

## VARIA

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### **LAWS OF LOGICAL THINKING AND THE GOSPEL**

It is generally accepted that those who use the laws of logic think logically. And whoever breaks this kind of laws in his thinking and speaking becomes illogical, i.e., incorrect and irrational<sup>1</sup>. Proponents of realistic philosophy share the belief that the source of logical laws has its original place in really existing reality (being). Whatever exists in real life exists according to specific rules<sup>2</sup>. Here we mean the basic principles of existence, which include: the principle of identity, the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of the excluded middle, the principle of sufficient reason, and the principle of finality. Every thing that has real existence is governed by the above principles. Thanks to them, beings are rational<sup>3</sup>.

Although the order of existence differs from the order of cognition, when we cognize reality as it is and discover the rules that govern it, we can also formulate the laws of logical thinking. For only in contact with rational (rationally structured and organized) things it is possible for human reasoning and speaking to be rationally formed<sup>4</sup>. Hence, the number and names of logic laws correspond to the number and names of principles of being. And denying any of the laws of logical thinking is associated with the rejection of a corresponding rule of existence.

The main purpose of this article is to clarify the meaning of the basic laws of logic and show their application in the Gospel. Even if the God of the Old Testament had made a reservation: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Is 55, 8–9), Jesus Christ – the Incarnate Son of God who lived in the real world, communicated with people and explained them many important

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Heller, *Moralność myślenia*, Kraków 2015, p. 7; J. M. Bocheński, *Ku filozoficznemu myśleniu. Wprowadzenie do podstawowych pojęć filozoficznych*, Komorów 2009, p. 36–42.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. M. A. Krapiec, *Metafizyka. Zarys teorii bytu*, Lublin 1984, p. 164–165.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. A. Krapiec, *Poznawać czy myśleć. Problemy epistemologii tomistycznej*, Lublin 2000, p. 275.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Pierwsze zasady wyrazem porządku racjonalnego. Interpretacja metafizycznych pierwszych zasad*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O prawdzie*, trans. A. Białek, Lublin 2001, p. 216–217; W. Wojtyła, *Między ontologią a logiką. Rola logiki w procesie poznania prawdy*, „Studia Elckie” 19(2017), no. 3, p. 283.

things – had to take into account the human way of thinking and speaking<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, based on selected Gospel passages, the basic laws of logical thinking will be discussed to see whether logic is traceable in the Gospel<sup>6</sup>.

## Grapes from thornbushes? – the law of identity

One of the laws of logic that Jesus uses is the law of identity. We can see it, among others in the following statement:

“You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit” (Mt 7, 16–18).

The question about the fruit that a vine or a thistle give birth to is to note that each plant produces fruit according to its nature. Just as no thorns, but grapes are harvested from the vine, so the thistle bears no figs. Each plant, by its nature, is what it is, not something different from itself – which accords with the law of identity that reads: every thing is itself, or every being is what it is<sup>7</sup>.

Jesus applies the law of identity and with its help explains that a good tree bears good fruit according to its nature and, consistently, a bad tree supplies bad fruit. If a good tree produced bad results, the principle of identity would be undermined and no one could say that the tree is good. Then we would be dealing with absurdity: one thing would at the same time be something else. According to the law of identity, a specific thing is that thing, not some other thing; each concrete being has its own content, not some else's; one object is not another object; some person is this person and not some other one<sup>8</sup>.

Logic in the Gospel contains and accepts this basic law of thinking and the existence of things. The Lord Jesus, taking into account and applying the law of identity which man uses in his natural way of knowing and thinking, acknowledges the laws present in the created world. Using them, he reaches people through his way of thinking – logical and rational, i.e., understandable<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> For the analysis on whether Jesus can be regarded as a philosopher, see Curtis L. Hancock, *Gilson on the Rationality of Christian Belief*, „*Studia Gilsoniana*” 1(2012), p. 29–44.

