

The Flesh of the Logos: Reflections on Faith and Reason

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SEPTEMBER 2016 MARKED the tenth anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's address to the faculty of the University of Regensburg. The Regensburg address caused a sensation because of what the Pope said, or was purported to have said, about Islam. But, as the actual title of his lecture indicates, Benedict's chief purpose in the Regensburg address was not to talk about Islam. The lecture was entitled "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," and its purpose was to issue a call for "reason and faith [to] come together in a new way" (7).¹

Whatever may be the case with Islam, the West, he argued, faces a crisis of reason. This crisis stems from a divorce between reason and faith that has deeply shaped the culture and institutions of the modern West, a conflict between the claims of reason and the claims of religious faith that seems to be intensifying rather than diminishing. We must bring faith and reason together in a new way and overcome the conflict between the two that has come to seem normal in the West. On our success in so doing, Benedict warns, depends the future of the university, of Europe, and of the West, to say nothing of peace among the religious traditions of the world.

¹ Benedict says "find one another" (*zueinanderfinden*) in a new way. Parenthetical page references to the Regensburg address are to the Vatican website's English translation, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.pdf. I have sometimes modified the translation in light of the German original, also available on the Vatican website.

Benedict bases his call for a renewed mutual embrace of reason and faith not on assumptions about human reason as such, but on a claim about God. The claim is this: not to act in accordance with reason, not to act *σὺν λόγῳ*, “with logos” or “according to the logos,” is contrary to the nature of God (2–3). These are the words of the fourteenth-century Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus to his Muslim interlocutor. Whether or not these words express a decisive critique of Islam, they clearly express, in Benedict’s view, a decisive truth about God. God acts *σὺν λόγῳ*, rationally, according to reason. At the heart of Christian faith, Benedict says, lies just this conviction about God (3–4). It finds its founding and paradigmatic expression in the prologue to the Gospel according to John, indeed in the Gospel’s very first verse: “In the beginning was the Logos,” and the Logos, John goes on to say, is God. With this utterance, John gave to us, Benedict does not hesitate to claim, nothing less than “the final word on the biblical concept of God” (3).

Before the birth of Christianity, the Greeks, or at least some of them, had already prized logos, reason. Logos or reason is present in the very nature of things; it pervades the world, including mind, the part of the world capable of knowing the world and the rational structure of things. And logos or reason, the Greeks were in various ways often convinced, has its root or ultimate basis beyond the world of sense, while the world of sense points to or manifests this rational basis beyond itself. Benedict sees in “the meeting between the biblical message and Greek thought” nothing less than the generous hand of divine providence—the providence of the biblical God, of course—and he sees the eventual “rapprochement” of Greek thought about logos with the biblical message as an “intrinsic necessity” (3) and a permanent feature of Christian faith itself. “The fundamental decisions [of the ancient Church] regarding the connection of faith with the searching of human reason belong to this faith itself, and are its own unfolding, in accordance with its own nature” (6).²

As Benedict notes, it is a “critically purified Greek inheritance” (5) that eventually, and with world-transforming results, comes to be

² “Die Grundentscheidungen, die eben den Zusammenhang des Glaubens mit dem Suchen der menschlichen Vernunft betreffen, die gehören zu diesem Glauben selbst und sind seine ihm gemäße Entfaltung” (p. 7 of the German PDF on the Vatican website, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/de/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.pdf).

assimilated into biblical faith. However much in the way of self-criticism and refinement of its intuitions about reason Greek philosophy may have been able to carry out on its own, the ultimate and decisive critical purification of the “Greek heritage” was the work of biblical faith itself. According to biblical faith, God is indeed logos—but not just any God, and not just any logos. In John’s prologue, the personal God of the Old Testament, the God of the Septuagint, as Benedict notes, the God who elected the Jews, from whom comes salvation for all the world (John 4:22)—precisely this God is logos, or reason.

So much Benedict points out to his hearers in Regensburg. But John’s prologue goes further than this. In fact, already in the very first verse, the apostle takes a decisive step in the “purification” of the Greek inheritance. God is logos, he says, or more exactly, God is *the* Logos. But before he says that, and as the basis for understanding what is to follow, he says, “In the beginning . . . the logos was *with* God.” “Logos” or rationality is not simply an attribute of God, with “God” now having been rightly located as the personal God of the Bible. The logos is with God, already distinct in the beginning, primordially distinct, from the God with whom he is. No one, after all, is with himself. To be “with” is to have an other, in some irreducible fashion distinct from oneself. With the personal God of the Bible there is, in the beginning, an other, the logos. So John intimates in the first words of his Gospel that logos in God is not merely an attribute, but a person.

