

The Manuscripts of Joseph Ratzinger's Lectures on the Doctrine of Creation

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Introduction

It would be surprising for a pope to dedicate a homily for the Easter Vigil—the most important celebration of the liturgical year—to sketching the features of the Christian doctrine of creation, a topic that *prima facie* has minimal pastoral relevance. Yet Benedict XVI did precisely this on April 23, 2011, and again on April 8, 2012.² Indeed, the now-emeritus Pontiff spoke frequently of the importance of faith in God the Creator and its consequences for the dialogue that Christians are called to undertake with the contemporary world,³ an approach that Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* has only confirmed.

¹ For further discussion of Ratzinger's lecture notes within a broader treatment of his thought on creation and evolution, see Matthew J. Ramage, *From the Dust of the Earth: Benedict XVI, the Bible, and the Theory of Evolution* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2022).

² Benedict XVI, Homily for the Easter Vigil, April 23, 2011, and Homily for the Easter Vigil, April 8, 2012. [Editorial note: All papal documents by Benedict can be found on the Vatican website.]

³ See Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," September 12, 2006 (also known as the Regensburg Address); Meeting with the Clergy of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone, August 6, 2008; Speech to Members of the Roman Curia, December 22, 2008; apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini*, September 30, 2010, §8; Speech at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart,

In encountering Ratzinger's theological thought, what immediately comes to mind is his strong grounding in Scripture and in the tradition of the Fathers and medieval masters (especially St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure)—as well as the importance he accords to the Church's liturgical tradition (and thus his interest for ecclesiology and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist). If we add to this his early dedication to fundamental theology and his growing passion for Christology and eschatology,⁴ then it would appear that the doctrine of creation does not lie among the principal interests and theological contributions of our author. We could go further still—as some have done in the case of *Introduction to Christianity*, his most widespread and read work of theological synthesis—and decry the almost total absence of reference to the first article of faith in early Ratzingerian theology.⁵

Yet it is not accurate to say that the theme of creation is alien to Ratzinger's thought. Indeed, a glance at the bibliography reveals that the interest was present already at the beginning of his scholarly corpus,⁶ although it is true that it appears to grow in importance over time.

May 3, 2012. The last general audience before his "great renunciation" treated precisely the topic "I believe in God: Maker of Heaven and Earth, the Creator of Man" (Benedict XVI, General Audience, February 6, 2013).

⁴ On these general dimensions of Ratzinger's theology, see A. Nichols, *The Theology of Joseph Ratzinger: an Introductory Study* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988); V. Twomey, *Benedikt XVI. Das Gewissen unserer Zeit. Ein theologisches Portrait* (Augsburg, 2006); P. Blanco, *La teología de Joseph Ratzinger. Una introducción* (Madrid: Palabra, 2011).

⁵ See J. Auer, *Die Welt—Gottes Schöpfung* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1983), 23: "Als 1969 Joseph Ratzinger seine 'Einführung in das Christentum' veröffentlichte, kam in den großen Ausführungen über Gott 'Gott der Schöpfer' oder 'die Welt als Schöpfung nicht zur Sprache, obwohl sich die Darlegungen an das Apostolicum hielten.' Das entspricht dem Denken und Fragen der westlichen Welt von heute." I myself have written something similar, expanding the criticism to K. Rahner's widespread work *Grundkurs des Glaubens* as others had already done. See: S. Sanz, *La relación entre creación y alianza en la teología contemporánea* (Rome: EDUSC, 2003), 45; L. Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung als Heilseröffnung. Schöpfungslehre* (Aachen: MM Verlag, 1997), 34. In reality, a detailed study of the Ratzingerian corpus reveals a need to nuance such objections. See J. Rodríguez Mas, "La verdad de la creación en Introducción al cristianismo de J. Ratzinger," in *Fede e Ragione. Le luci della verità*, ed. A. Porras (Rome: ESC, 2012), 213–24.

⁶ Limiting ourselves to works and contributions exclusively on the theme of creation, let us note: "Schöpfung," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. J. Höfer and K. Rahner, vol. 9 (Herder: Freiburg, 1964), cols. 460–66; "Schöpfungsglaube und Evolutionstheorie," in *Wer ist das eigentlich—Gott?*, ed. H. J. Schultz (München: Kosel, 1969), 232–45; *Konsequenzen des Schöpfungsglaubens*, Salzburger Universitätsreden 68 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1980); *Im Anfang schuf*

Aware of this evidence, there are those who have argued that Ratzinger changed his views over the years, first due to the post-conciliar situation, and then also to the continuing evolution of his ecclesial position (bishop, prefect, pope).⁷ I myself was convinced of this given that Ratzinger had grown in his appreciation for well-grounded moral theology and thereby to greater esteem for St. Thomas Aquinas even as he maintained his original Bonaventurian Augustinianism.⁸

Nevertheless, I began to rethink the notion that Ratzinger's views had changed after my "chance" discovery of a 1964 Münster manuscript in a Toronto library, a text to which I have dedicated a large study in three stages.⁹ As I have shown in other studies, this need for change was further reinforced over the course of a sabbatical in Regensburg at the Institut Papst Benedikt XVI, where I came into contact with other manuscripts germane to Ratzinger's doctrine of creation, one from 1958 and the other from 1976.¹⁰ These texts demonstrate that the doctrine of

Gott—Konsequenzen des Schöpfungsglaubens (Freiburg: Johannes, 1996), 77–94; *Gottes Projekt. Nachdenken über Schöpfung und Kirche* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2009). References to the importance of creation are present in many other works of Ratzinger. For a study and collection of texts, see J. Rodríguez Mas, "La relación, clave de lectura de la doctrina de la creación y del pecado original en la teología de Joseph Ratzinger," (PhD diss., Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, 2013).

⁷ H. Verweyen described the alleged about-face within Ratzinger's theology as "the myth of the great change [der Mythos der großen Wende]."; see Verweyen, *Joseph Ratzinger—Papst Benedikt XVI: Die Entwicklung seines Denkens*, Primus Verlag (Darmstadt, 2007), 39–42. See also L. Boeve and G. Mannion, *The Ratzinger Reader: Mapping a Theological Journey* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 11–12.

