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“IN PURSUIT OF PURIFIED PERSUASIONS”:

Making (Some) Sense of the Modern Mind

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It is an arresting quality of our present day and age that, for all our epistemological advances and our conquests in the fields of science and technology, questions like “Who am I?” and “What am I doing?” are perhaps more than ever tremendously difficult to answer. For example, in the 2003 film *Lost in Translation*, Scarlett Johansson’s character—Charlotte—knows neither what she is doing nor what she wants to be. “What do you do?” her fellow protagonist asks. “I’m not sure yet, actually,” she responds, adding, “I just graduated last spring.” And, in a later scene, she admits, “I’m just not sure what I’m supposed to be.”¹ All of this is simply to iterate what T.S. Eliot said eighty years earlier in *The Waste Land*: “Son of man, / You cannot say, or guess, for you know only / A heap of broken images.”²

But the example from *Lost in Translation* brings a certain point to our attention about the strangeness of this modern ignorance. Charlotte studied philosophy. Now, it is not the intention of this essay to ponder and then pass judgment on the kinds of philosophy Charlotte might have studied, and in what ways those particular kinds of philosophy might have resulted in her sense of uncertainty, lack of purpose, and a self-consciousness that is intensely introspective. The idea of a “perennial philosophy,” with which the essay will engage at a later point, suggests that the solution to the modern severance from the truth is a change in *what* is studied. But this essay intends to explore the ways in which the question of “what” Charlotte studied might in fact be secondary to the question of “how” she, as a modern self, actually studied. For Charlotte, as what one critic of the film called “a lost soul”³, is indicative of a problem peculiar to the modern self, a problem that has effectively compromised its ability to “do” philosophy. In other words, there is something holding back or holding down the modern self from engaging fully and properly in

¹*Lost in Translation*, directed by Sofia Coppola, (2003; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios, 2010), DVD.

²T.S. Eliot, *The Wasteland*, in *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (New York: Harcourt, 1991), ll. 20–22.

³Roger Ebert, review of *Lost in Translation* (12 September 2003), accessed on 1 May 2015, <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/lost-in-translation-2003>.

the pursuit of wisdom. But what is this vague and sinister “something”? In his discussion of the natural law, Thomas Aquinas identified “evil persuasions” and “vicious customs and corrupt habits” as the two ways in which the natural law can be “blotted out from the human heart.”⁴ The reason, then, why Charlotte and so many others can study philosophy and yet still be lost in the cosmos is not solely because their schools saturated them with Descartes and Derrida, and not Dionysius and Duns Scotus, nor indeed because these students themselves have studied Sartre and Schopenhauer, rather than sitting at the feet of the masterful Socrates and St. Thomas.

Instead, it is because even *sans* the direct study of those philosophies, modern selves are products of a culture and a history that have been directed and shaped by those philosophies. As one American scholar argued at the midpoint of the twentieth century: “The defeat of logical realism in the great medieval debate was the crucial event in the history of Western culture; from this flowed those acts which issue now in modern decadence.”⁵ After five hundred years of anti-logical realism, however, are we in fact capable, without intense and intentional rehabilitation, of returning to logical realism and all that it entails? Proponents of *philosophia perennis* might answer in the affirmative, since true philosophy is unchanging as truth itself is immutable. But the *praxis* of philosophy, for better or worse, does change; we are intellectually susceptible, as the teaching of Thomas Aquinas said, to “evil persuasions” and “corrupt habits.” Undoing the effects of those persuasions and habits requires that we confront what is the central problem, both intellectually and existentially, of modernity: the self and its relation to the world.

Modernity, in stark contrast to the Middle Ages and even Greek antiquity, is unabashedly egocentric and anthropocentric. No longer does our conception of the cosmos breed humility or encourage attention to the transcendent; modern men, as Descartes asserted, are born to be “the

⁴Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros, 1947), I-II.94.6.

