christianity (like all religions) – cured of its ‘pathologies’ (p. 27) by a

purification of its tendency to be, in place of a force for salvation, ‘an archaic and dangerous force which builds false universalisms [the reign of Christ, or Jihad] and foments thus intolerance and terrorism’ (p. 22) – would ratify the Rights of Man, duly purified and limited, as ‘the translation of the codified convictions of the Christian faith into the language of the secularized world,’ according to the expression of Jürgen Habermas in the same dialogue.[233]

#### Mutual regeneration and polyphonic correlation

In summary, Joseph Ratzinger declares: “I feel myself in general agreement with Jürgen Habermas’ account concerning a post-secular society, concerning the will for mutual learning and concerning self-limitation on the part of each’; he explains himself:

- There are extremely dangerous pathologies in religions; they make it a necessity to consider the divine light of reason [sic] as a sort of organ of control which religion must accept as a permanent organ for purification and regulation [...]
  - But there also exist pathologies in reason [...], a hubris (passion) of reason, which is not less dangerous [...]: the atomic bomb, man as product. This is why in an inverse sense, reason also must be recalled to its limits and learn a capacity for hearing in regard to the great religious traditions of humanity. [...]
  - Kurt Hubner recently formulated a similar need and declared that with such a thesis there was not question of a ‘return to faith,’ but of a ‘liberation in relation to a historical blindness, which supposes that [faith] no longer has anything to say to modern man from the fact that it is opposed to its humanistic idea of reason, of Aufklärung and of liberty’; I would thus willingly speak of a necessary form of correlation between reason and faith, reason and religion, called to a purification and to a mutual regeneration. [...]
- [As for other cultural or religious components], it is important to integrate them in an attempt for polyphonic correlation, in which they will open themselves to the essential complementarity between reason and faith. Thus could be born a universal process of purification in which, in the final account, values and norms, known or intuited in one manner or another by all men [sic], will gain a new force of radiance. What maintains the world in unity will in this way rediscover new vigor [p. 27-28].

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Thus, Benedict XVI’s hermeneutics goes much further even than I discerned at the beginning: more than a reinterpretation, it is a regeneration; and it goes beyond the only links of the Catholic religion with Western rationality. It consists first in a mutual purification of faith and reason, which corrects the intolerant drift of the first and the blind autonomy of the second. It finally consists in a mutual regeneration of faith and reason, which would enrich faith with the liberal values, duly limited, of the Enlightenment, and which would win reason over to a hearing of the faith duly decoded and transcribe in secularized language. And this process would stretch out universally to all religious faiths and to all rationalities. Without realizing a one world ethos (p. 27), thus vigor would be given to the values which must support the world.

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Does it not seem to my reader that what maintains the world is neither Max Scheler’s ‘values,’ nor the Enlightenment’s man as ‘subject of rights,’ but Jesus Christ, author, reformer and elev-

ator of human nature? ‘For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid: which is Christ Jesus’ (I Cor. 3, 11). Before this conviction which the Christian faith grants, the whole equilibrist construction of a theologian in his room – *salva reverentia* – collapses like a castle of cards, as the New World Order will collapse which it wishes to serve. For secularized reason, the faith has only one true word: ‘*Omnia instaurare in Christo* (to restore all things in Christ)’ (Eph. 1, 10).

