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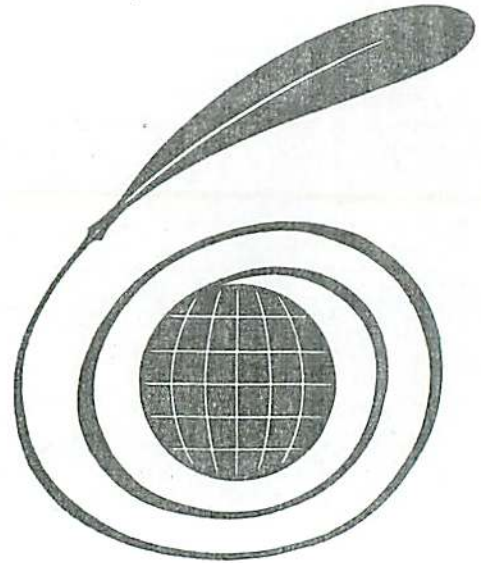
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Truth and Human Fellowship

By Jacques Maritain

(A lecture on Toleration, printed with the kind permission of Dr. Maritain and the Princeton University Press.)

"O Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!" Madame Roland said, mounting the scaffold. O Truth, it may be said, how often blind violence and oppression have been let loose in thy name in the course of history! "Zeal for truth," as Father Victor White puts it, "has often been a cloak for the most evil and revolting of human passion."¹

As a result, some people think that in order to set human existence free from these evil passions, and make men live in peace and pleasant quiet, the best way is to get rid of any zeal for truth or attachment to truth.

Here we have only the swing of the pendulum moving from one extreme to another. Skepticism, moreover, may happen to hold those who are not skeptical to be barbarous, childish, or subhuman, and it may happen to treat them as badly as the zealot treats the unbeliever. Then skepticism proves to be as intolerant as fanaticism—it becomes the fanaticism of doubt. This is a sign that skepticism is not the answer.

The answer is humility, together with faith in truth.

The problem of truth and human fellowship is important for democratic societies; it seems to me to be particularly important for this country, where men and women coming from a great diversity of national stocks and religious or philosophical creeds have to live together. If each one of them endeavored to impose his own convictions and the truth is which he believes on all his co-citizens, would not living together become impossible? That's obviously right. Well, it is easy, too easy, to go a step further, and to ask: if each one sticks to his own convictions, will not each one endeavor to impose his own convictions on all others? So that, as a result, living together will become impossible if any citizen whatever sticks to his own convictions and believes in a given truth?

Thus it is not unusual to meet people who think that *not to believe in any truth, or not to adhere firmly to any assertion as unshakably true in itself* is a primary condition required of democratic citizens in order to be tolerant of one another and to live in peace with one another. May I say that these people are in fact the most intolerant people, for if

perchance they were to believe in something as unshakably true, they would feel compelled, by the same stroke, to impose by force and coercion their own belief on their co-citizens. The only remedy they have found to get rid of their abiding tendency to fanaticism is to cut themselves off from the truth. That's a suicidal method. And it is a suicidal conception of democracy: not only would a democratic society which lived on universal skepticism condemn itself to death by starvation; but it would also enter a process of self-annihilation, from the very fact that no democratic society can live without a common practical belief in those truths which are freedom, justice, law, and the other tenets of democracy; and that any belief in these things as objectively and unshakably true, as well as in any other kind of truth, would be brought to naught by the pre-assumed law of universal skepticism.

In the field of political science, the opinion which I am criticizing was made into a theory—the so-called "relativistic justification of democracy"—by Hans Kelsen. It is very significant that in order to establish his philosophy of the temporal order and show that democracy implies ignorance of, or doubt about, any absolute truth, either religious or metaphysical, Kelsen has recourse to Pilate; so that, in refusing to distinguish the just from the unjust, and washing his hands, this dishonest judge thus becomes the lofty precursor of relativistic democracy. Kelsen quotes the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate—St. John, Chapter 18—in which Jesus says: "To this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," and Pilate answers: "What is truth?" and then delivers Jesus over to the fury of the crowd. Because Pilate did not know what truth is, Kelsen, concludes, he therefore called upon the people, and asked them to decide; and thus in a democratic society it is up to the people to decide, and mutual tolerance reigns, because nobody knows what truth is.