⁵Richard Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 3.

masters and possessors of nature.”⁶ But our self-awareness in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, even if it is described with the same language of autonomy as used in Descartes, is not experienced in its autonomy with the same confidence and comprehension as is present in that passage from the *Meditations*. Quite to the contrary, autonomy is presently experienced as rife with dis-ease and a lack of understanding: “Maybe when you’re older you will understand / Why you don’t feel right / Why you can’t sleep at night now / In line for a number but you don’t understand / Like a modern man.”⁷ And in many ways, this dis-ease and ignorance is the result of the unconscious philosophical positions we take in the face of reality; unconscious because the way we think is “simply the way we think,” and we do not ourselves understand how our mode of thinking came to exist in the way it does. It is this foundation of unconscious presuppositions that is at the heart of Christian Smith’s foray into the minds and hearts of modern selves, *Souls in Transition*.

In philosophical terms, most emerging adults functionally (meaning how they actually think and act, regardless of the theories they hold) are soft ontological antirealists and epistemological skeptics and perspectivalists—although few have any conscious idea what those terms mean. They seem to presuppose that they are simply imprisoned in their own subjective selves, limited to their biased interpretations of their sense perceptions, unable to know the real truth of anything beyond themselves.⁸

An additional reference to Eliot is relevant here: “What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?”⁹ The answer: we are really not sure what underlies or motivates our actions or our being; we just live and move and exist in particular times and places without reference to the past or real knowledge of the present—we are “unable to know the truth

⁶Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and First Meditations*, trans. Donald Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 34.

⁷Arcade Fire, “Modern Man,” in *The Suburbs*, Merge Records, 2010.

⁸Christian Smith, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 45.

⁹Eliot, *The Wasteland*, ll. 19–20.

of anything beyond” ourselves. In a very mundane and quotidian fashion, the modern world “is too much with us” for us to know it, ourselves, and what lies in the great beyond.

Given the state of affairs described up to this point, what are we to make of the philosophical act in particular and of philosophy in general? Not only does philosophy in the modern age, of its own accord, seem powerless to grant salvation—be that salvation characterized as the “good life” here and now or as a Platonic contemplation of the Forms—but philosophy seems also to have lost its position as handmaiden to the divine, and thus is incapable of even orienting us toward what truly brings salvation and truth. For believer and non-believer alike, the question is a live one. Does philosophy, with all the baggage of the early-, late-, and post-modern periods, still matter as it once did in Athens and Paris? Clearly it does, as otherwise this present essay would be a vain work indeed. But for believers, to whom the Lord says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:16) and “Without me, you can do nothing” (John 15:5), the temptation to succumb to fideism is quite real. But Catholic tradition denies the viability of a fideistic approach to reality; reason is indeed a gift from God and has an essential part to play in the life of faith.¹⁰ For believers, then, philosophy does matter. Now the question becomes: with what *kind* of philosophy should we concern ourselves?

One possible path already mentioned, namely that of “perennial philosophy,” deserves some attention. Perennial philosophy has been defined as “a tradition of classical wisdom originating in Plato and Aristotle, subject to healthy Christian influences in the age of the Fathers of the Church, culminating in the scholastic period (with figures such as Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Scotus in particular).”¹¹ The first mark of perennial philosophy, then, is that it proposes a

¹⁰Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, para. 55: “Fideism fails to recognize the importance of rational knowledge and philosophical discourse for the understanding of faith, indeed for the very possibility of belief in God.”

¹¹Thomas Joseph White, OP, “Why Should Christians Study Philosophy?”, in *Nova et Vetera*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2012), 15.

clear and defined body of work as its foundation—it offers a distinctive “what” to be studied. Even the most cursory of examinations of this body of work will reveal that the central focus of perennial philosophy is *being*. Immediately, this separates perennial philosophy from the kind of philosophy that is familiar to moderns—“Abandoning the investigation of being, modern philosophical research has concentrated instead upon human knowing.”¹² One scholar has pointed out that, for Thomas Aquinas, the assertion that knowing is primary and philosophy thus ought to “begin with an epistemology” is an erroneous one, in light of the fact that “the human spirit finds itself already oriented to being and truth.”¹³ The primacy of being requires that perennial philosophy be “commanded by a metaphysic.”¹⁴