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## THANKS

In concluding this study, I thank my confreres, Father Benoît de Jorna and Jean-Michel Gleize for their intellectual rivalry, as metaphysical as ecclesiological, which furnished me with precious ideas and documents. I likewise thank Father Jean-Dominique Favre for his help with German philosophy and Father François Knittel for his labors in ethics which I pillaged shamelessly; Father Renaud de Sainte-Marie for his master’s thesis for philosophy concerning *The Role of the Sensible Good in the Representation and the Obtainment of the Moral Good in Saint Thomas Aquinas and Kant* (Institut universitair Saint-Pie X, Juin 2006); Father Alain Lorans for his ‘Analysis’ of the speech of December 22, 2006, in *DICI*, # 148, January 13, 2007, p. 11-12, which I copied; Father Dominique Bourmaud for his work *One Hundred Years of Modernism: Genealogy of Vatican Council II*, Clovis, 2003, and his article *Karl Rahner, Son of Modernism*, in *Fideliter* # 179, September-October 2007, p. 29; Father Christian Thouvenot for his article *The Faith According to Joseph Ratzinger*, appearing in the same issue of *Fideliter*, p. 32; Father Xavier Beauvais for his article concerning contemporary modernist faith appearing in *Le Chardonnet*, # 236, March 2008, after Marcel De Corte; Father Grégoire Celier for his methodological counsel; and Father Pierre-Marie de Kergorlay for the important corrections that he suggested to me.

Thanks to what I have learned from these men, all in the school of Saint Thomas Aquinas, I can dare to say with the wise king Solomon: ‘The wisdom which I have learned without guile, I communicate without envy and her riches I hide not’ (Wis. 7, 13).

- [1] Hermeneutics is the art of interpreting facts or documents.
- [2] J. Ratzinger, "Right, Democracy and Religion" (debate with Jürgen Habermas, Catholic Academy of Bavaria, Munich, January 19, 2004), *Esprit*, July 2004, p. 28,
- [3] True philosophy
- [4] J. Ratzinger, *Le Sel de Terre*, Flammarion-Cerf, 1997, p. 78-79.
- [5] Benedict XVI, speech of December 22, 2005.
- [6] Y. Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, Paris, Cerf, 1950, p. 345-346.
- [7] See Pius XII, *Humani generis*, Dz 2314.
- [8] Vatican I, constitution *Dei Filius*, ch. 4, *De fide et ratione*, DS 3020.
- [9] J. Ratzinger, *The Principles of Catholic Theology*, Téqui, 1982, p. 13
- [10] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, Cerf, 2005 (reissue without any change from the 1st edition of 1969).
- [11] André Clement, *The Wisdom of Thomas Aquinas*, NEL, 1983, p.33-34.
- [12] Michael Fiedrowicz, *Theologie der Kirchenväter, Grundlagen frühchristlicher Glaubens-reflexion*, Herder, 2007, p. 340.
- [13] Vigilius of Thapsus, *Against Eutyches*, 5, 2.
- [14] Maximus the Confessor, opusc. 4, PG 91, 260: Fiedrowicz, *Theologie der Kirchenväter*, p. 356-357.
- [15] Saint Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*, RJ 2173-2174.
- [16] See J. Ratzinger, *My Life, Memories, 1927-1977*, Paris, Fayard, 1998, p.43-44.
- [17] John XXIII, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesiae*, opening speech of the Council from October 11, 1962, translation according to the Italian text prepared in *l'Osservatore Romano*, October 12, 1962, p. 3. See on this subject Paolo Pasqualluci, 'Vatican II and modern thought: Considerations from a celebrated talk of John XXIII,' *The Religion of Vatican II – First Paris Symposium*, October 4-6, 2002, p. 313-314. (NDLR.)
- [18] Benedict XVI, speech from December 22, 2005.
- [19] J. Ratzinger, *Der Christ und die Welt von heute*, in J. B. Metz, *Weltverständnis im Glauben*, Matthias Grünewald Verlag, Mainz, 1965, p. 145.
- [20] J. Ratzinger, *The Salt of the Earth*, p. 78-79.
- [21] Benedict XVI, speech from December 22, 2005.
- [22] "A right proper to each man": Pius IX, encyclical *Quanta cura*, Dz 1690.
- [23] "Rights which nature has given to man": Leo XIII, encyclical *Libertas*, Dz 1932.
- [24] Pius IX, encyclical *Quanta cura*, Dz 1690.
- [25] See: Fr. François Knittel, "Benedict XVI: debate concerning Vatican II," in *Courrier de Rome*, Si si no no, # 290, June 2006, p. 6.
- [26] Benedict XVI, speech of December 22, 2005.
- [27] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, preface to the 2nd edition, III, 13.
- [28] "Primo in conceptione intellectus cadit ens; quia secundum hoc unumquodque cognoscibile est in quantum est actu; unde ens est proprium objectum intellectus, et sic est primum intelligibile, sicut sonus est primum audibile." (I, q. 5, a. 2).
- [29] Wisdom 13, 1-5: "But all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen could not understand him that is. Neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman." (Douay-Rheims version)
- [30] St. Pius X, encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*, # 9 and 13, Dz 2076 and 2079.
- [31] Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 1793.
- [32] Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. (trans. by James W. Ellington), 1981, p. 7.
- [33] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Paris, PUF, 1965, p. 92-93.
- [34] Immanuel Kant, *Opus postumum, Convolutum VII*.

