

The Enlightened Mentality and Academic Freedom

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I. Introduction

To be in a crisis is to be at a decisive moment, a turning point. In the medical field a crisis indicates a change in a disease the result of which will be either recovery or death. We might diagnose, as others have done, American Catholics as suffering from an identity crisis, at a moment when our country and culture stand in the greatest need of the kind of witness which we ought to have been uniquely equipped to offer.¹ Yet rather than think that this situation of crisis will lead to the demise of American Catholicism, or to put it in another way, the separation of American Catholics from Rome, I prefer to think that this crisis will result in a recovery, since we are becoming more and more aware of the problem and the need for a solution.

Awareness of the problem, although late in the day, has begun to penetrate colleges and universities which call themselves Catholic and which have gradually become little more than "shadowy imitations of secular institutions."² What it means for a university to be Catholic is for many not at all clear, given that in the name of pluralism so many Catholic colleges and universities have simply become like their liberal counterparts and thus lost their distinctiveness. However, it is true that "our colleges and universities are beginning to analyze and deliberate about and agonize over the threat to their Catholic character."³ It is this analysis and deliberation which will

¹ Marvin R. O'Connell, "A Catholic University, Whatever That May Mean," in Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., ed. *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 236.

² *Ibid.*, p. 240.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

hopefully lead to a recovery; in addition, the present leadership in the Catholic Church is certainly working to foster such a recovery: one has only to think of the pope's document on Catholic universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which so clearly states the identity and mission of a Catholic university, or the writings of Cardinal Ratzinger on the nature and mission of theology and his reflections on the theologian's academic freedom in relation to the institutional Church.

In his book *The Catholic Moment*, Richard J. Neuhaus refers to Ratzinger as a "crisis theologian," a term associated with certain European theologians of the 1930s. "Crisis theology" is distinguished from a theology of cultural synthesis and accommodation. The latter assumes that the world is well-disposed and receptive to the Christian message, that the world is in effect a friendly place. For crisis theologians, however, the "principalities and powers of the present age are in unremitting rage against the truth."⁴ Although these theologians would agree that Christ is the beginning and the end of the whole of history's yearning, "this is asserted now by hope, only to be empirically vindicated in the End Time."⁵ And what is very much on Ratzinger's mind is whether or not as we approach the End Time faith will be found on earth, for Ratzinger, like the pope, believes in the possibility of apostasy.⁶

It would seem then that what "crisis theology" is stressing, with its vision of the present age as waging battle against the truth, is reminiscent of the Augustinian conception of human history as a struggle between two implacably opposed spiritual forces: Augustine spoke of the City of God and the Earthly City or City of the World. The first is dedicated to God and to His will and to His glory, whereas the second is dedicated to something wholly different. According to Alvin Plantinga, the Augustinian struggle is present in the areas of scholarship and science, for we are not to think that these are religiously and metaphysically neutral, since they too are deeply involved in a three-way struggle or contest, the main protagonists of which are Christian theism, perennial naturalism, and creative anti-realism.⁷ As Plantinga sees it: "the contemporary western intellectual world, like the world of [Augustine's] times, is a battleground or arena in which rages a

⁴ Richard J. Neuhaus, *The Catholic Moment* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), p. 189.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Alvin Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship," in Hesburgh, ed., *The Challenge and Promise*, pp. 268–270.

battle for our souls."⁸ In addition, Plantinga, following Alasdair MacIntyre, notes that there are many contemporary academics and intellectuals who think of themselves as having no commitments at all: they are committed neither to perennial naturalism nor to any form of antirealism, and they are of course far from Christian theism.⁹ But as Plantinga sees it, this lack of commitment is rooted in the thought that there is no such thing as truth as such: as he puts it: "Commitment goes with the idea that there is really such a thing as truth; to be committed to something is to hold that it is true, not just in some version, but *simpliciter* or absolutely—i.e., not merely true with respect to some other discourse or version, or with respect to what one or another group of human beings think or do."¹⁰ To desire the truth, to be committed to the truth, should then engage one's freedom, in such a way that we may speak of exercising one's freedom *for* the truth. However, "The postmodern spirit, with its relativist, subjectivist, deconstructionist tendencies, seems to have abandoned any traditional quest for truth and to have turned its energies instead in the direction of power."¹¹ The purpose of this paper will be to show how commitment to the truth, to a community of faith and to tradition, is imperative for the Catholic theologian so that his work does not degenerate into an individualistic, liberal enterprise. We will also see how the issue of academic freedom among contemporary Catholic theologians in colleges and in universities which are themselves Catholic is reminiscent of Kant's treatment of the uses which a clergyman-scholar may make of his reason. Let us begin with the enlightened mentality of Kant which so permeates the intellectual world of today.