The primacy of being is the fundamental tenet of classical and scholastic philosophy, since nothing is known that does not first have being. As one Thomistic scholar puts it, “Because being attends all our representations, every true philosophy must be a philosophy of being.”¹⁵ That is to say, if we are going to arrive at the truths of human experience, we must attend first and foremost to *first truths*—to the reality of the *first things*. This observation should bring to light an essential characteristic of perennial philosophy, namely, that it is not withdrawn from the world and closed in on itself: “Now the end of philosophy is not for us to have learned philosophy. Just as physics is not about physics, but about nature, so also philosophy is not about philosophy *but about reality* understood in the light of philosophical principles.”¹⁶ (Hence why the retreat of *philosophia perennis* and the advance of modern philosophy occur coincidentally

¹²Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, para. 5.

¹³Aidan Nichols, OP, *Discovering Aquinas: An Introduction to His Life, Work, and Influence* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 159.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁵Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Thomism* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1964), 88.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 93; emphasis added.

with Descartes meditating in the cozy confines of his quarters: for it is there and then that philosophy begins to break away from being.)

The breaking away from being necessitates a retreat from metaphysical realism. What does this mean? Quite simply, that the stance of the human person to the world is radically transformed; no longer is the world and the ways of its constituent parts a fixed and definitive reality, independent of the varying and individualized impressions and perceptions of human consciousness. The departure from metaphysical realism means that no more philosophy is fundamentally concerned with “coming to terms with what is first not in our consciousness but in the order of reality, whether that be matter, the demiurge, pure chance, a world-soul, or the transcendent God.”¹⁷ With the realistic foundation and the subject of being thus removed, philosophy has little option but to turn inwards on the one who philosophizes, on the self. The result: the egocentric nature of modern philosophy and the pervasive primacy of subjectivity. The call for a return to a perennial philosophy proposes that the healing for this philosophical disarray is to turn matters on their heads, and thus re-orient philosophy toward being. For the human intellect itself is in fact oriented toward being and capable of knowing it. This Thomistic viewpoint rather does away with the Kantian conception of the relationship between intellect and reality that we have inherited: “Thomas is not Kant—who thought that whatever shape we find the world to have is one the human mind itself confers upon it. At the back of our minds is a sunburst in which even the most opaque objects can stand forth for what they really are.”¹⁸ The ability of the intellect to represent rather than determine the truth of reality prevents the one who thinks and acts from experiencing—at least in regards to being—isolation, skepticism, and that perspectivalism mentioned by Smith. Thus, even before the formulation of the Cartesian *cogito*,

¹⁷White, “Philosophy?”, 19.

¹⁸Nichols, *Discovering Aquinas*, 160.

individuals possessed certain knowledge of their actual existence by virtue of metaphysical realism. Ultimately, the promise of the perennial philosophy, as exemplified in the Thomistic tradition, is that its riches provide us with the means necessary to “build up conclusions around some solid idea of what natures are, what human persons are, what the soul is, what we can know (or not know) of God, and so forth.”¹⁹

But to this notion that has been laid out in the preceding section, concerning the perennial philosophy and its constitutive concepts, there are two objections that demand consideration. These two objections, the “contextual-conditional” and the “post-modern,” which are directly formulated and responded to in an essay already referenced, are permeated with the habitual irresolution and dis-ease that is peculiar to modern thought. The notion of a perennial philosophy is not a viable one, asserts the contextual-conditional objection, because “Our thought, our philosophy, even our very beings are historically conditioned, such that we are meshed with other persons relationally in culturally situated contexts outside of which we become unintelligible.”²⁰ Therefore, the assertion that a particular philosophical system, which achieved a certain manner of success at one point in history, is capable of achieving the same or similar success at a later point in history overlooks an essential quality of history: namely, that it is a temporal process and as such involves contingency and change. The consequences of change and contingency condition us to be and behave in a certain way. Even ontological realism must acknowledge that, permanence contends with impermanence in reality; human nature can always and everywhere be human nature, but human behavior and human practice do in fact undergo changes.

