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«Reason, the critical criterion, is foreverwithout ground»[1]

THE VIEWS OF KARL POPPER AND JOSEPH RATZINGER/BENEDICT XVI ON A THEORY OF RATIONALITY[2]

Abstract. Typical of some contemporary theories of rationality is the pithily formulated idea stated almost 20 years ago by Gillian Rose (1947-1995) in her autobiography: «Reason, the critical criterion, is forever without ground». One important way of understanding this statement is found in the early writings of Karl R. Popper (1902-1994). This statement expresses the conviction at the root of Popper's theory of rationality. This article begins with a brief presentation and analysis of Popper's theory of rationality as it bears upon the question of violence. Afterwards, I turn to consider Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's theory of rationality—as a response to Popper's theory of rationality where critical reason is forever without ground. For Popper reason has its origin in the irrational, being as such, then, without grounds. *Pace* Popper, according to Ratzinger, reason has its origin in the Logos. In this connection, I lay out Ratzinger's appeal to the ecumenical Christian philosophy of the Logos as the grounds of human reason. Wrapping up my presentation of Benedict's view, I argue that he overcomes the dilemma of rationalism and irrationalism, especially in connection with the question of violence.

Keywords: Rationalism - Irrationalism - Theories of Rationality - Logos.

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[1] ROSE, GILLIAN, *Love's Work, A Reckoning with Life*, New York, NYRB, 1995, p. 128.

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We may choose some form of irrationalism, even some radical or comprehensive form. But we are also free to choose a critical form of rationalism, one which frankly admits its origin in an irrational decision (and which, to that extent, admits a certain priority of irrationalism)[3].

Logos signifies reason, meaning, or even «word»—a meaning, therefore, that is Word, that is relationship, that is creative. The God who is *logos* guarantees the intelligibility of the world, the intelligibility of our existence, the aptitude of reason to know God . . . and the reasonableness of God[4].

Not to act reasonably, not to act with *logos*, is contrary to the nature of God. . . . It is to this great *logos*, to this breadth of reason, that we invite our partners in the dialogue of cultures. To rediscover it constantly is the great task of the university[5].

God is the light of reason in which, by which, and through which all things that shine so as to be intelligible, shine. . . . Reason in us is that divine light; it is not itself the divine *Logos,* but it participates in it. To be (*esse*), to live (*vivere*), and to understand (*intelligere*) is the prerogative of God in respect of his being (*per essentiam*), ours in respect of participation (*per participationem*)[6].

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[3] POPPER, KARL R., *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Volume 2, New York, Harper & Row, 1963 [1945], Chapter 24, pp. 224-258, and for this quote, 231.

[4] RATZINGER, JOSEPH (Benedict XVI), *Einführung in das Christentum*, München, Kösel-Verlag, 2000, p. 23. Translated as *Introduction to Christianity* by J.R. Foster, with a New Preface, Translated by Michael J. Miller, San Francisco, Ignatius press, 2004, p. 26. Both sources will be cited throughout this article, first the original, followed by pagination of the English in square brackets [ ].

[5] This is one of the major themes in Benedict XVI's Regensburg Lecture, no. 63. Benedict is here giving a summary statement of the fourteenth century Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus «against violent conversion,» namely, «not to act in accordance with reason is contrary to God's nature» (no. 14). Aula Magna, University of Regensburg, Tues, 12 September 2006, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september /documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html. I am following the numbering system added to the Regensburg Lecture by James V. Schall, S.J., which was published in his book, *The Regensburg Lecture*. South Bend, IN, St. Augustine's Press, 2007, Appendix I, The Regensburg Lecture, pp. 130-148.

[6] BAVINCK, HERMAN, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* I, Zesde Onveranderde Druk, Kampen, J.H.Kok, 1976 [1895], p. 206. ET: Translated by John Vriend as *Reformed Dogmatics, Prolegomena*, Vol. 1. Edited by John Bolt, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2003, p. 232.

Introduction

In an address delivered 60 years ago to the Institut des Arts in Brussels, shortly after the end of World War II, Karl Popper raised a question whose outstanding importance remains with us today given the age of terrorism and increased violence in which we live. What is the basis of mankind's unity? Is faith in human reason that basis? In other words, is human reason, by which Popper means the rationalist attitude that is shown in our readiness to listen to critical arguments and to learn from experience, that basis? Yes, says Popper, «Violence can be defeated. It is our only hope [and] it need not be a vain hope—that violence *can* be reduced, and brought under the control of reason. This is perhaps why I, like many others, believe in reason; why I call myself a rationalist. I am a rationalist because I see in the attitude of reasonableness the only alternative to violence»[7].

This was not the first time that Popper had addressed this question in writing, having raised it in his earlier 1945 publication, *The Open Society and its Enemies*. Indeed, one might argue that this question is more than ever relevant. Popper thinks so, and there is an important aspect of his philosophy that is devoted to a defense of reason, of the rational unity of mankind, indeed, of a rationalist conception of reason, as he understands it, and of its ethical and institutional basis. «Rationalism is therefore bound up with the idea that the other fellow has a right to be heard and to defend his arguments». Why? Because everyone with whom we communicate is a potential source of argument and of reasonable information. Thus: «We have not only [a responsibility] to listen to arguments,» Popper adds, «but we have a duty to respond, to answer, where our actions affect others. Ultimately, in this way, rationalism is linked up with the recognition of the necessity of social institutions to protect freedom of criticism, freedom of thought, and thus the freedom of men. And it establishes some-

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[7] POPPER, KARL R., «Utopia and Violence», *Conjectures and Refutations*, New York, Harper & Row 1963, pp. 355-363, and at p. 355.

thing like a moral obligation towards the support of these institutions»[8].

Unfortunately, says Popper, there are others—he calls them irrationalists—who have revolted against reason, escaped from reason's overall competence in dealing with the issues of life, holding that «emotions and passions rather than reason are the mainsprings of human action». Popper adds, «The irrationalist will insist that "human nature" is in the main not rational. Man, he holds, is more than a rational animal, and also less. In order to see that he is less, we need only consider how small is the number of men who are capable of argument; this is why, according to the irrationalist, the majority of men will always have to be tackled by an appeal to their emotions and passions rather than by an appeal to their reason. But man is also more than just a rational animal, since all that really matters in his life goes beyond reason»[9].

Significantly, Popper lessens the distance between his view of reasonableness and irrationalism. His understanding of human nature is such that he isn't saying that man is «wholly rational». Rather, he is protesting against «certain exaggerations . . . of the irrationality of man and of human society». «But I am aware not only of the power of emotions in human life», he adds, «but also of their value». The attitude of reasonableness shouldn't necessarily be the one dominant aim of our lives but neither should it ever be wholly absent[10]. More to the point, Popper has some sympathy for irrationalism. He says, «Irrationalism is logically superior to uncritical rationalism»[11]. Let me explain in what sense this is so.

Popper rejects the excessive rationalism of the so-called «comprehensive rationalist» who claims, «I am not prepared to accept anything that cannot be defended by means of argument or experience». Comprehensive rationalism holds that any assumption that cannot be supported either by argument or by experience is rationally unacceptable. Popper argues that com-

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[8] POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Chapter 24, pp. 224-258, and for this quote, 238.
[9] *Ibidem*, p. 228.
[10] POPPER, «Utopia and Violence», p. 357.
[11] POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, p. 231.

prehensive rationalism is inconsistent because «it cannot, in its turn, be supported by argument or by experience» without involving itself in some kind of circularity. And thus it is self-referentially incoherent, failing to measure up to its own standards of rationality, namely, argument and experience. Put differently, «The rationalist attitude is characterized by the importance it attaches to argument and experience. But neither logical argument nor experience can establish the rationalist attitude; for only those who are ready to consider argument or experience, and who have therefore adopted this attitude already will be impressed by them. . . . We have to conclude from this that no rational argument will have a rational effect on a man who does not want to adopt a rational attitude. Thus a comprehensive rationalism is untenable»[12].

Furthermore, comprehensive rationalism is not only inconsistent, but also uncritical. One might say dogmatic, says Popper, because the comprehensive rationalist has not made rationalism a *critical* problem. He lacks self-criticism. Popper is self-critical about rationalism, and thus he regards his brand of rationalism to be *critical rationalism*. Surprisingly, having said that rationalism cannot be justified, which means that reason has limits[13], or without foundations, Popper opts for an «irrational *faith in reason*»[14]. He adds: «So rationalism is necessarily far from comprehensive or self-contained»[15]. Elsewhere he explains: «My rationalism is not dogmatic. I fully admit that I cannot rationally prove it. . . . [M]y rationalism is not self-contained, but rests on an irrational faith in the attitude of reasonableness. I do not see that we can go beyond this. One could say, perhaps, that my irrational faith in equal and reciprocal rights to convince others and be convinced by them is a faith in human reason; or simply, that I believe in man»[16]. In sum, «Irrationalism is logically superior to uncriti-

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[12] *Ibidem*, pp. 230-231.

[13] Since the critical rationalist holds the principle that «*nothing is exempt from criticism*», critical reason has limits in the sense that the total explicit justification of belief, once and for all, is ruled out by Popper, as I understand him.

[14] POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, p. 231.

[15] *Idem*.

[16] POPPER, «Utopia and Violence», p. 357.

cal rationalism»[17]. But this is no reason for adopting comprehensive irrationalism—to escape from reason. Indeed, Popper rejects irrationalism and opts for faith in reason. And adopting this option is a moral matter because our view of reason implies how we should treat others. «But I believe that the only attitude which I can consider to be morally right is one which recognizes that we owe it to other men to treat them and ourselves as rational»[18].