II. The Enlightenment and the Clergyman-Scholar

In his essay "What is Enlightenment?," Kant distinguishes between the private and public uses of the clergyman-scholar's reason. A contemporary reader of Kant cannot help but see in the distinction a foreshadowing of the problem of academic freedom among present-day theologians. While some thinkers in the eighteenth century had defined enlightenment with reference to the goal it fostered, that is, the destiny of man, Kant defined enlightenment not in terms of what it achieved, but rather in terms of what it es-

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

¹¹ Thomas V. Morris, "A Baptist View of the Catholic University," in Hesburgh, ed., *The Challenge and Promise*, p. 228.

aped.¹² For Kant, enlightenment meant a release from that immaturity which arises not from a "lack of understanding," but rather as a consequence of a moral failure, that is, a "lack of resolution and courage" to use one's understanding "without the guidance of another."¹³ If man is to live in an "enlightened age," he must release himself from "self-incurred tutelage"; in other words, he must dare to make use of his reason "without direction from another."¹⁴ According to Kant, for enlightenment to prosper, "all that is needed is freedom," and the freedom Kant had in mind is "the most innocuous form of all—freedom to make *public use* of one's reason in all matters."¹⁵

By the "public" use of reason Kant meant that "use which anyone may make of it as a man of learning addressing the entire reading public." This use of reason is contrasted to the "private" use which a person may make of his reason in a particular *civil* post or office with which he is entrusted.¹⁶ In man's private use of reason he behaves "passively," bound by an "artificial accord" to advance or to defend certain "public ends." He functions as "part of a machine," and as such he cannot argue. By contrast, in his public use of reason man acts as "a member of the complete commonwealth or even of a cosmopolitan society"; within such a framework, an individual "may indeed argue without harming the affairs in which he is employed in a private capacity." Restrictions on the private use of reason in no way contradict the goal of enlightenment, but the public use of reason must remain free, since "it alone can bring about enlightenment among men."¹⁷

To illustrate the difference between the public and private uses of reason, Kant makes reference to soldiers, citizens, and clergymen. Of these three cases, Kant devotes particular attention to the responsibilities of a scholarly clergy. A clergyman may write whatever he pleases in books and articles addressed to the reading public, but when he is addressing his pupils or his congregation, he is bound to adhere to his church's "symbols"—those basic doctrines of the faith to which clergymen and teachers

¹² James Schmidt, "What Enlightenment Was: How Moses Mendelssohn and Immanuel Kant Answered the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*," p. 11, unpublished manuscript.

¹³ Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?," trans. H.B. Nisbet in H. Reiss, ed., *Kant's Political Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 54

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

were required to swear allegiance before taking up their posts.¹⁸ At the center of Kant's discussion is the question of the limits of those duties which bound an official of a church. Kant argued that, insofar as they were fulfilling their responsibilities to the church as an institution, clergymen must adhere to the teachings of the church, even in those cases in which they might have reservations as to their truth. According to Kant, "[t]here is nothing in this which need trouble the conscience."¹⁹ What a man taught as an officer of the church "is presented by him as something which he is not empowered to teach at his own discretion, but which he is employed to expound in a prescribed manner and in someone else's name."²⁰ "He will say: Our church teaches this or that, and these are the arguments it uses. He then extracts as much practical value as possible for his congregation from precepts to which he would not himself subscribe with full conviction, but which he can nevertheless undertake to expound, since it is not entirely impossible that they may contain truth."²¹ The interest of Kant's clergyman here is in the practical, not in the dogmatic, dimension of religion. For Kant, it is "not entirely impossible" that the doctrines of the church be true, but in any case, religion is a matter of practical faith, not of theoretical certainty. However, there is a limit to how far a clergyman can go in maintaining this separation between official dogma and personal conviction: "nothing contrary to the essence of religion" must be present in the teachings of the church, for if this were the case the clergyman "would not be able to carry out his official duties in good conscience, and would have to resign."²²