John bids us to go further still. God is reason, logos, and in particular, reason that fully expresses itself in the formation of a “word” that comes forth in the beginning from God, who speaks it so as to be “with” the speaking God. This Word fully utters or speaks all that God is, and as a result, all that could possibly be made by him (John 1:3). Here the apostle John, intimate of the incarnate Word and temple of the Holy Spirit, exploits in a previously unimagined way the dual meaning of the Greek term “logos,” both “reason” and “word.” In so doing, he exposes the root of the Christian doctrine of God, of the Father who has a Word and a Spirit, the doctrine of the holy Trinity. On the lips of the apostle, unlettered fisherman though he was, “logos” does work it could never have done on the lips of any Greek philosopher and opens up depths Greek reason could never have suspected.

What I have said so far suggests two questions. First, what exactly is the “crisis of reason” (my phrase, not his) that worries Pope Bene-

dict? Second, how is the biblical teaching on God as *logos*, or if you like, the biblically purified Greek teaching on the divinity of *logos*, expected to help us overcome this crisis of reason?

The view of reason that has us in crisis is, we could say, that of modern scientific naturalism. On this account, what is rational is limited, on the one hand, to the certainties of mathematics and, on the other hand, to what can be verified empirically, or by experiment. These two come together, Benedict rightly observes, in the project at the heart of the modern natural sciences, which is to give a mathematically rigorous account of what happens in nature, to show that matter, from its simplest to its most complex forms, obeys laws that can be stated mathematically.

As far as it goes, this way of looking at reason, this confidence in mathematics and experiment, is both correct and helpful, as the practical accomplishments of modern science and technology show. The problem comes, so Benedict argues, when we *limit* reason to the mathematical modeling of nature and hold that the rest of what we might think or speak about is irrational, against reason, or perhaps simply non-rational, beyond the bounds of what reason can help us with. When we limit reason in this way, the most fundamental matters of human concern, including especially those having to do with God and religion, are treated as inherently the enemies of reason that must be rooted out with a positively inquisitorial zeal. Or a bit more benignly (but only a bit), these basic matters of human concern are seen as simply but irrevocably beyond the scope of reason, incapable of rational assessment one way or the other. Reason therefore rightly ignores all such matters and assigns them to the realm of the subjective or the imaginary, where other forces hold sway and where such matters must be kept if reason is to do its own salutary work.

It is sometimes held, not least in contemporary Catholic apologetics, that the crisis of reason is fundamentally a loss of confidence, a postmodern disappearance of reason's proper self-assurance about its own ability to know the truth of things. Such loss of confidence may be felt here and there, but this is clearly not the crisis Benedict is talking about. Scientific naturalism embodies, on the contrary, a quite untroubled confidence in reason, in reason's ability to know all there is to be known. Naturalistic reason rejects transcendent truth, truth unreachable from the world of sense, not because it despairs of the power to know it, but because of its complete confidence that there are no such truths to be known. Naturalism disregards reli-

gious claims not because it worries that such claims deal with matters beyond its reach, but because of its confidence that reason has long since reached the truth about these claims and shown them for what they are: false, at best subjective or imaginary, and often fantastic and dangerous. Reason needs no help from beyond itself in order to know whatever there is to be known. In the process of knowing, it can certainly grasp its own limit, which is simply the limit of the real, the whole of which it is reason's business to know. Scientific reason sees no need of a logos beyond its own manipulation that might instruct reason concerning its limits and concerning truths beyond those limits. The crisis of which Benedict speaks is not one of under-confidence, but of overconfidence. It will not be helped by insisting that we need to have more confidence in reason, but by proposing a genuinely alternative vision of what reason is.

In contrast to this unhappy and finally destructive "modern self-limitation of reason" (5), the vision of reason Benedict seeks to foster is, first of all, simply a broader one, a view that sees all matters of human concern as in some way (though not always in the same way) subject to rational engagement. An adequately robust understanding of reason will be one that has ample room not only for the natural sciences but also for listening to "the great experiences and insights of the religious traditions of humanity, but especially of the Christian faith," and for tirelessly seeking, with Socrates, "the truth of existence" (7). By devolving into scientific naturalism, reason has lost any awareness of having roots beyond the world of sense. The crisis of reason will be overcome, Benedict suggests, when reason recovers a sense of its transcendent basis, and so of its own true nature. Reason thus liberated from the chains it has needlessly imposed upon itself will no longer deny its own grandeur and will once again be free to engage the full breadth of what it is made to know (7–8).