⁸ See G. Pell, foreword to Tracy Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith: Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xii: "Ratzinger, like every main-line Catholic, is indebted to Aquinas in a thousand ways, especially in morality, and he is not hostile to classical Thomism in general or to St Thomas personally." See also Blanco, *La teología de Joseph Ratzinger*, 23–31. An interesting fact is that, in the cycle of his catecheses on the Fathers of the Church and the great medieval doctors, Benedict XVI dedicated five audiences to the figure of Saint Augustine, while he dedicated "only" three to Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventure.

⁹ See S. Sanz, "Joseph Ratzinger y la doctrina de la creación: los apuntes de Münster," *Revista Española de Teología* 74 (2014): 31–70; Sanz, "Joseph Ratzinger y la doctrina de la creación: los apuntes de Münster de 1964 (II): Algunos temas fundamentales," *Revista Española de Teología* 74 (2014): 201–48; Sanz, "Joseph Ratzinger y la doctrina de la creación. los apuntes de Münster de 1964 (y III): Algunos temas debatidos," *Revista Española de Teología* 74 (2014): 453–96.

¹⁰ See S. Sanz, "La dottrina della creazione nelle lezioni del professor Joseph Ratzinger: gli appunti di Freising (1958)," *Annales theologici* 30 (2016): 11–44;

creation has been present in Ratzinger's teaching through all the stages of his academic life.¹¹

Given the importance of the topic, in this article I will present a summary of the results of my research into these manuscripts. First, however, we need to make some preliminary comments to contextualize the work and to explain what we stand to gain by studying the unpublished and therefore non-authoritative texts of an author like ours.

Preliminary Considerations

The Institut Papst Benedikt XVI houses many manuscripts of Ratzinger's lecture notes (*Vorlesungsmitschriften*) beginning with the 1955–1956 academic year, all the way up to 1976. According to the list made available to me and dated March 5, 2015, seventy-one manuscripts have been cataloged.¹² It must be borne in mind that some of these are duplicates or versions of the same course from different writers. For some, it is specified whether they have been taken by hand (*handschriftlich*) or are typewritten (*maschinenschriftlich*), while for others nothing of this kind is specified. Sometimes it gives information about the text's provenance (i.e., the person who owns the notes), while other times it also includes the editor's name. Of course, owner and editor do not necessarily coincide.¹³

Sanz, "La dottrina della creazione nelle lezioni del professor Joseph Ratzinger: gli appunti di Regensburg (1976)," *Annales theologici* 30 (2016): 251–83. I am grateful to the institute staff, especially its deputy director, Dr. Christian Schaller, for their welcome and help that made possible a profitable and serene development of my research.

¹¹ The work of W. Baier appears to further corroborate this statement [in editorial choices for] *Weisheit Gottes—Weisheit der Welt: Festschrift für Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger zum 60. Geburtstag*, vol. 2, ed. Baier (St. Ottilien: Eos, 1987). In this *Festschrift* for Ratzinger's sixtieth birthday, one can grasp the importance that the theme of creation had for him. Of the almost 1400 pages comprising the two volumes, the first part of the five into which it is divided is entitled "Die Weisheit Gottes in der Schöpfung" (3–308) and consists of seventeen contributions on the doctrine of creation.

¹² There is another list available to researchers that contains up to ninety-seven titles, organized by the name of the person who wrote the notes. As we have said, however, some are mere duplicates or constitute different versions of the same course.

¹³ Such is the case concerning a manuscript from the Freising period, which corresponds to the *Trinitätslehre* course of the winter semester 1957–1958. It contains 140 pages typewritten by Joh. Harrer and hailing from Jos. Mühlbacher, the same people who appear in the manuscript that we will be studying here. The notes of the course *Der Gottesglaube der Kirche*, held in the winter semester 1972–1973, span seventy-six typewritten pages and were composed by Markus

We do not have a lot of data when it comes to the method that Ratzinger's students used to compose these notes. According to an expert of the institute, the lectures were recorded on cassettes beginning in the 1960s, but once transcribed the tapes were recycled for other courses. Because of this, unfortunately, the audio of these recorded lectures has not been preserved.¹⁴

The manuscripts span the whole gamut of Ratzinger's academic life and come from lectures held at the various institutions where he taught: the Freising seminary and the theological faculties of Bonn, Münster, Tübingen, and Regensburg. They bear witness to the diversity of dogmatic disciplines Ratzinger taught. Among those preserved are notes for fundamental theology, Trinitarian theology, Christology, sacraments (especially Eucharist), ecclesiology, eschatology, and still others.¹⁵

Ten of the seventy-one manuscripts on the list deal with the doctrine of creation and represent three of the five times that Ratzinger taught this treatise based on the available information.¹⁶ Specifically, there are five copies of the course held in Freising in the summer semester of 1958, four of the course held in Münster in the summer semester of 1964, and

Franz (*Skribent*), whereas they come from the archive of Gregor Tischler (from Regensburg).

¹⁴ See the author's personal interviews with Franz-Xaver Heibl from July 6–17, 2015.

¹⁵ For a complete list of the courses taught by our professor over his academic career, see V. Pfnür, *Joseph Ratzinger, Papst Benedikt XVI, Das Werk: bibliographisches Hilfsmittel zur Erschließung des literarisch-theologischen Werkes von Joseph Ratzinger bis zur Papstwahl* (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2009), 401–6; see also G. Valente, *Ratzinger professore. Gli anni dello studio e dell'insegnamento nel ricordo dei colleghi e degli allievi (1946–1977)* (San Paolo: Cinisello Balsamo, 2008), 189–96.

¹⁶ In relation to the lists present in the works indicated in the previous note, there are no notes for the 1955 course on creation delivered in Freising or the one held in Regensburg in 1970. Of the five copies of the 1958 Freising course, three are handwritten (at least one certainly by Joseph Vogt) with various additions, and two are typewritten. The three copies of the 1964 Münster course are typewritten, without any indication of their editor. There is another typewritten copy that does not specify its year or place, yet a glance at the table of contents and the content itself is sufficient to understand that it aligns entirely with the 1964 course. Regensburg from 1976 is machine driven. The other list of which we have spoken, classified according to the name of its editors, mentions: four copies of the 1958 course by Joseph Vogt; three other copies of the same course (one lacking an indication of its editor, and two made available to us by Joh. Harrer and Jos. Mühlbacher); and, finally, a copy of the Münster manuscript that we have already treated.

one from that held in Regensburg from the summer semester of 1976. The typed versions of these courses have lengths of 101, 254, and 128 pages, respectively.¹⁷ The Münster manuscript of 1964 is one of the most carefully edited in terms of presentation, in addition to being one of the longest overall. The other two also have features that make them interesting, and thus a brief description of their content will be useful.

