



Cardinal Ratzinger

COMMUNION WITHOUT CONFESSION AND THE 1983 CODE OF CANON LAW

The Fideism of Cardinal Ratzinger, Perfect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

On Oct. 27, 1996, the *Osservatore Romano* published Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's conference given to the "presidents of the Commission for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Latin American Episcopal Conferences (Guadalajara, Mexico, May 1996)." The title of the conference was "Relativism has become today's main problem as far as Faith and Theology are concerned." This conference made it unmistakably clear that the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has a very wide concept of "theology" as well as of "faith." So wide, in fact, that he includes everything: errors, heresies, together with outright apostasies.

Let us now follow him, point by point, at least in the most important passages of his address.

POPE ST. PIUS X WAS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT

In the first part of his conference, Card. Ratzinger refers to "liberation theology" and to "theological relativism," especially those represented by the "American Presbyterian J. Hick" and by "P. Knitter, a former Catholic priest, " as well as by the "New Age" movement.

As is his wont, the Cardinal Prefect shows his considerable ability for synthesis and, in a certain measure, also for critique. Thus, for instance, he writes that in "liberation theology," which he considers as being already out-of-date, "redemption became a political process [and therefore - we add - temporal and terrestrial or worldly] to which Marxist philosophy provided its general direction or basic orientation."

Regarding "theological relativism," he tells us that it "starts from Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena: we are not able to attain to ultimate reality in itself, since we can only see it through diverse 'lenses' by our own way of perception." Therefore, "the identification of a singular historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth, with 'reality' itself, that is, with the living God, is rejected out of hand as being a lapse back into myth: Jesus is expressly relativized as just one more religious genius among so many 'others'. That which is absolute, or else He who is absolute, cannot present Himself in history, wherein are to be found only models, only ideal figures which refer us to something utterly different, to that which we cannot apprehend or know as such in history. From this it is clear that the (Catholic) Church also, her dogmas and sacraments, cannot have any value of absolute necessity."

Regarding P. Knitter's (a former Catholic priest) "primacy of orthopraxis over orthodoxy," Card. Ratzinger writes that such a primacy comes as a "logical consequence, once a person abandons metaphysics: if knowledge becomes [more exactly: is erroneously considered] impossible, all that is left is human acts (or behavior)." Then follows Ratzinger's critique: "But is this allegation true? From where can I get the impression that an action is just, if I have no idea of what is just...? Praxis alone is no light... Knitter... asserts that the criterion allowing him to distinguish between orthopraxis and pseudo-praxis, is man's liberty. But he still must explain, in a practical and persuasive manner, just what is liberty and what it is that leads man to his real liberation."

Conclusion: "In the last analysis, Hick's relativism is based upon a rationalism [i.e., the error of those who reject all revelation and give assent to nothing but what can be attained by the natural power of their own reason] which, in the Kantian fashion, pretends that metaphysics [i.e., that branch of philosophy dealing with the first principle of things] cannot be known or grasped by human reason." Thus, Card. Ratzinger clearly indicates the root of these aberrations, which he later favors with the term "New Age" present day theology, "that rotten root of all modernism already revealed by Pope St. Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi*: the agnostic and immanentist rationalism of Kant, "the philosopher of Protestantism" (Paulsen).

THE RETURN OF PAGANISM, OR "NEW AGE"

Card. Ratzinger has also described remarkably well the neo-paganism of the "New Age," which "seeks to put forth a completely anti-rationalist model of religion - a modern 'mystique': Man cannot believe in the absolute but he may experience. God is not a Person...but consists in the spiritual energy which propagates itself in the Whole...Man's redemption consists in ridding himself of his I...and returning to the Whole. The (pagan) 'gods' are back. They now appear more believable than God. We must bring up to date those primordial [pre-Christian] rites by which the I is initiated into the mystery of the Whole and liberated of itself." In brief, the New Age says: "Let us now give up the adventure of Christianity which has proven to be a failure, so let us now return to our pagan gods." Further on, Card. Ratzinger notes the influence that the "New Age" is having on some Catholic "liturgies": "Nowadays, we have grown weary of wordy liturgies, [but how can one simply reduce Catholic liturgy to words?] approaching New Age orientations: people are now looking for noisy and ecstatic experiences."

Having completed these remarks, Card. Ratzinger now turns his attention to the present-day "tasks facing theology." And this is where things really begin to spoil!