The truth of which Kelsen was speaking was religious and metaphysical truth—what they call "absolute truth," as if any truth, insofar as it is true, were not absolute in its own sphere. As Miss Helen Silving puts it,² the burden of Kelsen's argument is: "Whoever knows or claims to know absolute truth or absolute justice"—that is to say, *truth or justice* simply—"cannot be a democrat, because he cannot and is not expected to admit the possibility of a view different from his own, the *true* view. The metaphysician and the believer are bound to impose their eternal truth on other people, on the ignorant, and on the people without vision. Theirs is the holy crusade of the one who knows against the one who does not know or does not share in God's grace. Only if we are aware of our ignorance of what is the *Good* may we call upon the people to decide."

It is impossible to summarize more accurately a set of more barbarous and erroneous assumptions. If it were true that whoever knows

¹Rev. Father Victor White, O.P., "Religious Tolerance," *The Commonwealth*, September 4, 1953.

²Helen Silving, "The Conflict of Liberty and Equality," *Iowa Law Review*, Spring, 1950.

or claims to know truth or justice cannot admit the possibility of a view different from his own, and is bound to impose his true view on other people by violence, then the rational animal would be the most dangerous of beasts. In reality it is through rational means, that is, through persuasion, not through coercion, that the rational animal is bound by his very nature to try to induce his fellow men to share in what he knows or claims to know as true or just. And the metaphysician, because he trusts human reason, and the believer, because he trusts divine grace and knows that "a forced faith is a hypocrisy hateful to God and man," as Cardinal Manning put it, do not use holy war to make their "eternal truth" accessible to other people; they appeal to the inner freedom of other people by offering them either their demonstrations or the testimony of their love. And we do not call upon the people to decide because we are aware of our ignorance of what is the good, but because we know this truth and this good, that the people have a right to self-government. It is, no doubt, easy to observe that in the history of mankind nothing goes to show that, from primitive times on, religious feeling or religious ideas have been particularly successful in pacifying men; religious differences seem rather to have fed and sharpened their conflicts. On the one hand truth always makes trouble, and those who bear witness to it are always persecuted: "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth; I came not to send peace, but the sword."³ On the other hand—and this is the point we must face—those who know or claim to know truth happens sometimes to persecute others. I do not deny the fact; I say that this fact, like all other facts, needs to be understood. It only means that, given the weakness of our nature, the impact of the highest and most sacred things upon the coarseness of the human heart is liable to make these things, by accident, a prey to its passions, as long as it has not been purified by genuine love. It is nonsense to regard fanaticism as a fruit of religion. Fanaticism is a natural tendency rooted in our basic egotism and will to power. It seizes upon any noble feeling to live on it. The only remedy for religious fanaticism is the Gospel light and the progress of religious consciousness in faith itself and in that fraternal love which is the fruit of the human soul's union with God. For then man realizes the sacred transcendence of truth and of God. The more he grasps truth, through science, philosophy, or faith, the more he feels what immensity remains to be grasped within this very truth. The more he knows God, either by reason or by faith, the more he understands that our concepts attain (through analogy) but do not circumscribe Him, and that His thoughts are not like our thoughts: for "who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath become His counselor?"⁴ The more strong and deep faith becomes, the more man kneels down, not before his own alleged ignorance of truth, but before the inscrutable mystery of divine truth, and before the hidden ways in which God goes to meet those who search Him.

³Matt. 10:34.

⁴Isa. 40:13.

To sum up, the real problem has to do with the human subject, endowed as he is with his rights in relation to his fellow men, and afflicted as he is by the vicious inclinations which derive from his will to power. On the one hand, the error of the absolutists who would like to impose truth by coercion comes from the fact that they shift their right feelings about the object from the object to the subject; and they think that just as error has no rights of its own and should be banished from the mind (through the means of the mind), so man when he is in error has no rights of his own and should be banished from human fellowship (through the means of human power).

On the other hand, the error of the theorists who make relativism, ignorance, and doubt a necessary condition for mutual tolerance comes from the fact that they shift their right feelings about the human subject—who must be respected even if he is in error—from the subject to the object; and thus they deprive man and the human intellect of the very act—adherence to the truth—in which consists both man's dignity and reason for living.