- [35] Joseph Ratzinger, speech at Subiaco, Documentation catholique, 2005, special edition, p.121-122.
- [36] J. Ratzinger, *ibid.*
- [37] J. Ratzinger, *ibid.*
- [38] J. Ratzinger, *ibid.*
- [39] J. Ratzinger, *ibid.*, p. 124-125.
- [40] J. Ratzinger, *My Life, Memories, 1927-1977*, Paris, Fayard, 1998, p. 52.
- [41] reduction
- [42] Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, II, 2nd part, translated by H. Hélie, PUF, 1970, p. 151.
- [43] Husserl, *Directive Ideas*, translated by Ricoeur, Gallimard, 1950, p. 164.
- [44] Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes*, #11, § 2.
- [45] John Paul II to President Bettino Craxi, at the time of the ratification of a new Italian concordat, June 3, 1985 (*The Cross*, June 5, 1985).
- [46] Joseph Ratzinger, interview with the daily newspaper, *Le Monde*, November 17, 1992.
- [47] *Gaudium et spes*, #24, § 3.
- [48] “Si in luce ambulamus,” St. John said, “societatem habemus ad invicem” (If we walk in the light, we are in communion with each other – 1 John 1, 7): Society is a matter of virtue.
- [49] Karol Wojtyla, *Person und Tat (Person and Act)*, Freiburg, Herder, 1981, ch. 7, n.9, p. 311 and 341.
- [50] “Persona est perfectissimus in natura.” *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 29, a. 3.
- [51] *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 39, a. 3, obj., 4.
- [52] Rocco Buttiglione, *The Thought of Karol Wojtyla*, Communio-Fayard, 1984, p. 291.
- [53] Joseph Ratzinger, *My Life, Memories, 1927-1977*, p. 52.
- [54] *Ibid.*
- [55] Summarized from our perusal of G. Bensussan, art. ‘Buber,’ in Jean-François Mattéi, *Universal Philosophical Encyclopedia*, Paris, PUF, 1972, t. 2, p. 2301-2302.
- [56] ‘Mutua amatio [quae] fundatur super aliqua communicatione’ II-II, q. 23, a. 1.
- [57] II-II, q. 23, a. 1.
- [58] Martin Buber, *The Eclipse of God*, Paris, Nouvelle Cité, 1987, p. 35; cited by Daniel Tangay, *Leo Strauss, an Intellectual Biography*, Paris, Livre de poche, p. 296.
- [59] Joseph Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 203-204.
- [60] *Ibid.*, p. 204
- [61] John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, # 85.
- [62] Josef Rupert Geiselman, *Die katholische Tübinger Schule*, Freiburg, Herder, 1964, p. 22.
- [63] Josef Rupert Geiselman, *Die katholische Tübinger Schule*, p. 36.
- [64] Drey, *Apologetik*, I, p. 377-378; Josef Rupert Geiselman, *Die katholische Tübinger Schule*, p. 36.
- [65] J Ratzinger, *My Life, Memories, 1927-1977*, p. 82
- [66] *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- [67] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
- [68] *Ibid.*
- [69] Pius IX, 1846, Dz 1637.
- [70] St. Pius X, decree *Lamentabili*, 1907, Dz 2021
- [71] Pius IX, Dz 1636; Vatican I, Dz 1800.
- [72] Vatican I, Dz 1836.
- [73] Dz 1836.
- [74] Saint Thomas, II-II, q. 1, a. 7, obj. 4 and reply 4.
- [75] ‘Interpretatione latiori,’ ‘Letter of the bishops after the council of Chalcedon,’ 458, in

- Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum published by W. de Gruyter, 1936, 2, 5, 47. (Cited in Michael Fiedrowicz, *Theologie der Kirchenväter*, Herder, 2007, p. 355, note 97.
- [76] Saint Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*, 434, RJ 2174.
- [77] Saint Thomas, I, q. 36, a. 2, reply 2.
- [78] II-II, q. 174, a. 6, reply 3
- [79] II-II, q. 1, a. 7.
- [80] Before Christ, the articles of faith increased because they were revealed more and more explicitly by God; after Christ and the Apostles, the articles of faith increased because they were transmitted more and more explicitly by the Church.
- [81] J. Ratzinger, *My Life, Memories, 1927-1977*, p. 88.
- [82] See: Martin Buber, *Moses*, Oxford, East and West Library, 1946.
- [83] The Council of Trent, session IV, Dz 786.
- [84] *Ibid.*, Dz 783.
- [85] Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Paris, Flammarion, 2007, foreword, p. 15.
- [86] ‘Apostoli plenissime fuerunt instructi de mysteriis: acceperunt enim, sicut tempore prius, ita et ceteris abundantius, ut dicit Glossa, super illud, Rm 8, 23, “nos ipsi primitias spiritus habentes.” [...] Illi qui fuerunt propinquiore Christo vel ante sicut Joannes, vel post sicut Apostoli, plenius mysteria fidei cognoverunt.’ (II-II, q. 1, a. 7, obj. 4 and reply 4)
- [87] Joseph Ratzinger, *My Life, Memories, 1927-1977*, p. 87.
- [88] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 111.
- [89] *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- [90] See *Pascendi*, # 16, Dz 2082.
- [91] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 111.
- [92] See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, preface to the second edition, III, 10-14.
- [93] Dz 48, DS 112.
- [94] *Jesum Christum, Filium Dei, natum ex Patre unigenitum, hoc est de substantia Patris[...], genitum no factum, consubstantialem Patri*’ (Dz 54).
- [95] ‘Unam deitatem in tribus subsistentiis sive personis adorandam’ (Dz 213).
- [96] ‘In relativis vero personarum nominibus, Pater ad Filium, Filius ad Patrem, Sanctus Spiritus ab utroque referetur; quae cum relative tres personae dicantur, una tamen nature vel substantia creditur’ (Dz 278).
- [97] ‘Ubi non obviate relationis oppositio’ (Dz 703).
- [98] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 352, cited by Garrigou-Lagrange, *Common Sense*, Paris, 1922, 7th edition, p. 92.
- [99] John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1878, reprinted by the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, 2006, p. 185-186.
- [100] John Henry Newman, *An Essay*, p. 187.
- [101] Council of Trent, session VII, canon 8, Dz 851.
- [102] Ralph Wiltgen, *The Rhine flows into the Tiber*, Paris, Cèdre, 1974, p. 90. See also Father Victor Alain Berto, letter of November 30, 1963, to Father B., published in *Le Sel de la terre* 43 (winter 2002-2003), p. 29.
- [103] Translator’s note: by this word, the Bishop could be referring either to the medical disorder in which one part of the intestine is invaginated (sheathed) in another, or to the process of blood vessel growth by the splitting of one into two. However, neither of these meanings makes much sense in context, so perhaps he had the etymological meaning in mind: *intus-suscipere* – to receive within oneself, which could be understood as ‘to digest.’
- [104] Michael Fiedrowicz, *Theologie der Kirchenväter*, Herder, 2007, p. 340.
- [105] André Clement, *The Wisdom of Thomas Aquinas*, NEL, 1983, p. 42.
- [106] Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange O.P., *Common Sense and Dogmatic Formulae*, Nou-