According to Kant then, the use which the clergyman employed as a teacher makes of his reason in the presence of his congregation is purely *private*, since the congregation constitutes no more than a domestic gathering. In such a situation, Kant considers that the priest "is not and cannot be free, since he is acting on a commission imposed from outside."²³ As a scholar, however, addressing the world at large through his writings, the clergyman makes public use of his reason and "enjoys unlimited freedom to use his own reason and to speak in his own person."²⁴ It is evident from

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., pp. 56–57.

²³ Ibid., p. 57.

²⁴ Ibid.

what has been said that Kant saw nothing objectionable in a church requiring its representatives to teach the doctrines of their religion according to certain established conventions. But for Kant, no church was free "to commit itself by oath to an unalterable set of doctrines."²⁵ To do so would impede the progress of knowledge and thus create a barrier for enlightenment. As Kant put it: "One age cannot enter into alliance on oath to put the next age in a position where it would be impossible for it to extend and correct its knowledge . . . or to make any progress whatsoever in enlightenment. This would be a crime against human nature, whose original destiny lies in precisely such progress."²⁶

In order to determine whether any particular measure could be adopted as a law, "we need only ask whether a people could impose such a law upon itself."²⁷ While for short periods of time it might be necessary to impose a particular set of political and social arrangements, pending a better solution, even during such periods Kant insists that "each citizen, particularly the clergyman, would be given a free hand as a scholar to comment publicly, i.e., in his writings, on the inadequacies of current institutions." However to agree, "even for a single lifetime," on a permanent, unquestionable religious constitution, would be to adopt a law which would "virtually nullify a phase of man's progress." The renunciation of enlightenment, whether by a people, a monarch, or even an individual, "means violating and trampling underfoot the sacred rights of mankind."²⁸

In the name of the spirit of freedom then, Kant holds that "ecclesiastical dignitaries, notwithstanding their official duties, may in their capacity as scholars freely and publicly submit to the judgment of the world their verdicts and opinions, even if these deviate here and there from orthodox doctrine."²⁹ Because of the particular attention paid to the clergyman-scholar, Kant's essay portrays "*matters of religion* as the focal point of enlightenment, i.e., of man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity."³⁰ According to Kant, religious immaturity is the most dangerous type of servility; as he puts it: "Dogmas and formulas, those mechanical instruments for rational use (or rather misuse) of [man's] natural endowments, are the ball and chain of his permanent immaturity. And if anyone did throw them off,

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 59.

³⁰ Ibid.

he would still be uncertain about jumping over even the narrowest of trenches, for he would be unaccustomed to free movement of this kind."³¹ In order to make enlightenment possible, the guardians of the people in spiritual matters must therefore be allowed unlimited freedom to make public use of their reason. If this were not the case, we would have, according to Kant, a permanently absurd situation.³² But because the guardians of the people in religious matters have in effect been able to throw off "the yoke of immaturity," they will "disseminate the spirit of rational respect for personal value and for the duty of all men to think for themselves."³³ In an age of enlightenment, then, intellectual freedom is to be fostered so that man be able not only to think freely but also to act freely.³⁴

III. The Church and the Theologian

Although the case of Kant's clergyman-scholar may be slightly different from that of today's Catholic theologian, if only because not all Catholic theologians are clergymen, there are nonetheless some striking similarities. Kant's appeal to the clergyman's public use of reason is an appeal to reason on one's own without regard to the community of faith to which the clergyman belongs. This particular use of reason relies on its own authority, thus disconnecting itself from church authority viewed as something externally imposed. The freedom which the public use of reason requires in the case of the clergyman-scholar is therefore a freedom *from* authority, *from* permanent and unquestionable truths, rather than a freedom *for* the truth. And this, all in the name of progress towards greater enlightenment, an enlightenment which is not necessarily a movement toward truth.³⁵ It is evident therefore that in the public use of his reason the clergyman-scholar is acting as an individual, apart from the tradition and the community to which he belongs. He is therefore writing and speaking as man, as a lone individual, and not as a "cog in a machine"—to use an "enlightened" phrase—who has a function to fulfill within a given group.

