

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CRITERION

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ABSTRACT: This paper establishes an eschatological criterion as a principle of comprehending history through its totalization. We argue that the opposition between relativism and reason can be fully grasped only from an eschatological standpoint. Postmodernism was associated with “post-historical” relativism epitomized in deconstruction as dissolution of all criteria. But the eschatological meaning of postmodernity is ultimately an epochal confusion that will culminate in a “church without an essence”. To more concretely thematize such a church we devised a political-theological analysis of the *Apocalypse*.

Keywords: Eschatology, Postmodernism, Relativism, Church, Deconstruction, Ratzinger, Antichrist, Apocalypse, global government, watchfulness.

1. Relativity, reason and eschatology

An eschatological criterion is fundamental by way opposition to postmodern historicization. One standard feature of relativism is that it believes there’s no *objective timeless truth* and everything is subjected to time, space or history and culture. Relativism is thus, from a metaphysical standpoint *the quintessence of immanence itself*: radical adherence to the phenomenal world, total identification to the plane of

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immanence or total consecration of the worldly *status-quo*². This culminates of necessity with an identification of the subject to the world in a *monistic materialism* in which personhood, freedom and meaning are meaningless “metaphysical” categories. It is our argument therefore, that the pure antithesis to relativism (as immanent identification with *history* itself) is not simply *reason*, but *eschatology*. This is why Ratzinger’s double concern with a) *relativism* as well as with b) *eschatology* is thoroughly consistent. Connecting both is the intimate task of reason itself. Relativistic, as well as eschatological thinking are both challenging, albeit in opposing ways, to what we call *secular reason* (or *finite intellect*). Relativism challenges reason from below, eschatology challenges reason from above. *Since relativism is secular but not rational while eschatology is rational but not secular*. Historical truth is truth about the *singular*. It is therefore contextual, determined and *inherently incomplete*. This should, however, not be taken as definitive but as provisional. Since history is *becoming*, and as the succession unfolds, more is to be discovered - which makes Hegel’s famous statement that *Das Wahre ist das Ganze* (The Truth is the Whole) intrinsically *rational*. To restrain “truth” to the singular alone is contradictory, as Aristotle argued. Knowledge can only be science of the universal. There are always systematic connections of singularities which makes that they always reflect more than their isolated individuality. And it belongs to the labor of thinking to uncover the *Whole* of which particular forms are nothing but *parts*.

“That is why we must have the courage to dare to say: Yes, man must seek the truth; he is capable of truth. It goes without saying that truth requires criteria for verification and falsification. It must always be accompanied by tolerance, also. But then truth also points out to us whose constant values which have made mankind great. That is why the humility to recognize the truth and to accept it as a standard has to be relearned and practiced again The truth comes to rule, not through violence, but rather through its intrinsic power; this is the central theme of John’s *Gospel*: When brought before Pilate, Jesus professes that he himself is *The Truth* and the witness to the truth. He does not defend

² M. Frank, *What is Neostructuralism?*, Minnesota 1984, 3.

the truth with legions but rather makes it visible through His *Passion* and thereby also implements it”³.

Reason proper is the organ able to grasp the universal *within* the singular, to transcend and encompass mere local fragments of truth. In the end, the very labor of reason is to synthesize and totalize – not just empirical instances, but disjunctive concepts as well. And, to reformulate and old argument of German idealism: our very understanding of *incompleteness* is owed to having a prior concept of *completeness*.

