

I must begin by thanking the President and the Senate of the University of St. Michael's College for the honorary degree they have conferred on me this evening. I wish to thank them not only on my own behalf but also on behalf of Regis College, for the recognition they have accorded me, if I may venture a surmise, also expresses an appreciation of the ^{extensive} ~~close~~ collaboration between St. ^{Basil's} ~~Michael's~~ and Regis that, within the Toronto School of Theology, has come into existence during the past two years.

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Religious Commitment

I have chosen as the topic of the address -- which, on such occasions as the present, custom exacts -- Religious Commitment. The meaning I would attach to those words, Religious Commitment, I derive from a public lecture delivered ~~in~~ in the University of Toronto in January 1968 by Wilfred Cantwell Smith of Harvard University, where he is the director of the Institute of World Religions.

Prof. Smith began by acknowledging the great value and the extensive range of the work done by students of comparative religion. They have explored the religious traditions and reconstructed the history of the overt data of mankind's religious living. Both in detail and in wide compass they have observed the observable forms, rituals, symbols, recitals. But Prof. Smith then went on to urge that a further, a more important, a more difficult question must be raised. To live religiously is not merely to live in the presence of certain symbols but, he ~~originally~~ claimed, it is to be involved with them or through them in a quite special way -- a way that may lead far beyond the symbols, that may demand the totality of a person's response, that may affect his relation not only to the symbols but to everything else, to himself, to his neighbor, to the stars.

~~In brief, there are many religions. In externals,~~
~~all~~ ~~in all that can be seen or heard, they differ enormously.~~
 But the thoroughly one studies them, the ^{more} sympathically
 one examines them, the ~~more penetratingly~~ ^{the more penetratingly} one understands them,
 the more one is ~~led~~ led to the suspicion, the surmise,
 the hypothesis that, behind the objective ~~differences,~~

In brief, there are many religions. In externals, ~~and all that can be seen or heard, they differ enormously~~ in their traditions, their rituals, their beliefs, in all that can be seen and heard, they differ enormously. But Prof. Smith has endeavored to understand and describe Islam in the manner that a pious Muslim would ~~annoy~~ recognize and accept as a fair account of his own religion. This effort at sympathetic penetration forced on him the question, What is religious commitment? What has happened to a man or woman when religion in him or her ~~man~~ becomes something alive, effective, enduring, even transforming? Is there some common root to all religion, and not only to all Christian religions, but to all the religions of mankind?

The question that has concerned Prof. Smith also, I think, is of concern to us and, indeed, for any of several reasons. For even a brief answer should throw some light on the fact that secular universities across the continent have been setting up departments of religious studies. Again, it should help us understand the foundations of the ecumenical movement both in general and particularly in the notable enterprise of the Toronto School of Theology. Finally, it should make clearer the value of all religion and, specifically, of the Christian religion.

Not only is the question relevant but also the answer fundamentally is simple. There is, ^{I believe,} a common root to all religious commitment. It is God's grace that makes a religion become alive, effective, enduring, transforming. And it is widely held view that God gives sufficient grace for salvation, not just to Catholics, not just to Christians, but to all men.

~~not just to Christians, but to all men sufficient grace for~~

Salvation

It remains that the familiar words, God's grace, also are obscure. There are abstruse, highly metaphysical accounts of grace, in traditional Catholic theology. But what is wanted is an account of grace in terms of personal religious experience, something that can be described, recognized, in some sense verified in the general history of religions. To this end I can offer tonight no more than a sketch. I shall speak first of being human, for that is our capacity to receive God's grace. I shall speak secondly of being religious, for that is the effect of God's grace. I shall speak thirdly of being Christian, for it is in Christ Jesus that God's grace is revealed and celebrated.

1. Of Being Human

What is it to be human? There is a static, minimal answer. It holds that one is human whether or not one ~~is~~ is awake or asleep, a genius or a moron, a saint or a sinner, young or old, sober or drunk, well or ill, sane or crazy. But there also is a dynamic, maximal answer that envisages the range of human potentiality and distinguishes authentic from unauthentic realization. The authentic realization of human potentiality reveals man to be self-transcendent and, indeed, in a series of different manners in which the later go beyond, complement, and transform the earlier. Let us consider briefly (1) sleeping and dreaming, (2) being awake, (3) inquiring and investigating, (4) checking, weighing the evidence, judging, (5) deliberating, evaluating, deciding, acting.