This enlightened mentality as portrayed in Kant's essay and as found in contemporary scholarship and theology is, I believe, subject matter for many of Cardinal Ratzinger's essays. Let us begin first of all with

³¹ Ibid., p. 55.

³² Ibid., p. 57.

³³ Ibid., p. 55.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

³⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, *First Principles, Final Ends, and Contemporary Philosophical Issues* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1990), p. 66.

Ratzinger's characterization of freedom within the academy. In an essay titled "On the Essence of the Academy and Its Freedom," Cardinal Ratzinger says: "academic" freedom is freedom for the *truth*, and its justification is simply to exist for the sake of the truth, without having to look back toward the objectives it has reached."³⁶ In this essay Ratzinger speaks of the Christian option which considers truth as prior to making, and we might also add, prior to doing. There is no doubt that in the modern age, truth has been manipulated to such an extent that we might say the following: "If you can't do what you want to do with the truth, then you change it, so that it suits you and your actions." One has only to think of the area of moral theology, in which a false compassion at times takes precedence over the truth. The promotion of people's happiness, a short-lived happiness at that, also seems of more importance than truth-orientation. But if man's capacity for action, if man's freedom, is unchecked by truth, then sooner or later while appearing to be free, man will find himself enslaved because he has closed himself off from the transcendent. As Ratzinger puts it: "anarchic pseudo-freedom is at work behind every refusal of the bond to the truth and of the demands it makes. Those counterfeit freedoms, which predominate today, are the real menace to true freedom."³⁷ To open oneself to the truth is in effect to journey toward the divine. It is for this reason that Ratzinger says:

To think through the essence of truth is to arrive at the notion of God. In the long run, it is impossible to maintain the unique identity of the truth, in other words, its dignity (which in turn is the basis of the dignity both of man and of the world), without learning to perceive in it the unique identity and dignity of the living God. Ultimately, therefore, reverence for the truth is inseparable from that disposition of veneration which we call adoration. Truth and worship stand in an indissociable relationship to each other; one cannot really flourish without the other, however often they have gone their separate ways in the course of history.³⁸

According to Ratzinger, therefore, freedom for the truth cannot exist without the acknowledgment and worship of the divine.³⁹

Now what Ratzinger says here is of utmost importance for the contemporary theologian, for the true theologian does not produce or make the

³⁶ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "On The Essence of the Academy and Its Freedom," in *The Nature and Mission of Theology*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), p. 37 (hereafter *NMT*).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

truth. Theology is for Ratzinger a specifically Christian phenomenon which follows from the structure of faith: faith is not separable from truth, it has to do with truth, for what faith initially reveals is, "In the beginning was the Word." It is because of this Word that eternal reason penetrates all of creation: faith reveals to us that eternal reason is the ground, the foundation, for all things. It is only natural therefore that faith should seek understanding. "Understanding, hence, rational engagement with the priorly given Word, is a constitutive principle of the Christian faith, which of necessity spawns theology."⁴⁰ The theological enterprise is therefore a pondering about what God has said and thought before us. If theology abandons this secure ground, then it becomes a private project; as Ratzinger puts it: "The truth of faith . . . is not bestowed upon the isolated individual, for God has willed instead to build history and community with it. It has its place in a common subject: the people of God, the Church."⁴¹ Theology must therefore be understood within the context of the community of faith which is the Church. Among certain theologians, present-day so-called academic freedom is resistant to this close bond between the theological enterprise and the believing community. But without church teaching, theology renders itself sterile. If the authority of the church is considered a foreign element for the science of theology, then both theology and the church are harmed in their integrity: "For a church without theology is impoverished and blind. A theology without a church, however, soon dissolves into arbitrary theory."⁴² Essential to the theologian is not only methodology but also a deep participation within the community of faith. For this reason, Ratzinger stresses the priority of faith, the priority of the Word which is the measure of theology, and which requires its own organ, that is, the Magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church. Ratzinger does not think that Catholic theologians reject church authority in principle, though it does seem that they regard church authority as alien and extrinsic to their thought. This is especially the case of theologians in a university setting, who consider themselves to be part of a world of science in which "nothing counts except the "reasonable" and "objective" argument."⁴³ Authority for