Yet, there is more: the critical rationalist is a presuppositionalist, or contextualist, and as a corollary of the latter, Popper rejects any sort of justificationism, meaning thereby that critical rationalism, indeed rational criticism, the critical method itself, is without foundations. According to presuppositionalism, or contextualism, rational criticism or argument must take place in a context defined by certain assumptions that are, in that context, temporarily fixed, not subject to question. Says Popper, «Since all argument must proceed from assumptions, it is plainly impossible to demand that all assumptions should be based on argument. The demand raised by many philosophers that we should start with no assumption whatever and never assume anything about «sufficient reason», and even the weaker demand that we should start with a very small set of assumptions («categories»), are both in this form inconsistent. For they themselves rest upon the truly colossal assumption that it is possible to start without, or with only a few assumptions, and still to obtain results that are worthwhile»[19]. So Popper rejects the presupposition that one should avoid all presuppositions. Of course these assumptions or presuppositions can be questioned in turn, but only in some other context that is defined by some other (temporarily) fixed assumptions. The source of these presuppositions or assumptions is tradition, but this fact must not be held to support traditionalism. All our assumptions are «open to critical examination and may be overthrown» but it is quixotic to think that they should all be subject simultaneously to this critical opera-

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[17] POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, p. 231.
[18] *Ibidem*, p. 240.
[19] *Ibidem*, p. 230.

tion. All rational criticism is relative to some context of assumptions[20].

Furthermore, the critical rationalist is also a fallibilist[21]. Fallibilism is the view stating that we can always be mistaken in what we believe. «What I call the attitude of reasonableness may be characterized by a remark like this: I think I am right, but I may be wrong and you may be right, and in any case let us discuss it, for in this way we are likely to get nearer to a true understanding than if we each merely insist that we are right»[22]. While Popper rightly distinguishes fallibilism from skepticism or relativism he nonetheless insists that all beliefs are uncertain; no belief is justified. Hence, he rejects the «justificationist philosophers of knowledge (or of belief)» because, Popper says, «we can never give positive reasons which justify the belief that a theory is true»[23]. It is a «false idea», he adds, «that we must *justify* our knowledge, or our theories, by *positive* reasons, that is, by reasons capable of establishing them, or at least of making them highly probable; at any rate, by better reasons than that they have so far withstood criticism»[24].

I turn now to consider briefly four questions about Popper's theory of rationality. First, is Popper's choice for reason no more reasonable than another man's choice for violence? Second, is everything open to criticism, including this prin-

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[20] POPPER, KARL R., «On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance», in *Conjectures and Refutations*, pp. 3-30, and at p. 28. See also, «Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition», in *Conjectures and Refutations*, pp. 120-135.

[21] I shall leave unaddressed the question as to whether Popper successfully distinguishes fallibilism from skepticism. If our beliefs are without foundations, doesn't it follow from this that all judgments are arbitrary, or at least based on assumptions that are arbitrary. Popper contests this inference, but his protestations seem unconvincing. It is impossible to develop this criticism of Popper here. Suffice it to make the following remark by Hugo Meynell, «To say that there is no foundation for our judgments is to imply that there is no more foundation for the claim that there is usually snow in Alberta in January, or that it is wrong to torture cats for fun, than for the contradictories of these claims. There is an 'orderly march and natural progression of views', as J.H. Newman put it, from the claim that there are no foundations for our knowledge, to dogmatism, skepticism, or relativism in factual or theoretical matters, and cynicism, selfishness, and opportunism in practical affairs. Why try to establish one's beliefs or practices on a critical foundation, when it is admitted that there is none to be had»? (*Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment*. Washington, DC, Catholic University of America Press, 1999, pp. 28-29).

[22] POPPER, «Utopia and Violence», p. 356.

[23] POPPER, KARL R., «Truth, Rationality, and the Growth of Knowledge», in *Conjectures and Refutations*, pp. 215-250, and at p. 228.

[24] POPPER, «On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance», p. 29.

ciple itself? This question arises because «Reason, the critical criterion, is forever without ground»[25]? Although these words are from Gillian Rose, they express the conviction at the root of Popper's theory of rationality. In this connection, I will consider briefly the claim that we are so constituted that we take for granted general beliefs in self-consciousness, enduring physical objects, other persons, the reality of the past, reliability of our perceptual capacities, and many others. Are these taken-for-granted things such that they are beyond criticism? Third, Popper is correct in holding that «*truth is above human authority*»[26]. But is he correct in claiming that theistic views of truth «tend to encourage self-righteousness and the use of force against those who refuse to see the divine truth»[27] [?]

Following my critical remarks of Popper's view, I turn to consider Pope Benedict XVI's theory of rationality—as a response to Popper's theory of rationality where critical reason is forever without ground—and its bearing upon the question of violence. My main sources in this connection are the then Joseph Ratzinger's 1968 class work *Einführung in das Christentum* and later Benedict's two university lectures: the 2006 Regensburg Lecture on God, reason and violence and the 2008 *La Sapienza*[28] lecture at the University of Rome on the Church's advocacy of truth. For Popper reason has its origin in the irrational, being as such, then, without grounds. *Pace* Popper, according to Ratzinger, reason has its origin in the Logos, and hence is grounded in that Logos. In this connection, then, I shall begin by laying out Ratzinger's appeal to the ecumenical Christian philosophy of the Logos as the grounds of human reason. I shall wrap up my presentation of Benedict's view by arguing that he overcomes the dilemma of rationalism and irrationalism, especially in connection with the question of violence.

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[25] ROSE, *Love's Work, A Reckoning with Life*, p. 128.

[26] POPPER, «On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance», p. 29.

[27] *Idem*.

[28] January 17, 2008, «Lecture by the Holy Father Benedict XVI at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza'». Online: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080117_la-sapienza_en.html.

2. The subjective choice for reason or violence

Popper holds, «The true rationalist . . . will be inclined . . . to consider men as fundamentally equal, and human reason as a bond which unites them. Reason for him is the precise opposite of an instrument of power and violence: he sees it as a means whereby these may be tamed»[29]. Popper expresses the conviction here that reason is an instrument that may tame power and violence. In particular, we now know that Popper also holds that the rationalist attitude about human reason may have this effect on human beings because it recognizes the other fellow's right to be heard and defend his arguments. A corollary of this attitude is the recognition of the claim to tolerance. «One does not kill a man when one adopts the attitude of first listening to his arguments». «This is why arguing is no waste of time», he adds, «as long as people listen to you»[30]. Indeed, as long as they initially adopt the attitude of reasonableness, namely, «the belief that in the search for truth we need co-operation, and that, with the help of argument, we can in time attain something like objectivity»[31].

Now, I want to ask a critical question about the grounds of Popper's attitude of reasonableness. Popper concedes that the fundamental rationalist attitude is rooted in an act of faith, and that his faith in reason is irrational. Indeed, he holds that both comprehensive irrationalism and critical are logically tenable views. «Accordingly, our choice is open. We may choose some form of irrationalism, even some radical or comprehensive form. But we are also free to choose a critical form of rationalism, one which frankly admits its origin in an irrational decision (and which, to that extent, admits a certain priority of irrationalism)»[32]. Are then such choices equally leaps of faith, or simply matters of taste, and hence all equally irrational? But if this is so, then the choice between reasonableness and vio-

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[29] POPPER, «Utopia and Violence», p. 363.
[30] *Ibidem*, p. 369.
[31] POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, p. 225.
[32] *Ibidem*, p. 231.

lence is equally irrational[33]. In other words, a man whose sub-
jective choice is for violence is no more reasonable than the
subjective choice of the man who opts for the attitude of rea-
sonableness. So let me put my objection to Popper as clearly as
I can: Popper cannot maintain that the use of violence is, in
principle, unreasonable.

Popper would protest to the charge that his decision to be
rational is based on a leap of faith. «The choice before us is not
simply an intellectual affair, or a matter of taste. It is a moral
decision». Such a choice «will deeply affect our whole attitude
towards other men, and towards the problems of social life»[34].
Indeed, Popper suggests that my choice can be helped by a
«rational analysis of the consequences of a decision», and that
such an analysis «makes the difference between a blind deci-
sion and a decision made with open eyes»[35]. Thus, adds Popper,
«I believe that the only attitude which I can consider to be
morally right is one which recognizes that we owe it to other
men to treat them and ourselves as rational»[36].

Yet, Popper does not arrive at this conclusion on the basis
of his analysis of the consequences of his faith-decision for
reason. In other words, Popper doesn't argue that opting for
reason is the right choice because it has the consequence of
recognizing obligations to ourselves and others. In fact, he says
that such an analysis «does not make the decision rational». In
the end, «it is always we who decide»[37]. So suppose I make an
alternative choice for violence, and I do so with «open eyes»,
fully aware that my subjective choice for violence will result in
the countless deaths of innocent people. Given Popper's dis-
tinction between a blind decision—a decision blind to the con-
crete consequences of my choice—and a decision made with
open eyes, the terrorist has made one with eyes wide open. I

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[33] It is one thing to say that there are limits to the attitude of reasonableness, namely,
that «you cannot, by means of argument, make people listen to argument; you cannot, by
means of argument, convert those who suspect all argument, and who prefer violent decisions
to rational decisions» (*The Open Society and its Enemies*, p. 359). It is another thing to say that
both rationalism and irrationalism are logically tenable.

[34] *Ibidem*, p. 232.

[35] *Ibidem*, p. 233.

[36] *Ibidem*, p. 240.

[37] *Ibidem*, p. 233.

don't see how this distinction helps Popper to make his case against the criticism that his view implies that a subjective choice for reason is no more reasonable than a subjective choice for violence; both choices are equally irrational.