2. The eschatological criterion as radical revolution

Theological truth is therefore not *historical*, but *eschatological*. That is to say: nothing temporal is totally “true” except in light of its atemporal final completion. History is the realm of the particular, where nothing is fully actualized and rigid, that is: definitive, *consummate*. This means there’s always a correlative particular to every particular (relativism) but also there’s always a metaphysical counter-dimension to everything phenomenal (eschatology). It is the very unfolding in the series of particular events as relative to each other that brings about *completion* and the integrated meaning of it all. Currently everything is still “caught” up in relation, but everything is equally progressing towards its self-overcoming. As such, relativity is the very nature of history, but its completion amounts to the sublation (*Aufhebung*) of all *successive relative things* into the *simultaneous relatedness of it all*, relating all parts within the Whole. The *Final Judgment* (*krisis*) then amounts to a *final analysis* preceding the eschatological *final synthesis* (recapitulation and simultaneous completion) of all things at the end of times (at the end of succession). To contemplate the world from an eschatological standpoint is to look at the world from the standpoint of its own *completion*. Comprehending its relativity as intrinsically related to its correlative absoluteness in relation to which alone it can be, in the first place, relative – since there cannot be something relative which is not related to something

³ Pope Benedict XVI / P. Seewald, *Light of the World: The Pope, The Church and the Signs of Time*, San Francisco 2010, 50-54.

nonrelative. This is no abstract fundamentalism obliterating differences by abstracting itself from history. It is quite the contrary: *understanding history and becoming* precisely by encompassing and transcending it (*be-greifen*). To study eschatology means therefore to subject *history* to the exigency of its own ultimate nature, as succession of events toward the point of its own completion. Just like individuals develop and die, humankind develops and dies. We cannot logically assert the finite nature of *individuals* without admitting the finite nature of human *essence* – its fatal mortality. Eschatology, as doctrine of the last things interrogates this unavoidable *collective death of humanity*. This death is not, however, to be conceived as abstract termination, since humans are not objects, but subjects. The termination of *objects* is a different thing than the termination of a *subject*. Individual death must be theologically conceived as the end of the objectified phenomenal existence of a subject. The death of a subject also amounts to a completion of its subjectivity beyond the limits of its own phenomenal objectivity. History should likewise experience its collective death as a gigantic process of collective transmutation or subjectivation suggested in theological representations by the images of a new heaven and a new earth – that is a new materiality which is no longer objectified. As such, eschatology is a *vindication of the relative for the Absolute*, or a *claim of totality* against the incompleteness of particularities succeeding one another towards their own completion. This also means to contemplate *contemporary (ephemeral) things* from the standpoint of the *last (eternal) things*. The eschatological understanding of humankind is analogical to understanding man from the standpoint of his death. It is as if one would set his every decision against the background of his own death. This naturally incurs a *revolution in perspective*, an essentialization following which *relative criteria* are abandoned for a deeper, more radical criterion which we designate as *the eschatological criterion*. What is the effect of this revolution in perspective? Things appear in their *essential* nature as opposed to their *accidental* appearance. They are rather understood in their fundamental meaning rather than in their contingent interest. The world is stripped away of accidentality and reveals what is *universal*. As if during the labor of agony in the urgency of death, masks fall down, the apocalyptic labor of the last things (*ta eschata*) is dialectically followed by the consummate revelation of the

ultimate mystery of history (*Parousia*). As such, the eschatological criterion provides retroactive directional meaning to life and history as incomplete but teleological. What appears to be meaningless contingency reveals itself to be objective supra-individual teleology. What takes the form of a visibly evolving *fragment* reveals its meaning as *part* of an invisible *totality*. To put things in the language of German idealism, this criterion is much more radical than intuition (*Anschauung*) or intellect (*Verstand*). It can only be associated with *reason* (*Vernunft*) as radicalization of the intellect, carried to its limits in conceiving the unconditioned of the series of conditions. Eschatology is therefore the most radical approach of history (or politics, for that matter). It is *revolutionary* in that it conceives things in their ultimate being, in their completion, utterly shattering their provisional form. Eschatology as ultimate revelation is therefore an interrogation into the *revelation of things-in-themselves*. This *revolutionary character of eschatology* is not simply *political*, but *ontological* and *existential*. From a particularly existential standpoint Nikolai Berdyaev insists that *truth* is not useful, but dangerous, since it requires “sacrifice and martyrdom.”