At this point, however, we need to ask ourselves what is to be gained by a study of this sort. The first thing to observe is that, as indicated to me both by the institute staff and by the personal secretary of Benedict XVI himself, these are not authorized writings, and therefore cannot be considered official works of the author *stricto sensu*.¹⁸ Indeed, we have no guarantee that the author continues to support a particular opinion that he may have expressed in his lectures as documented in these unpublished texts.

In addition to this limit, or rather more fundamentally, one may contest the veracity or reliability of the notes. This logically depends on the competence of the student who writes them. The fact that Joseph Ratzinger never once authorized their publication is undoubtedly significant.¹⁹

Nevertheless, there are good reasons to offer a description of these notes to the theological community. In the first place, they are sources of Ratzinger's thought. One cannot reasonably doubt that their contents substantially correspond to what he said in his lectures, and that they therefore reflect his thinking and opinions at that time regardless of whether they went on to be published or not.²⁰ In this regard, as I have

¹⁷ One of the copies of the 1964 course, the one without indication of place or date, has a smaller page count (182 compared to 254 in the other versions) simply because there is more text on each page, as can be easily verified from a comparative reading of the manuscripts.

¹⁸ Author's personal interview with His Excellency the Most Reverend Msgr. Georg Gänswein, Vatican City, February 26, 2015. I am grateful to Msgr. Gänswein for the valuable suggestions and information he provided me.

¹⁹ "Man sollte bei allen Manuskripten, die von Joseph Ratzingers Vorlesungen angefertigt worden sind, bedenken, dass es sich um Mitschriften von seinen Studenten handelt. Er selbst hat nie ein Manuskript ausgeteilt oder autorisiert, bis auf eine Aufnahme" (private letter from Dr. Christian Schaller to the author, August 7, 2014).

²⁰ According to Msgr. Gänswein, it was normal in that era within German theological faculties for students to copy the professor's lecture notes and then arrange them in order with a table of contents, bibliographies, and the like. The professor never allowed such notes to be published as his own, as that would have been tantamount to accepting that the mere study of those notes would be sufficient for students to master the material. However, he did acknowledge that his name was present, that he had in some way authorized the notes' existence, and that

shown in my study of the Münster manuscript, some of Ratzinger's later publications had a clear basis in these lecture notes, at times lifting from them entire paragraphs verbatim.²¹ This applies not only to the doctrine of creation but also could easily be shown with regard, for example, to eschatology, the only subject for which he has published a manual.²²

More generally, we must not forget that lecture notes are an important source (in some cases the only one) for learning about the thought of great authors like Aristotle, Duns Scotus, Francisco de Vitoria, and Hegel, to name just a few.²³ The fact that the Institut Papst Benedikt XVI preserves these manuscripts and makes them available to scholars is itself indicative of their non-negligible value, as they are lecture notes of a professor who over time became not only an internationally renowned theologian but also successor of Peter and, as of February 28, 2013, the first pope emeritus in modern times.

they served as a study guide. From this, we can infer that Ratzinger approved these texts as corresponding with what he taught in class. This is not to say that what we read reflects his final opinion on every single issue treated. What certainly can be said is that Ratzinger said those things in class (see interview with His Excellency the Most Reverend Msgr. Gänswein).

²¹ See the second and third parts of the study cited in note 8, which contain numerous quotations from texts in Ratzinger's publications parallel to those in the Münster manuscript. On this score, Msgr. Gänswein acknowledged that, if we should happen to find texts of later publications that are similar or even identical to what we have in these manuscripts, then such student *Mitschriften* enjoy a high degree of reliability and in some sense truly can be considered Ratzinger's thought. In any case, the secretary of the emeritus Pontiff observed that Ratzinger had expressed his vision on creation in the publications we have listed in note 5.

²² J. Ratzinger, *Eschatologie. Tod und ewiges Leben* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1978). In the list of manuscripts present at the institute, we find notes for Ratzinger's eschatology courses in the winter semester of the academic year 1957–1958 (three handwritten copies of brief and variable lengths), handwritten ones for the summer semester of 1968, typewritten ones for the summer semester of 1972, and typewritten ones for the summer semester of 1975. This last copy of 124 pages in length is the most extensive and perfect in comparison with the others. If you compare this copy with the manual published a few years later, you will notice a great overlap both in the table of contents and in the content itself, with many identical paragraphs, although naturally the manual contains not only modifications but also amplifications.

²³ It is interesting to note that Karl Rahner's courses from 1956–1959 on the doctrine of creation and grace can be found on his archive's website. [Editorial note: This was the case up through when Fr. Sanz last consulted the site on November 22, 2018, but the link used at that time has since ceased to reach the site.] A comparative study with the manuscripts of our professor would be interesting, but this task lies beyond our competence.

The Freising Manuscript (1958)

In the 1958–1959 academic year, Ratzinger held the chair of dogmatic and fundamental theology at the college of philosophical and theological studies in Freising, before moving to Bonn. Actually, he had begun teaching there already in the academic year 1954–1955.²⁴ At this time, among others, he twice gave a course of four lecture hours per week on the doctrine of creation, one in the summer semester of 1955 and the other in the summer semester of 1958.²⁵

We are in possession of a typed manuscript of 108 pages [total] of this last instance. The manuscript is entitled *Schöpfungslehre*, with the name of the professor and the semester further specified (“Nach einer Vorlesung von Prof. Jos. Ratzinger, im SS 1958”). Additionally, the cover indicates the editor’s name (“Skriptum geschrieben von Joh. Herrler”), and below it the presumed owner of this copy (Jos. Mülbacher). The table of contents (*Inhaltsverzeichnis*) follows in seven pages with Roman numerals, and then the 101 pages of content. At the end of the last page, we find the date of the lectures’ conclusion: July 25, 1958 (“Ende 25.7.1958”).