"CLASSICAL THEOLOGY": PRISONER IN THE DOCK!

At this point, what is the *sensus fidei*, or even simple common sense entitled to expect from the Cardinal Prefect directly responsible for the doctrine and protection of the Faith? The very least he could do is to refute all of those false "theologies." In point of fact, theology is "the science which, in the light of reason as well as of that of divine revelation, treats of God and of His creatures in their relationships with Him." It therefore comprises Revelation on God's part as well as Faith on the part of men....As such, it is to be distinguished from "theodicy" [or natural theology], a purely rational science of God. Theology is rooted in fundamental principles drawn, without question, from the sources of Revelation" (Parente-Piolanti-Garofalo, *Dizionario di Teologia dogmatica*).

It is therefore quite impossible to even consider as "theologies" those heretical ravings of so-called "theologians": they are obviously lacking those essential qualities required by the Faith. Instead of *positively* drawing from the fundamental principles of divine Revelation, they begin by questioning the very fact of that revelation by denying the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, logically enough, each and every other dogma of the Catholic Faith. But things are such as they are: and it seems that for Card. Ratzinger, any kind of discourse, even uttered and broadcast without faith and against the Faith, indeed happens to be "theology."

Moreover, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith, far from denouncing those false "theologies," has actually gone so far as to incriminate Catholic theology. In fact, he wonders:

How come classical theology has proven itself so little prepared to face these (modernist) events and circumstances? And where are its weak points which have robbed it of its strength and efficiency?

Please note well: "classical theology," and not Catholic theology. The Cardinal Prefect avoids, even in his choice of words, any discrimination between the true and false theologies. Why, indeed, did "classical theology" show itself so ill-prepared in facing those events and circumstances? Has not this "classical" theology simply been rejected together with "classical" philosophy by those "new theologians" artisans of Vatican II? These "events," which are nothing but old heresies already condemned in various other epochs in the history of the Church, have they not previously been refuted time and again by "classical theology"?

Or are we to understand that Card. Ratzinger has not sufficiently familiarized himself with Catholic theology?

As to the "ineffectiveness" of "classical theology," it must be realized that theology, in itself, can only be effective from a theoretical point of view. Its practical effectiveness does not depend on theological speculation, but on the sincerity of those who are in error and, in the absence of such sincerity, it actually depends on the opportune as well as efficacious intervention of Catholic authority, and in particular on that dicastery responsible for the protection of the Faith, over which Card. Ratzinger, after the Pope, presides. St. Thomas Aquinas, commenting on St. Paul's directive to Timothy, "...that thou mightest charge some not to teach others" (I Tim. 1:3), points up the fact that the duty of those in authority is a double one: (1) to restrain anyone from teaching error; (2) to prevent the faithful from following anyone teaching error.

To impute to "classical theology" the ineffectiveness of a defective or faulty (and even worse) authority signifies, on the part of the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith, transferring to Catholic theology the responsibilities of his dicastery in the face of the triumph of heresy actually present in the Catholic world.

"MODERNIST EXEGESIS" IS AT THE ROOT OF "TODAY'S THEOLOGY"

In attempting to find an answer to his own question, "How come classical theology has proven itself so little prepared to face these 'events' and circumstances? Where are its weak points which have rendered it so ineffective?" Card. Ratzinger brings the discussion around to exegesis, and, once again, to Kantian "philosophy." Hick (but what has a "Presbyterian" got to do with Catholic theology?) and Knitter (and what has a defrocked priest got to do with Catholic theology?) "appeal," Ratzinger says...:

...to exegesis in order to justify their destruction of Christology: according to these two, exegesis would seem to have proven that Jesus never considered Himself to be the Son of God, God Incarnate, but that it was only some while later that His disciples laid claim to and first referred to His divinity [an argument which modernists have borrowed and still borrow from their rationalist "separated brethren"]. Moreover, both of them claim to take their inspiration from philosophical evidence. Hick assures us that Kant has irrefutably demonstrated that the absolute, or He Who is the Absolute [since God, for some of these heretics, is not even a Person] cannot be known in history and cannot, as such, be found therein.