- velle Librairie Nationale, 1922, p. 358-359.
- [107] Benedict XVI, Speech to the Curia from December 22, 2005, ORLF December 27, 2005.
- [108] J. Ratzinger, *My Life, Memories, 1927-1977*, ch. 11, p. 121.
- [109] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, Cerf, 2005 (a new edition without any change to the 1st edition from 1969).
- [110] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 207
- [111] *Ibid.*
- [112] *Ibid.*, p. 213.
- [113] Fifth logical research, in Husserl, *Logical Researches*, t. II-2, Paris, PUF, 1961.
- [114] I, q. 1, a. 10.
- [115] *Videntibus illis, elevatus est, et nubes suscepit eum ab oculis eorum* (Acts 1, 9).
- [116] See Tixeront, *Handbook of Patrology*, Paris, Victor Lecoffre, 1918, p. 120-121.
- [117] Saint Jerome, *Letter contra Joannem Hierosolymitanum*.
- [118] Louis Billot, *De Ecclesia*, t. II, Rome, Gregorian University, 1929, p. 96.
- [119] See Pascendi, # 9, Dz 2076,
- [120] Benedict XVI, foreword to *Jesus of Nazareth*, Flammarion, 2007, p. 15.
- [121] *Ibid.*
- [122] Pius XII, *Humani generis*, August 12, 1950, Dz 2306, DS 3878.
- [123] Patrice Favre, Georges Cottier, *Itinerary of a Believer*, Tours, CLD, 2007, p. 73.
- [124] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 111.
- [125] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
- [126] *Ibid.*, p. 113-114.
- [127] I, q. 28, a. 2.
- [128] I, q. 29, a. 4.
- [129] J. Ratzinger, *My Life, Memories, 1927-1977*, p. 52.
- [130] J. Ratzinger, *The Salt of the Earth*, p. 60-61.
- [131] H-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustine and Augustinianism*, Seuil, 1955, p. 62.
- [132] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 159.
- [133] H. de Lubac, *Catholicism*, Paris, Cerf, 1954, 264-265.
- [134] See F. J. Thonnard, *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, Desclée, 1966, p. 1081-1082.
- [135] See J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 197-198.
- [136] *Ibid.*, p. 199.
- [137] See Thonnard, *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, p. 676-677.
- [138] J. Ratzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
- [139] See Saint Thomas, III, q. 48.
- [140] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 199.
- [141] See III, q. 1, a. 2, ad. 2; q. 48, a. 2 and 4.
- [142] Saint Leo the Great, *First and Second Christmas Sermons*, Paris, Cerf, 'Christian Sources' #22a, 1964, p. 69 and pp. 81-82.
- [143] From the Latin, 'condono': to give freely, without claiming anything in return.
- [144] See III, q. 46, a. 1, ad. 3.
- [145] See I-II, q. 113, a. 1.
- [146] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 197.
- [147] *Ibid.*
- [148] *Ibid.*, p. 198.
- [149] *Ibid.*, p. 199.
- [150] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

