

When Hartshorne speaks of "[r]eason in general" (*RSP*: 163), what he evidently has in mind is reason in what I distinguish as the proper sense of the word, i.e., the *secondary level of critical reflection and proper theory*, and even then, only in the sense of *critical validation*, as distinct from *critical interpretation*. Therefore, what he proceeds to say about "reason in general" could be put less problematically as follows:

"Critical validation in general is either a mere tracing of the consequences of ideas, whether true or false, that is, mere deduction, as in mathematics, or an attempt to estimate the truth of ideas by the honest weighing of evidence, the most accurate attainable estimation of pros and cons. This weighing of evidence has two main forms or levels: the inductive reasoning of science and everyday life; and the presumed reasoning, not easy to classify, which is at work in the constructions of systems of metaphysics and theology" (cf. 163).

Actually, this is too narrow a characterization to apply to "critical validation in general," allowing, as one must, that claims to truth, whether purely formal or also material, are not the only kinds of validity claims that can and may need to be critically validated. So the first sentence needs to be rewritten to begin, "Critical validation of truth-claims in general"

Given this reformulation, what Hartshorne goes on to say about "faith and reason" has much to commend it.

"[H]ow are the processes of deduction, and of weighing of evidence (on the two levels mentioned), related to trust in the environment as an adequate basis for our efforts to live in accordance with certain ideals? At once, we note that deducing consequences of ideas and weighing evidence for ideas, are themselves modes of behavior, and of these modes, as of any others, we must ask, what is their ideal, and is the world such that this ideal is practicable? For if it is not, why should we bother to study mathematics or to pursue inductive science or metaphysics? As has been often remarked, the entire life of [human beings], including quite especially [their] intellectual life, is the expression of faith or trust, for example, trust that the human discovery of truth is possible and worth striving for. Since this is the case, there is an

absurdity in supposing that faith is unjustified until and unless it can find evidence to support it. To look for evidence is to express one's trust in the value of evidence. The most basic animal and human faith is beyond need of justification. Even suicide expresses the trust that to die is, in certain cases at least, better than to live. What needs justification is not faith in general, for to think, as to live, is already to accept faith as valid. What needs justification is only the choice of *which* faith, which verbal and intellectual and perhaps institutional, ritualistic, and artistic form of expression and intensification we should seek to give the faith we inevitably have. Here truly we do need justification, not merely by faith, but of faith. Is there any way to achieve this, if not by deducing the consequences of various interpretations of the content of faith, and examining the arguments for and against each? The only alternative is to put unlimited trust in our luck in having been born into the right religion, or in our capacity to make the right choice without any careful consideration of relevant arguments.

"In the comparison of diverse faiths, reason asks us to be technically neutral; that is to say, whatever may be the particular form of faith we happen to incline to, we ought to reason as if we had no such inclination. It is obvious that nothing is humanly more difficult than to achieve such neutrality of reasoning. Here—as [Reinhold] Niebuhr points out—is a mighty ambiguity in the term 'reason.' It means one thing so far as it designates an ideal of thinking, and something more or less radically different so far as it stands for this or that [woman's or] man's practice of thinking. The ideal neutrality which reason calls for is only an ideal, so far as [human beings are] concerned. [They try] to play fair as between the faith [they] would like to justify and rival faiths, but scarcely can [they] ever wholly succeed. Here is the element of truth in the disparagement of reason often expressed by [women and] men of faith. What we actually have is not reason, but various alleged reasonings. . . . But granted all this, are not the [women and] men of faith in the same human boat along with the rest of us? If they renounce reason in favor of resting content with their own form of faith, on what ground do they claim validity for this form? If they say, we have received it directly or indirectly from God [Godself] who cannot deceive or be in error, the question is, by what mode of human response to a divine message could the possibility of error be ruled out? . . . The message is divine, but we miserable human wretches must receive and interpret it if it is to become our own living faith.

"In at least one sense, however, it seems correct to say that faith transcends rational justification. After we have weighed the evidences as best we can, the question is: how conclusive is the result? Rational neutrality may remain at the end as it is obligatory at the beginning of the process. And yet a living faith we need, and something more definite than the mere general faith that somehow it is all right for us to live and try to do our best. Such complete vagueness is not practicable, and it means that the content of the word 'best' also remains all too vague. So it seems that each individual must carry on such reasoning as [she or] he has opportunity and leisure to effectuate, and then 'take a chance' on the best guess [she or] he can make. [Her or h]is reasoning may seem to favor this faith over that, but inconclusively. Yet [her or] his life of faith can hardly be equally undecided. Or can it? And is such indecision desirable? At least, it should, as Niebuhr says, survive in our practical faith in the form of tolerance. Since I am not rightfully certain, I cannot set down the disagreements of others with me as simply so many errors. I may practice my own ritual with cheerful confidence, but I ought not to condemn you uncharitably, or with a sense of personal infallibility, for similarly practicing yours. And I ought not to condemn myself too definitively, or my children, to persistence in that ritual unchanged, should new evidences become apparent to me" (164 ff.).

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