They begin, as we have seen apropos of Kelsen, with the supreme truths either of metaphysics or of faith. But science also deals with truth, though in science the discovery of a new truth supplants most often a previous theory which was hitherto considered true. Well, what will happen if human fanaticism takes hold of what it claims to be scientific truth at a given moment? Suffice it to look at the manner in which the Stalinist state imposed on scientists its own physical, biological, linguistic, or economic truth. Now, it is a little different: a certain amount of diversity among scientists is *commanded* in Russia, and the Russian state is endeavoring to *manage* and *control* free discussion itself. Shall we then conclude that in order to escape state-science oppression or management, the only way is to give up science and scientific truth, and to take refuge in ignorance?

It is truth, not ignorance, which makes us humble, and gives us the sense of what remains unknown in our very knowledge. In one sense only is there wisdom in appealing to our ignorance: if we mean the ignorance of those who know, not the ignorance of those who are in the dark.

Be it a question of science, metaphysics, or religion, the man who says: "What is truth?" as Pilate did, is not a tolerant man, but a betrayer of the human race. There is real and genuine tolerance only when a man is firmly and absolutely convinced of a truth, or of what he holds to be a truth, and when he at the same time recognizes the right of those who deny this truth to exist, and to contradict him, and to speak their own mind, not because they are free from truth but because they seek truth in their own way, and because he respects in them human nature and human dignity and those very resources and living springs of the intellect and of conscience which make them potentially capable of attaining the truth he loves, if some day they happen to see it.

Peter's proof — has not been "Lord and Christ" from eternity, but has become so only by the miracle of Grace of the incarnation, by the act of the one God. That is why Peter says God has "made" him Lord and Christ."

It would appear then that the foundations of the characteristic Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation are to be found in the most primitive witness of the early Church, before Paul and John had begun the development of Christian theology. It was the question of the Messiah, not the question of God that stood in the foreground of the early Apostolic mission. The early Christian question centered on the mission of the historical Jesus. This appears from the standard St. Peter set up for the selection of an apostle to take Judas' place: "Of these men who have been in our company all the time that the Lord Jesus moved among us, from John's baptism until the day that He was taken up from us, of these one must become a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts 1:21). Faith in his divinity is the broad undercurrent of their proclamation of Jesus the servant; but they were clearly afraid of being misunderstood by the Jews. The early Apostolic tradition leaves no doubt that it arose in a time when Christianity was slowly and painfully emerging from Judaism, in a time of transition from the Jew's rigid belief in one God to the dynamic Christian faith in one triune God.

¹ Adam, Karl: *The Christ of Faith*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1957, page 69.

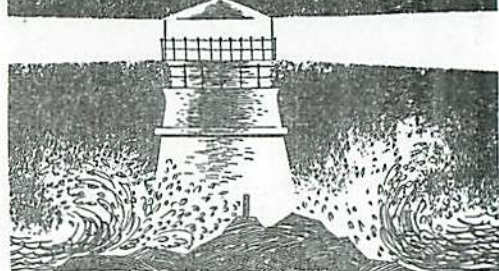
SANCTUARY—

Here is the answer to all our searching need—
Where Christ looks down with quiet eyes
And sees, beneath the tortuous, frantic greed,
The soul His Father made. His hands are wise,
His voice a whisper louder than all the clamor
That would drown it out. His Heart of Love
Loves us, who crucify Him still and more,
He will go on—for all above,
Beneath us, all within, without—
All sins forgiven, all our hopes and joys,
Are His. We cannot doubt—
Beyond patience, beyond love, above all faith,
HE IS—and we have but to come, to seek
Him where He waits . . . It is not far—a breath
Of our own will, we scale the peak
Of self and are with Him. Here is our peace,
Our truth, our very life, our joy's increase!

—Cornelia Curtis

Truth and Human Fellowship

(II)



Jacques Maritain

A particular application of the problem we are discussing can be found in the philosophical field. Some years ago I was asked whether in my opinion philosophers can cooperate.

I felt rather embarrassed, for on the one hand if philosophy is not search for truth it is nothing, and truth admits of no compromise; on the other hand if philosophers, that is, lovers of wisdom, cannot cooperate, how will any human cooperation be possible? The fact that philosophical discussions seem to consist of deaf men's quarrels is not reassuring for civilization.

My answer was that philosophers do not cooperate, as a rule, because human nature is as weak in them as in any other poor devil of a rational animal, but that they *can* cooperate; and that cooperation between philosophers can only be a conquest of the intellect over itself and the very universe of thought it has created—a difficult conquest indeed, achieved by intellectual rigor and justice on the basis of irreducible and inevitably lasting antagonisms.