<sup>6</sup> Of course, we recognize here the distinction between a logic in the Gospel and the logic of the Gospel, i.e., natural logic and the so-called supernatural logic (best expressed by the words quoted above from the book of Isaiah). Cf. J. Werbick, *Wprowadzenie do epistemologii teologii*, trans. G. Rawski, Kraków 2014, p. 30–32; J. Wojtysiak, *O możliwych strategiach teologa wobec nauki*, „*Roczniki Filozoficzne*” 59(2011), no. 2, p. 341–343. Logic in the Gospel includes, of course, the natural rules of logical thinking. Cf. J. M. Bocheński, *Logika religii*, Komorów 2009, p. 39–41; idem, *Współczesne metody myślenia*, Poznań 1992, p. 23–24.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality of the World of Persons and Things*, trans. from the Polish by H. McDonald, Lublin 2016, p. 41–43.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. ibidem, p. 43–46; D. G. Kennard, *Epistemology and Logic in the New Testament*, Eugene 2016, note 77.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. A. B. Stępień, *Wstęp do filozofii*, Lublin 1989, p. 51; P. Jaroszyński, *Inteligibilność*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 7, ed. J. Duchniewski, Lublin 1997, p. 356.

Rejecting the law (principle) of identity would make it impossible to distinguish things from each other: all of them would become different things and, consequently, all or nothing. It would also be impossible to distinguish truth from falsehood, and thus – to conduct studies and to lead discussions. Thinking would lose its rationality, and communication (language) – its sense<sup>10</sup>.

## Collection vs. distraction – the law of non-contradiction

A common sense look at reality allows us to state that there is no situation when something is happening and, simultaneously, not happening. For example, has anyone observed that the bell is ringing and not ringing, or that it is raining and not raining at the same time? Although it may be raining in Warsaw and not raining in London, it cannot be raining and not raining here and now. Common sense does not give grounds for claiming that a given state of affairs occurs and does not occur at the same time. The reasoning for this belief is based on the principle of non-contradiction, which forms the basis for the logical law of non-contradiction.

The principle of non-contradiction states that no object has and does not have some specific feature at the same time<sup>11</sup>. In other words, it is impossible for us to read and not read at the same time, be wise and not be wise, have faith and not have it, etc. Any of these combinations implies that only one of the two contradictory states of affairs can occur. In the cognitive order, this means that two contradictory sentences cannot be true at the same time<sup>12</sup>. When one of them speaks the truth, the other remains false. If the sentence “Christ is risen” is true, then under the law of non-contradiction the sentence “Christ is not risen” is false.

Here is an example of a statement in which Jesus also uses the law of non-contradiction:

“Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, ‘Can this be the Son of David?’ But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, ‘It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons’. Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters’” (Mt 12, 22–30).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. Herbut, *Elementy metodologii filozofii. Skrypt do wykładu*, Lublin 2007, p. 31–35.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Arystoteles, *Metafizyka*, trans. K. Leśniak, Warszawa 2009, IV 1005b; J. Łukasiewicz, *O zasadzie sprzeczności u Arystotelesa*, Warszawa 1987, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *Realizm ludzkiego poznania*, Lublin 1995, p. 174.

Addressing Jesus, the Pharisees accuse him of freeing the possessed by the power of the prince of evil spirits. Jesus denies this accusation and justifies his position. Can other evil spirits be cast out by the most powerful evil spirit called Beelzebub? According to Jesus, nothing like this can happen. And he refutes the accusation by applying the principle (law) of non-contradiction. First, he notes that the described situation could occur as a result of division and quarrel. Discord causes a house or city to be divided and destroyed. So if Satan's kingdom is divided against itself, it will fall apart. The Pharisees seem to suppose that Satan does not care about the division and destruction of his kingdom. But the truth is that he is rather seeking to strengthen and expand it. And his intention can only be satisfied at the expense of the kingdom of God, which he constantly attacks and fights. So logically it is absurd to accuse Jesus of casting out evil spirits by the power of their leader. This way of thinking inevitably leads to contradiction. It consists in supporting the claim that something is being built and destroyed at the same time, that there is consent and dissent regarding the same question, that the truth and its opposite are one side of the same coin, etc.<sup>13</sup> But no unity is built on the principle of division and disintegration. Thus, on the basis of the law of non-contradiction, Jesus shows that evil spirits are cast out no other way than by God's power.