The first surprising thing is the breadth of the table of contents. For just over a hundred pages, it is quite rich in titles and subtitles, especially if we compare it with the other two manuscripts’ table of contents. This may be indicative of a minor expansion in explanation of the themes, greater concision on the part of the editor, or likely both.

The general structure is at bottom quite simple. The text is divided into two major parts. The first somewhat resembles the traditional distinction of the *De Deo creante* treatise between creation *active sumpta* (i.e., the creative act of God) and creation *passive sumpta* (i.e., created being).²⁶ Each of these, in turn, is divided into two parts: first the dimension of static nature, and then the dimension of historical dynamism. Thus, the first part deals with creative divine action and then with providence, while the second covers Christian doctrine on man as creature and then the specification of his historic-salvific condition as sinner.²⁷

²⁴ See J. Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927–1977* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 41.

²⁵ See Pfnür, *Das Werk*, 401.

²⁶ The distinction comes from Thomas Aquinas. See, for example, *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 3, corp.

²⁷ See J. Ratzinger, *Schöpfungslehre*, Nachschrift der Vorlesung im SS 1958 (Freising, 1958), 2: “Die Schöpfungslehre teilt man am besten in 2 Hauptabschnitte ein: 1. die Schöpfungstat Gottes und 2. das Schöpfungswerk Gottes, die Geschöpfe im einzelnen.” Hereafter, we will cite this document with the abbreviation SS 1958. Accordingly, we will quote the Münster manuscript as SS 1964

Within this schema, two elements of particular interest stand out. The first is that the supernatural elevation of man, and accordingly the great nature–grace theme is dealt with in the first part at the end, rather than at the beginning of the second, as will be the case in 1964.²⁸ The other is that here a specific section is dedicated to angels and demons; most likely due to lack of time, however, the pages dedicated to this topic are few and the style of the notes is particularly succinct and schematic. We will see later that this theme disappears from the table of contents in the 1964 manuscript and then reappears emphatically in that of 1976.

Turning to the formal aspects of development within the course content, the first thing that draws our attention is that here it is very clear that these are notes written by a student. Indeed, they contain many short paragraphs with definitions and precise explanations of various concepts. The manuscripts of 1964 and 1976 are also the work of students, yet comparatively they have a more refined style. One point that illustrates this difference is that here, in the 1958 manuscript, Ratzinger's name is spelled out on several occasions in order to clarify that the professor's opinion on the topic in question is being transcribed.²⁹

and that of Regensburg as SS 1976. The tables of contents in the appendices of our previous studies can be compared. See Sanz, "Joseph Ratzinger y la doctrina de la creación," 58–63; "La dottrina della creazione (Freising)," 34–39; "La dottrina della creazione (Regensburg)," 278–79.

²⁸ Following a traditional schema, within the first part on the creative act Ratzinger includes a final chapter ("3. Kapitel: Die übernatürliche Erhebung der Kreatur" [SS 1958, 40–53]) which acts as a bridge to the second part on creatures. God creates but also elevates; supernatural elevation is also God's action, which recalls the old name of the treatise: *De Deo creante et elevante*. In 1964, on the other hand, this theme will be dealt with in the part on man as one of the pairs of fundamental concepts for understanding human beings: nature and grace: see Sanz, "Joseph Ratzinger y la doctrina de la creación," 41; "Joseph Ratzinger y la doctrina de la creación [III]," 459–71.

²⁹ On the possibility of an eternal world in Thomas, who himself had inherited a certain Aristotelian conception in this regard (and without saying anything in relation to Bonaventure or other medieval doctors), Ratzinger only notes the following: "Nach Ratzinger hat Thomas recht. Die Möglichkeit einer Anfangslosen Schöpfung scheint möglich zu sein" (SS 1958, 19). In touching the subject of man as the center of creation, we observe: "Ratzinger: Im Hinblick auf die Erde trifft die Feststellung zu. Die Erde ist um des Menschen willen da (Gen 1)" (SS 1958, 23). With regard to some authors who favor a symbolic interpretation of the story of Eve's creation, we read: "Nach Ratzinger sind diese Theologen auf dem richtigen Weg" (SS 1958, 60). On various exegetical opinions on the image of God in man, we read: "Ratzinger: Diese Argumentation ist nicht völlig unberechtigt" (SS 1958, 66); and concretely, regarding the idea that the

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the 1958 manuscript served as the basis for the one from 1964. This is evident not only due to parallelism between the tables of contents already described, but moreover because we often find paragraphs within the two that are practically identical or at least exhibit strong similarity. Indeed, we observe continuity between the two manuscripts in content and in style, whereas we shall see that the manuscript of 1976 will in some ways represent a further degree of maturation.

Although there is no place for footnotes in this Freising manuscript, we do have numerous bibliographies, typically provided at the end of sections. Citations of texts from Sacred Scripture and the magisterium are also abundant, with frequent reporting of the degree of assent required for the various theses expounded (*de fide*; *sententia certa*; *sententia communis*; etc.) followed by corresponding references to Denzinger. In this sense, one could say that these notes of 1958 contain several elements that resemble the neo-Scholastic manuals of the time. It is no coincidence that on several occasions explicit reference is made to one of the most widespread dogmatic treatises of the time, the Diekamp.³⁰

In my estimation, some characteristic traits of these lectures include the use of metaphysical categories (causality, participation, relationship) to articulate the relationship between the natural dimensions of the created order and those of the supernatural revealed in salvation history, a

complementarity between men and women is part of this image: "Ratzinger: Dies stellt so eine exegetische Naivität dar. In dieser Form stimmt es nicht" (SS 1958, 67). Finally, in addressing the soul-body relationship and the Thomistic position on the one substantial form, we read: "Die thomistische These von der Einzigkeit der Form muß auf jeden Fall ausscheiden. Die eigentliche Lösung sieht Ratzinger darin, daß man nicht mit einer Formel arbeitet, sondern mit 2 Formeln: 1. *anima = corporis forma*; 2. *corpus = quoddammodo forma animae*" (SS 1958, 76).