Furthermore, one contributing factor to Popper's opting for an irrational faith in reason is his presupposition that the world itself is at root *not* rational. Accordingly, Popper stresses the importance of the «demand *that we submit or subject it [this non-rational world] to reason*, as far as possible»[38]. Reason, then, has its origin in the irrational, being as such without ground. But Popper's claim leaves unanswered the question about the relation between reason and reality. In this connection, Joseph Ratzinger puts the following fundamental question to views like Popper's:

> The question is whether reason, or rationality, stands at the beginning of all things and is grounded in the basis of all things or not. The question is whether reality originated on the basis of chance and necessity (or, as Popper says, in agreement with [Samuel] Butler, on the basis of luck and cunning) and, thus, from what is irrational; that is, whether reason, being a chance by-product of irrationality and floating in an ocean of irrationality, is ultimately just as meaningless; or whether the principle that represents the fundamental conviction of Christian faith and of its philosophy remains true: «In principio erat Verbum»—at the beginning of all things stands the creative power of reason. Now as then, Christian faith represents the choice in favor of the priority of reason and of rationality[39].

Pared down for our purpose here, the Christian faith has chosen in favor of the primacy of the *logos*—«the Logos is at the ultimate origin of things»—not least, argues Ratzinger, because the consequence of renouncing the claim that the rational has priority over the irrational, namely, that «the world comes from reason, so that its criterion and its goal is ratio-

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[38] *Ibidem*, p. 357n19.

[39] RATZINGER, JOSEPH (Benedict XVI), *Truth and Tolerance, Christian Belief and World Religions*, Translated by Henry Taylor, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 181. Ratzinger refers to Karl Popper, *Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography*. La Salle, Ill., Open Court, 1976, p. 180.

nal»[40], results in reason's truth-attaining capacity «*abolishing itself*»[41]. In his Regensburg Lecture, Benedict XVI argues that Christianity is the religion of the *Logos*, and that the *Logos* is at the origin of all things, including human reason. Human reason itself is not itself the divine Logos, but it participates in it[42]. Explains Benedict:

> Ever since the Prologue to the Gospel of John, the concept of *logos* has been at the very center of our Christian faith in God. *Logos* signifies reason, meaning, or even «word»—a meaning, therefore, that is Word, that is relationship, that is creative. The God who is *logos* guarantees the intelligibility of the world, the intelligibility of our existence, the aptitude of reason to know God [*die Gottgemässheit der Vernunft*] and the reasonableness of God [*die Vernunftgemässheit Gottes*], even though his understanding infinitely surpasses ours and to us may so often appear to be darkness. The world comes from reason, and this reason is a Person, is Love—this is what our biblical faith tells us about God. Reason can speak about God; it must speak about God, or else it cuts itself short[43].

Given, then, what biblical Christianity tells us about God, the pope argues that the use of violence against those who refuse to see the divine truth is something unreasonable; indeed, not to act in accordance with reason is contrary to God's nature. Thus, looking back to Popper's irrational faith in reason, Ratzinger adds, «A reason that has its origin in the irrational and is itself ultimately irrational does not offer a solution to our problems»[44]. In particular, the problem is whether «Reason, the critical criterion, is forever without ground»[45]? I shall come

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[40] RATZINGER, JOSEPH (Benedict XVI), *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*, Translated by Brian McNeil, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2006, p. 49.

[41] RATZINGER, *Truth and Tolerance,* p. 180.

[42] This, too, is the view of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 12, art.2, ad 3; q. 79, art. 4; q. 88, art 3, ad 1; II, q. 109, art. 1 and 2; *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, 47.)

[43] Because Benedict gives a fuller account of the concept of *logos* elsewhere, I am quoting from the Preface to the New Edition (2000) of Joseph Ratzinger's classic 1968 work, *Einführung in das Christentum*, pp. 23-24 [26]. For the same ideas, see Benedict XVI, Regensburg Lecture, nos. 17-18, 27; idem., La Sapienza Lecture.

[44] RATZINGER, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*, p. 49.

[45] ROSE, *Love's Work, A Reckoning with Life*, p. 128.

to Ratzinger's answer to this question below. But first, I shall develop further the Popperian claim that critical reason is without a foundation and hence that everything is open to criticism.

3. Is everything open to criticism?

Jürgen Habermas provocatively stated that Popper saved rationalism at least as a «confession of faith»[46]. Indeed, Popper's critical rationalism came under fire for embracing fideism[47]. His own student, William W. Bartley, charged Popper with providing «a *rational excuse* for irrational commitment»[48]. Popper argued that rationality is limited. «Since all argument must proceed from assumptions, it is plainly impossible to demand that all assumptions should be based on argument»[49]. This argument was generalized by some into the *tu quoque* argument. «Just what is the powerful *tu quoque* argument? It argues that (1) for certain logical reasons, rationality is so limited that *everyone* must make a dogmatic irrational commitment; (2) therefore, [everyone] has a right to make whatever commitment he pleases; and (3) therefore, no one has a right to criticize him (or anyone else) for making such a commitment»[50]. Since one's assumptions are held independently of argument, they are immune to criticism. But this implies that everyone else's assumptions are also immune to criticism. The upshot of Bartley's criticism is that generalizing Popper's argument «one gains the right to be irrational at the expense of losing the right to criticize». Bartley adds, «One gains immunity from criticism for one's own commitment by making any criticism of commitment impossible»[51].

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[46] On this, see *Erkenntnis und Interesse*. Frankfurt, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968, p. 22.

[47] Fideism (the Latin word for faith is *fides*) in Popper's case means that his decision for reason is not determined by argument and hence is not rational. This suggests that his faith in reason was invulnerable to any questioning, criticism or revision. This point was generalized by some into the *tu quoque* argument.

[48] BARTLEY, III, W.W., *The Retreat to Commitment*, Second edition, revised and enlarged. LaSalle/London, Open Court Publishing Co., 1984, p. 72.

[49] POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, p. 230.

[50] BARTLEY, *The Retreat to Commitment*, p. 72.

[51] *Ibidem*, p. 82.

Bartley's proposal is to dispense with the fideistic implications of critical rationalism by affirming that everything is open to criticism, including the principle of the critical method itself. He called his position, *pancritical rationalism*. Bartley is correct that Popper responded to Bartley's criticism of critical rationalism in later revisions of Chapter 24 of *OSE*[52]. Furthermore, Popper apparently accepted Bartley's suggestion to sever the link between rationality and *justification* and instead to align rationality with *criticizability*. «*Nothing gets justified; everything gets criticized*»[53]. Bartley proposed then to abandon the «ideal of comprehensive *rational* justification»[54]. The latter ideal, namely, the demand for universal justification—rational as well as irrational—poses a trilemma, says Popperian Hans Albert (another proponent of pancritical rationalism):

> If one demands a justification for *everything*, one must also demand a justification for the knowledge to which one has referred back the views initially requiring foundation. This leads to a situation with three alternatives, all of which appear unacceptable: in other words, to a trilemma which, in view of the analogy existing between our problem and one which that celebrated and mendacious baron once had to solve, I should like to call the *Münchhausen trilemma*. For, obviously, one must choose here between 1. an *infinite regress*, which seems to arise from the necessity to go further and further back in the search for foundations, and which, since it is in practice impossible, affords no secure basis; 2. a *logical circle* in the deduction, which arises because, in the process of justification, statements are used which were characterized before as in need of foundation, so that they can provide no secure basis; and, finally, 3. the *breaking-off of the process* at a particular point, which, admittedly, can always be done in principle, but involves an arbitrary suspension of the principle of sufficient justification[55].

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[52] POPPER, «Facts, Standards, and Truth: A Further Criticism of Relativism», Addendum in *The Open Society and its Enemies*, pp. 369-396, and for this point, pp. 378-379.

[53] BARTLEY, *The Retreat to Commitment*, p. 112.

[54] *Ibidem*, p. 118.

[55] ALBERT, HANS, *Treatise on Critical Reason*, translated by M.V. Rorty Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 81.

The pancritical rationalist avoids this trilemma by not justifying at all. Remember it was the link between rationality and justification that led Popper to fideism. «Since we want to justify and cannot do so *rationally*, irrational justification or commitment seems the only resort». «So», adds Bartley, «if rationality lies in justification, it is severely limited by the necessity for commitment. But if rationality lies in criticism, and if we can subject everything to criticism and continued test, including the rationalist way of life itself, without leading to infinite regress, circularity, the need to justify, or other such difficulty, then rationality is in this sense unlimited. . . . If all justification—rational as well as irrational—is really abandoned, there is indeed no need to justify irrationally a position that is rationally unjustifiable. The position may be held rationally without needing justification at all—*provided that it can be and is held open to criticism and survives severe examination*»[56].

The *crux interpretum* of Bartley's pancritical rationalism—a non-justificational critical approach—is his claim (which is also Popper's) that everything is open to criticism, including the critical method itself. This seems like an impossible requirement, particularly with respect to logic. Is logic itself revisable[57]? Doesn't the idea of critical argument presup-

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[56] BARTLEY, *The Retreat to Commitment*, pp. 118-119. Like Popper, Bartley's pancritical rationalism embraces contextualism: «When one belief is subjected to criticism, many others, of course, have to be taken for granted—including those with which the criticism is being carried out. The latter are used as the basis of criticism not because they are themselves justified or beyond criticism, but because they are *unproblematical at present*. These are, *in that sense alone and during that time alone*, beyond criticism. We stop criticizing—temporarily—not when we reach uncriticizable authorities, but when we reach positions against which we can find no criticisms» (*The Retreat to Commitment*, p. 122).