The principle (including the law) of non-contradiction is that which makes reality rational. Thanks to it we can distinguish what is from what is not, as well as truth from falsehood. If the principle of non-contradiction did not apply, objects and persons would be contradictory and, consequently, unknowable – it would be possible, for instance, to hear the bell ringing and not ringing. Non-contradiction is the principle of both the existence of things and the cognitive law, thanks to which we can pose questions, make analyses and obtain reasonable results<sup>14</sup>.

At this point, it should be noted that a contradiction is not always the same as an opposition. Contradiction is one of the four types of opposition: a) contrariety (good and bad), b) privation (hearing and deaf), c) relation (single and double), d) contradiction (existence and non-existence)<sup>15</sup>.

## **Serving two masters? – the law of the excluded middle**

There are no two alike snowflakes, flowers, events, or even more so – people. Each thing is unique and unrepeatably, even if it is confusingly similar to another. For the difference between things is ultimately determined not by what contributes to their essence, but by what constitutes their existence<sup>16</sup>. Even the proverbial peas in a pod are distinguished from each other by the fact that

<sup>13</sup> Cf. B. Krzos, *Wnioskowanie logiczne jako uzasadnienie w akcie wiary*, „Roczniki Teologii Dogmatycznej” 58(2011), no. 3, p. 165–166.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. S. Kamiński, *Czym są w filozofii i w logice tzw. pierwsze zasady?*, „Roczniki Filozoficzne” 11(1963), no. 1, p. 15; J. Herbut, *Logiczna charakterystyka języka religijnego*, in: *Filozofia Boga*, vol. 1, ed. S. Janeczka, A. Starościc, Lublin 2017, p. 539–540.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. M. A. Krapiec, *Metafizyka...*, p. 150–151.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *S.Th.*, 1, q. 3, a. 4; M. A. Krapiec, *Byt i istota*, Lublin 2001, p. 132–135.

each of them exists by its own act of existence, and not one and the same, i.e., common. This obvious fact about the existence of things is called separateness. Whatever exists is separate in its existence. That is why one thing is not any other thing but a sovereign individual.

The separation of things is governed by the law of the excluded middle. It reads: “there is nothing intermediate between one being and another,” and “of two contradictory judgments, only one is true”<sup>17</sup>. Both these formulas mean that there is no “middle” between one being and another that would justify the existence of so-called intermediate states. There is nothing between a man and, e.g., a cup, but also between man and non-man, between thought and non-thought, etc. This law then decides 1) that a particular being is not some other being, and 2) that there are no intermediates between beings, e.g., a human being and a plant. Things are either there or not there, and when they are there, they exist as separate and indivisible.

The Gospels are not without examples of the application of this law. We find them in the statements of the Lord Jesus. Here is one which illustrates the use of the law of the excluded middle:

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Mt 6, 24).

How does Jesus explain the impossibility of serving two masters? By applying the law of the excluded middle. The point is that neither servants nor non-servants are those who provide half service. Service demands total (not partial) devotion. Otherwise, there is no service in the full sense of the word. Jesus explains that an intermediate solution that would satisfy two men is out of the question. If there are more masters, only one of them can be fully served. Serving two masters cannot be justified. For either service is entire and indivisible or it does not exist at all. Any other approach to it should be considered a pseudo service. Therefore, any middle between service and no service should be rejected in accordance with the principle of the excluded middle – *tertium non datur* (no third is given, no third option is available)<sup>18</sup>.

Under the law of the excluded middle, the statement on the existence of intermediate states must be rejected. This law allows to refute, for example, the claim that a human embryo is an intermediate state between man and non-man (i.e., not yet a human being)<sup>19</sup>. The same applies to intermediate states between truth and falsehood. If the law of the excluded middle did not apply, then any affirmative sentence could be said to be only “as if true” or “almost false”, or “half true” etc. Whereas, following the law of the excluded middle, the Lord says:

“Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil” (Mt 5, 37).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Zasady pierwsze*, in: *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, vol. 9, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, Lublin 2008, p. 903.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. M. A. Krapiec, *Poznawać czy myśleć...*, p. 278–279.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality...*, p. 71–73.

## The rain is coming – the law of sufficient reason

Where there's smoke, there's fire; you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs; whoever digs a pit will fall into it. What connects the above proverbs? Well, they express an important truth: everything has its reason. We also sometimes say: nothing happens without a reason, or: nothing is done by itself.