³⁰ See F. Diekamp, *Katholische Dogmatik nach den Grundsätzen des heiligen Thomas* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1949–1954). For example, speaking of the glory of God, Ratzinger echoes the distinction between *gloria Dei interna* and *gloria Dei externa*, and, within this, between *gloria Dei externa objectiva* and *gloria Dei externa formalis* (see SS 1958, 21). Dealing with Providence with explicit reference to Diekamp, he makes a distinction between providence in a broad sense and the divine government of the world and, within this, between the conservation of things in being and *concursus divinus* (see SS 1958, 33). When it comes to the question of the supernatural, he likewise follows the complex Scholastic division of this category: substantial and accidental; and, within this, *secundum quid* and *simpliciter*, which in its own turn is divided into *quoad modum* and *quoad substantiam* (see SS 1958, 41).

Franciscan-style optimism in creation, and a lucid vision of the human sin's origin and transmission.³¹

The Münster Manuscript (1964)

Gianni Valente informs us that the move from Bonn to Münster in 1962 was positive for the young Professor Ratzinger.³² Whereas in Bonn some colleagues did not welcome the fact that a young theologian had been appointed *peritus* in the work of the Second Vatican Council, in Münster he found a cordial and stimulating atmosphere among both the professors and the students. At this time, his fame visibly began to spread. With the large number of students attending his lectures, one of his disciples, V. Pfnür, sold 850 copies of the typewritten notes of Ratzinger's course on the Eucharist. He then decided to expand the experience by creating "a small printing house. When the lectures were mimeographed, entire courses were circulated all over Germany. All the theological faculties sought these out from us. It was a sign that the number of Ratzinger's admirers was increasing everywhere."³³

This description helps to explain the origin of the manuscript that I discovered for the first time in the library of the University of Saint Michael's College in Toronto and which I subsequently found in the Institut Benedikt XVI. This is the course on the doctrine of creation held in the summer semester of 1964, as explained on the cover ("Joseph Ratzinger / Schöpfungslehre"),³⁴ which also includes a short paragraph at the bottom

³¹ I have dwelt upon these points in Sanz, "La dottrina della creazione (Freising)," 18–31.

³² Valente, *Ratzinger professore*, 93ff. For more information on this period of our author's life, see M. Schlögl, *Joseph Ratzinger in Münster* (Münster: Dialogverlag, 2012).

³³ Valente, *Ratzinger professore*, 117–18. Here we read that on average six hundred listeners attended the lectures, and that the students of other faculties such as philosophy and jurisprudence also came to hear Ratzinger. On the relationship between Pfnür and Ratzinger in this period, see Schlögl, *Joseph Ratzinger in Münster*, 45–46.

³⁴ See SS 1964, cover: "Dieses Skriptum erscheint als Nachschrift einer Vorlesung, die Prof. Joseph Ratzinger im Sommersemester 1964 an der theol. Fakultät der Universität Münster gehalten hat." Among the unpublished sources (*Ungedruckte Quellen*) in the bibliography at the end of the book on Ratzinger in Münster, in a subsection that lists the lecture notes of our author ("Mitschriften der Vorlesungen und Vorträge von Joseph Ratzinger") we find mention of these notes along with the precise page count: "Schöpfungslehre (SS 1964, 254 S.)." See Schlögl, *Joseph Ratzinger in Münster*, 171.

in which the editor takes responsibility for any possible errors.³⁵ Six pages (in Roman numerals) of the table of contents immediately follow, and then the 254 pages of exposition on various topics.

The table of contents (*Inhalt*) provides detailed information, with precise divisions into parts, chapters, paragraphs, and the like, as we have already seen in the case of the 1958 manuscript; and, once again, the first page of each section is indicated.

The general structure is divided into two major parts, following the classical schema (first creative divine action, and then created being) yet with a nuance that is not without importance: in the second part, the human being is approached as the central created being.³⁶ In contrast with the other manuscripts, in vain do we seek here a chapter or section dedicated explicitly to the angelic domain, although this does not mean that it is absent in the course of the reflections.

The study of *creatio active sumpta* unfolds in two phases: the divine creative act is not reduced to an initial moment, but instead is prolonged in the divine government of the world (conservation and providence). Accordingly, two main chapters comprise this first part. The first aligns with the theological and exegetical developments of the time (exegete Gerhard von Rad's vision of salvation history and Karl Barth's work on the relationship between creation and covenant).³⁷ Ratzinger does not limit his consideration of the biblical notion of creation to Genesis, but rather opens it to the whole history of salvation—and thereby to a Christological reading. Along with the biblical grounding of his treatments, dialogue with other areas of human wisdom, especially philosophy, is integral to the Ratzingerian style. In this way, the chapter concludes with a reflection on the philosophical consequences of faith in creation. The central thesis is that Christianity replaces a matter–spirit dualism with the duality of Creator–creature. The second chapter, much shorter, focuses on the concepts of conservation and

³⁵ See SS 1964, cover: “Es trägt rein privaten Charakter und erhebt nicht den Anspruch, die Ansichten von Professor Ratzinger immer richtig wiedergegeben zu haben. Alle Mängel und Fehler in der Wiedergabe seines Vortrages gehen zu Lasten der Redaktion. Das Skriptum ist ausschließlich für Hörer der Vorlesung bestimmt.”

³⁶ See SS 1964, 5: “Aus praktischen Gründen ist es vorteilhafter, bei der üblichen Einteilung zu bleiben, so daß wir in einem ersten Teil die Schöpfungstat Gottes (Woher die Welt?), In einem zweiten das Schöpfungswerk (Was ist der Mensch?) Besprechen werden.”

³⁷ On this issue, see S. Sanz, “Creation and Covenant in Contemporary Theology: A Synthesis of the Principal Interpretative Keys,” *Nova et Vetera* (English) 12, no. 1 (2014): 217–53.

providence. Ever taking salvation history as its interpretative key, it offers a dynamic view of creation understood as *creatio continua*, itself implying a conception of created being as intrinsically temporal.