[57] BOCHENSKI, J.M., *The Road to Understanding*, Translated by Gerard M. Verschuuren, North Andover, MA, Genesis Publishing Co., 1995, «In logic, there are several systems. . . , so the question as to whether a certain logical statement is true or not cannot be answered until some specific system is taken into consideration. Take the famous law of the excluded middle—which says, for instance, that it is either raining or not. This law is valid in the so-called classical logic as constructed by Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, but not so in Arend Heyting's logic» (p. 36). How does Bartley response to the point raised here of «alternative logics»? He says, «However much the various alternative systems of logical rules of inference may differ among themselves, they have one important feature in common: whenever we observe these rules and, *starting with true premises*, argue in accordance with them, *we arrive at true conclusions*. The question arises whether we can revise logic in the sense of denying that true premises need always lead, in any valid inference, to true con-

pose the notion of deducibility, that is, «the idea of the *retransmission of falsity* from conclusion to premises and, *ipso facto*, of the *transmission of truth* from premises to conclusion»[58]. Bartley quickly conceded that if we're talking about denying that true premises necessarily lead in any valid inference to true conclusions, then, «we cannot regard logic as part of the set of beliefs that are put to the test in critical discussion, for the notion of testing and revising in accordance with the results of the test presupposes logic»[59]. So the practice of critical argument and logic are necessarily connected such that to «abandon logic is to abandon rationality». Bartley believes, therefore, that logic is «an absolute presupposition of argument»[60]. With this conclusion, it seems to me that Bartley has refuted his own position. In his own words, he has produced «an argument showing that at least some of the unjustified and unjustifiable critical standards necessarily used by a pancritical rationalist were uncriticizable to boot»[61]. This conclusion does not mean that we cannot expose errors in reasoning. Rather, it only means that we cannot challenge logic itself from a position outside logic because challenging the claims of reason itself presupposes reason.

Following Karl-Otto Apel, however, I suggest that we can speak of a transcendental justification of Bartley's argument so long as we do not think of «grounding in philosophy as deduction within the framework of an axiomatic system». Otherwise, we'd fall back into the *Münchhausen trilemma*. Rather, as Apel says, «is not the very reference to the fact that one *cannot* ground logic in this sense, since *it is always presupposed for every attempt* to ground something, the typical

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clusions» (BARTLEY, *The Retreat to Commitment*, p. 132). Bartley's argues that this idea of deducibility, namely, «the idea of the *retransmission of falsity* from conclusions to premises and, *ipso facto*, of the *transmission of truth* from premises to conclusion» (p. 133), is not in principle revisable. «The point is that the practice of critical argument and logic [minimally, the notion of deducibility] are bound together. We can reject logic, but to do so is to reject the practice of argument. What we cannot do is to go on arguing critically after we have rejected the idea that true premises must, in a valid argument, lead to true conclusions. If we want to learn about, or even to describe, the world, we need to be able to derive true conclusions from true premises» (p. 134).

[58] BARTLEY, *The Retreat to Commitment*, p. 133.
[59] *Idem*.
[60] *Ibidem*, p. 134.
[61] *Ibidem*, p. 120.

starting-point of a «philosophical grounding» in the sense of a *transcendental reflection* upon the *preconditions for the possibility and validity of argumentation*». «If», adds Apel, «in the context of a philosophical discussion about basic matters, we establish that something cannot in principle be grounded since it is the precondition for the possibility of all grounding, then we have not simply established an insoluble contradiction in the deductive procedure. We have also gained an *insight* in terms of *transcendental reflection*»[62].

Finally, I want to make one further suggestion regarding the limits of reason: we take for granted, indeed trust, and in the nature of the case must trust, the fundamental reliability of our basic belief-forming faculties as vehicles of truth[63]. «Let us say that a belief possesses the merit of being *warranted* for the person holding it if it was produced by a reliable faculty working properly in an environment for which that faculty was designed, provided the faculty was designed for arriving at truth»[64]. Let us also call a belief-forming faculty a «doxastic practice», which is a way of forming beliefs and epistemically evaluating them. These practices have epistemological authority, being sources of justification and rationality, ways of building up our knowledge. In the nature of the case we can't prove the reliability of these practices without taking for granted their reliability. Prior to all reflection and reasoning, everyone is in fact fully assured of the fundamental reliability of these doxastic practices[65]. Thus: we trust our senses, trust our memory,

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[62] APEL, KARL-OTTO, «The *a priori* of the communication community and the foundation of ethics: the problem of a rational foundation of ethics in the scientific age», in *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy*, Translated by Glyn Adey and David Frisby, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, pp. 225-300, and at p. 263.

[63] In what follows, I am heavily indebted to a discussion of these matters by WOLTERSTORFF, NICHOLAS, *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 185-249. I have also profited from NEWMAN, JOHN HENRY, «Religious Faith Rational», Sermon XV, in *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. I. Waterloo Place, London, Rivingtons, 1868, pp. 190-202.

[64] WOLTERSTORFF, *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology*, pp. 208-209. Says Wolterstorff, «I am, of course, borrowing the concept [of warrant] from Alvin Plantinga. See [Plantinga's] *Warrant and Proper Function*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993», p. 209n9.

[65] Wolterstorff makes the point this way: «Presumably it is the case that everything that all those of us who are normal adults believe immediately and justifiedly is also taken for granted by all of us in the living of our lives in the everyday; elementary propositions of logic and

trust our introspection, trust our rational intuition, and trust our reasoning, treating these belief-forming faculties as innocent until proved guilty. What is irrational here? These doxastic practices cannot be radically mistaken or somehow ill-conceived at root. John Henry Newman explains:

> What I wish you particularly to observe, is, that we continually trust our memory and our reasoning powers in this way, though *they often deceive us*. . . . I say our memory and reason often deceive us; yet no one says it is therefore absurd and irrational to continue to trust them; and for this plain reason, because *on the whole* they are true and faithful witnesses, because it is only *at times* that they mislead us; so that the chance is, that they are right in this case or that, which happens to be before us; and (again) because in all practical matters we are obliged to dwell upon not what *may be possibly*, but what is *likely* to be. In matters of daily life, we have no time for fastidious and perverse fancies about the minute chances of our being deceived. We are obliged to act at once, or we should cease to live. There is a chance (it cannot be denied) that our food to-day may be poisonous—we cannot be quite certain—but it looks the same and tastes the same, and we have good friends round us; so we do not abstain from it, for all this chance, though it is real. . . . If it be said, that we sometimes do distrust our reasoning powers, for instance, when they lead us to some unexpected conclusion, or again our memory, when another's memory contradicts it, this only shows that there *are* things which we should be weak or hasty in believing; which is quite true.

mathematics would be examples. But the converse is definitely not true. For one thing, most people surely don't actually *believe* those propositions that all those of us who are normal adults must take for granted in our living of life in the everyday. Most people haven't even so much as entertained them, let alone believed them. And that's because what we all take for granted concerning the reliability of memory, say, is full of subtle qualifications built up by tacit rather than explicit learning, and consequently extremely difficult to extract and formulate with full precision. One doesn't have to believe something to take it for granted. Taking a proposition for granted is a different propositional attitude—if one wants to call it that— from believing it; and one can do the former, with respect to a certain proposition, without doing the latter. Second, if anybody has managed to extract one of these propositions taken for granted by all of us, and then to believe it, surely he will not have believed it immediately. The belief will have emerged from a lengthy process of reflection. And third, many of the things we take for granted do not function as beliefs on the basis of which we believe other things; they are not 'principles, upon which I build all my reasoning'. They are background and substratum for our beliefs, not basis» (*Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology*, pp. 225-226).

> Doubtless there is such a fault as credulity, or believing too readily and too much . . . but this neither shows that *all* trust is irrational, nor again that trust is necessarily irrational, which is founded on what is but likely to be, and may be denied without an actual absurdity. . . . [Thus] we must *trust*; and first our senses, memory, and reasoning powers; then other authorities:—so that, in fact, almost all we do, every day of our lives, is on trust[66].

Now, Popper denies that sources of knowledge, or justified belief, like sense perception, memory, rational intuition, various kinds of reasoning, have authority, or are a guarantee, or a criterion, of truth. «There are all kinds of sources of knowledge; but *none has authority*»[67]. If I understand him correctly, this denial is made because he holds that questions about the nature of truth are distinct from those about the best way of reaching it. He doesn't want «to mix-up questions of actual truth-seeking or truth-finding (i.e. epistemological or methodological questions) with the question of what we mean, or what we intend to say, when we speak of truth, or of correspondence with the facts (the logical or ontological question of truth. . . . It is decisive to realize that knowing what truth means, or under what conditions a statement is called true, is not the same as, and must be clearly distinguished from, possessing a means of deciding—a *criterion* for deciding—whether a given statement is true or false»[68]. No problem here. Rather, a problem arises because Popper *separates* the sources, or tests, or criteria, of truth from truth itself. Of course we are not infallible and neither is any criterion of truth we may have to hand. Yet, there must be some link between a test for truth and the nature of reality, of truth. Without that link, once more skepticism gains an entrance—notwithstanding Popper's protests to the contrary[69]. In short, doesn't his epistemology put

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[66] NEWMAN, «Religious Faith Rational», pp. 192-193.

[67] POPPER, «On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance», p. 24.

[68] POPPER, «Facts, Standards, and Truth», p. 371.

[69] Or despite the protest of Gillian Rose who writes, «There is no rationality without *uncertain* grounds, without *relativism* of authority. Relativism of authority does not establish the authority of relativism: it opens reason to new claimants» (*Love's Work*, pp. 138-139).

reality at risk, eventually making reality totally inconsequential with respect to the question whether true theories are «true *in virtue of* the nature of objective reality»[70]? If so, then Popper's view raises the objection: «A reality we can know nothing of is not so very different from no reality at all»[71]. Reality is at risk. Reason, then, is susceptible to losing its grasp on reality.