The current crisis of reason will be abated, Benedict further suggests, when reason and biblical faith come together once again, or come together in a new way. What is it, then, about Christian faith in the God who is logos that can come to the aid of shackled reason and help to liberate it?

Here we need to return to the prologue of the Gospel according to John and to two further statements John makes about the logos. For whatever reason, strikingly, Pope Benedict recalls neither one of these Johannine teachings in the Regensburg address. However, they together hold the key, I think, to ending the crisis of reason. One is

John's statement that "the Word became flesh . . . full of . . . truth" (John 1:14). The other is John's statement that "From his fullness we have all received" (John 1:16).

"The Word became flesh." As the Greeks rightly glimpsed, word, or logos, is the ultimate source of all reason, of all rationality. The Word, however, is not simply the transcendent source of reason, beyond the world of sense and the mind of the creature. For, according to the biblical faith of Catholics, the Logos has become flesh. As a result, the flesh the Logos became—that is, the human being Jesus—is the transcendent source of all reason. Not to believe this is not to believe that the Word has become flesh. And not to believe that the Word has become flesh is not to reckon with the Logos as he actually is, and will be forever. As Augustine tellingly relates, he read in the books of the Platonists about the Logos who was in the beginning with God, if not in just those biblical terms. "But that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," he goes on to say, "I did not read there."³

The Greeks glimpsed the logos as best they could, dimly and from afar. They caught sight of reason at its source, but only from a great distance. Now, the Word has become flesh. When we receive the body of Christ in the Eucharist, that flesh, the transcendent source of all reason, rests on our tongue and we are joined to the transcendent source of all reason in heart, in mind, and indeed, in body. We know the Logos not from a distance, but intimately and by contact. The last thing we should want is to do the impossible, to return to the position of the Greeks, sensing reason, logos, only from afar. We cannot succeed in sundering the source of all reason from his flesh, ejecting the Logos from the Virgin's womb and the tabernacle, nor should we want to. We must seek reason, seek the Logos, where he is to be found, in his flesh, in the Virgin's womb, in the tabernacle. For the Word has become flesh and will be this flesh forever. The biblical faith of Catholics recognizes this.

"The Word became flesh . . . full of truth." In his Word, God expresses or utters all that he is, and with that, all that he can make or do. The eternal speaking of this Word is the very generation or begetting of the person of the Son, the Father's personal and eternal act in which we confess our faith each week when we say the Creed. Because he expresses all that God is, God's Word or Son contains all

³ Augustine, *Confessions* 7.9.14, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 121.

truth in its original or primordial form, all truth about God and all truth about creatures, whether creatures God actually makes or those he could make but does not. As a result, the Logos of God is not only the source of all reason, but the measure of all truth. He is not only the source of the rational creature's capacity to seek truth, but the truth the creature's reason seeks. He is the ultimate norm or standard to which all truths in one way or another conform, and from which all falsehood departs. Just this Logos, the Word who is "the truth of the Father," has become flesh.⁴ So, the flesh the Logos became, the human being Jesus, is full of truth and is the measure of all truth. This human flesh is the stern measure of our reason, the flesh that is full of truth, that is the fullness of truth, and so renders all of our judgments true or false.

Thomas Aquinas makes this point with great force in his commentary on John 1:14. "This human being," he says, "is divine truth itself." Not just the Logos, but the flesh the Logos became, is divine truth itself, *ipsa divina veritas*. Thomas goes on to say: "In other human beings, there are many truths known by participation, insofar as the first truth itself [that is, God, in his Logos, the measure of all truth] shines in their minds by way of many different [created] likenesses [to the first truth]. But Christ is this truth."⁵

Of course you do not have to know Christ or know that he is *ipsa divina veritas* in order to have a share in the truth that he is. The Greeks did not, and yet his light shone in their minds in one way and another, as any truth in any created mind is a shining of his light and a share in the truth that he is. Through Christ himself, "all created truths have come to be, as various participations and flashes of the

⁴ On the Son or Word who becomes flesh as the *veritas Patris*, see Peter Lombard, paraphrasing Augustine: "The Son is understood to be the most perfect beauty, that is, the truth of the Father, in no way unlike him, whom we worship with the Father and in him" (I *Sent.*, d. 3, c. 1, [8], trans. Giulio Silano [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007], 20; translation altered). Similarly, see the Lombard's gloss on Ps 43[42]:3 ("Send forth your light and your truth"): "The light of the world and the truth of the Father is Christ . . . coming in his first advent" (PL, 191:425C; my translation). See also Thomas Aquinas: *Super 1 Cor 2*, lec. 2 (Marietti no. 100); *Summa theologiae* [ST] III, q. 39, a. 7, corp.