“Truth sets us free and saves us less here on earth than it sets us free and saves us from this ‘here on earth’. The acceptance to the limit of the evangelical truth, and the consent to its true realization would lead to the destruction of states, civilizations, societies organized according to the law of this world, to the ruin of this world completely opposed to the evangelical truth. Superior truth is eschatological in nature and by virtue of this fact it unmask the lie of an optimistic cult of life. Truth does not come from the world but from the spirit, it is known only by transcending the objective world. Truth is the end of this objective world and demands adherence to this purpose. Truth is then judgment upon the lie of the world, it is a light that unveil darkness. *Truth* is the end of the world of deceit, the end of the enslaving objectivity”⁴.

However archaic might eschatology sound to postmodern self-indulgence, fact is the eschatological criterion is the very *restlessness* hindering us from freezing into either the *dictatorship of dogmatism* (as finite intellectual abstractions) or into the *dictatorship of relativism* (as finite concrete intuitions). Freedom – theoretical

⁴ N. Berdyaev, *Essay of Eschatological Metaphysics*, New York 1957, 48-50.

or practical – can only be real in the horizon opening an *eschatological totality*, the only one able to *uproot* the subject from its finite enclosure - without however abandoning it to a headless relativistic isotropy. The beginning of freedom is *negative* (as dis-location), but its end is *positive* (as superior re-location). As such, the eschatological criterion is *revolutionary*, in that it is *negatively* emancipative in overturning partial truths and *positively* emancipative in returning to the complete Truth. We can determine something as relative from the standpoint of an Absolute alone. Acknowledgement of partial truths is therefore a vindication of an eschatological totality.

3. The essence and the existence of the Church

Having established the eschatological criterion, we now advance our counter-intuitive thesis. *The Church is the original claim to an eschatological criterion.* As such, it appears that the most “conservative” *de facto* institution is actually the most “revolutionary” *in principio*. It aims to emancipate mankind from metaphysical objectification, beyond social alienation. The external positivity of the Church as an institution camouflages its internal mobility as theory and practice of *spiritual self-transcendence*. Its retrograde *phenomenal* movement only conceals its progressive *noumenal* movement. Its refractory external existence is the very opposite of its radiant internal essence. By way of definition, the Church is *theandric* in nature: divine and human alike, eternal and historical alike. It is not abstractly mystical (dissolving humanity into indeterminateness), nor is it concretely empirical (dissolving humanity into nature). It is the *stabilized* presence of transcendence within immanence. The Church is grounded on the incarnated Truth. Postmodernism as ontology refuses both *grounding* and *truth*. It therefore refuses the Church. Relativism in theology amounts to a *revocation of Christology*: “The relativist elimination of Christology, and most certainly ecclesiology, now amounts to a central commandment of religion”⁵. Why, then, are we under the impression that a tolerant doctrine claiming to have overcome modernity accepts what it in fact refuses? This appearance results from

⁵ B. Lieven / G. Mannion, *The Ratzinger Reader. Mapping a Theological Journey*, London / New York 2010, 175.