4. Epistemological optimism and pessimism

Intriguingly, Popper is a realist about truth. «Truth is above human authority», he says. Accordingly, for a realist, like Popper, a proposition is true if, and only if, objective reality is as the proposition says it is; otherwise the proposition is false. In his own words, «an assertion, proposition, statement, or belief, is true if, and only if, it corresponds to the facts»[72]. Given his distinction between justification and truth, Popper rejects what he calls «all subjective (or "epistemic") theories of truth». I think he rejects such theories because they limit truth to what men can find out. Hence, the description of these theories of truth as subjective or epistemic. In other words, they mix-up truth itself with the conditions under which we can recognize truth. Here's Popper on this mix-up:

> If we start from our subjective experience of believing, and thus look upon knowledge as a special kind of belief, then we may indeed have to look upon truth—that is, true knowledge—as some even more special kind of belief: as one that is well-founded or justified. This would mean that there should be some more or less effective criterion, if only a partial one, of well-foundedness; some symptom by which to differentiate the experience of a well-founded belief from other experiences of belief. It can be shown that all subjective theories of truth aim at such a criterion: they try to define truth in terms of the sources or origins of our beliefs, or in terms of our operations of verification, or some set of rules of acceptance, or simply in terms of the quality of our subjective convictions. They all say, more or less, that truth is

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[70] TRIGG, ROGER, *Reality at Risk*, Sussex, The Harvester Press, 1980, xiv.
[71] *Ibidem*, p. 10.
[72] POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, p. 369.

what we are justified in believing or in accepting, in accor-
dance with certain rules or criteria, or origins or sources of
knowledge, or of reliability, or stability, or biological suc-
cess, or strength of conviction, or inability to think otherwi-
se. The objective theory of truth leads to a very different atti-
tude. This may be seen from the fact that it allows us to make
assertions such as the following: a theory may be true even
though nobody believes it, and even though we have no rea-
son for accepting it, or for believing that it is true; and ano-
ther theory may be false, although we have comparatively
good reasons for accepting it[73].

Popper's realist view of truth raises the question to what
mind then does truth correspond. Of course, unlike Ratzinger,
Popper does not provide a theological-metaphysical grounding
to this correspondence by going back to an infinite intellect, the
divine mind[74]. As we shall see below, for Ratzinger there exists
an indissoluble relation between reality, truth and knowability,
not in the human mind, but rather in God's divine mind, with
his knowledge being alone the foundation of how things really
are.

Let me say (again), that Popper's realist distinction bet-
ween justification and truth is right and proper to make. So
there is no problem here. Notwithstanding the distinguishabi-
lity between truth and justification, however, there is neverthe-
less a close link between them; indeed, justification presuppo-
ses the very notion of truth. For when I am justified in belie-
ving that P, I have reasons to believe that P *is true*. Popper's
problem arises because he splits the nature of truth off from our
criteria of truth. But don't judgments made for good reason

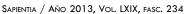[73] POPPER, «Truth, Rationality, and the Growth of Knowledge», p. 225.

[74] *Pace* Ratzinger, Hans-Georg Gadamer claims, and I presume Popper would agree,
«Now philosophy certainly can no longer avail itself of such a theological grounding . . . by
going back to an infinite intellect. Hence we must ask: are there finite possibilities of doing
justice to this correspondence [of subject and object, knower and known, thought and being]?
Is there a grounding of this correspondence that does not venture to affirm the infinity of the
divine mind and yet is able to do justice to the infinite correspondence of soul and being? I
contend that there is» («The Nature of Things and the Language of Things» (1960), in
Philosophical Hermeneutics, Translated and Edited by David E. Linge, Berkeley, University
of California Press, 1976, pp. 69-81, and at pp. 74-75). Ratzinger clearly disagrees with
Gadamer because the latter's hermeneutic philosophy, arguably, leaves human reason without
grounds.

converge on truth? Popper does not think so. If not, then it is unclear how he can defend his idea that our knowledge grows, and that we're getting nearer to the truth and, most importantly, that our beliefs are true in virtue of objective reality.

In conclusion of this section and in preparation for the next when we turn to Benedict XVI's views, I want to return briefly to the attitude of reasonableness that Popper opts for as a rationalist. Is this attitude of reasonableness inspired by an epistemological optimism? That is, does Popper embrace an «optimistic view of man's power to discern truth and to acquire knowledge»[?] Not at all. His rejection of this anthropology results in his dispensing with an optimistic epistemology and, consequently, its undergirding epistemological doctrine that «*truth is manifest*». This doctrine states that «Once the naked truth stands revealed before our eyes, we have the power to see it, to distinguish it from falsehood, and to know that it *is* truth». Popper correctly sees that this optimistic epistemology and the doctrine that truth is manifest are based on the truthfulness of God. In other words, we have confidence in the truth-attaining powers of man's intellect because we know that our intellectual powers, indeed, our very disposition as truth-seekers are underwritten by the truthfulness of God, by the fact that God can neither deceive nor be deceived. Our truth-seeking desire fits the world and life is not fundamentally deaf to its aspiration all because truth is that which is ultimately, finally, and absolutely real, and therefore is utterly trustworthy and dependable because it is grounded and anchored in God's own reality and truthfulness. *Pace* Popper, «Thus the truthfulness of God must make truth manifest»[75].

Furthermore, that still leaves the epistemological optimist with the question of how to explain falsehood. If truth is manifest, then why do men not see it? The answer of the epistemological pessimist[76] to this question is, according to Popper,

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[75] POPPER, «On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance», pp. 5, 7.

[76] St. Thomas Aquinas and Abraham Kuyper argue that the entrance of sin into our human situation affected our epistemic ability to grasp truth. Human reason's actual functioning is perverted, says Aquinas, by passion, by evil habit, by evil disposition of nature, but also by vicious custom and evil persuasion (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 94, art. 4, 6). Kuyper argues that social background influences us: «He who has had his bringing-up in the midst of want

«through our own sinful refusal to see the manifest truth; or because our minds harbor prejudices inculcated by education and tradition, or other evil influences which have perverted our originally pure and innocent minds. Ignorance may be the work of powers conspiring to keep us in ignorance, to poison our minds by filling them with falsehood, and to blind our eyes so that they cannot see the manifest truth. Such prejudices and such powers, then, are the sources of ignorance»[77]. Popper simply dismisses this view without argument. Although I cannot argue the point here, there is much to be said for this explanation of the obstacles inhibiting men from grasping truth.

Popper's criticism of epistemological optimism and pessimism, as well as the doctrine that truth is manifest is that «this theory is the basis of almost every kind of fanaticism». «For only the most depraved wickedness can refuse to see the manifest truth; only those who have every reason to fear truth can deny it, and conspire to suppress it»[78]. Furthermore, says Popper, the claim that «the sources from which our knowledge derives must be super-human . . . tends to encourage self-righteousness and the use of force against those who refuse to see the divine truth»[79].

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and neglect will entertain entirely different views of jural relationships and social regulations from him who from his youth has been bathed in prosperity». He also describes the effects of social goals or interests, as well as the influence of sympathy and antipathy. On the latter, he writes: «The darkening of the understanding . . . would be better understood if we called it the *darkening of our consciousness*. Over against sin stands love, the sympathy of existence, and even in our present sinful conditions the fact is noteworthy, that where this sympathy is active you understand much better and more accurately than where this sympathy is wanting. A friend of children understands the child and the child life. A lover of animals understands the life of the animal. In order to study nature in its material operations, you must love her. Without this inclination and this desire toward the object of your study, you do not advance an inch. . . And this is significant in every department of study». Finally, adds Kuyper, «the chiefest harm is the ruin, worked by sin, in those data, which were at our command, for obtaining the knowledge of God, and thus for forming the conception of the whole. Without the sense of God in the heart no one shall ever attain unto a knowledge of God, and without love, or, if you please, a holy sympathy for God, that knowledge shall never be rich in content. . . . From which it follows at the same time that the knowledge of the cosmos as a whole, or, if your please, philosophy in a restricted sense, is equally bound to founder upon this obstruction wrought by sin» (*Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, Translated from the Dutch by J. Hendrik de Vries, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898, pp. 109-112). Of course neither Aquinas nor Kuyper accepted the method of doubt as a universal solvent of error.

[77] POPPER, «On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance», p. 7.

[78] *Ibidem*, p. 8.

[79] *Ibidem*, p. 29.

This last claim brings us back to the question of reason and violence, but now with the added factor of God. In this article, I have criticized Popper to the effect that his view implies that a subjective choice for reason is no more reasonable than a subjective choice for violence; both choices are equally irrational. According to Popper, reason, then, has its origin in the irrational, being as such without ground. This conclusion is unacceptable; reason stands to lose its grasp of reality. I want to suggest a better alternative by considering Ratzinger's account of the rationality of faith.

5. The ecumenical Christian philosophy of the Logos

Ratzinger states that the rationality of faith «is not a blind surrender to the irrational»[80]. This statement is opposed to views, such as Popper's, in which reason has its origin in the irrational, being as such without ground. Recall that Popper's critique of comprehensive rationalism clearly showed the emptiness—the self-referential inconsistency—of the demand that reason be self-sufficient[81]. In response, he opts for a critical rationalism that cannot be justified, but rather «rests on an irrational faith in the attitude of reasonableness»[82], in short, an «irrational *faith in reason*»[83]. In contrast to this position, Ratzinger claims that the rationality of faith involves «a movement toward the *Logos*, the *ratio*, toward meaning and so toward truth itself, for in the final analysis the ground on which

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[80] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 68 [75].

[81] John Paul II summarily states the transition from rationalism to irrationalism in *Fides et Ratio*, «Since the nineteenth century the affirmation of the principle of immanence [reason's self-sufficiency], which is a sort of basis to the claims of [comprehensive] rationalism, has provoked the profoundest doubting of claims once thought indisputable [about human reason]. In response, currents of irrationalism have arisen, while at the same time critical judgment clearly showed the emptiness of the claims of the absolute domination of reason» (no. 91). One such claim that has been challenged and which was once taken to be a first principle of the intellectual life is, according to Sokolowski, «a conviction concerning the nature of human reason: reason is seen as self-authorizing and autonomous, as generating its own principles and not accepting anything on authority, as setting itself up as the beginning and the judge of thinking». On this view, «accepting things on faith» is seen, he adds, «as the deepest betrayal of reason» (SOKOLOSKI, ROBERT, «Church Tradition and the Catholic University», in *Christian Faith & Human Understanding*, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America Press, 2006, pp. 286-298, and at pp. 287-88).

[82] POPPER, «Utopia and Violence», p. 357.