A distinction, moreover, seems to me to be relevant in this connection. The question can be considered either from the point of *doctrinal exchanges* between systems or from the point of view of the *mutual grasp* which various philosophical systems can have of each other, each being taken as a whole.

From the first point of view, or the point of view of doctrinal exchanges, each system can avail itself of the others for its own sake by dismembering them, and by feeding on and assimilating what it can take from them. That is cooperation indeed, but in quite a peculiar sense—as a lion cooperates with a lamb.

Yet from the second point of view, and in the perspective of the judgment which each system passes on the other, contemplating it as a whole, and as an object situated in an external sphere, and trying to do it justice, a mutual understanding is possible which cannot indeed do away with basic antagonisms, but which may create a kind of real though imperfect cooperation, to the extent that each system succeeds (1) in recognizing for the other, in a certain sense, a right to exist; and (2) in availing itself of the other, no longer by material *intussusception* and by borrowing or digesting parts of the other, but by bringing,

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thanks to the other, its own specific life and principles to a higher degree of achievement and extension.

It is on this genuine kind of cooperation that I would like to insist for a moment.

If we were able to realize that most often our mutually opposed affirmations do not bear on the same parts or aspects of the real and that they are of greater value than our mutual negations, then we should come nearer the first prerequisite of a genuinely philosophical understanding: that is, we should become better able to transcend and conquer our own system of signs and conceptual language, and to take on for a moment, in a provisional and tentative manner, the thought and approach of the other so as to come back, with this intelligible booty, to our own philosophical conceptualization and to our own system of reference.

Then, we are no longer concerned with analyzing or *sorting* the set of assertions peculiar to various systems in spreading them out, so to speak, on a single surface or level in order to examine what conciliation or exchange of ideas they may mutually allow in their inner structure. But we are concerned with taking into account a third dimension, in order to examine the manner in which each system, considered as a specific whole, can, according to its own frame of reference, do justice to the other in taking a view of it and seeking to penetrate it as an object situated on the outside—in another sphere of thought.

From this standpoint, two considerations would appear all-important: the one is the consideration of the central *intuition* which lies at the core of each great philosophical doctrine; the other is the consideration of the *place* which each system could, according to its own frame of reference, grant the other system as the legitimate place the latter is cut out to occupy in the universe of thought.

Actually, each great philosophical doctrine lives on a central intuition which can be wrongly conceptualized and translated into a system of assertions seriously deficient or erroneous as such, but which, insofar as it is intellectual intuition, truly gets hold of some aspect of the real. And, consequently, each great philosophical doctrine, once it has been grasped in its central intuition and then re-interpreted in the frame of reference of another doctrine (in a manner that it would surely not accept), should be granted from the point of view of this other doctrine some place considered as legitimately occupied, be it in some imaginary universe.

If we try to do justice to the philosophical systems against which we take our most determined stand, we shall seek to discover both that intuition which they involve and that place we must grant them from our own point of view. And then we shall benefit from them, not by borrowing from them or exchanging with them certain particular views and ideas, but by seeing, thanks to them, more profoundly into our own doctrine, by enriching it from within and extending its principles

to new fields of inquiry which have been brought more forcefully to our attention, but which we shall make all the more vitally and powerfully informed by these principles.

Thus there is not *toleration* between systems—a system cannot *tolerate* another system, because systems are abstract sets of ideas and have only intellectual existence, where the will to tolerate or not to tolerate has no part—but there can be *justice*, intellectual justice, between philosophical systems.

And between philosophers there can be tolerance and more than tolerance; there can be a kind of cooperation and fellowship, founded on intellectual justice and the philosophical duty of understanding another's thought in a genuine and fair manner. Nay more, there is no intellectual justice without the assistance of intellectual charity. If we do not *love* the thought and intellect of another as intellect and thought, how shall we take pains to discover what truths are conveyed by it while it seems to us defective or misguided, and at the same time to free these truths from the errors which prey upon them and to re-instate them in an entirely true systematization? Thus we love truth more than we do our fellow-philosophers, but we love and respect both.