⁵ *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 8 (Marietti no. 188; my translation from the Marietti edition). For an English version of the whole, see St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 3 vols., trans. Fabian Larcher, O.P., and James A. Weisheipl, O.P., ed. Daniel Keating and Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010); the quoted passage is at 1:77.

first truth.”⁶ At the same time, Thomas often points out that there are different degrees of participation in the first truth, in God as *prima veritas*, as there are in all the divine perfections. Jesus of Nazareth is the *prima veritas* in the flesh. So the different grades of the rational creature’s participation in the first truth will be so many different levels of sharing in the human being Jesus as divine truth in the flesh, in the fullness of divine truth that is Jesus himself.

Of these, the most distant and incomplete is to know only truths accessible to natural reason. A radically more intimate and complete participation in divine truth itself comes through the virtue of faith, which knows the truths about God only the incarnate Word can teach, and so can both go immeasurably beyond natural reason and correct its many errors. Perfect participation in the fullness of truth that Jesus is comes only with the immediate vision of God, when we will know all truths humanly knowable and know them precisely as measured by the human being who is divine truth itself. On the whole, then, the more complete and intense your knowledge of the human being Jesus, the more complete and intense your apprehension of divine truth itself, the measure of all other truth. Every truth grasped by our mind comes to us from him; he is the source both of each truth and of the light by which we see it: “He cannot be deceived, because he is the truth itself [John 14:6] and teaches every truth; John 18:37: ‘For this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth.’”⁷ He is equally the standard by which all claims to truth must, in the end, be measured or judged. “The Word of God is the truth itself. . . . If you seek to know where you are going, cling to Christ, because he is the truth that we desire to reach.”⁸

“Of his fullness we have all received.” If the enfleshed Logos is the source of all reason and the measure of all truth, the human soul of

⁶ *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 10 (Marietti no. 207; my translation; *Commentary*, 1:85).

⁷ *Super Ioannem* 14, lec. 2 (Marietti no. 1870; my translation; *Commentary*, 3:56). On the Word made flesh as the source of that light by which every intellectual creature sees any truth it apprehends, whether by nature or by grace, see *Super Ioannem* 8, lec. 2 (Marietti no. 1142), commenting on John 8:12 (“I am the light of the world”): “Whatever light there is in the rational creature all flows from this supreme light, ‘Which enlightens every man coming into the world [John 1:9]’” (my translation; *Commentary*, 2:107); cf. *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 5 (Marietti nos. 129–30), commenting on John 1:9 (“He was the true light”) (*Commentary*, 1:54–55).

⁸ *Super Ioannem* 14, lec. 2 (Marietti nos. 1869–70; my translation; *Commentary*, 3:55–56).

the Logos is the *location* of the fullest possible human knowledge of truth. Catholic theology has long held that the perfection of Jesus's human knowledge consists above all in this, that he possesses in his human soul the immediate vision of God, the knowledge that brings unsurpassable blessedness, from the first moment of his existence in the womb of the Virgin Mary and throughout his earthly life. Here again, St. Thomas is clear and forceful, commenting on John 1:14. "Christ was full of truth, because his precious and blessed soul knew all truth, both divine and human, from the instant of conception. For just this reason, Peter said to him [at the end of John's Gospel (21:17)], 'You know all things.'"⁹

The perfection of human reason, the fullest possible apprehension of the truth by a created intellect, is therefore not simply an ideal, perhaps a quite hopeless ideal, at which we strive. The perfection of human reason is a reality in the human soul of Jesus. The human being Jesus is the measure of all our claims to truth, and at the same time, his human soul already possesses all the knowledge of truth that we seek. From his fullness we receive: all our knowledge, from the first infant stirrings of reason through supernatural faith to the fullness of beatitude, is not simply measured and normed by him; it *comes* from him, not only as divine Logos, but as this fleshly human being. It is the gift of Jesus himself to us, a participation in his perfection of reason, in his beatitude or blessedness. St. Thomas again speaks of the totality of grace in us, including our knowledge, as a share in the single perfection of grace that belongs to the human soul of Christ: "The fullness of grace that is in Christ is the cause of all the graces that are in all intellectual creatures."¹⁰

For just this reason, the apostle Paul urges us to have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5; 1 Cor 2:16). The mind of Christ, the knowledge of "all truth, both divine and human" lodged in his human soul, is not opaque or inaccessible to us. He shares it with us in all its fullness. He imparts to us in a human way, by way of words, the natural instruments of the embodied soul, the innermost secrets of the divine life. By mere words, he opens up to us the truths about God

⁹ *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 8 (Marietti no. 189; my translation; *Commentary*, 1:77).