[83] POPPER, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, p. 231.

man takes his stand cannot possible be anything else but the truth revealing itself»[84]. The main point here is that not only does truth exist but also that man's own mind, his own *logos*, his own reason, has been made to attain truth itself. «Thus the Christian act of faith intrinsically includes the conviction that the meaningful ground, the *Logos*, on which we take our stand, precisely because it is meaning, is also truth. Meaning or sense that was not truth would be nonsense»[85]. The question that must be asked here of Ratzinger is about his account of the correspondence between the knower and the known, of the subject and the object, of thought and being, of *logos* of the one *Logos*. Ratzinger provides a theological-metaphysical grounding to this correspondence by going back to an infinite intellect, the divine mind. As I noted earlier, there exists an indissoluble relation between reality, truth and knowability, not in the human mind, but rather in God's divine mind, with his knowledge being alone the foundation of how things really are. He explains:

> Being itself is true, in other words, apprehensible, because God, pure intellect, made it, and he made it by thinking it. To the creative original spirit, the *Creator Spiritus*, thinking and making are one and the same thing. His thinking is a creative process. Things are, because they are thought. In the ancient and medieval view, all being is, therefore, what has been though, the thought of the absolute spirit. Conversely, this means that since all being is thought, all being is meaningful, *Logos*, truth. It follows from this traditional view that human thinking is rethinking of being itself, rethinking of the thought that is being itself. Man can rethink the *Logos*, the meaning of being, because his own *logos*, his own reason, is *logos* of the one *Logos*, thought of the original thought, of creative spirit that permeates and governs his being[86].

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[84] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 68 [75].

[85] *Ibidem*, p. 69 [76].

[86] *Ibidem*, p. 53 [59]. The German text capitalizes *Logos*, not distinguishing between the human *logos* and the divine *logos*. The English translation never capitalizes *Logos*. In order to distinguish between human thinking and divine thinking, which Ratzinger naturally affirms, I only capitalize the divine *Logos*. Ratzinger adds in a note (p. 346n9 [59n9]): «This statement is of course only fully true of Christian thinking, which with the idea of the *creation ex nihilo* attributes to God the material, too; for the ancient world, this remained the a-logical element,

To say that man's own *logos* is *logos* of the *one divine Logos* is to say that our own intellect, although not itself the divine *Logos*, nevertheless participates in it[87]. Furthermore, to say that being is truth (*verum est ens*) is to say that the thing is created true, is meaning, and hence has the potentiality of being known, apprehended. What makes knowledge of the truth possible is that thought and being have a preexistent correspondence—a theological correspondence—with each other in the mind of the Creator. Therefore, to confess, «"I believe that God exists" also implies opting for the view that the [divine] *Logos*. . . is the originating and encompassing power of all being. In other words, faith means deciding for the view that thought and meaning do not just form a chance by-product of being; that, on the contrary, all being is a product of [divine] thought and, indeed, in its innermost structure is itself thought»[88]. Put differently, says Ratzinger, the Christian faith means deciding for the truth, and this kind of truth called onto-logical truth appears to be demanded by the very idea of «*Credo in Deum*—I believe in God», namely, that «being itself is truth, comprehensibility, [and] meaning»[89]. Ratzinger adds, «This means nothing else than the conviction that the objecti-ve mind we find present in all things, indeed, as which we learn increasingly to understand things, is the impression and expression of subjective [divine] mind and that the intellectual structure that being possesses and that we can *re*-think is the expression of a creative *pre*-meditation, to which they owe their existence»[90]. So God has made the world to be the embo-diment of his thoughts and the human mind engages in *re*-pro-ducing and *re*-flecting on those embodied thoughts[91]. When we know the truth about the world we are, in effect, thinking God's thoughts after him. Naturally Ratzinger does consider the dif-ference between divine thought and human thought. Indeed,

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the universal matter alien to the divine, thus also marking the limit to which reality could be comprehended».

[87] BAVINCK, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* I, p. 206; ET: p. 232.
[88] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 140 [152].
[89] *Idem*, p. 140 [152].
[90] *Idem*, p. 140 [152].
[91] BAVINCK, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* I, pp. 206, 557; ET: pp. 233, 587.

Benedict stresses this point in his Regensburg Lecture, «The Church has always insisted that between God and us, between his eternal Creator Spirit and our created reason there exists a real analogy, in which—as the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 stated—unlikeness remains infinitely greater than likeness, yet not to the point of abolishing analogy and its language»[92].

Still, Benedict continues, «The world is objective mind; it meets us in an intellectual structure, that is, it offers itself to our mind as something that can be reflected upon and understood»[93]. This rethinking is possible because there is a correspondence between the *Logos*, subjective rationality, and the objective rationality of the world; the latter two stem from the same Logos. As Herman Bavinck explains, «There just has to be correspondence or kinship between object and subject. The Logos who shines in the world must also let his light shine in our consciousness. That is the light of reason, the intellect, which, itself originating in the Logos, discovers and recognizes the Logos in things»[94].

Now, before going on with Ratzinger's view, we need to deter any misconstruing of his view that «Being is being-thought» as a version of theistic (Berkelian) idealism, that is, that things must exist because God thinks them, meaning thereby that they must be ideas in the divine mind[95]. Ratzinger

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[92] Benedict XVI, Regensburg Lecture, no. 27. The pope is referring here to the *De Fide Catholica* of Lateran IV: *«Inter creatorem et creaturam non potest similitudo notari, quin inter eos maior sit dissimilitudo notanda»* [«For between creator and creature there can be noted not similarity so great that a greater dissimilarity cannot be seen between them»], 2. On the error of abbot Joachim, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Council*, Volume I, *Nicaea I to Lateran V*, Editor, Norman P. Tanner, S.J. London/Washington, D.C., Sheed & Ward/Georgetown University Press, 1990, p. 231.

[93] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 143 [155]. Elsewhere Ratzinger writes, «This surely means that all our thinking is, indeed, only a rethinking of what in reality has already been thought out beforehand. It can only try in a paltry way to trace over that being-thought which things are and to find truth in it» (p. 141 [153]).

[94] BAVINCK, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* I, p. 207; ET: p. 233. See also, BAVINCK, HERMAN, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing*, Tweede Herziene Druk. Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1913, 1. Denken en Zijn [Knowing and Being], pp. 15-36, and at pp. 21, 28-9, 32-3. Online: http://www.neocalvinisme.nl/tekstframes.html.

[95] BERKELEY, GEORGE, *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Howard Robinson, Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 1996 [1710; 1713]. See also COPLESTON, FREDERICK, S.J., *A History of Philosophy*, Volume V, Hobbes to Hume, Westminster, Maryland, The Newman Press, 1959, p. 246; and TALIAFERRO, CHARLES, *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1998, p. 352.

explains, contrasting his own Christian view with materialism and idealism:

> The idealistic solution to the problem of being accordingly signifies the idea that all being is the being-thought by one single consciousness. The unity of being consists in the identity of the one consciousness, whose impulses constitute the many things that are. The Christian belief in God is not completely identical with either of these two solutions. To be sure, it, too, will say, being is being-thought. Matter itself points beyond itself to thinking as the earlier and more original factor[96].

Let us pause for a moment to see, even if only briefly, why Ratzinger rejects the materialist solution. The materialist solution to the question of the one and the many—«what is the one being behind the many "things" which nevertheless all "exist"»[97]?—is that ultimate reality is matter. «*This* is the only thing that always remains as demonstrable reality and, consequently, represents the real being of all that exists». Ratzinger rejects the materialistic solution because the «reduction of all being to matter as the primary form of reality consequently implies that the beginning and ground of all being is constituted by a form of being that does not itself understand being; this also means that the understanding of being only arises as a secondary, chance product during the course of development. This at the same time also gives us the definition of "mind": it can be described as being that understands itself, as being that is present to itself»[98]. In other words, the reduction of everything that exists to one single, ultimate materiality means that there is not personal choice or will, and also no mind, behind matter. This point brings us back to the claim that materialism prioritizes the irrational over the rational (understanding), and that view raises Ratzinger critical remark that «the attempt to distill rationality out of what is in itself irrational quite visibly fails»[99]. Continuing now with Ratzinger's rejection of theistic idealism, he argues:

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[96] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, pp. 144-45 [157].
[97] *Ibidem*, p. 144 [156].
[98] *Idem*
[99] RATZINGER, *Truth and Tolerance*, p. 182.

But in opposition to idealism, which makes all being into moments of an all-embracing consciousness, the Christian belief in God will say: Being is being-thought—yet not in such a way that it remains only thought and the appearance of independence proves to be mere appearance to anyone who looks more closely. On the contrary, Christian belief in God means that things are the being-thought of a creative consciousness, of a creative freedom, and that the creative consciousness that bears up all things has released what has been thought into the freedom of its own, independent existence. In this it goes beyond any mere idealism. While the latter, as we have just established, explains everything real as the contents of a single consciousness, in the Christian view what supports it all is a creative freedom that sets what has been thought in the freedom of its own being, so that, on the one hand, it is the being-thought of a consciousness and yet, on the other hand, is true being itself[100].

We are, therefore, according to Ratzinger, not mere moments of God's all-embracing consciousness. Furthermore, we are also not substantial entities held in existence by God's enduring thoughts—as if to suggest that those entities have no independent existence. Yes, God's all-embracing consciousness «bears up all things», but «what has been thought» has been released «into the freedom of its own, independent existence». Moreover, Ratzinger affirms the primacy of the *logos* as opposed to mere matter, or one single, ultimate materiality, but «the belief that the original thought, whose being-thought is represented by the world [that is, its objective mind], is not an anonymous, neutral consciousness but rather freedom, creative love, a person»[101]. What, then, prevents Ratzinger's option for the primacy of the *logos* from remaining mere idealism is that the «Christian option for the *logos* means an option for a personal, creative meaning» as well an «option for the primacy of the particular as against the universal»[102]. He elaborates:

Let us content ourselves with the indispensable elucidations by first asking what it really means to say that this *Logos*,

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[100] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, pp. 145 [157].
[101] *Ibidem*, pp. 146 [158].
[102] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 146 [158].

whose thought is the world, is a person and that therefore faith is the option in favor of the primacy of the particular over the universal [such as cosmic necessity or natural law]. In the last analysis, the answer can be put quite simply: It means nothing else than that [1] the creative thinking we found to be the precondition and ground of all being is truly conscious thinking and that it knows not only itself but also its whole thought. It means [2] further that this thinking not only knows but [also] loves; it is creative because it is love; and that, because it can love as well as think, it has given its thought the freedom of its own existence, objectivized it, [and] released it into distinct being. So the whole thing means that this thinking knows its thought in its distinct being, loves it and, loving, upholds it. . . . But if the *logos* of all being, the being that upholds and encompasses everything is consciousness, freedom, and love, then it follows automatically that the supreme factor in the world is not cosmic necessity but freedom [and love][103].