At this point I should like to observe that even when they are wrong philosophers are a kind of mirror, on the heights of intelligence, of the deepest trends which are obscurely at play in the human mind at each epoch of history; (the greater they are, the more actively and powerfully radiant the mirror is). Now, since we are thinking beings, such mirrors are indispensable to us. After all, it is better for human society to have Hegelian errors with Hegel than to have Hegelian errors without Hegel—I mean hidden and diffuse errors rampant throughout the social body, which are Hegelian in type but anonymous and unrecognizable. A great philosopher who is wrong is like a beacon on the reefs, which says to seamen: steer clear of me; he enables men (at least those who have not been seduced by him) to *identify* the errors from which they suffer, and to become clearly aware of them, and to struggle against them. And this is an essential need of society, insofar as society is not merely animal society but society made up of persons endowed with intelligence and freedom.

And even if philosophers are hopelessly divided among themselves in their search for a superior and all-pervading truth, at least they seek this truth; and their very controversies, constantly renewed, are a sign of the necessity for such a search. These controversies do not witness to the illusory or unattainable character of the object that philosophers are looking for. They witness to the fact that this object is both most difficult and most crucial in importance: is not everything which is crucial in importance crucial also in difficulty? Plato told us that beautiful things are difficult, and that we should not avoid beautiful dangers. Mankind would be in jeopardy, and soon in despair, if it shunned the beautiful dangers of intelligence and reason.

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Moreover, many things are questionable and oversimplified in the commonplace insistence on the insuperable disagreements which divide philosophers. These disagreements do indeed exist. But in one sense there is more continuity and stability in philosophy than in science. For a new scientific theory completely changes the very manner in which the former ones posed the question. Whereas philosophical problems remain always the same, in one form or another; nay more, basic philosophical ideas, once they have been discovered, become permanent acquisitions in the philosophical heritage. They are used in various, even opposite, ways: they are still there. And finally, philosophers quarrel so violently because each one has seen some truth which, more often than not, has dazzled his eyes, and which he may conceptualize in an insane manner, but of which his fellow-philosophers must also be aware, each in his own perspective.

At first glance it seems particularly shocking, as I observed at the beginning, that men dedicated to wisdom and to the grasping of the highest truths might be not only in mutual disagreement—which is quite normal—but might display, as happens more often than not in actual fact, more mutual intolerance—refusing one another any right intellectually to exist—than even potters, as Aristotle put it, or painters and writers with respect to each other. In reality this is not surprising, for mutual toleration relates essentially to living together in concrete existence; and, as a result, mutual toleration is easier in practical matters than in theoretical ones. When it is a question of rescuing a man from a fire, mutual toleration and cooperation between an atheist and a Christian, or an advocate of determination and an advocate of free will, will be a matter of course. But when it comes to knowing the truth about the nature of the human will, the cooperation between the advocate of determinism and the advocate of free will will become more difficult. We just saw on what conditions and in overcoming what obstacles such cooperation between philosophers is possible. To tell the truth, philosophers are naturally intolerant, and genuine tolerance among them means a great victory of virtue over nature in their minds. The same can be said, I am afraid, of theologians. This theme was

particularly dear to Descartes, who made theologians (non-Cartesian theologians) responsible for all wars in the world. And yet both philosophers and theologians are surely able to overcome the natural bent I just alluded to, and to nurture all the more respect for the man in error as they are more eager to vindicate the truth he disregards or disfigures.

Thus we come to our third point: mutual understanding and cooperation—in uncompromising fidelity to truth as each one sees it—between men of different faiths: I do not mean on the temporal level and for temporal tasks; I mean on the very level of religious life, knowledge, and experience. If it is true that human society must bring together, in the service of the same terrestrial common good, men belonging to different spiritual families, how can the peace of that temporal society be lastingly assured if first in the domain that matters most to the human being—in the spiritual and religious domain itself—relationships of mutual respect and mutual understanding cannot be established?

I prefer the word *fellowship* to "tolerance" for a number of reasons. In the first place, the word *tolerance* relates not only to the virtue of mutual toleration between human individuals, which I am discussing in this lecture, but also to problems which are extraneous to my present topic. For instance, on the one hand there is the problem of "dogmatic tolerance": Has man a moral obligation to seek religious truth and to cling to it when he sees it? Yes indeed. Has the Church a right to condemn errors opposed to the deposit of divine revelation with which she has been entrusted? Yes indeed. And, on the other hand, there is the problem of "civil tolerance"⁵: Must civil society respect the realm of consciences and refrain from imposing a religious creed by coercion? Again, yes indeed.