the fact that the acceptance of the Church as an *historical* and *phenomenal* fact (among others) is articulated with the refusal of the Church as an *eternal* and *metaphysical essence*. The *existence* of the Church is therefore dissociated from its *essence*. The relative and visible side of the Church is dissociated from its absolute and invisible side. Its manifestation is separated from its *Truth*. Modernity was frontal and analytical in its rejection of the Church. Postmodernity is subtle and dialectical in its rejection. Modernity essentially demanded the extinction of its *existence*, while postmodernity, even though allowing for its *existence* permanently strives to subvert its *essence*. Modern *direct negation* is complemented by postmodern *indirect subversion*. Postmodernity implicitly denies the concept of the Church (its Eternity) – while indulging its objective existence (its historicity). Why then wouldn't theology deny postmodernism its eternity, while entirely accepting its historicity? The urgency to adapt the Church to anthro-history can only be accepted inasmuch as it concerns temporal arrangements and not its atemporal truth-content that forms its very *concept*. Behind the rupture, postmodernism (inconsistently) assumes modern historicism, while compelling the Church to accept a new “insurmountable horizon”. Theologically, however, the Church is the only one “insurmountable horizon”, rather than any determinate historical age. The very notion of the Church is the effectiveness of Eternity in time and the corresponding overcoming of all epochal limitations, which renders the *Geist* of the Church universal and emancipative in relation to any dogmatized *Zeitgeist* (since the Church actually is *Ewigkeitgeist*: Holy Spirit). This is so insofar as despite being in the world, it is not from the world, despite being in history it proclaims the overcoming of history. While modernity is *subjected* to temporality, the true content of the *ecclesial proclamation* is that all finite relations are in themselves (*an sich*) already overcome – however definitive they may seem. The eschatological dimension of the Church is the proclamation that, despite the authority of this world (space, time, causality, matter, institutions) over the subject, it is *in-itself* citizen of a moral kingdom of free spirits. Many theologians conceive postmodernism as revenge against modern *hybris*. But postmodernism negates the theological narrative as much as it negated modern pseudo-theological meta-narratives. If modernity was essentially *anti-theology*, postmodernity is *non-theology*. The alliance of theology with a non-theology against an anti-theology cannot be but a monstrous coalition. So much

more that modern anti-theology did not just fall from the sky, as mere contingency. Modernity was born precisely from an inner conflict within Christian theology. Behind secularization as separation of sacred and profane we identify a theological notion. It is not modern values as such which are problematic, but their humanistic grounding. Religion, according to Soviet commissary Lunacearsky resembles a *nail*: the harder you hit, the deeper it goes. The most terrible revolutions have touched the visible, historical Church. Frontality is however a criterion of sincerity. Modern Titanism was heroic in its anti-divine fight. Modernism was a *compactly religiously-irreligious paradigm*. The Church reenacted the catacombs as long as it clearly knew who it was fighting against. Postmodernism instead opened religion again to civil society. The existence of the Church is tolerated, but its essence is denied. There are two kinds of prosecutors of modernity: theologians and nihilists are holding hand in a negative alliance based on a common enemy. Relation however implies contamination. What the “enemy” was unable to realize, the “friend” did: categorical and archetypal distortions have succeeded. That which modern aggression was not able to accomplish succeeded in postmodern subversion.

4. Ecclesial architectonics and academic deconstruction

The Church is the work of God building a regenerated humanity. Philosophically determined, it is the *schematism between Eternity and temporality* (Kant), between the invisible reconciliation and the visible division. It is invisible and visible alike, and is the *locus* where humanity participates in God’s work of reconciliation. The same way postmodernist tolerance camouflages refusal, postmodernist neutrality camouflages a program. The name of this program is “deconstruction”. This method is a doctrine as well. Deconstruction techniques require, under the spell of an infinite suspicion that behind any accepted *thesis* there must be a repressed *anti-thesis*. Bellow every meaning, an anti-meaning lays oppressed. Postmodernism aims at emancipating every excluded. Everything must therefore be emancipated. Behind the One, deconstruction sees multiplicity – behind Identity, the difference; behind the man, the woman; behind the adult, the child. When it perhaps accepts some truth, postmodernism does it inconsistently in plural. A coherent deconstruction must read mother instead of father, dissociation instead of union. Damnation