Now, because God is love, He can only be love if, in effect, His Being includes the dimension of relationship. Although I cannot argue the point here, Ratzinger holds that it becomes possible to glimpse love as the starting point of the confession of faith in the revealed truth that God is triune[104]. Thus, says Ratzinger, «the profession of faith in God as a person necessarily includes the acknowledgment of God as relatedness, as communicability, as fruitfulness. The unrelated, unrelatable, absolutely One could not be person. There is no such thing as person in the categorical singular»[105]. Furthermore, if God were not consciousness, freedom, creative love, then, he could not be personal, either[106]. God, then, is

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[103] *Ibidem*, p. 147 [159]; see also, p. 136 [148]: «The *Logos* of the whole world, the creative original thought, is at the same time love; in fact this thought is creative because, as thought, it is love, and, as love, is thought».

[104] So LEWIS, C.S., *Mere Christianity*, San Francisco, Harper, 1960, p. 174: «All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that "God is love". But they seem not to notice that the words "God is love" have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, he was not love».

[105] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 167 [180].

[106] LETHAM, ROBERT, *The Holy Trinity*, Phillipsburg, NJ, Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 2004, p. 444.

supremely personal. Although much more could be said regarding Ratzinger's doctrine of God, for example, on his account of the relation between the God of faith and the God of the philosophers, it must suffice for now to say that I have shown why affirming the primacy of the *Logos* in Christian faith is something different from mere idealism.

In this light, we can proceed to consider Ratzinger's account of the rationality of faith. What, then, is faith? Ratzinger understands faith to cover not only the entirety of man's stance toward God and to reality as a whole but also, inseparably including, belief, meaning thereby a propositional content, a *fides quae creditur*, a «what is believed»[107]. How does one come to faith? «"Faith comes from what is heard", says St. Paul (Rom 10:17)», and, he adds, «what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ»[108]. Ratzinger's epistemology of faith elevates testimony and proclaiming the Word to a position of priority in coming to faith because the realities of faith comes to man from outside, with testimony and proclamation proposing them outwardly. Thus, his epistemology of faith subordinates reflection—faith is not a mere product of reflection, a quasi-Cartesian private search for truth, where man pulls himself up to God by his own intellectual boot-straps—to hearing, receiving, and answering the Word of God by way of the testimony of Scripture, the revealed Word of God[109]. Put differently, Ratzinger is making reference here to a *principium cognoscendi externum*, namely, the economy of God's self-revelation in word and deed[110].

Further, this epistemology is grounded in an anthropology that expresses an abiding structural truth about the dialogical structure of faith, namely, a call/response structure.

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[107] The German language uses only one word both for faith and belief—*Glauben*—and so the context determines when Ratzinger means beliefs and when he means faith as man's total stance.

[108] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 82 [91].

[109] Aquinas states, «Other things being equal, sight is more certain than hearing; but if (the authority) of the persons from whom we hear greatly surpasses that of the seer's sight, hearing is more certain than sight . . . and much more is a man certain about what he hears from God who cannot be deceived, than about what he sees with his own reason which can be mistaken» (*Summa Theologiae*, IIa, IIae, q. iv, a.8. ad.2).

[110] Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, no. 2.

Faith's «nature lies in the fact that it is not the thinking out of something that can be thought out and that at the end of the process is then at my disposal as the result of my thought. On the contrary, it is characteristic of faith that it comes from hearing, that it is the reception of something that I have not thought out, so that in the last analysis thinking in the context of faith is always a thinking over of something previously heard and received»[111]. In other words, starting with myself I would never discover the realities of faith; rather, they have been communicated to me through the testimony of others, through the instrument of the creeds, the source of the testimony being revelation, the revealed Word of God. He continues: «Faith . . . comes to man from outside, and this very fact is fundamental to it. It is—let me repeat—not something thought up by myself; it is something said to me, which hits me as something that has not been thought out and could not be thought out and lays an obligation on me. This double structure of "Do you believe?—I do believe?", this form of the call from outside and the reply to it, is fundamental to it»[112].

Moreover, there is also an *ecclesiological a priori* that refers to ecclesial faith, the faith of the Church, carried forward by the Church's tradition, meaning thereby the «social character of belief» that binds us together[113]. But what actually binds us together? Is that bond the Word as true? Ratzinger explains: «The primary factor for belief is, as we have seen, the proclaimed Word. While a thought is interior, purely intellectual, the Word represents the element that unites us with others. It is the form in which the mind is, as it were, human, that is, corporeal and social. This primacy of the Word means that faith is focused on community of mind. . . . Faith [then] is first of all a call to community, to unity of mind through the unity of the Word. Indeed, its significance is, a priori, an essentially social one: it aims at establishing unity of mind through the unity of the word»[114]. Unity of mind through the unity of the word?

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[111] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 83 [91].
[112] *Ibidem*, p. 83 [91-92].
[113] *Ibidem*, p. 84 [92].
[114] *Ibidem*, *Einführung in das Christentum*, pp. 84-85 [93].

Does that statement bring us any closer to answering the question regarding what binds us together?

I presume the unity of mind does not refer to states of mind but rather to propositional truth that comes into perspective when we attend to the Word of God as true. One must not separate the word from the truth, namely, its propositional content. And what I mean by a proposition is simply whatever can be believed to be true, or affirmed as true. What, then, binds us together is the Word as true. Bernard Lonergan rightly holds that this makes sense because «the word of God contains a realism, both because it is to be believed [affirmed as true] and not contradicted, and also because it is a true word, telling of things as in fact they are»[115]. Ratzinger is, then, a realist about truth. Lonergan continues: «For realism consists in this, that the truth that is acknowledged in the mind corresponds to reality. But whoever believes the true word of God certainly acknowledges truth in his mind»[116]. In this light, we can understand why Ratzinger states that dogma unites people in a common profession of faith in the community of those who confess the Word of God. This brief reflection on propositional truth brings us back to Ratzinger's understanding of faith. Naturally faith, then, includes belief, its propositional content, but faith is not identical with belief. Rather, says Ratzinger, the organizing center of faith is trust: «Faith is thereby defined as taking up a position, as taking a stand trustfully on the ground of the Word of God»[117]. In other words, «The Christian attitude of faith is expressed in the little word 'Amen', in which the meanings trust, entrust, fidelity, firmness, firm ground, stand, truth all interpenetrate each other; this means that the thing on which man can finally take his stand and that can give him meaning can only be truth itself. Truth is the only ground suitable for man to stand upon»[118]. Faith, then, is the entirety of the stance

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[115] LONERGAN, BERNARD J. F., S.J., *The Way to Nicea*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1976, p. 128.

[116] *Idem*.

[117] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 62 [69].

[118] *Ibidem*, p. 69 [76]. Elsewhere Ratzinger writes, «The *one* root word ʾmn (amen) embraces a variety of meanings whose interplay and differentiation go to make up the subtle grandeur of this sentence ["If you do not believe (if you do not *hold* firm to Yahweh), then you will have no *foothold*"]. It includes the meanings truth, firmness, firm ground, ground, and fur-

of man in the totality of reality, entrusting himself to the meaning that upholds him and the world. Ratzinger adds, that this meaning is indissolubly connected to ground and truth and hence faith means «understanding our existence as response to the word, the *logos*, that upholds and maintains all things»[119]. Two things remain to be said before returning in one last section to the question of God, reason and violence.

First, understanding of the meaning that man has received as the ground and truth of his own existence and the world's presupposes standing in the truth, the truth of being itself. Standing in the truth is an indispensable prerequisite for understanding «to grasp the ground on which we have taken our stand as meaning and truth; that we learn to perceive that *ground* represents *meaning*». In other words, «"Understanding" only reveals itself in "standing", not apart from it. One cannot occur without the other, for understanding means seizing and grasping as *meaning* the meaning that man has received as *ground*»[120]. In other words, the understanding of reality in its totality is made possible from taking up a certain fundamental stance, or vantage point, toward that totality. This standing requires the illumination of man through the Holy Spirit—a *principium cognoscendi internum*—because faith may only be attained, adds Ratzinger, «by what the language of the Bible calls "turning back", "con-version"»[121]. This is the interior light that leads to assent, says Aquinas. *Credo ut intelligam*: I believe in order that I may understand. Faith is the condition of understanding and understanding, conversely, is the end of faith. In Ratzinger's own words, «Understanding grows only out of faith. That is why theology as the understanding, *logos-like* (=rational, understanding through reason) discussion of God is a fundamental task of Christian faith. This

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thermore the meanings loyalty, to trust, entrust oneself, take one's stand on something, believe in something, thus faith in God appears as a holding on to God through which man gains a firm foothold for his life» (p. 62 [69]). Ratzinger also says in a note (p. 346n15 [p. 76n15]): «The Greek word *logos* displays in its range of meanings a certain correspondence with the Hebrew root ʾ*mn* ("Amen"): word, meaning, rationality, truth are all included in its semantic range».