In the second place the word *fellowship* connotes something positive—positive and elementary—in human relationships. It conjures up the image of travelling companions, who meet here below by chance and journey through life—however fundamental their differences may be—good humoredly, in cordial solidarity and human agreement, or better to say, friendly and cooperative disagreement. Well then, for the reasons I have just mentioned the problem of good fellowship between the members of the various religious families seems to me to be a cardinal one for our age of civilization.

⁵ See Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate* (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), I, 215-216, 283-284.

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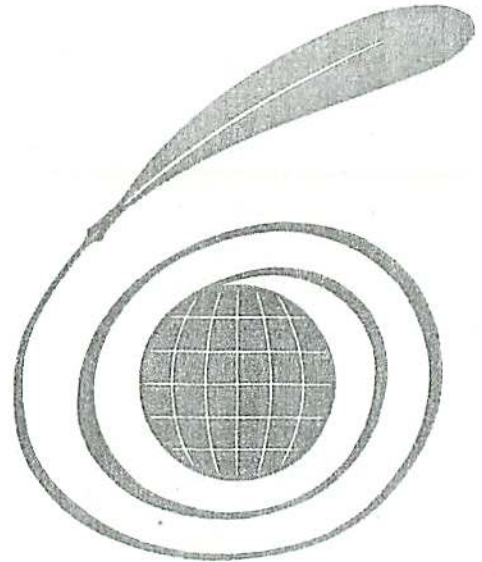
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Truth and Human Fellowship

(III)

Jacques Maritain

Let me say immediately that this attempt at rapprochement might easily be misunderstood. I shall therefore begin by clearing the ground of any possible sources of misunderstanding. Such a rapprochement obviously cannot be effectuated at the cost of straining fidelity, or of any yielding in intellectual integrity, or of any lessening of what is due to truth. Nor is there any question whatever either of agreeing upon I know not what common minimum of truth or of subjecting each one's convictions to a common index of doubt. On the contrary, such a coming together is only conceivable if we assume that each gives the maximum of fidelity to the light that is shown to him. Further-

more, it obviously can only be pure, and therefore valid and efficacious, if it is free from any *arrière-pensee* of a temporal nature and from even the shadow of a tendency to subordinate religion to the defense of any earthly interest of acquired advantage.

I am sure that everyone is agreed on these negative conditions I have just enumerated. But as soon as we pass on to positive considerations each one sees the very justification and the very reason for being of this good fellowship between believers of different religious families mirrored in his own particular outlook and in his own world of thought. And these outlooks are irreducibly heterogeneous; these worlds of thought never exactly meet. Until the day of eternity comes, their dimensions can have no common measure. There is no use closing one's eyes to this fact, which simply bears witness to the internal coherence of the systems of signs, built up in accordance with different principles, on which human minds depend for their cognitive life. Fundamental notions such as that of the absolute oneness of God have not the same meaning for a Jew as for a Christian; nor has the notion of the divine transcendence and incommunicability the same meaning for a Christian as for a Moslem; nor the notions of person, of freedom, grace, revelation, incarnation, of nature and the supernatural, the same meaning for the Orient as for the Occident. And the "non-violence" of the Indian is not

the same as Christian "charity." No doubt, as I just said apropos of philosophical justice, it is the privilege of the human intelligence to understand other languages than the one it itself uses. It is none the less true that if, instead of being men, we were patterns of Pure Ideas, our nature would be to devour each other in order to absorb into our own world of thought whatever other such worlds might hold of truth.

But it happens that we are men, each containing within himself the ontological mystery of personality and freedom: and it is in this very mystery of freedom and personality that genuine tolerance or fellowship takes root. For the basis of good fellowship among men of different creeds is not of the order of the intellect and of ideas, but of the heart and of love. It is friendship, natural friendship, but first and foremost mutual love in God and for God. Love does not go out to essences nor to qualities nor to ideas, but to persons; and it is the mystery of persons and of the divine presence within them which is here in play. This fellowship, then, is not a fellowship of beliefs but the fellowship of men who believe.