¹⁹White, “Philosophy?”, 22.

²⁰Ibid., 16.

What sense are we to make of this? The cultural-conditional objection suggests that we “adopt most fundamentally a narrative vision of reality. Experience and phenomenological description, not intellectual systems, should be accorded primacy of place.”²¹ But this suggestion stems from an extreme of the cultural-conditional view, which itself is an extension of the “narrative vision of reality.”²² A more tempered suggestion from the narrative viewpoint might not demand that historical and phenomenological data be given “*primary* of place,” but instead propose that such data in fact does play a *crucial and necessary* role in philosophy, in the pursuit of truth and wisdom, especially at our present time. For, as one philosopher and devotee of Charles Taylor recently argued, understanding the present necessitates taking the tasking trek through the past: “If we’re going to make sense of our muddled present, we need to get close to the ground and explore all kinds of contingent twists and turns that are operative in the background of our present.”²³ For if the words of the Common Doctor are taken as true, that “evil persuasions” can obfuscate the capacity of the human person to know and love what is true and good, and the deviations in Western philosophy from metaphysical realism and other tenets of *philosophia perennis* have in fact been evil persuasions, then it is certainly crucial that we examine the past in order to see properly where and how philosophy went wrong. This exploration of the past is necessary for an additional reason: that the sins of our philosophical forefathers have been visited on even those children who have determined to be faithful lovers of *philosophia perennis*. For most, if not all, of us seem to bear the marks of defeat from that bygone medieval debate.

In addition to “evil persuasions,” Thomas Aquinas also speaks of “corrupt habits” as one of the ways that the natural law is blotted out in human practice. We can become so accustomed

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³James K.A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 25.

to particular persuasion that is contrary to the true and good that we are rendered unaware of its presence, never mind its malevolence. If this holds true for philosophy, and it seems that in its present state (especially in our universities) of fragmentation and discord and irrelevance (consider the relegation of metaphysics to the corner of bookstores where tarot and palm-reading guides are kept), it indeed does hold true. Thus, one might well ask: what are these philosophical habits and how did we come to possess them, however unwittingly or unintentionally, come to possess them in the twenty-first century?

If we penetrate what Husserl called “the crust of the externalized ‘historical facts’ of philosophical history”²⁴, we find that the shift in focus from being to the *ego* at the dawn of the Enlightenment remains in effect in the problem of modernity. Modern thought is concerned with the self, with personhood, in a way that medieval philosophy was not. *Cogito ergo sum*: this is the root formulation of modern thought, and we have not yet managed to sever ourselves from it. In the absence of a strong metaphysical foundation, we are left to understand how we are part of a physical world at the same that we sense ourselves to be radically different from its other parts. This leads to a thread of self-definition. Freud wrote of how, in the face of reality, man “can try to re-create it, try to build up another instead, from which the most unbearable features are eliminated and replaced by others corresponding to one’s own wishes.”²⁵ Something similar to this is found in Husserl, who spoke of the struggle for self-truth: “This true being is not something he always already has, with the evidence of the ‘I am,’ but something he only has and can have in the form of the struggle for his truth, the struggle to make himself true.”²⁶ One gets a taste for how these assertions have made their mark on worldviews and ways of thinking,

²⁴Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 18.

²⁵Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. Joan Riviere (Eastford: Martino Publishing, 2011), 36.

²⁶Husserl, *Crisis*, 13.

considering that the danger of modernity is “to become no one nowhere”²⁷ and the postmodern presumption that individuals “are autonomous agents who have to deal with each other, yes, but do so entirely as *self-directing choosers*.”²⁸

This is the problem with which perennial philosophy must contend, if it is to be a harbinger of truth and light to modern man: the problem of self. The meeting of a system that is objective in its metaphysics and employs a representative epistemology with the modern system of subjectivity, skepticism, self-definition will result, at least initially, in conflict rather than conversion. The evil persuasions and corrupt habits with which we have been left at this point in philosophical history will not go away without a fight; we are, in varying degrees, “natural Cartesians” (self-centered). Does this mean, then, that these two different systems are in fact ultimately incompatible? Such is assertion of the “post-modern” objection, which is worth considering in its entirety.