The second part on man in creation is also divided into two major chapters. The first and longer one sets out to sketch the characteristic features of human nature according to God's creative design. The second, meanwhile, deals with the historical development of human nature, including the first free decision that transformed the human being into a sinner before God. Taking as its starting point the biblical witness of man's creation in the image and likeness of God, Ratzinger structures the Christian understanding of man in three pairs of concepts (nature and grace; soul and body; creation and evolution) and dedicates the ensuing sections to these. The large section dedicated to the problem of "creation and evolution" (thirty pages) reveals the liveliness of discussions on the topic in those years. Aware of the difficulties involved with a theological exposition of paradise and of original sin in the contemporary world, Ratzinger begins the last chapter with the traditional doctrine of the Church as a basis for confronting the challenges of modern thought. This leads him back to the biblical witness, striving to situate Genesis 3 within the whole of Scripture, especially the New Testament. In this way, he avoids a reductive reading of the Church's faith.

A fundamental question present in our young theologian from the time of his research on Saint Bonaventure's theology of history is the relationship between the fields of metaphysics and salvation history.³⁸ To my mind, a glance at the outline of the doctrine of creation sketched here suggests that Ratzinger wished to see both perspectives in a harmonious relationship, avoiding the then-common temptation to set them in opposition to one another. The two main parts deal, respectively, with God the Creator and the creature man. Each part is in its own turn divided into two. The first begins with the creative act and then discusses its prolongation in history. In an analogous way, the second part deals first with man as a creature of God, and from there considers his historical condition as a sinner. It seems obvious to me that in this schema primacy belongs to God.

³⁸ See J. Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtstheologie des heiligen Bonaventura* (München: Schnell & Steiner, 1959). As is known, this publication contains only part of the manuscript. The work in its totality saw the light of day just a few years ago as a key part of the second volume of the *Opera Omnia*: J. Ratzinger, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, *Offenbarungsverständnis und Geschichtstheologie Bonaventuras. Habilitationsschrift und Bonaventura-Studien* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2009).

Moreover, there is the desire to distinguish without separating what is natural from what is historical, what comes from God from what proceeds from the play of created freedom within history—in the relationship of that freedom with the fundamental freedom of the Creator who continues to act in that same story.

In contrast with the other two manuscripts, the one from Münster has footnotes with citations and bibliographical references. That said, what is common to all is that each offers a short bibliography (*Literatur*) at the beginning of almost all sections as well as supplementary notes. This demonstrates the up-to-date nature (as of that time, naturally) of the books and articles cited. Most are publications from the late 1950s and early 1960s. In other words, here we are looking at what was the most up-to-date literature of the time, with a commanding but not exclusive presence of German-language publications, including the most widespread theological and biblical encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Ratzinger's characteristic freedom of thought is evident in his manner of engaging in dialogue with those who support differing theological or philosophical positions. We have an example of this in his colleague Karl Rahner, clearly the most cited contemporary author in these pages. Here we readily observe the influence of the anthropological turn along with criticisms of some of its claims.³⁹ Ratzinger also cites authors such as Martin Heidegger, who in his work *Sein und Zeit* develops a dynamic conception of being in history,⁴⁰ and the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, with his evolutionary vision of created being as temporal.⁴¹ Ratzinger welcomes insights from Jewish thinkers such as Martin Buber and Franz

³⁹ After having referenced a text by Rahner on the connection between creation and incarnation, Ratzinger shows himself partially in agreement while adding: "Es wäre da noch manches zu bedenken" (SS 1964, 122). Regarding the well-known Rahnerian notion of a supernatural existential in man, Ratzinger references Balthasar's opinion that this notion appears to attempt a reconciliation of the irreconcilable. "Dieses übernatürliche Existential ist selbst schon übernatürlich, wenngleich Existential, und ist folglich, weil übernatürlich, prinzipiell in abstracto noch von der Natur als reiner Natur trennbar. Rahner versucht unversöhnlich Scheinende das zu verbinden...Balthasar glaubt, daß Rahners Versuch ist doch nur eine Scheinversöhnung" (SS 1964, 143).

⁴⁰ See SS 1964, 82: "Also eine ganz neue Konzeption von Kosmos und Wirklichkeit. Sein und Zeit treten in eine untrennbare Relation; 'Sein und Zeit,' dies Titel von Heideggers erstem Werk, drückt einen Grundgedanken des modernen Denkens aus. Zeitlichkeit erscheint nun als die wesentliche Verfaßtheit des Seins selbst."

⁴¹ See SS 1964, 173: "Teilhard: 'Die Evolution ist nicht schöpferisch, wie die Wissenschaft einen Augenblick glauben konnte, sondern vielmehr der Ausdruck für unsere Erfahrung der Schöpfung in Raum und Zeit'" (see also 175, 197).

Rosenzweig, in particular the “dialogical principle” (*das dialogische Prinzip*) of the former.⁴² At the same time, he has no problem referencing an author like Matthias Joseph Scheeben, widely considered the classic authority on the subject of the supernatural.⁴³ He even discusses so-called “baroque” or “Jesuit” theology—itself the object of strong criticism in those years—acknowledging at once both its limitations and correct motivations.⁴⁴ In this, Ratzinger’s judgment appears better thought out than that of authors such as Henri de Lubac and even Hans Urs von Balthasar, who nevertheless exerted an important influence on Ratzinger. In my opinion, something Ratzinger says *en passant* regarding the value of the Platonic and Aristotelian cosmic vision can be considered an interesting hermeneutical principle: “Naturally, let us not delude ourselves: every image of the world has its dark and clear sides. Consequently, not everything that is new is by that very fact good! On the other hand, though, we should see and openly understand that this new image of the world that has come to us offers real possibilities for faith.”⁴⁵

The Regensburg Manuscript (1976)

After teaching for a few years in Bonn (1959–1963) and Münster (1963–1966), in 1966 Ratzinger found the opportunity to draw nearer to his

⁴² See SS 1964, 114: “In dieser Idee der Brüderlichkeit, die wir als konstitutiv für das biblische Menschenbild ansprechen konnten, ist zugleich jener Gedanke miteingeschlossen, der in unserem Jh. die Anthropologie revolutioniert hat: das dialogische Prinzip (M. Buber, Ferd. Ebner, Fr. Rosenzweig)” (SS 1964, 114). For the influence upon Ratzinger’s thought by Buber and Ebner, as well as other figures like Guardini, de Lubac, and Balthasar, see A. Läßle, *Benedikt XVI. und seine Wurzeln* (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2006).