The conviction each of us has, rightly or wrongly, regarding the limitations, deficiencies, errors of others does not prevent friendship between minds. In such a fraternal dialogue, there must be a kind of forgiveness and remission, not with regard to ideas—ideas deserve no forgiveness if they are false—but with regard to the condition of him who travels the road at our side. Every believer knows very well that all men will be judged—both himself and all others. But neither he nor another is God, able to pass judgment. And what each one is before God, neither the one nor the other knows. Here the "Judge not" of the Gospels applies with its full force. We can render judgment concerning ideas, truths, or errors; good or bad actions; character, temperament, and what appears to us of a man's interior disposition. But we are utterly forbidden to judge the innermost heart, that inaccessible center where the person day after day weaves his own fate and ties the bonds binding him to God. When it comes to that, there is only one thing to do, and that is to trust in God. And that is precisely what love for our neighbor prompts us to do.

I should like to dwell a moment on the inner law and the privileges of this friendship of charity, as regards precisely the relations between believers of different religious denominations (as well as between believers and non-believers). I have already made it sufficiently clear that it is wrong to say that such a friendship *transcends* dogma or *exists in spite* of the dogmas of faith. Such a view is inadmissible for all those who believe that the word of God is as absolute as His unity or His transcendence. A mutual love which would be bought at the price of faith, which would base itself on some form of eclecticism, or which, recalling Lessing's parable of the three rings, would say, "I love him who does not have my faith because, after all, I am not sure that my faith is the true faith, and that it bears the device of the true ring." in

so saying would reduce faith to a mere historic inheritance and seal it with the seal of agnosticism and relativity. Such a love, for anyone who believes he has heard the word of God, would amount to putting man above God.

That love which is charity, on the contrary, goes first to God, and then to all men, because the more men are loved in God and for God, the more they are loved themselves and in themselves. Moreover this love is born in faith and remains within faith, while at the same time reaching out to those who have not the same faith. That is the very characteristic of love; wherever our love goes, it carries with it our faith.

Nor does the friendship of charity merely make us recognize the existence of others—although as a matter of fact here is something already difficult enough for men, and something which includes everything essential. Not only does it make us recognize that another exists, but it makes us recognize that he exists, not as an accident of the empirical world but as a human being who exists before God, and has the right to exist. While remaining within the faith, the friendship of charity helps us to recognize whatever beliefs other than our own include of truth and of dignity, of human and divine values. It makes us respect them, urges us on ever to seek in them everything that is stamped with the mark of man's original greatness and of the prevenient care and generosity of God. It helps us to come to a mutual understanding of one another. It does not make us go beyond our faith but beyond ourselves. In other words, it helps us to purify our faith of the shell of egotism and subjectivity in which we instinctively tend to enclose it. And it also inevitably carries with it a sort of heart-rending, attached, as is the heart, at once to the truth we love and to the neighbor who is ignorant of that truth. This condition is even associated with what is called the "ecumenical" bringing together of divided Christians; how much more is it associated with the labor of bringing into mutual comprehension believers of every denomination.

I distrust any easy and comfortable friendship between believers of all denominations, I mean a friendship which is not accompanied as it were, by a kind of compunction or soul's sorrow; just as I distrust any universalism which claims to unite in one and the same service of God, and in one and the same transcendental piety—as in some World's Fair Temple — all forms of belief and all forms of worship. The duty of being faithful to the light, and of always following it to the extent that one sees it, is a duty which cannot be evaded. In other words, the problem of conversion, for anyone who feels the spur of God, and to the extent that he is pricked by it, cannot be cast aside, any more than can be cast aside the obligation of the apostolate. And by the same token I also distrust a friendship between believers of the same denomination which is, as it were, easy and comfortable, because in that case charity would be reserved to their fellow-worshippers: there would be a uni-

versalism which would limit love to brothers in the same faith, a proselytism which would love another man only in order to convert him and only insofar as he is capable of conversion, a Christianity which would be the Christianity of *good* people as against *bad* people, and which would confuse the order of charity with what a great spiritual writer of the seventeenth century called a police-force order.

The spurious universalism I just alluded to—and which would make all faiths have their stand, window display, and loudspeaker in a World's Fair Temple, on the condition that all of them should confess they are *not sure* that they are conveying the word of God, and that none of them should claim to be the true Faith—is sometimes advocated in the name of Indian wisdom, which teaches a kind of transcendent liberal indifference with respect to any definite creed.

At this point I should like to observe:

First. Such liberal indifference actually applies to non-India rather than Indian creeds, and consequently resembles very much an illusory theme of propaganda. Moreover, as a matter of fact, "Right view or right thinking is the first step in the path of the Buddha, and the word *orthodoxy* is precisely its Greek equivalent. In the Pali scriptures there is much that reads like accounts of heresy trials."⁶ And finally was not Buddhism, which was born in India, persecuted by Brahmanism and expelled from India?