instead of salvation. Hell instead of Paradise. But *watchfulness* is what we are called to cultivate: the very opposite to deconstruction namely the ability to *discern and guard fundamental distinctions, discriminating truth from lie, good from bad – and ultimately Christ from Antichrist*. Deconstruction is, however, *anti-truth par excellence* even if it holds that it is merely suspension of binary oppositions. If we suspend the divide between true and false, good and evil, we fall utterly *blind* and surrender to error and evil. Deconstruction cannot achieve its transcendence of binary oppositions but always falls back into *error* (which is precisely *its own mixture with the truth*), since generalized liquidation of criteria ultimately degenerates into falsity *as fusion of itself with truth*). *The Church instead was disjunctively grounded on Truth and Good*. Its positive reconciliation requires a negative separation from sin, evil and lie. It is the very extension of the ultimate concrete Truth in history. It is no merely concept but the concrete incarnated Truth invisibly incorporating humanity into its mystical body while separating it from falsity and sin. Revealed truth is therefore predicated upon fundamental oppositions at work. They are not deconstructible without incurring the risk of *indistinction* (i.e. blindness). Theological *dogmatas* are the categorial stained-glasses of the Absolute, finite sentences saturated with infinite truth. As such they are essential to *fixate* truth and they are more than a mere *apophatic indeterminateness* (merely negative notion). The fundamental thesis of Christianity are *the positively reconciled antinomies that God is One in His Being and Trinitarian in Persons* and that *Christ is one as a Person and has two natures, infinite and finite*. There is a *binary opposition* at work in history – the substantially participatory extension of Christ into mankind (as the active Good) and the negative war waged against this Good principle which is an *agent evil*. Deconstruction is a therefore a sort of *theoretical anomian / antinomian apocalypse* suppressing our ability to discriminate, our vocation to discern spirits. Derrida's solution of an *indeterminate messianic to come* suppresses the fundamental binary opposition between Christ and Antichrist. Too much *sophistication* borders on *sophistry* obliterating essential distinctions while creatively confusing through shadows of meaning. *Deconstruction* and *nihilism* disguised as *apophasis* ignores that suppression of *dogmata* (as theoretical assertoric predication about the mystery amounts to sealing Plato's cave against the emancipative light. Deconstruction is then merely abstract not dialectical thinking,

mere negation of the disjunction between affirmation and negation *inconsistently restating this very disjunction again*. We must acknowledge that deconstruction is precisely what its name claims: literal deconstruction. As general spirit of postmodernism itself, deconstruction is incompatible with the constructive and restorative agency of the Church. The *snake* was the first deconstructive “intellectual” engaged in the first hermeneutics of suspicion. The serpentine hermeneutic strove to uncover an “anti-sense” behind the intent of the Commandment. He played semantics implying that the Commandment only “seemed” to serve man, whereas it would only serve God etc. History has therefore emerged under the auspices of deconstructive vagary. But the beginning of its end in Incarnation is consummated in a restorative agency.

5. Postmodern Church: existence *without* essence

While the Church was to be an *essence without existence* for moderns, postmodernism strives to render the Church an *existence without essence*. We can speak of the Church in postmodernity but not of an intrinsically ‘postmodern Church’. Since, firstly, it is *supra-historical* in nature, whereas postmodernity is just a late phase in history. Secondly, inside the Church, Christ exerts a destructive work against sin and a reconstructive work for man. Postmodernism exerts, conversely, a reconstructive work for sin, and a destructive work for man. It sees truth as a construct and lie as a different standpoint. It disputes all discriminations - including fundamental discriminations of truth and false or good and evil. It aims to include all excluded as a *human-made terrestrial apokatastasis* (ἀποκατάστασις). It is so indulgent as if nobody should be discriminated against and left out of Noah’s ark. *Anything goes* and *il est interdi d’interdire*. Theologically however Christ is the only real advocate of man and the gift of restoration can only come with lucidity, separation and repentance. *Salvation therefore is gratuitous in origin but conditional in realization*. Objective salvation must be subjectively appropriated. It does not come mechanically and impersonally. Forgiveness without justice, redemption without truth is heresy – itself incomprehensible for nihilism since the very distinction between orthodoxy and heresy must lose its rigidity and be retracted to