⁴³ See SS 1964, 122: “Mehr als sonstwo ist Scheeben in dieses Thema der klassische Autor.”

⁴⁴ See SS 1964, 127: “Wenn man das unter solchen Aspekten ausgesprochen geistesgeschichtlich Bedingte der Jesuiten-Dogmatik und des Barock sieht, dann wird man sich doch auch nicht vergebem dürfen, daß auch immer noch darin theol. Motive am Werke waren.” See also SS 1964, 137: “Trotzdem kann man diesen Versuch nicht einfach übergehen. Es steckt nämlich in ihm auch etwas theol. sehr Großes: die strikte Wahrung der absoluten Freiheit der Gnade, ihre Ungeschuldetheit. Das bleibt für immer das Positive dieses Versuches.”

⁴⁵ See SS 1964, 184: “Selbstverständlich geben wir uns keiner Täuschung hin, daß jedes Weltbild seine blinden und seine hellen Seiten hat. Nicht alles, was neu ist, ist deswegen schon gut! Aber umgekehrt sollten wir sehen und offen wahrnehmen, daß dieses neue auf uns zukommende Weltbild wahrhafte auch Chancen für den Glauben anbietet. Aufgabe der Theologie ist es, jene Gegebenheiten, die in der platonisch-aristotelischen Grundkonzeption nicht zum Zug gekommen sind, aufzugreifen und dabei die eigene Tradition als Korrektiv zu Hilfe zu nehmen.”

Bavarian birthplace when he accepted the chair of dogmatics at the prestigious University of Tübingen.⁴⁶ There, however, the post-conciliar climate prior to the events of May 1968 did not favor the serene approach to theological work that is characteristic of our professor. Soon afterward, the year 1967 saw the creation of a chair of dogmatics in the theology faculty of the newly founded University of Regensburg. This presented Ratzinger with the occasion to return to his native land, although he did not immediately seize it, given that he had only recently arrived in Tübingen. By 1969, the situation in Tübingen had significantly deteriorated and showed no signs of improvement. In Regensburg, meanwhile, a second chair had been created. Given this opportunity, Ratzinger decided to accept the offer to return to his beloved Bavaria, which also made it possible for him and his two brothers to live together.⁴⁷

The Regensburg years (1969–1977) are those of our author's full theological maturity. As he writes in his autobiography, "the feeling of acquiring a theological vision that was ever more clearly my own was the most wonderful experience of the Regensburg years."⁴⁸ In these years, our professor taught many dogmatic treatises. His repeated and mature teaching of Christian eschatology eventually resulted in the publication of the only book penned by Ratzinger in the project *Kleine katholische Dogmatik* by his colleague Johann Auer.⁴⁹

Regarding the treatise on creation, which had been absent in his teaching at Tübingen, we know that he taught it twice in the Regensburg period: once in the summer semester of 1970 (one hour per week of lectures) and again in the summer semester of 1976 (two hours per week).⁵⁰ The type-written notes of this last instance have been preserved, and we can say that these are the "penultimate" university lectures of the man who only a few months later would be appointed Archbishop of Munich and Freising.

The cover opens by indicating the university and faculty ("Universität Regensburg / Fachbereich Kath. Theologie"), followed by the subject and the professor ("Dogmatik // Prof. Dr. Joseph Ratzinger // Allgemeine Schöpfungslehre"). After this, the date and the name of the notes' editor are mentioned ("SS 1976 // Erwin Keller"), followed by a notice

⁴⁶ See Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 132.

⁴⁷ See Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 140.

⁴⁸ Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 150. More details on both periods of Ratzinger's life (Tübingen and Regensburg) can be found in P. Blanco, *Benedicto XVI: El papa alemán* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2010), 191–230; see also Valente, *Ratzinger Professore*, 120–47 and 148–79.

⁴⁹ On the vicissitudes of this project, see Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 150.

⁵⁰ See Pfnür, *Das Werk*, 401–6; see also Valente, *Ratzinger professore*, 189–96.

regarding the limits of the writing analogous to what we found in the Münster manuscript.⁵¹

Here we also find a table of contents (*Gliederung*) of two pages in Roman numerals, followed by the treatment of topics over the course of 128 pages. As in the other manuscripts, in-depth bibliographies for further reading are provided.⁵²

The fact that two pages are sufficient to summarize all the content reveals a difference with respect to the manuscripts of 1958 and 1964 in that the structure has been notably simplified. The professor no longer feels bound by a complete and pre-established program for his subject, but instead gives the impression of wanting to concentrate his efforts on themes that he considers particularly important at the time of his teaching. The first page of contents offers a simple listing of the four chapters that he wishes to develop: (1) structure and form of Christian faith in creation; (2) *Creator invisibilium* (angelology); (3) being and becoming; 4) meaning and ethos of creation. The chapters are preceded by a preliminary reflection on the meaning of the doctrine of creation.⁵³

Ratzinger therefore feels the need to insist on some questions that required clarification in the '70s. First of all, the fact that he dedicated a large section to the question of angels and the devil in the mid-1970s is to my mind deeply suggestive.⁵⁴ Moreover, the very notion of creation needed

⁵¹ "Dieses Skriptum ist eine persönliche Mitschrift; es ist nicht wörtlich; es erhebt keinen Anspruch auf Fehlerlosigkeit und es will auch nicht die Vorlesung ersetzen" (J. Ratzinger, *Allgemeine Schöpfungslehre*, Nachschrift der Vorlesung im SS 1976, Regensburg).

⁵² Indeed, the pages containing these lists are mentioned at the end of page II of the table of contents. A glance is sufficient to confirm a fact that should not be surprising but which is nice to note: Ratzinger's ability to incorporate new materials from more recent publications into his explanations.

⁵³ See SS 1976, 1: "Vorüberlegungen; 1. Kap.: Struktur und Gehalt des christlichen Schöpfungsglaubens; 2. Kap.: Creator invisibilium (Angelologie); 3. Kap.: Sein und Werden; 4. Kap.: Schöpfungssinn und Schöpfungsethos." This enumeration is followed by two clarifications (*Nota bene*) that promise to offer later what in fact has already been made available in the two pages of the table of contents (a detailed table of contents and bibliographies). For this reason, we think that the table of contents was the last thing to be included in the manuscript. At this point, and almost anecdotally, we may note that the entire explanation of section 7 ("Freiheit–Gnade–Schicksal") and part of section 8 (point 2: "Vertiefung des christl. Schöpfungsglauben"; and 3: "Neuzeitliche Erscheinungen") was unfortunately omitted due to want of time. However, the professor does at least offer students a bibliography for personal study.