Therefore, at the very basis of "today's theology," as well as at that of neo-modernism, we find an exegesis, or better said, a pseudo-exegesis, taking its origin in the agnostic rationalism of Kant, to whom "today's theologians" have attributed that charism of infallibility which they deny even to the Church. Nothing new here either: At the base of modernism there was Loisy's "exegesis" modeled on Protestant rationalist exegesis, and at the root of neo-modernism, we now have the "new exegesis," yet again springing from Protestant rationalism, and it is for this reason that we consecrate so much of our effort to the problem of exegesis.

Finally, Card. Ratzinger, at the end of his discourse, comes to the following conclusion:

I believe that the problem of exegesis as well as the limits and possibilities of our reason, that is to say, the philosophical premises of the Faith, actually constitute the painful and grievous weak point of today's theology, through which the Faith - as also, more and more, the faith of ordinary folk - continues to fall victim to the current crisis.

We are now made to understand that "liberation theology," "relativist theologies," with their "abolition of Christology," "New Age," *etc.*, are, for the Cardinal Prefect for the Faith, not heresies nor apostasies, but... "today's theology," different but not incompatible with "classical theology." He seems to consider all of the errors as some normal variant alternative of true Catholic theology.

A little further on, we will see how Card. Ratzinger deals with "the problem of exegesis as well as the limits and possibilities of our reason," which is at the very base of the present crisis of the Faith.

For the moment we simply wish to underline here that Card. Ratzinger is indeed conscious of the fact that "today's theology," without faith or in a crisis of faith, not only "destroys Christology," but is actually in the process of demolishing - again, he is the one who admits it - "as also, more and more, the faith of ordinary Catholics." And, as for the Cardinal Prefect for the Faith, just what is it that he intends doing about this disastrous state of affairs?

THE "TASK" FACING THE AUTHORITIES

"I would simply like to try to outline here the task now facing us," declares Ratzinger, logically referring that "us" to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith as well as to the president of the Commission for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Episcopal Conferences, to whom his conference was addressed.

And this is where Card. Ratzinger engages in theoretical reflections on "modern-day exegesis." He begins by saying that Hick and Knitter, in order to sustain their assertion that...:

...exegesis seems to have proven that Jesus never considered Himself to be the Son of God, God Incarnate, but that it was only some while later that His disciples laid claim to and first referred to His divinity, can in no way at all, appeal to exegesis in a global manner, as if all of their suppositions constitute an indubitable result universally recognized by all exegetes... But it is true that if we look at modern exegesis as a whole, we can come away with an impression quite similar to that of Hick and Knitter.

Therefore, even at this point, for Card. Ratzinger, there does exist a "modern-day exegesis" different, to be sure, but not incompatible with "exegesis in a global manner" (which, we hope and suppose, also included the (only) true and authentic exegesis: Catholic exegesis). This so-called "modern exegesis," radically denying as it does the very divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, has obviously "buried" Catholic exegesis. But this does not seem to present a problem for Card. Ratzinger, who now sets out in search of the cornerstone of this "modern exegesis," for which, just as in the case of the older modern exegesis, Jesus is not God nor did He ever claim so to be (cf. St. Pius X, *Pascendi*).

"My thesis," he explains, "is as follows":

If many exegetes think as do Hick and Knitter, "reconstructing" in the same way the recorded history of Jesus Christ [that is, by their denial of Jesus Christ's divinity] it is due to the fact that they share their philosophy. It is not exegesis which proves philosophy but it is rather philosophy which brings about exegesis."

A real discovery indeed! Who is not aware that it is rationalism, which denies the supernatural, which has given rise to the ravings of Protestant systems [*Formgeschichte*, *Redaktions-eschichte*, *etc.*], which it now seeks to pass off as "exegesis"? And who does not know that "modern exegesis," a Catholic copy of Protestant rationalist "exegesis," also shares its presupposed philosophy: that rationalism bent on denying the supernatural? This has always been well known to us. Except that, up until Vatican II, Rome never honored the delirious wanderings of Protestant rationalism with the dignity of "exegesis" and, against such errors, never used to present theses, but would invariably condemn them unequivocally in the most unmistakably clear terms. Thus did Pope Leo XIII define rationalists as the "sons and heirs" of the Lutheran "reformation" who "have utterly rejected even the last traces of that Faith they had formerly received from their fathers." He especially warned the bishops while reminding them that these errors must touch and give rise to their common pastoral solicitude so that to this new "science which does not even deserve such a title (I Tim. 6:20), they would oppose that ancient truth which the Church received from Jesus Christ through His Apostles" (Leo XIII, *Providentissimus*). Nowadays, on the contrary, that "pastoral solicitude" trampled underfoot by the "pastoral" Vatican II Council, is no longer touched and can no longer show and make itself felt, not even in the face of the scandal given to "ordinary Catholics." In fact, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith, himself has nothing else to oppose to "modern-day exegesis," save his doctoral theses. And what is still worse: he has clearly declared that since...:

...the presuppositions welling up from the Kantian theory of conscience are making themselves...felt...like a spontaneous key to hermeneutics guiding the development and progress of critique,...ecclesiastical or Church authority cannot simply impose that we must find in Holy Scriptures a Christology of divine filiation.

So that's it! Now only heretics are able to dictate their views and laws to the Church, and not the other way around, and against such people the Church is not to do what it has always done by divine right from the very beginning by imposing its "rule of Faith" and excommunicating those who obstinately deny it:

And (we have in person) that exalteth itself [himself] against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ. And every height in readiness to revolt all disobedience, when your obedience shall be fulfilled (II Cor. 10:5 - 6; cf. also II Cor.13 : 2 sq.; I Cor. 4:18 - 21; II Cor. 5 : 1 - 5; I Tim 1 : 20; Acts 5:1 - 10).

Of which Church is Card. Ratzinger speaking anyway? Clearly, he is not referring here to the indefectible, unchanging Catholic Church founded by our Lord Jesus Christ almost two thousand years ago. No, Card. Ratzinger is speaking of the "Conciliar Church" which has adopted an erroneous concept of authority, distinctly characteristic of liberalism and solemnly condemned by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Libertas*:

Others, in fact, do recognize the Catholic Church...; they do not, however, admit its nature and its rights of a perfect society with its authentic power of legislation, of judging and punishing. They only recognize her faculty of exhortation, of persuasion, and of governing those who spontaneously and willingly make themselves subject to her. (See on "withdrawal" of authority since Vatican Council II, in *Iota Unum* by Romano Amerio.)

According to Card. Ratzinger , in fact, if:

...ecclesiastical authority cannot simply impose that we must find in Holy Scriptures a Christology of divine filiation [i.e., that Jesus Christ is also the Son of God], Church authority can and must, however, make an appeal [it is all in this word] to kindly "appeal"] to critically evaluate the underlying philosophy of the method we choose to adopt.

The Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith has made it manifest that he does not believe that our Lord Jesus Christ instituted, within His Church, a true and authentic power of governing all of the faithful. No, he considers, in spite of Holy Scriptures and Church tradition, that our Lord merely instituted a charge of fraternal exhortation. The double task entrusted to Church authorities of "restraining those teaching and spreading error" and of "preventing the faithful from following such false teachers" has "now been sacrificed to the [faith] principle of liberty," wrote Romano Amerio in his remarkable work, *Iota Unum*, (ch. 34, p.546).

POPE PIUS XII WAS ALSO RIGHT

Card. Ratzinger concludes:

The problem of exegesis coincides, to a great extent, with the problem of philosophy. Philosophical difficulties - that is to say, those difficulties with which human reason directed in a positivist sense has been struggling - have now become difficulties of our Faith.

Better late than never. Card. Ratzinger is beginning to see not only that truth which Pope St. Pius X pointed out so clearly in *Pascendi*, as did his predecessor Pope Leo XIII in *Providentissimus*, but also that which Pope Pius XII denounced equally clearly in *Humani Generis*, when he condemned the wanton claim of being able to express Catholic dogmas using the categories of modern-day philosophy, "of those products of fevered imagination presently called immanentism, idealism...or yet again, existentialism" or any other one of such systems.

Theology (and the same can be said regarding exegesis, which applies those norms based on reason and theology known as "hermeneutics"), in truth, does not depend on any philosophical "system"; what it does need is faith together with right reason, and, if the Church agrees with the "philosophy of the Fathers of the Church" and has adopted its terms for the formulation of its doctrine, it is because this philosophy is the expression of right reason as well as of a "true knowledge of that which has been created" (Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis*) and that its objectives constitute "stable human notions" (Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *La nouvelle théologie où va-t-elle?*). Pretending to base divinely revealed truth on a sick and unbalanced philosophy continually straying farther and farther away from right reason as well as from good common sense, as in Kantianism, can only end with the destruction of the Faith (that is, personal and not objective, as Ratzinger seems to understand it, even though in this destruction many, many souls are indeed implicated). In order to avert such a disaster, the humble obedience on the part of the sovereign pontiffs to the magisterium would have been quite sufficient:

I thank Thee, O Lord, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent according to worldly standards and hast revealed them to the humble of heart.