⁴⁰ Ratzinger. "On The 'Instruction Concerning the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian,'" in *NMT*, p. 103.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁴² Neuhaus, *The Catholic Moment*, p. 140.

⁴³ Ratzinger. "The Spiritual Basis and Ecclesial Identity of Theology," in *NMT*, p. 47.

such theologians is viewed as a power play. And yet, theology will only be historically relevant in its presence within the church, so that it does not dissolve into ideology whose interest is centered on the acquisition of power.

Since the Council, the Magisterium has often been portrayed as “the last holdover of a failed authoritarianism.”⁴⁴ According to Ratzinger, “The impression [given] was that the insistent claim to competence on the part of a nonacademic authority threatened to keep thought under tutelage, whereas in reality the path to knowledge could not be prescribed by authority but rather depended solely upon the force of argument.”⁴⁵ These words are no doubt reminiscent of the enlightened mentality. The orientation of theology toward a strictly “scientific” status according to the standards of the modern university tends to divorce theology from the life of the Church.⁴⁶ It is for this reason that it has become imperative to reflect on the relationship of theology to the Magisterium. In an essay titled “The Spiritual Basis and Ecclesial Identity of Theology,” Ratzinger begins by referring to the words of Heinrich Schlier: “It is unlikely that any sensible Christian would contest that the care for the Word of God among men is entrusted to the church alone.”⁴⁷ Schlier’s words came at a time in history in which there was an attempt to convert Lutheran Christianity into a German Christianity; however, for our purposes here what is important is Schlier’s emphasis on the fact that theology exists in and from the church, that it is bound to the creed and thus to the teaching Church. The teaching office of the Church is not, as some contemporary theologians seem to think, primarily “jurisdictional,” that is, concerned with discipline and order, it is rather concerned with truth, with the truths of both faith and morals, because the Magisterium is charged with the care of souls.⁴⁸ When the theologian accepts as “the voice and the way of the truth the greater understanding which is already present as a prior given in the church’s faith,”⁴⁹ then he accepts the church’s proclamation of the Word as the measure for theology, and recognizes that theology is not the measure for the proclamation.⁵⁰ When the the-

⁴⁴ Ratzinger, “On The ‘Instruction . . . ,’” in *NMT*, p. 102.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁴⁷ Ratzinger, “The Spiritual Basis . . . ,” in *NMT*, p. 45.

⁴⁸ William E. May, “Catholic Moral Teaching and the Limits of Dissent,” in William W. May, ed., *Vatican Authority and American Catholic Dissent* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), p. 90. May emphasizes, along with Aquinas, that the teaching office of the Church is primarily pastoral in nature, charged with the *cura animarum*.

⁴⁹ Ratzinger, “Pluralism as a Problem for Church and Theology,” in *NMT*, p. 97.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* See also Neuhaus, *The Catholic Moment*, p. 143.

ologian thus accepts church authority in his work, he participates in the church's task of instructing souls in the faith and thus caring for souls. As Ratzinger puts it: "When one teaches, not on his own authority, but in the name of the common subject, the church, the assumption is that he recognizes this fundamental role [caring for the faith of the faithful] and freely obliges himself to it."⁵¹ Ratzinger emphasizes the free commitment on the part of the theologian for the truth, for the unadulterated proclamation of the faith to souls. Thus it would seem that the theologian who separates himself from church teaching in the name of scholarship is not rightfully caring for souls. For some contemporary theologians, critical method is incompatible with confessional faith since they feel that the latter requires the theology scholar to accept specific conclusions on dogmatic grounds.⁵² Such dogmatism would be for them a hindrance to their free use of reason. Not to recognize church authority, *auctoritas*, is really to separate oneself from the believing community, and therefore to carry out the theological enterprise in private, as the lone individual of Kant's clergyman-scholar, for *auctoritas* is the basic presupposition of community life.⁵³