⁵⁴ As we know, in those years of the anthropological turn within theology, the passage from the treatise on God the Creator to nascent theological anthropology

a rethinking due to the apparent lessening of its significance within theology in connection with the worldview emerging from the experimental sciences.⁵⁵ With this in mind, one can perhaps better understand the reason for the long dialogue that takes place at this juncture with the theses of an author such as Jacques Monod.

On the other hand, we can also discern here a greater maturity within our author, in particular in his epistemological understanding of the biblical accounts, enriched as it was by new features. As can be gathered from the bibliographies, Ratzinger knows how to keep up to date by clarifying, and if necessary modifying, his own opinions when biblical exegesis offers new data. This applies above all to the question of the origin of biblical faith in creation, as can be seen in his contrasting of [Claus] Westermann's theses to those of von Rad.⁵⁶

That there is a more mature thought here than we find in the other two manuscripts is also evident in the fact that the relationship of these notes with published materials, both before and after the lectures, is more extensive and direct.⁵⁷ Thus, some parts of the first chapter, already present in previous manuscripts, certainly form the basis of his Lenten sermons in Munich preached a few years later, which in their own turn gave rise to the book *In the Beginning: A Catholic Understanding of Creation and the*

more than once led to the disappearance of the chapter on angels from the manuals. It seems that Ratzinger himself was influenced by this milieu if we compare the 1958 manuscript with that of 1964. As we have already said, the first retained the chapter on angels and demons, while in the second it disappears. Over the years, however, the theme of angels had returned both in authors who opted to dedicate a specific treatise to the theology of creation as well as in others who included it in theological anthropology. Among the first, see L. Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung als Heilseröffnung: Schöpfungslehre* (Aachen: MM Verlag, 1997), 286–371; among the latter, see G. Gozzelino, *Il mistero dell'uomo in Cristo. Saggio di protologia* (Turin: Elledici, 1991), 236–343.

⁵⁵ The period spanning the late 1960s and early 1970s has been described as the eclipse of creation. The first to denounce the situation with these words—later borrowed by many others—was G. Hendry, professor at Princeton, in a lecture given before the assembly of the American Theological Society in April of 1971. See Hendry, “Eclipse of Creation,” *Theology Today* 28 (1972): 406–25.

⁵⁶ See Sanz, *La relación entre creación y alianza*; more briefly, *Creation and Covenant*, 217–53.

⁵⁷ As for materials published previously, the Münster notes reference the article on the axiom *Gratia supponit naturam* which Ratzinger wrote for the *Festschrift* of his mentor G. Söhngen. These serve as the basis for materials published later, both part of the entry “Schöpfung” which he wrote for the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* and his contribution “Belief in Creation and the Theory of Evolution,” published in the late 1960s. We have provided these references in note 5 above.

Fall. The portion of the second chapter on the devil, as indicated in the bibliography, uses pages on the same subject that had been published a few years earlier in the book *Dogma and Preaching*. That book also contains reflections on evolution that we find in the third chapter of these notes. Here again, there is a dialogue with the thought of Monod which will appear again in some sections of his book on creation and the fall to which we have just referred. Finally, the last part of the fourth chapter has the same title and content (with modifications) of the conference he held a few years later. This was published as an appendix to the aforementioned book in editions beginning in 1996 under the title “The Consequences of Faith in Creation.”

As I see it, two fundamental points characterize Ratzinger's reflections in these Regensburg lectures: a serious concern over the disappearance of the doctrine of creation in theology, and the effort to show the indissoluble relationship between creation and redemption (covenant, salvation, worship, eschatology) in the Christian faith which has important consequences for the life of the Church and of the world. Our author tries always to find a way to maintain the substance of the truth of creation, on the one hand, and on the other, its intrinsic orientation to the Paschal mystery of Christ, which is made present to us in worship and in the liturgy.

Summary

The fact that these manuscripts belong to three decades that cover the entire span of Joseph Ratzinger's teaching career (the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s) has allowed us to approach the thought of our author in its evolution from the beginning to the end of his academic life. In it, we have found elements that illustrate the presence of continuity within a number of fundamental principles along with elements of novelty.

As we have already pointed out in our previous studies, there is a profound continuity between the manuscripts of Freising and Münster, which is quite logical considering that the distance between them is only six years. Even the “scholastic” style, quite pronounced in 1958 but less in 1964, represents an element of similarity—especially in comparison to the 1976 manuscript.

In the 1958 Freising manuscript, there are further differences in detail in comparison to the 1964 manuscript, such as Ratzinger's insistence on certain metaphysical categories to understand the doctrine, together with a “creaturely optimism” of clear Franciscan provenance. In 1964, on the other hand, a more thought-out development of most of the questions is given, and there are some absences such as that of the chapter on angels.

This itself testifies to the sensibilities of the '60s, when the anthropological turn within theology was felt. However, Ratzinger does not succumb to this turning, as it were. Rather, he always insists on the need to raise the anthropological question both in the case of metaphysics (at the philosophical level) and with regard to Christology (at the theological level).

Precisely for this reason, the counterpoint of the 1976 manuscript is very interesting. One might find surprising its dedication of so much space to the topic of angels and demons. Ratzinger has a strong concern for dialogue with the philosophical and scientific currents of thought within his day. This leads him to set scholastic debates to the side (there is no trace here of matters very prominent in the first two manuscripts, such as the supernatural and original sin) in order to maintain his focus.

In any case, it seems to me that, granted these natural differences, some of Ratzinger's basic convictions not only remain intact but even appear to grow in importance over time. Along with the centrality of the dogma of creation as the foundation of God's design in Christ, the growing importance that our author places on liturgy and worship stands out in a particular way. In other words, for Ratzinger the mystery of creation is oriented to its fulfillment in Christ, through which it receives its fullness of meaning. On the other hand, this does not detract from the fact that creation has its own integrity and is the foundation of God's entire plan in Christ. 