its original indistinction. Postmodernism aims to short-circuit the polarity between *wheat* and *chaff* and reconcile it into an *indistinct togetherness of self-indulgent tolerance or reconciliation without truth and judgment*. But since postmodernism is thorough deconstruction (i.e. crime without punishment), there's nothing to rectify and repent. Everything is as it should be. The only trouble in the postmodern all-comprehensive condition is the very division between good and evil, false and true, heaven and earth, as Nietzsche put it. The *overman* (*Übermensch*) is *self-projection beyond imputation*. It is law itself that is the sin. In healing the blind, Christ symbolically taught people *watchfulness* so they can see. This simple warning of wisdom that we should be able to discern is completely opposed to all sophisticated deconstruction which ultimately wrecks into the *in-distinction of blindness*. Efforts to align the Church to postmodern thinking ultimately amount to de-substantialization. A presumptive *postmodern aggiornamento* in a presumptive *Vatican Council III* will endeavor to implement the existence of a Church without essence.

6. A Political Theology of the Apocalypse

And with this we reach precisely our point: the apocalyptic times envisage precisely *the rise of a church without an essence*. We shall try to use Ratzinger's account of eschatology in order to outline some general remarks on the political theology of the *Apocalypse* as precisely a challenge to our *ultimate watchfulness as commandment to discern within the epochal confusion of the end of times*. We believe that the point when the *dictatorship of relativism* and *eschatology* will supremely collide will be the apocalyptic climax of history. The *Apocalypse* describes *the rise of a substitutionary church without an essence* unleashed against the *authentic Church*. This *existence without essence* will express the spirit of the *New Babylon*. Ratzinger interprets the signs of the End where, in our view, *theoretical relativism* (*false Messiahs* and deconstruction) and *practical relativism* (oppression) are ultimately articulated. There is an ongoing opposition between Faustian interrogations: Where is the promise? (Peter 3, 3-4) and the contemplative testimony of Amos: "Not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos, 8, 11).

1. The coming of the Antichrist will be preceded by false prophets: *Christological heretics* or *Christological relativists* (I John 2, 18-22). Theoretical relativism as confusion and subversion escalates and eventually culminates in the instauration of the “abomination of desolation in the holy place”. This colossal profanation describes “a personal subject of an act of desecrating the sanctuary”⁶ Antichrist will be both a “lawless man” and “false prophet” (theoretical deconstruction of values) and a “great persecutor” (practical deconstruction of values). “The future antichrist is thus described with features which originally belonged to two other figures from the distant past naturally deprives him of any very well defined uniqueness. It situates the antichrist at the End within a series where a long line of predecessors have already nursed the evil that comes to its supreme intensity in him”⁷.

2. His coming culminates with the emergence of a *colossal political-theological entity*, a global government which is the *New Babylon*. This will be on the one side a *counter-ecclesia* grounded on collective apostasy (*the occult Babylon*) and on the other side a *super-state* grounded on global concentration of power dedicated to uniting the world and terminating all divisions. As a future replica of the *Old Babylon*, its promise is to achieve eternity and final peace on earth. As such, it is prophesized to be based on:

Indistinction truth and falsehood	Accomplished semantic deconstruction
A human, all too human spirit	Faustian drive to bring heaven on earth by constructing a humanistic community as <i>counter-church</i> dedicated to once and for all achieve the promise on earth.
A Salvationist authority	Following giant crises of the last days (plagues such as famine, wars, catastrophes), expressions of man’s inability to control himself and nature, this authority will legitimize itself through desperate utopian expectations calling for a <i>state of exception</i> in the name of earthly salvation and for an end to it all thereby achieving provisional mundane sovereignty

⁶ Ratzinger, *Eschatology. Death and Eternal Life*, Washington 1988, 196.

⁷ Ratzinger, *Eschatology* 196.

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Indistinction truth and falsehood	Accomplished semantic deconstruction
A Humanistic global project	The quintessence of the global government or the <i>Apocalyptic super-state</i> : its inner essence is outright <i>demonian</i> . The one subject fusing Caesarian and Pontifical powers will be Antichrist himself, dedicated to destroy <i>ordo</i> through <i>confusio</i> .