On a number of occasions, Ratzinger notes how theology is rooted in the church:

Insofar as the Church is a corporate subject which transcends the narrowness of individuals, she is the condition which makes theological activity possible . . . [T]wo things are essential for the theologian. First, the methodological rigor which is part and parcel of the business of scholarship: . . . philosophy, the historical disciplines and the human sciences as privileged partners of the theologian. But he also has need of inner participation in the organic structure of the church; he needs that faith which is prayer, contemplation and life.⁵⁴

Ratzinger reminds us here of what the great theologians of the Middle Ages had already seen so clearly: that mere learning does not suffice for theological understanding, but that it must be complemented by a life of prayer, born of love. Theology is for Ratzinger a matter of conversion, of devotion to a community and to the truths it bears. The work of the theologian does not begin with unthinking submission to authority, which Ratzinger considers to be a juridical view of theology, but rather begins and always returns to the recognition of the ultimately authoritative Christ, that is, the Word

⁵¹ Neuhaus, *The Catholic Moment*, p. 145.

⁵² Plantinga, "On Christian Scholarship," in Hesburgh, ed., *The Challenge and Promise*, p. 290.

⁵³ Ratzinger, "On 'The Instruction . . .'" in *NMT*, p. 113.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

that always precedes us, the I who becomes our I.⁵⁵ Thus, for Ratzinger, conversion, the losing of self to the other, the Pauline assertion, "I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2), is the presupposition of theology.⁵⁶ It is evident therefore that theology involves not only reasoning but a quest for perfection, for sanctity, which is in reality a commitment, an exercise of freedom for the truth.

IV. Conclusion

In closely linking theology and sanctity, Ratzinger is not indulging in sentimental or pietistic speech, for he is, as was noted above, following the tradition of the great medieval theologians. St. Thomas reminds us that learning must be joined to the experience of divine things in order to carry out the work of the theologian. And St. Bonaventure points not only to the desire for truth and understanding inherent in the faith, but also to the dynamism of love, which desires to know the beloved more intimately. As Richard of St. Victor puts it: "Love is the faculty of seeing."⁵⁷ And love for the Christian is nurtured in prayer, in dialogue with the divine. And it is this dialogue which enables seeing, that is, knowledge and understanding. Ratzinger reminds us that knowledge involves a similarity between the knower and the known, that like is known by like. Consequently, in order for theological understanding to take place, the theologian must enter into the reality of the divine and become one with it. In speaking for example of the theologian's study of Christ, Ratzinger says:

Real advances in Christology, therefore, can never come merely as the result of the theology of the schools, and that includes the modern theology as we find it in critical exegesis, in the history of doctrine and in an anthropology oriented toward the human sciences, etc. All this is important, as important as schools are. But it is insufficient. It must be complemented by the theology of the saints, which is theology from experience. All real progress in theological understanding has its origin in the eye of love and in its faculty of beholding.⁵⁸

It would seem, then, that together with learning the more the theologian surrenders his subjectivity, the more he finds himself within the unity of a

⁵⁵ Neuhaus, *The Catholic Moment*, p. 147.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-142.

⁵⁷ Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 27.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

new subject, which makes possible contact with the ground of all reality.⁵⁹ Theology thus involves a surrender of the autonomous subject in an acceptance of the Word which always precedes us. The greater the conversion of the theologian, the greater his penetration into the truth. Thus it may be said that the more the theologian is himself interiorly transformed, the more he will be able to transform the souls of those whom he teaches. The theologian in the university thus has a tremendous responsibility. The Catholic university, in particular, is called to this transformation of humanity; only thus does she and especially the theologian contribute to the progress of society.⁶⁰ We might end therefore by recalling that contemporary scholarship is not neutral and that the contemporary western intellectual world is indeed a battleground for souls.

⁵⁹ Ratzinger, "The Spirituai Basis and Ecclesial Identity of Theology," in *NMT*, p. 51.

⁶⁰ See John Paul II, *Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1990).