[119] *Ibidem*, p. 66 [73].
[120] *Ibidem*, p. 70 [77].
[121] *Ibidem*, p. 45 [51].

context is also the basis of the inalienable right of Greek though to a place in Christianity». In sum, he adds, «Believing and understanding belong together no less than believing and "standing", simply because standing and understanding are inseparable. To this extent the Greek translation of the sentence in Isaiah [7:9] about believing and abiding reveals a dimension that is implicit in the biblical attitude itself if it is not to be degraded into fanaticism, sectarianism»[122]. *Fides quarens intellectum*: faith seeking understanding of the content of revelation, stirring reason into motion so as to understand the inner coherence and intelligibility of that revelation. And in this disciplined exploration of the content of revelation, the Christian faith does not «cut off the path of thought», indeed; it not only draws upon philosophical resources but also stimulates philosophical inquiry. Ratzinger illuminatingly probes here:

> Is it not the case that answers concerning ultimate reality by nature always open into that which has not been expressed and perhaps cannot be expressed? Might it not be that it is only such answers that give questions their true depth and drama? Could it not be that they radicalize not only questioning but thinking itself, setting it on its path instead of obstructing it? [Karl] Jaspers himself once remarked that thought which severs itself from the great tradition falls into a seriousness which is progressively emptied of content. Does this not suggest that familiarity with a great answer such as that conveyed by [Christian] faith stimulates rather than obstructs questioning?[123]

I shall return to this point in the next section.

Second, the rationality of Christian faith is not merely about taking a stance with respect to the firm ground, the *Logos*, of the world. Rather, Christian faith involves faith's personal knowledge, not an impersonal knowledge, that Jesus Christ «is the presence of the eternal itself in this world»[124]. More concretely, «The belief that Christ *is* the only Son of

God, that God really dwells among us as man in him, that the man Jesus is eternally in God, is God himself, and therefore is, not a figure in which God appears, but rather the sole and irreplaceable God»[125]. As Ratzinger also puts this point about faith's personal knowledge, faith «is not "I believe in something", but "I believe in Thou". It is the encounter with the man Jesus, and in this encounter it experiences the meaning of the world as a person». Faith's personal knowledge is a relational knowing because in knowing Jesus Christ we ourselves are known, are transformed. He elaborates:

> Thus faith is the finding of a «Thou» that upholds me and amid all the unfulfilled—and in the last resort unfulfillable—hope of human encounters gives me the promise of an indestructible love that not only longs for eternity but also guarantees it. Christian faith lives on the discovery that not only is there such a thing as objective meaning but that this meaning knows me and loves me, that I can entrust myself to it like the child who knows that everything he may be wondering about is safe in the «Thou» of his mother. Thus in the last analysis believing, trusting, and loving are one, and all the theses around which belief revolves are only concrete expressions of the all-embracing about-turn, of the assertion «I believe in Thou—of the discovery of God in the countenance of the man Jesus of Nazareth . . . . I believe in Thou, Jesus of Nazareth, as the meaning (*logos*) of the world and of my life»[126].

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[122] *Ibidem*, p. 70 [78].

[123] RATZINGER, JOSEPH, «Faith, Philosophy and Theology», in *The Nature and Mission of Theology*, Translated by Adrian Walker, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1995, pp. 13-29, and at pp. 17-18.

[124] RATZINGER, *Einführung in das Christentum*, p. 72 [80].

[125] *Ibidem*, p. 18 [21].

[126] *Ibidem*, pp. 72-73 [80-81].

6. God, Reason and Violence

Earlier in this article, I concluded that Popper's irrational faith in reason, and his adjoining claim that the unjustifiable attitude of reasonableness is the only alternative to violence, was unsatisfactory in as much as he was unable to show that violence is something unreasonable. That conclusion stems from Popper's view that reason, the critical criterion, is forever without grounds. Popper compounds this problem because, in his metaphysics of the world, the irrational has priority over the rational, which results in reason's truth-attaining capacity «*abolishing itself*». Ratzinger puts the following fundamental question to views, such as Popper's, which are common today in our culture. «Is the world to be understood as originating from a creative intellect or as arising out of a combination of probabilities in the realm of the absurd? Today as yesterday, this alternative is the decisive question for our comprehension of reality; it cannot be dodged»[127].

Pace Popper, then, reason has its ground in the *Logos*, according to Ratzinger, and in this connection he argues that «spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable. Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul». Put otherwise: «not to act in accordance with reason is contrary to God's nature»[128]. Thus, Popper's claim that belief in God as the ultimate source of knowledge «tends to encourage self-righteousness and the use of force against those who refuse to see the divine truth» is refuted, as a matter of principle, by Benedict's rejoinder that «Not to act reasonably, not to act with *logos*, is contrary to the nature of God»[129]. In other words, Benedict's claim is that the failure to act reasonably is not only contrary to the nature of man but also contrary to the nature of God.

Furthermore, then, the first step in stopping violence is to understand that Christian belief about God implies a fundamental claim on human reason. This claim is, argues Ratzinger,

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[127] RATZINGER, «Faith, Philosophy and Theology», p. 25.
[128] Benedict XVI, Regensburg Lecture, nos. 13-14.
[129] *Ibidem*, no. 63.

«wholly evident in the religious critique of the prophets and the biblical wisdom literature». He elaborates:

> If the prophets ridicule man-made idols with mordant acerbity and set the only real God in contrast to them, in the wisdom books the same spiritual movement is at work as among the pre-Socratics at the time of the early Greek enlightenment. To the extent that the prophets see in the God of Israel the primordial creative ground of all reality, it is quite clear what is taking place is a religious critique for the sake of a correct understanding of this reality itself. Here the faith of Israel unquestionably steps beyond the limits of a single people's peculiar worship: it puts forth a universal claim, whose universality has to do with its being rational. Without the prophetic religious critique, the universalism of Christianity would have been unthinkable. It was this critique which, in the very heart of Israel itself, prepared that synthesis of Hellas and the Bible which the Fathers labored to achieve. For this reason, it is incorrect to reduce the concepts *logos* and *aletheia*, upon which John's Gospel centers the Christian message, to a strictly Hebraic interpretation, as if *logos* meant «word» merely in the sense of God's speech in history, and *aletheia* signified nothing more than «trustworthiness» or «fidelity». For the very same reason, there is no basis for the opposite accusation that John distorted biblical thought in the direction of Hellenism. On the contrary, he stands in the classical sapiential tradition. It is precisely in John's writings that one can study, both in its origins and its outcome, the inner movement of biblical faith in God and biblical Christology toward philosophical inquiry[130].

And this inner movement toward philosophical inquiry alluded to in the concluding sentence of the quotation above necessarily involves an appeal to reason and an orientation toward the truth itself because the life of faith needs philosophy in order to address human beings are by nature truth-seekers, «man who questions and seeks». So, says Ratzinger insightfully, «It is not questioning, in fact, which places obsta-

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[130] RATZINGER, «Faith, Philosophy and Theology», pp. 24-25. For a defense of the thesis that Ratzinger offers here in this passage, see PELIKAN, JAROSLAV, *Christianity and Classical Culture, The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism*, Gifford Lectures, 1992-1993, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 1993.

cles to faith but that closure which no longer wants to question and holds truth to be unreachable or not worth striving for. Faith does not destroy philosophy, it champions it. Only when it takes up the cause of philosophy does [faith] remain true to itself»[131].

Conversely, only if philosophy takes up the claims of faith are the demands of reason fulfilled in its search of truth. This is because faith is an advocate of reason's truth-attaining capacity, and hence «faith is the "yes" to the truth»[132]. This is so because we know that the truth-attaining capacity of reason, indeed, our very orientation as truth-seekers, is underwritten by the truthfulness of the *Logos*, of creative Reason, who grounds not only the existence of truth but also that man's own mind, his own *logos*, his own reason, has been made to attain truth itself. In the words of Bavinck, «The Logos who shines in the world must also let his light shine in our consciousness. That is the light of reason, the intellect, which, itself originating in the Logos, discovers and recognizes the Logos in things»[133].

In this connection, Benedict notes what might be referred to as man's nature as, not only a truth-seeker, but also a truth-twister. Thus, here we can see the point to Benedict's claim that the Christian faith «is a purifying force for reason, helping it to be more fully itself. On the basis of its origin, the Christian message should always be an encouragement towards truth, and thus a force against the pressure exerted by power and interests». This brings Benedict back to the starting point of this essay.

Is it reason alone, the attitude of reasonableness, as Popper holds, or a rigidly secularized rationality, as others put it, that safeguards freedom of criticism, of thought, of man's truth-attaining capacities? Benedict rejects this view. For when reason cuts itself off from the treasury of not only ethical knowledge, but also the insights of the religious traditions of humanity, and particularly the sources of knowledge—

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[131] RATZINGER, «Faith, Philosophy and Theology», p. 29.
[132] Benedict XVI , «Lecture by the Holy Father Benedict XVI at the University of Rome "La Sapienza"».
[133] BAVINCK, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* I, p. 206; ET: p. 233.

Scripture and Tradition—of the Christian revelation, this «is an unacceptable restriction of our listening and responding»[134]. The consequence is that human reason «withers like a tree whose roots can no longer reach the waters that give it life. It loses the courage for truth and thus becomes not greater but smaller». In other words, adds Benedict, «if our culture seeks only to build itself on the basis of the circle of its own argumentation, on what convinces it at the time, and if—anxious to preserve its secularism—it detaches itself from its life-giving roots, then it will not become more reasonable or purer, but will far apart and disintegrate»[135]. Alternatively, it is only the Christian faith that consistently safeguards sensibility to the truth, inviting «reason to set out ever anew in search of what is true and good, in search of God; to urge reason, in the course of this search, to discern the illuminating lights that have emerged during the history of the Christian faith, and thus to recognize Jesus Christ as the Light that illumines history and helps us find the path towards the future»[136].

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[134] Benedict XVI, Regensburg Lecture, no. 60.
[135] Benedict XVI, «Lecture by the Holy Father Benedict XVI at the University of Rome "La Sapienza"».
[136] *Idem*.

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