To this effect, Ratzinger quotes Gerhoh of Reichersber “What the antichrist means is grasped philologically: everyone who is *Christo Filio Dei contraries* deserves this name. In other words anyone who destroys *ordo* and furthers *confusio* is an antichrist” (...).

“The inner correspondence to the condition of being ‘antichrist’ is there imaged in the two beasts, one rising out of the sea and other from the earth. Here too antichrist is envisaged very concretely, in terms of contemporary history. The beasts are identified with the self-deifying Roman state, as embodied in the ‘divine’ emperor and the priesthood associated with him”⁸.

Antichrist as *Anti-logos* will therefore express the culmination of demonian’s millennial endeavors to destroy *Logos* (nature and truth). Antichrist will imitate and invert Christ’s prerogative, impersonating as both universal *Emperor* as well as supreme *Priest*. He will concentrate and invert state and church alike, seizing control of all states and all religions. *And nations will honor the horror*. This will literally be *demonocracy* based on usurpation:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as god sitteth in the temple of god, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thess, 2, 3-4).

Saint Augustine set the proper boundaries between *Civitas Dei* and *civitas terrana*. The Kingdom of God was not from this fallen world, the invisible dominion of God was different than the visible authority of the state. This is why

⁸ Ratzinger, *Eschatology* 200, 197.

an authentic political theology acknowledged that Christ alone is *Emperor and Priest* alike, and that these two powers cannot be confused in the finite realm. This is true against both oriental theocracy and western a-theocracy, both for archaic and modern totalitarianism. What we see is a correlation between *spiritual falsity* and *political tyranny*. Spiritual confusion of notions brings about political confusion of power. Theoretical destabilization of *truth* brings about practical destabilization of *freedom*. False messiahs and their culmination – the abomination in the holy place – unleash persecution. Anti-truth will eventually unleash anti-freedom. The deconstruction of the Church is inversely correlated with the glorification of the State. The new state is a *totalitarian state*: an *ideological demonocratic state*, that holds and advances a *vision* (an *anti-vision*) fusing power over the external sphere with power over the internal sphere. Secularization of the sacred goes hand in hand with sanctification of power. Relativism has therefore two faces: theoretical anarchy and practical tyranny. Or, more precisely: *theoretical anarchy entails practical tyranny*. Deconstruction of truth degenerates into deconstruction of freedom. Suppression of the distinction between inner private and external public are therefore correlated.

“The medieval Church is a charismatic form of Christianity; at the heart of medieval religion is *the Mass*, where heaven and earth become one. The history of European revolution is the history of resistance to the Ptolemaic *Kyrios Christos* cult of medieval Christianity. The word revolution is found in the writings of Copernicus and Galilee, the fathers of the modern worldview.” (...) But in the Kingdom of Prometheus, Antichrist becomes a title of honor (...). In the circle of the Berlin freethinkers, Antichrist is a title of honor, which Karl Marx also acquired”⁹

Antichrist is therefore *the ultimate revolutionary* as much as Satan was *the primordial revolutionary*. Antichrist will likely be “socialist” in the first mandate, and “fascist” in the second mandate since he will first present himself as Salvationist peacemaker, only to unleash oppression once his dominion is stable. In face of things to come Ratzinger argues that the coming of the end is *incalculable* but this is

⁹ J. Taubes, *Western Eschatology*, Stanford 2009, 88-90.

precisely why we were given *signs* to which we can only respond through *watchfulness*: “openness for the wholly other God”¹⁰. For all those who seek signs or calculate the coming of the end we must anachronistically answer that *the Apocalypse will take place in 1984*. Watchfulness implies, instead: a) Openness to God, b) Vigilance and discernment towards the forces of this world: “*In St. John, judgment is located in our present life, our present history. Even now, in our decision as between faith and non-faith, judgment falls*”¹¹. Watchfulness only will secure decision and secession when confronting the final apocalyptic confusion. Watchfulness is the eschatological criterion.

¹⁰ Ratzinger, *Eschatology* 198.

¹¹ Ratzinger, *Eschatology* 205.