- [151] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
- [152] *Ibid.*, p. 202 and 204.
- [153] Luther's Little Catechism, cited by Louis Bouyer, *Concerning Protestantism in the Church*, 3rd edition, Paris, Le Cerf, collection 'Unam Sanctam' #27, 1959, p. 27.
- [154] 'Heresy,' in Greek etymology *hairésis*, means: retreat, selective choice, preference, diminution.
- [155] Pius IX, encyclical *Qui pluribus* of November 9, 1846.
- [156] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 157.
- [157] See III, q. 1, a. 2, ad. 2. Saint Thomas Aquinas has pointed out the doctrine that Saint Anselm proposed in his *Cur Deus Homo* (why did God become man). J. Ratzinger's critiques opposing Saint Anselm in fact are directed against Saint Thomas Aquinas himself.
- [158] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 158.
- [159] Benedict XVI, encyclical *Spe salvi* of November 30, 2007, #44.
- [160] 'Deus [...], infunde cordibus nostris tuis amoris affectum: ut te in omnibus et super omnia diligentes [...].' (Collect of the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost)
- [161] See I-II, q. 85, a. 3.
- [162] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 212.
- [163] *Ibid.*, p. 199.
- [164] J. Ratzinger, *The Principles of Theology*, p. 279.
- [165] *Ibid.*
- [166] John Paul II, Speech to the Cardinals in the Curia, October 22, 1986, DC #1933, year 1987, p. 133-134.
- [167] See Pius XII, encyclical *Summi pontificatus*, October 20, 1939, in Utz-Groner-Savignat, *Human Relations and Contemporary Society*, Fribourg, ed. Saint-Paul, t. 1, p. 17-9, #26-35.
- [168] 'Fundamentum enim aliud nemo potest ponere praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Jesus.'
- [169] – Deus, qui diversitatem gentium in confessione et in nomine adunasti: da, ut renatis fonte baptismatis una sit fides mentium, et pietas actionum, per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.
- [170] *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, reple tuorum corda fidelium, et tui amoris in eis ignem accende: qui per diversitatem linguarum cunctarum, gentes in unitate fidei congregasti. (Antiphon for the office of Pentecost)
- [171] See Jean Carmignac, *To Hear Our Father*, Paris edition, 1971, p. 17.
- [172] Code of Canon Law from 1983, canon 204, §1.
- [173] John Paul II, apostolic constitution *Sacrae disciplinae leges* (January 25, 1983), promulgating the new code of Canon Law.
- [174] *I accuse the Council*, Martigny, ed. Saint-Gabriel, 1976, p. 34.
- [175] J. Ratzinger, 'Conference on the ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium* to the congress of studies concerning Vatican II from February 25-27, 2000,' DC 2223 (2000), p. 311.
- [176] *Ibid.*
- [177] *Ibid.*, p. 305.
- [178] J. Ratzinger, 'Conference at Subiaco,' April 1, 2005, DC special edition, 2005, p. 121.
- [179] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Mame/Plon, 1992, #2337.
- [180] II-II, q. 151, a. 2, ad. 2.
- [181] *Gaudium et spes*, n. 51, 3; John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, # 32.
- [182] See Saint Pius X, letter *Our Apostolic Charge*, # 25.
- [183] Father Marie-Dominique Philippe, *At the Heart of Love*, Jubilé, 1998, p. 115.
- [184] Pius XII, Speech to midwives, October 29, 191, Utz-Groner-Savignat, # 1160. EPS-

Mariage, # 646.

[185] R. Frydman, *God, Medicine and the Embryo*, ed. Odile Jacob, 2003.

[186] Saint Thomas Aquinas, *De Regno*, I.1, ch. 14.

[187] *Ibid.*, ch. 15.

[188] Dz 1689. This passage has been suppressed in editions after the Denzinger.

[189] See Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, Paris, Cerf, 1950, p. 344.

[190] J. Ratzinger, 'Why the Faith is in Crisis,' debate with Vittorio Messori, *Jesus*, November 1984.

[191] See J. Maritain, *Integrated Humanism*, Paris, Aubier, 1936, p. 134-135.

[192] See the relation Mgr. Emil De Smedt's discussion on the Council from May 28, 1965; and the debate between Cardinal Ratzinger and Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre on July 14, 1987 (see Mgr. Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, *Marcel Lefebvre*, Étampes, Clovis, 2002, p. 576).

[193] See F. J. Thonnard, *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, Desclée, 1966, # 657, p. 1091.

[194] See the schema of Cardinal Ottaviani at Vatican Council II concerning the relations between Church and State (analyzed in *The Salt of the Earth* 39, winter 2001-2002, p. 74 and sq., notably p. 93).

[195] EPS-PIN, # 131-132.

[196] *Ibid.*, # 154; Dz 1873.

[197] Leo XIII, encyclical *Libertas*, June 20, 1888, Dz 1932.

[198] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, p. 36-37.

[199] J. Ratzinger, *The Salt of the Earth*, 2nd ed., Flammarion, 2005, p. 19.