¹⁰ *Super Ioannem* 1, lec. 10 (Marietti no. 202), on John 1:16 (my translation; see also *Commentary*, 1:82). Cf. *ST* III, q. 7, a. 1, corp., and q. 8, a. 5, corp. In particular, the blessedness at which our life aims is simply the fullest possible participation in the perfection of Jesus's human knowledge, in his own immediate vision of God (*ST* III, q. 9, a. 2, corp.).

that only God himself is naturally able to know but that he freely shares with us whom he calls to friendship with himself. To have the mind of Christ, as Paul insists, we need simply to believe the Gospel proclaimed by the Church. Or as Blessed John Henry Newman puts Paul's point: "And I hold in veneration, / For the love of Him alone, / Holy Church, as His creation, / And her teachings, as His own."¹¹ From his fullness, the fullness of human, rational knowledge, we have all received. The more we have the mind of Christ, the more rational we are.

What it will take for faith and reason to come together in a way that brings an end to the modern crisis of reason thus seems startlingly clear. Debased reason will have to return to its source, to the Logos made flesh, and humbly seek the mind of Christ. Less bluntly put, Western reason has fallen into bondage by attempting to loose itself from its roots in biblical faith, or if you like, its roots in the biblically purified Greek understanding of reason's grandeur. It will escape its chains by returning to its roots.

Interestingly, the Benedict of the Regensburg address hesitates at this point. Or more precisely, he sees that there are two quite different strategies by which a culture that takes scientific naturalism for granted might be brought to see reason in a broader and more humane way—to see reason, in other words, the way Christian faith sees it. For all practical purposes, these strategies are opposites, such that to follow one is to abandon the other. Nonetheless, Pope Benedict gestures at both.

One strategy is to seek resources within scientific naturalism itself, within reason under its current state of bondage, to exhibit the need for a more comprehensive understanding of reason than the one naturalism itself displays. The other strategy is to seek resources within biblical faith that call for this broader understanding of reason, in particular the Johannine resources that I have just described. While Benedict seemingly wants to try both, only one of them, I think, offers any reliable promise of success.

In pursuit of the first strategy, one might try to convince the scientific naturalist that his outlook makes some big assumptions that

¹¹ *The Dream of Gerontius*, in John Henry Newman, *Prayers, Verses, and Devotions* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 694. Similarly Thomas Aquinas: "What is established by the Church is ordained by Christ himself [*ea quae per Ecclesiam statuuntur, ab ipso Christo ordinantur*], who says, Matt. 18 (:20), 'wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them'" (*ST* III, q. 83, a. 3, sc; my translation from the Leonine edition).

its constricted view of reason does not allow it to explain. The project of mathematizing nature assumes, in particular, that matter has an inherently rational structure and that the rationality of matter is accessible to, and coheres with, the rational structures of the human mind. The modern natural sciences depend upon the truth of these epistemic assumptions, but science itself has no way to show that they are true. In the nature of the case, assumptions like these, upon which all natural science rests, can neither be demonstrated mathematically nor verified empirically, since every effort at demonstration and verification presupposes that they are true. In this way, Benedict suggests, we might try to convince the naturalist that “modern natural-scientific reason . . . bears within itself a question that points beyond itself and beyond the possibilities of its methodology,” and so science inherently points to and depends on the kind of reasoning undertaken in philosophy and theology, reasoning that cannot be reduced to empirical verification of mathematical hypotheses about nature (7).

Now, I find this sort of argument convincing, but I nonetheless think it is fated to fail, at least in the current conditions of faith and reason. What is to prevent the scientific naturalist from declining Benedict’s gambit and thinking himself quite rational in doing so? All reasoning has to start somewhere, the naturalist might argue, with something it takes for granted. Even Aristotle knew that. The enormous success of modern science at producing practical results proves, as well as anything could, that we are starting in the right place, in the rational place: with matter and mind (whatever the latter may be) alike obedient to mathematical laws. Why matter and mind cohere is, Benedict insists, “a real question” that science cannot answer (7). To which the naturalist can simply reply (and often has) that, since science cannot answer it, it is not a real question. It is, rather, the assumption that makes it possible to ask questions that we can actually answer.