A cursory observation of reality shows that both objects, people and states of affairs are constantly changing. The leaves on trees beam with greenery in the summer, glitter with different colors during the fall, but later inevitably fall to the ground. The conclusion that follows from the experience of various changes is that there is a reason behind each of them. If happening without a reason took place, it would be a sensation<sup>20</sup>.

It is significant that everything that really exists is knowable, both in its essential and in its existential aspects. The human intellect deals with every thing it encounters in the world. To know the essence of things, it does not have to refer to anything other than the things themselves which are a sufficient reason for acquiring knowledge about their nature. On the other hand, the existence of individual states of affairs and individual subjects always find their explanation in other states of affairs or subjects. The point is that whatever exists in the real world always has a specific reason for its existence and for its essential identity. On this basis, the law of sufficient reason is also called the law of rationality.

Being has a reason either inside or outside of itself. Inside of itself when the reason is to determine its nature, and outside of itself when the reason is to show what causes it to exist. That is why we talk about the internal (material and formal) and external (efficient and final) reasons for being. For example, a man is a man by virtue of his matter and form, i.e., his body and soul, a triangle is a triangle thanks to its three sides and three angles. The internal reasons, then, are those factors that establish its nature. The negation of even one of them is tantamount to the negation of the whole being. Thus, removing one side of the triangle means annihilation of the triangle itself<sup>21</sup>.

In the case of the external reasons for being, it should be noted that things also have properties that they do not need to possess in order to be themselves. Even without them they are still the same things. Possessing, then, an unnecessary property needs an explanation, and it finds its reason beyond itself. For example, a man wears a blue tie. What is the reason that he has chosen the blue one? Although there may be many reasons for this, when one takes into account the fact that the tie is worn by the man who accompanies his wife dressed in a blue dress, then the reason for choosing the blue tie becomes obvious – it is the dress which the tie matches in color. In other words, the reason for choosing a blue tie, rather than a red or green one, is the decision (feeling, taste), most likely of the wife, dictated by the blue color of her dress. The rejection of reason would mean

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Summa contra gentiles*, vol. 1, trans. Z. Włodek, W. Zega, Poznań 2003, p. 41–46.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. P. Moskal, *Problem zasady racji bytu. Komentarz do stanowiska Mieczysława A. Krąpca OP*, in: *Metafizyczne i antropologiczne założenia filozofii religii*, ed. P. Moskal, Lublin 2007, p. 86–87.



that we do not know why the man wears the blue tie. Only when we know the reason for this fact, do we understand it.

Thomas Aquinas, in turn, points out that what has no reason beyond itself is absolutely supreme in the domain of reasons – the reason of all reasons. And since it is only God that meets the condition of having no reason beyond itself, God alone is the ultimate reason for all things.

The law of sufficient reason is also present in the teaching of the Lord Jesus. At one point, he addresses the crowds:

“When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming’. And so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat’, and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?” (Lk 12, 54–56).

In the above sentences, Jesus implies that the law of sufficient reason is already present in everyday life. Most people can easily indicate the reason for heat or rain. The wind from the south in the Holy Land promises a high temperature, and the cloud in the west predicts a rain. Even the “present time” has its reason, and it is the disciple’s job to uncover it, i.e., to make out who Jesus really is, to recognize the Son of God in Him on the basis of his words and works.

### **Maybe it will bear fruit – the law of finality**

Can you imagine the world without any action? Without the passing of seasons, or changing places, or the alternation of generations, etc. Or is it possible that there is a lack of human activity? The lack of talking, thinking, shopping, helping, repenting, etc. A world without the slightest activity would be dead, just like a person without any manifestations of action (life). While inaction shortens life, its opposite – activity – prolongs existence<sup>22</sup>. What is, then, what causes actions to take place?

On the one hand, man performs various activities because he is not self-sufficient. He takes many actions to supplement himself with what he does not possess and what brings about his enrichment. For this reason, action belongs to human nature. On the other hand, man’s activity is triggered by the object he is heading toward. In this respect, every thing that arouses desire in him is called a good. It is customary to say that the good is what generates desire and, when achieved, then perfects<sup>23</sup>.