[200] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[201] Alred Läßle, 'Testimony,' in *30 Days*, 24th year, 2006, #1-2, p. 60.

[202] Marin Sola, O.P., *The Homogenous Evolution of Dogma*, 2nd ed., Fribourg (Switzerland), Lib. Saint-Paul, t. 1, 1924, p. 375.

[203] *Pascendi*, # 54, Dz 2106.

[204] DTC, 'Thomas Aquinas': see the section on the 'objectivity of his doctoral teaching.'

[205] Mgr. Lefebvre, homely at Jurançon, July 29, 1979.

[206] *Ibid.*

[207] J. Ratzinger, *The Principles of Catholic Theology*, Téqui, 1982, p. 426.

[208] J. Ratzinger, *The Christian Faith of Yesterday and Today*, Cerf, 2005, p. 11-12.

[209] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[210] Immanuel Kant, *Opus Postumum*, *Convolutum VII*.

[211] J. Ratzinger, 'Europe in the Crisis of Cultures,' conference at Subiaco on April 1, 2005 (just before being elected Pope), Sienna, Cantagalli, 2005.

[212] J. Ratzinger, *The Salt of the Earth*, Flammarion-Cerf, 1997, p. 16.

[213] Mgr Marcel Lefebvre, *Conference at Mortain, 1947; A Spiritual Itinerary*, Écône, 1990.

[214] *Official Bulletin of the Diocese of Metz*, October 1, 1967, cited by *Itinéraires*, # 118.

[215] *The Bishops Speak the Faith of the Church*, Paris, Cerf, 1978, p. 229-230.

[216] See *Mitteilungsblatt of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X*, Stuttgart, May 2009.

[217] *The Hope of Salvation for Children Who Die Unbaptized. Reflections of the International Theological Commission*, published by Benedict XVI's oral authorization in April 2007, # 2.

[218] Homily on the Death of his Brother Saturus, II, 47, CSEL 73, 274, cited by Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, # 10.

[219] H. de Lubac, *Catholicism, the Social Aspects of Dogma*, Cerf, 1938, p. 164-165.

[220] Translator's note: the bishop's word choice here was 'sulfureux,' meaning sulfurous or possibly lurid. Since 'the sulfurous/lurid Jesuit' made little sense, scurrilous or suspect seemed

to be about the best interpretation.

[221] H. de Lubac, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

[222] *Mox post mortem et purgationem [...] in illis qui purgatione hujusmodi indigebant [...] sunt et erunt in caelo, coelorum regno et paradiso coelesti cum Christo, sanctorum angelorum consortio aggregatae* (DS 1000).

[223] Immanuel Kant, *The Victory of the Good Principle over the Evil and the Foundation of a Kingdom of God on Earth* (1792), in *Philosophical Works*, Gallimard, La Pléiade, t. 3, 2003, p. 140.

[224] Kant, *Das Ende aller Dinge – The End of All Things* (1795), in *Philosophical Works*, Gallimard, La Pléiade, t. 3, 2003, p. 324-325.

[225] See Lucia Retells Fatima, *DDB-Résiac*, 1981, p. 159.

[226] Council of Trent, session VI, chapter 16, can. 32, DS 1582.

[227] DC #2373, February 4, 2007, p. 108.

[228] J. Ratzinger, *Why the Faith is in Crisis*, debate with Vittorio Messori, *Jesus*, November 1984, p. 72.

[229] Y. Congar, *True and False reform in the Church*, Paris, Cerf, 1950, p. 345-346.

[230] J. Ratzinger, 'Democracy, Right and Religion' in *The Prepolitical Foundations for the Democratic State*, Dialogue with Jürgen Habermas, Munich, January 19, 2004, translation by Jean-Louis Schlegel, in the review *Esprit*, July 2004, p. 5-28.

[231] Speech of December 22, 2006, to the Curia, DC # 2373, February 4, 2007, p. 107.

[232] See I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

[233] See J. Ratzinger, speech of December 22, 2006, DC 2373, p. 107.