This suggests, against the grain of much Catholic philosophy and theology since the mid-nineteenth century, with its endlessly reiterated and increasingly fruitless appeals to natural reason and natural law as the only bulwark against secularism, atheism, naturalism, and nihilism, that, at least as things presently stand in the West, it takes biblical faith to see the need for and the attractiveness of a broader and more humane conception of reason. Faith and reason can and should come together again, but faith is going to have to do the work of

joining the two. Reason, having shackled itself with the limitations of scientific naturalism, is not likely to escape them under its own power.

As a way of seeing how this might be the case, think again of Benedict's attempt to argue the scientist out of his naturalism. As I say, I find this kind of argument clear and compelling, and others do as well. But surely our inclination to be convinced by it is shaped quite deeply by biblical and Christian convictions. It is shaped, for example, by the convictions that matter (including the matter that makes up the human brain) is not simply a given and that matter and the human mind are both freely created by God. These convictions make the origin of each, of matter and mind, something sensible to ask about, a "real question," in Benedict's terms, and also offer a basis for being convinced of their profound coherence, which makes natural science possible.

Were we to abstract completely from the convictions of biblical faith (assuming for the moment that this is at least logically, if not psychologically, possible), would we still be inclined to regard the origin of matter and mind as a real question, one it makes sense to ask and to which we might give a rationally warranted answer, an answer that reached beyond matter and the embodied mind to an explanatory source beyond them?

If we were really to set aside the biblical faith of Catholics in the creator God, I suspect that most of us, if we think honestly about it, would be strongly inclined toward naturalism. At most we might perhaps suppose, with some agnostic scientists and philosophers of our own day, that scientific reason inevitably poses questions it cannot answer, a state of affairs that attests not to the need for a broader view of reason, but to limits beyond which our cognitive capacities can never hope to go. Something may lie beyond these limits, or something may not, but we will never know.

To be sure, this result, while likely under our cultural circumstances, is not inevitable. One or two of us might, for example, become genuine Platonists, robustly convinced of a *logos* that gives light to the passing world of sense and draws us beyond that world. But it would be a big mistake, though a mistake to which Catholic philosophers and theologians remain oddly tempted, to take these remarkable exceptions, these Platonist outliers, as proof that, in order to liberate reason from its shackles, we first need to convince scientific naturalists to be Platonists, Aristotelians, or something of the

sort—that we first need to persuade them of the truth of our philosophical preferences.

Still less should we suppose that, in order to help scientific naturalists find their way to Christian faith, we first need to convince them to be Platonists or Aristotelians (or Hegelians or Heideggerians, or whatever)—as though believing in Christ were possible only for someone who already holds this or that philosophical view. Perhaps one can be a Platonist simply on the strength of the arguments proposed in Plato's dialogues, or in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, though under our cultural conditions that would be quite difficult (not least because of two millennia of Christian discourse about the Logos). But a Catholic, even the most flamboyant Platonist among us, does not believe in reason or logos transcending the world of sense solely, or primarily, because of the arguments in Plato or Plotinus. We believe in a transcendent logos because we have been taught it by the Logos himself, the Logos made flesh who taught us that he was in the beginning with God. To carry on as though this were not the case is at best confused, a failure to understand that all the truth we do have has been truly received from the fullness of the Word made flesh, and at worst dishonest, an apologetic bait and switch unworthy of believers in the Gospel.

These last thoughts are a bit of the second strategy, which seeks the resources for bringing faith and reason together and restoring reason to its senses in biblical faith itself. The source and the measure, rule, and standard of our reason is not simply the divine Logos, but the Logos made flesh—the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5), full of grace and truth (John 1:14), and thus the perfection of human reason. As Justin Martyr and Irenaeus already clearly saw, and as many since have likewise seen, biblical faith does not need to prove its rationality to those who know the logos only from afar. We know the Logos by contact: we have been given the mind of Christ, the very human thoughts of the Logos. Those who share in the Logos only from a distance will prove themselves rational when they recognize the flesh of the Logos for what it is. It is not we who will prove ourselves and our faith in the flesh of the Logos rational by finding support for it in the naturalist's hopelessly constrained conception of reason. The key to realizing a new and better relationship between faith and reason, we could say, is not a new philosophy (still less the revival of an old one), but the Great Commission—or, as it has been called in our day, the New Evangelization. N&V