THOMISM: the system of philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.
LATITUDINARIANISM: a false tolerance in religious matters. In English, this term has been chiefly used of those tendencies in Protestantism which have now become openly modernist.
HERMENEUTICS: the principles governing the correct interpretation of Sacred Scriptures nad Associated, therefore, with the science of exegesis.

Having completed his diagnosis, what does Card. Ratzinger propose as a remedy in order to cure both exegesis and theology? Maybe a return to that "perpetually good and valid philosophy" and to sound Christian realism? The very thought does not even cross his mind. Even though Card. Ratzinger's diagnosis coincides with that of Pope St. Pius X as well as with that of Pope Pius XII, the same cannot be said with regard to his therapy. To false modern philosophy St. Pius X and Pius XII both [without mentioning other Roman pontiffs] oppose traditional philosophy, and especially Thomism, which "is based upon a belief in the capacities of human reason, and rejects scepticism both partial and complete" (R Amerio, *op. cit.*, p.537). Card. Ratzinger, on the contrary, in order to liberate human reason, argues in favor of a "new dialogue between faith and philosophy," but, precisely because he seeks such a "new" dialogue, he intends to block any possible way or path towards any attempt of "restoring" traditional philosophy." He declares:

I believe that neo-scholastic rationalism [the sane and sound one that does not fly in the face of Faith, but on the contrary, serves it] has failed in its bid of trying to reconstruct the "*preambula fidei*" through a purely rational certainty.

And not only that, but, Card. Ratzinger assures us, "all other attempts following the same route will end up with identical results." All of which means, in other words that, for Card. Ratzinger, it is impossible to prove with arguments based on pure reason the two fundamental facts of Christianity: (1) the existence of God, and (2) that God has indeed spoken to us. But why indeed, we wonder, would the "purely rational certainty" of the "*preambula fidei*" be inaccessible or out of our reach? Is this not tantamount to saying that it is impossible for us to obtain metaphysical knowledge? And is this not precisely that very same Kantian postulate or supposition which he has so piously been criticizing up to this point in his conference? And thus do we find that Card. Ratzinger not only opposing one agnosticism to another, but also declaring the entire Catholic Church to be in error, that same Church which, for almost two thousand years, has on the contrary, defended and taught the possibility of rationally justifying its act of Faith, beginning with its divine Founder, who also appealed to our reason (Jn. 10:38): "But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works." And continuing in the same vein, we have the Apostles (see I Pet. 3:15; Rom. 12:1, *etc.*) together with the apologists who defended the credibility of Christianity with arguments solidly based on pure reason as well as with the Fathers of the Church (St. Augustine: *Ratio antecedit fidem-Reason precedes faith*). The dogmatic [i.e., infallible] Vatican Council I (1869-70) also taught that "sound reason proves the foundations of Faith" (DB 1999). We should not forget that Pope Pius XII who, it should be mentioned, on the eve of Vatican II, countered the neo-modernists of his day because of their obstinate refusal to admit the rational character of the Christian faith's "credibility" (*rationali indoli "credibilitate" fidei Christianae iniuriam inferunt*), resolutely reaffirmed that...:

...it is indeed possible to prove with absolute certainty the divine origin of the Christian religion by means of the sole use of the natural light of human reason (*Humani Generis*).

It therefore follows that for a Catholic, it is a matter of Faith that the credibility of revelation is proved through arguments based on pure reason. Moreover, if the Church had indeed been in error for almost two thousand years concerning the rational justification of its act of Faith, and if the road of the "*preambula fidei*" is indeed foredoomed to failure, then the only thing to do is to continue on this fateful "path of skepticism, whim and heresy" which will simply and fatally open up to that same modernism solemnly condemned by Pope St. Pius X in the encyclical *Pascendi* (Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *cit. cit.*) Regarding this modernism, St. Pius X wrote:

[After Kantian agnosticism] they infer two things: that God is not directly subject to scientific study; and that God has never revealed Himself as a Person in history. After all of this, what is there left of natural theology, of the reasons for belief (or credibility) and of outside revelation? ...They [the modernists] have purely and simply suppressed them (*Pascendi*).