No one human articulation of meaning is necessarily binding on the human intellect. Man is not only a factory of idols, but also an endless forger of intellectual systems, and the metaphysics he formulates are pluralistic, and mutually exclusive in their incompatibility. Tertullian asked “what has Athens to do with Jerusalem,” but we can also ask, what has “Athens to do with Königsberg, or the Sorbonne to do with Cambridge.” Philosophies endlessly and inevitably refute philosophies, and there is no common ground from which to adjudicate what is true philosophically from a supposedly grounded first perspective.²⁹

Now, in light of what has been discussed about the fundamental difference between classical and modern philosophies, one can readily see that the problem is not the absence of an actual principle by which truth can be arrived, but a conflict between two divergent principles: being and self. The reason that Tertullian’s question has remained relevant through the ages is that philosophies do clash and there does arise incompatibility. In this the post-modern objection

²⁷Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), 83.

²⁸Smith, *Souls in Transition*, 49; emphasis added.

²⁹White, “Philosophy?”, 17.

is correct, but the inference it makes, to the effect that philosophical conflict is “endless,” is contentious. One response to this is an affirmation of the realism found in perennial philosophy as the resolution of the crisis: “In the face of realistic philosophical arguments, the ills of post-modernist perspectivalism, the lassitude of indifferentism, and the smugness of anti-supernaturalism can all be seen themselves to be forms of unrealistic thinking.”³⁰ Certainly, there is merit to this proposal; the truths themselves of *philosophia perennis* are in no way brought into question in this discussion. What is, however, subject to debate is the receptivity of the modern mind to the realistic philosophical arguments. To what extent is the modern mind, saturated as it is with misbegotten and misdirected persuasions, capable—without some manner or rehabilitation—of understanding and assenting to the truths of classical and scholastic thought?

Not to belabor the point, but the fundamental “mis-persuasion,” so to speak, of modernity is the abandonment of being in favor of focusing on human reason. This abandonment of being embeds in modernity a tendency toward nihilism. This was the primary thrust of an essay by theologian David Bentley Hart, in which he described how, in Heideggerian thought, nihilism is “born in a forgetfulness of the mystery of being, and in the attempt to capture and master being in artifacts of reason.”³¹ In the course of that essay, Hart charted the progression of Western thought, describing how Christianity absorbed all that was good in ancient and pagan thought; naught remained of the pagan tradition “but a few grim, gaunt ruins to lure back the occasional disenchanted Christian and shelter a few atavistic ghosts”: for “the Christian God has taken up everything into Himself; all the treasures of ancient wisdom, all the splendor of creation, every good thing.”³² As a result, Hart argued, we are left with the state of affairs found in Western modernity: “The only cult that can truly thrive in the aftermath of Christianity is a sordid service

³⁰Ibid., 20.

³¹David Bentley Hart, “Christ and Nothing,” in *First Things* 136 (October 2003), 49.

³²Ibid., 52; 53.

of the self, of the impulses of the will, of the nothingness that is all that the withdrawal of Christianity leaves behind.”³³ And that is precisely the cult that has been described at length in this discussion.

Does Christianity, then, provide the means and material for repairing and rehabilitating the modern mind? Is Christianity itself to be our primary means of ascending to truth—be it natural or supernatural? An answer in the affirmative seems out of keeping with what has already been said regarding the stance of Catholicism toward fideism, but there is room for nuance and qualification. Rather than formulating the discussion in such a way as to examine the compatibility of faith with reason, or *vice versa*, a more fruitful approach (for our present interest) is to examine faith itself. For the faith-reason debate can itself fall prey to the malaise of modern thought; at present, discussions of the compatibility, relationship, and relative merits, to mention a few angles of interest, of faith and reason flow from methodologies and terminologies which are, to borrow Husserl’s term, “sedimented” with the persuasions, customs, and habits that have become part of the Western *ethos* since a certain point in history, namely, the Enlightenment.³⁴ Enlightenment philosophy, as then-Cardinal Ratzinger pointed out, is “incomplete” because “it detaches itself from what we might call the basic memory of mankind, without which reason loses its orientation.”³⁵ The recovery of this memory—a task on which perennial philosophy professes to focus—rests on a restored vision of faith. As the present Holy Father wrote in his first encyclical: “There is an urgent need, then, to see once again that faith is

³³Ibid., 54.