When we decide on some good because we need it, then it becomes an end-purpose of our actions. In this way we are heading toward the good as end. Good and end-purpose are the same. Every end-purpose that gives birth to desire and

<sup>22</sup> Cf. M. A. Krapiec, *O filozofii*, Lublin 2008, p. 103.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru. Dysputy problemowe O pożądanii dobra i o woli*, trans. A. Białek, Lublin 2010, p. 18–19 (q. 21, a. 1).

releases from passivity is the reason for human action<sup>24</sup>. And this is the basis on which the law of finality is formulated.

The law of finality states that the end-purpose of any action is always a good<sup>25</sup>. By analyzing our activity, we can find out whether it is already done or just planned. For example, why do we study? We most likely study to get an education (knowledge and skills); the education is pursued in order to get a good job; and the job is taken to provide for the family. Each of these purposes (knowledge, job, family) is some good. Therefore, the good is the end-purpose of every action.

In the light of the law of finality, there are no purposeless actions. Every action is done for the sake of some good. Even lazing is dictated by some end-purpose, e.g., rest. Although sometimes the action may fail in getting the expected results, but even then it cannot take place without a set purpose.

In addition, it should be noted that some things are wanted and others are not. The decision to strive for any of them is made by the will. This means that things are ordered (assigned) to the will of man. The human will, in a way, measures the value of things in order to respond to them on the basis of attraction or aversion. Moreover, the natural things can be analyzed by the human will only because they are derived from the will of the Creator. The things exist and fulfill their specific tasks, because the Maker's will is written in their form and enable them to pursue the purpose for which they are intended. Thus, the natural things are derived from the will of the Creator and addressed to the will of the human persons. In other words, the natural world is replete with goods which are desired and loved by the Creator whereby desirable and lovable for us<sup>26</sup>.

As for natural beings, Jesus told the following parable of the fig tree:

“A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down’” (Lk 13, 6–9).

Jesus confirms here that nature is made for a purpose. The life of the fig tree is fruitful by its nature. The will of the Creator decides that the tree bears fruit and that the man is able to recognize in it the good he can desire. On the other hand, if man is brought to life by God's hand (will) as other creatures, then he also has his own specific purpose and his task is to recognize this purpose and achieve it<sup>27</sup>. Even if it is too difficult for man to do so on his own, Jesus, as a caring gardener, takes action to save him from failure.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. P. Gondek, *Projekt autonomicznej filozofii realistycznej. Mieczysława A. Krąpca i Stanisława Kamińskiego teoria bytu*, Lublin 2015, p. 183–184.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *Metafizyka...*, p. 179; A. Maryniarczyk, *Dobro bytu*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Dysputy problemowe O dobru*. Dysputy problemowe *O pożądaniu dobra i o woli*, p. 218.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality...*, p. 91.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Tomasz z Akwinu, *Summa contra gentiles*, p. 18; P. Moskal, *Spór o racje religii*, Lublin 2000, p. 192.



## Conclusion

The above analysis of selected Gospel passages was to show the presence of logic in the thinking and speaking of Jesus Christ. This kind of logic has its source in the real world which is governed by the so-called first (metaphysical) principles. Thus, the order of cognition depends on the laws of logic, and the laws of logic are found in the nature of real beings.

The rationality of being and, consequently, the rationality of cognition are expressed in a set of transcendental (general and all-pervading) principles-laws. Each of these laws is found in the Gospel, which means that Jesus knows them and uses them. These laws of logic include: the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, the law of the excluded middle, the law of sufficient reason, the law of finality. In order for the message of revelation to be understood, and then accepted, by man, such laws cannot be violated.

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## LAWS OF LOGICAL THINKING AND THE GOSPEL

### SUMMARY

The article aims to clarify the basic laws of logic and show their application in the Gospel. The content of selected fragments of the Gospel proves that it contains fundamental laws of rational thinking in the form of: the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, the law of the excluded middle, the law of sufficient reason, the law of finality. The statements and teachings of Jesus Christ are not without logical principles, which man already applies in everyday thinking. The source of this kind of laws is real existence. The so-called the first principles that govern the existence of being, in the order of knowledge, become the laws of thinking. For the message of revelation to be understood and accepted by the person to whom it is addressed, the laws of thought must exist in the Gospel.

**KEY WORDS:** Logic, Laws of Logical Thinking, Gospel