And, as a matter of fact, even though he seems to take some distance from the "premises" or "theses" of modernism, that is, from Kantian agnosticism, Card. Ratzinger continues, nevertheless, shoring in those very same consequences which modernists have understood drawn and still coherently continue to draw, by setting aside, as they do, the "*preambula fidei*": natural theology and motives or grounds for credibility. Strangely enough, Ratzinger does accept the principle that "faith protects and frees human reason from errors" (Vatican I, DB 1799). Yet, he does not accept another important principle also professed and approved by Vatican I, that is that "the fundamentals of Faith can indeed be proven by sound human reason" (*ibid*); thus for him, Faith is based on no rational foundation whatsoever. But then, we wonder, how can human reason be "cured" by a "faith" utterly lacking in any argument to justify itself before the bar of human reason?

FROM AGNOSTICISM TO LATITUDINARIANISM: "SUBSTITUTE FORMS" FOR THE FAITH

Up to the very end of his conference, Card. Ratzinger resolutely continues on this road of agnosticism and now logically comes to the most disastrous of conclusions. He writes:

In conclusion, as we contemplate our present-day religious situation, of which I have tried to throw some light on some of its elements, we may well marvel at the fact that, after all, people still continue believing in a Christian manner, not only according to Hick's, Knitter's as well as others' substitute ways or forms, but also according to that full and joyous Faith found in the New Testament of the Church of all time.

So, there it is: For Card. Ratzinger, "Hick, Knitter, and others" who deny the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Church, His sacraments, and, in short, all of Christianity, continue "despite everything" "believing in a Christian manner," even though they do so using "substitute forms of belief"! Here, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith leaves us wondering indeed, just what it is he means by "believing in a Christian manner."

Moreover, after the "*preambula fidei*" have been eliminated, that "full and joyous Faith of the Church of all time" which seems [for Card. Ratzinger] to be no different from modern-day apostasies other than by its style and total character, is utterly lacking in any rational credibility in comparison with and in relation to what he refers to as "substitute ways or forms" of faith. "How is it," Card. Ratzinger wonders, "in fact, that the Faith [the one of all time] still has a chance of success?" Answer:

I would say that it is because it finds a correspondence in man's nature....There is, in man, an insatiable desire for the infinite. None of the answers we have sought is sufficient [but must we take his own word for it, or must we go through the exercise of experiencing all religions?]. God alone [but Whom, according to Card. Ratzinger, human reason cannot prove to be truly God], Who made Himself finite in order to shatter the bonds of our own finitude and bring us to the dimension of His infinity [...and not to redeem us from the slavery of sin?] is able to meet all the needs of our human existence.

According to this, it is therefore not objective motives based on history and reason, and thus the truth of the "success" but only a subjective appreciation which brings us to "see" that it [Christianity] is able to satisfy the profound needs of human nature and which would explain the "Christianity" [modernists would say the "vitality"] of the "faith" ["of all time"] or in its "substitute forms," it is of but little importance. Such, however, is not at all Catholic doctrine: this is simply modernist apologetics (cf. Pope St. Pius X, *Pascendi*), based on their affirmed impossibility of grasping metaphysical knowledge (or agnosticism or skepticism), which Card. Ratzinger seemed to want to shun in the first part of his address.

Now we are in a position to better understand why Card. Ratzinger has such a wide-open concept of "theology" and of "faith" that he includes everything: theology as well as heresies, faith and apostasy. On that road of denial of the human reason's ability of attaining metaphysical knowledge, a road which he continues to follow, he lacks the "means of discerning the difference between faith and non-faith" (R. Amerio, *op. cit.*, p.340) and, consequently, theology from pseudo-theology, truth from heresy:

All theologies are nullified, because all are regarded as equivalent; the heart or kernel of religion is located in feelings or experiences, as the Modernists held at the beginning of this century (Amerio, *op. cit.*, p.542).

We cannot see how this position of Card. Ratzinger can escape that solemn condemnation proclaimed at Vatican I: "If anyone says...that men must be brought to the Faith solely by their own personal interior experience...let him be anathema" (DB 1812).

Romualdus

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