³⁴The notion that modernity begins in the Enlightenment has been touched upon already, in particular with reference to the Cartesian *cogito* and to the demise of logical realism at (or as?) the end of the Middle Ages (see reference to Weaver, n. 5). The notion may correspond most directly, as Smith suggests, to the epistemological inclinations of the West, which have trickled down to effect everything from metaphysics to ethics, and from education to aesthetics. Smith writes: “Philosophical accounts of modernity—and hence our present (or “postmodernity”)—tend to have an epistemological fixation that seizes upon the Enlightenment as the center of the story” (*Secular*, 73–74). This essay insists that the epistemological transformation is central to the discussion of the role of faith in curing the malaise of modern thought.

³⁵Joseph Ratzinger, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 41.

a light, for once the flame of faith dies out, all other lights begin to dim. The light of faith is unique, since it is capable of illuminating *every aspect* of human existence.”³⁶ The power of faith to illuminate and explain the entirety of reality bridges the divide between classical and modern thought. Whereas classical thought focuses on being while modern thought is centered on the self, faith provides the foundation to pursue the truth of each.

Faith provides this foundation first in its relational dimension, which makes the metaphysical realism of the classical and scholastic schools accessible to the self-occupied modern mind by explaining existence as *personal*. In other words, faith establishes existence as personal—as giving each individual a meaningful place and purpose—in a way that even the metaphysics of realism cannot. Taking again from the Holy Father, Abraham (“our father in faith”) “does not see God, but hears his voice. Faith thus takes on a personal aspect. God is not the god of a particular place, or a deity linked to specific sacred time, but the God of a person.”³⁷ Faith, in a single sweeping movement, re-orient us to truth and meaning. Ultimately, the “God of a person” is Christ himself: hence, “Those who believe, see; they see with a light that illumines their entire journey, for it comes from the risen Christ, the morning star which never sets.”³⁸

This yields the second way in which faith provides the foundation for truth: the purifying power of faith as *light* is able to divest philosophical thought of its “evil persuasions.” So encrusted is modern thought with these persuasions that, without the illuminating power of faith, it is difficult to imagine a return to truth. In the bold and unflinching words of Hart: “Modern persons will never find rest for their restless hearts without Christ, for modern culture is nothing but the wasteland from which the gods have departed, and so this restlessness has become its

³⁶Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, para. 4.

³⁷*Ibid.*, para. 8.

³⁸*Ibid.*, para. 1.

own deity; and, deprived of the shelter of the sacred and the consoling myths of sacrifice, the modern person must wander or drift.”³⁹ Certainly, if we take seriously the malaise of modern thought and the manifold ways in which philosophical history has left us to attempt to encounter the truth and attain meaning with broken tools and distorted concepts, then we will also take seriously Hart’s disjunction between choosing faith in Christ and choosing the wasteland of self-obsession. White made a remarkable insight about the relationship between knower and known, to the effect that truth of a claim does not depend on the philosophical sophistication of its proposal.⁴⁰ Instead, as classical thought would have it, truth exists external to the mind; the mind represents the truth to the knower. The knower enters into a relationship with the truth, because the truth is not identical to the knower. Hence, the conformity of the classical traditional with the relational nature of faith: existence is personal, because truth is personal. Our arrival at the truth—with which philosophy in its sincerest form is concerned—rests, then, on getting outside of ourselves (that peculiarly modern occupation) and encountering that truth. And what provides this foundation but faith? For “faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love.”⁴¹ And that is the nature and promise of the light of faith: to purify us in preparation for knowing the truth.

³⁹Hart, “Christ,” 55.

⁴⁰See White, “Philosophy?,” 24.

⁴¹Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, para. 4.

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