Second. Indian wisdom, be it Brahmanist or Buddhist, does not teach indifference to any supreme truth; it teaches undifferentiation of supreme truth, and this is a definite metaphysical creed indeed. To be sure, Indian metaphysics is rich with invaluable insights and experiences. Yet it is seriously mistaken, insofar as it teaches that the supreme Truth is sheer undifferentiation, and the Supreme Reality so transcendent that it cannot be known in any expressible manner, even through concepts and words which God himself used to reveal Himself to us. And this boils down, on the one hand, to disregarding the intellect as such, which can grasp through analogy divine things themselves, and, on the other hand, to forbidding God the right to speak. Then all religious forms are embraced and absorbed in a formless religiosity.

Third. The Western or Westernized caricature of Indian metaphysics, which preaches, in the name of one "sophy" or another, indifference to any religious dogma and equivalence between all religious creeds henceforth decidedly relativized, displays itself a most arrogant dogmatism, asking from its believers unconditional surrender of their minds to teachers who are self-appointed prophets. And the kind of mysticism supposedly free from, and superior to, any revealed dogma, which is advocated by this cheap gnosticism, is but spiritual self-complacency or search for powers, which make up for the loss of the sense of truth.

True universalism, as I have insisted all through this lecture, is just the opposite of indifference. The catholicity it implies is not a catholicity of relativism and indistinction, but the catholicity of reason, and

first of all the catholicity of the Word of God, which brought salvation to all the human race and to whose mystical body all those who live in grace belong visibly or invisibly.⁷ True universalism presupposes the sense of truth and the certainties of faith; it is the universalism of love which uses these very certainties of faith and all the resources of the intellect to understand better, and do full justice to, the other fellow. It is not supra-dogmatic, it is supra-subjective. We find a token of such a universalism of love — not above faith but within faith, not above religious and philosophical truth but within religious and philosophical truth, to the extent to which everyone knows it—in the development of certain discussion groups between Moslems and Christians, for instance, or of certain studies in comparative theology and comparative mysticism. I would like to cite as an example the case of a book written a few years ago by two Thomist authors⁸ on Moslem theology which proved to be so illuminating for Moslem as well as for Christian readers that a professor of the Al-Hazar University wished to translate it into Arabic.

As to comparative mysticism, it is genuinely comparative only if it avails itself of all the analytical instruments provided by philosophy and theology. According to the principles of Thomist philosophy and theology, it is a fact that, if divine grace exists and bears fruit in them, men of good will who live in non-Christian climates can experience the same *supernatural* mystical union with God "known as unknown"⁹ as Christian contemplatives do: it is so, *not* because mystical experience is independent of faith, but because faith in the Redeemer can exist implicitly, together with the grace of Christ, in men who do not know His name, and this faith can develop into grace-given contemplation, through union of love with God. On the other hand, studies in *natural* mysticism have shown that the disciples of the Yoga, for instance, normally terminate in a mystical experience which is authentic in its own sphere but quite different from grace-given contemplation, and has for its object that invaluable reality which is the Self, in its pure act of existing, immediately attained through the void created by intellectual concentration. Thus it is that a Christian can do full justice, in the Christian perspective itself, to mystical experiences which take place in non-Christian religious areas;¹⁰ and he can develop genuine understanding of, and respect for those who are dedicated to these experiences.

I have given these indications only to illustrate the fact that genuine human fellowship is not jeopardized — quite the contrary! — it is fostered by zeal for truth, if only love is there.

⁶ Rev. Father Victor White, *op. cit.*

⁷ See the chapter "Catholicité" in the remarkable book *Chemins de l'Inde et Philosophie Chrétienne* by Olivier Lacombe (Paris: Alsatia, 1956).

⁸ Louis Gardet et M.-M. Anawati, *Introduction à la Théologie Musulmane* (Paris: Vrin, 1948).

⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. contra Gent.*, III, 49. Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Mystica Theologia*, cap. 2.

¹⁰ Cf. Louis Gardet, *Experiences mystiques en terres non-chrétiennes* (Paris: Alsatia, 1953).



COR AD COR LOQUITUR



It is education which gives man a clear, conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, and eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them.