In dreamless sleep we are still alive. We are operating in accord with the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology.

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In dreamless sleep we are still alive. We are operating in accord with the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology.

It may be said that we are ourselves but not that we are reaching beyond ourselves and, much less, that we rising above ourselves. But when we begin to dream, consciousness emerges. However helpless, however lacking in initiative and control, the dreamer is an intending subject. What is ~~for~~ intended commonly is symbolic, obscure, fragmentary. In what Ludwig Binswanger has called dreams of the night, the source of the dream is just the dreamer's somatic state, say, the state of his digestion. But in what Dr. Binswanger called the dreams of morning the dreamer is anticipating his waking state, he is recollecting his world, he is beginning to adopt his stance within it.

On awaking one begins to sense, to feel, to move. There is the endless variety of things to be seen, sounds to be heard, odors to be sniffed, tastes to be palated, shapes and textures to be touched. We feel pleasure and pain, desire and fear, joy and sorrow, and in such feelings there seem to reside the mass and momentum of our lives. We move about in various manners, assume now this now that posture and position, and by the fleeting movements of ~~our face~~ our facial muscles, communicate to others the quiet pulse or sudden surge of our ~~feelings~~ feelings.

Still sensations, feelings, movements reveal no more than the narrow strip of space-time that we immediately experience. But who is content with that meagre world? Imagination wants to fill out and round off the picture. Language makes questions possible, and intelligence makes them fascinating. So we ask what and why and what for and how. Our answers construct, serialize, ~~exp~~ extrapolate, generalize. Memory and tradition and belief put at our disposal the tales of travelers, the

among stories of nations, the exploits of heroes, the treasures of literature, the discoveries of science, the reflections of philosophers, the meditations of holy men. Each of us has his own little world of immediacy, but all such worlds are just minute strips within a far larger world, a world constructed by imagination and intelligence, mediated by words and meaning, and based by and large upon belief.

Now it is this far larger world that, for each of us, is the real world. It is a world unknown to the infant; it is a world we learn about at home and then at school and then at work; it is the world in which we lead most of our lives. But you are, perhaps, somewhat uneasy about this larger world. It is not the world of immediacy, ^{for instance, it is not Macbeth's "sure} ~~the sure~~ and firm-set earth on which I tread." In a manner that was ~~was~~ hardly reassuring, I spoke of it as constructed by imagination and intelligence, mediated by words and meaning, and based by and large on belief. But you will ask whether it is real, and your asking that question brings to light a further stage in man's self-transcendence. The questions already considered ~~are~~ asked what and why ^{and} and how and what for. None of them can be answered by simply saying "Yes" or "No." If one asks the man with the computer how the thing works and he answered either yes or no, his answer would just not make sense. But when one asks whether the larger world is real, to answer "Yes" means that it is real and to answer "No" means that it is not.

Just what evidence we have for answering "Yes" or "No" and how we can tell whether or not the evidence we have is is or is not sufficient, is a very nice problem in cognitional

theory, and we shall not go into now. What concerns us is the fact that we do make judgements. The further fact is that, when we affirm that something really and truly is so, then we do not mean that that is what appears, or what we imagine, or what we think, or what seems to be so, or what we would be ~~more~~ inclined to say. No doubt, we frequently have to be content with such lesser statements. But the point I would make is that the greater statement is not reducible to the lesser. When we affirm that something really and truly is so, we mean that we have somehow got beyond ourselves, somehow have got hold of something that is independent of ourselves, somehow have risen above, transcended ourselves.

I have been endeavoring to unfold and clarify the notion of self-transcendence by drawing your attention to the contrast between dreamless sleep and the ~~beginning~~ beginnings of consciousness in the dream, between the dreaming and the waking subject, between the world immediately contacted by sense, ~~immediately~~ enlivened by feeling, responded to by movement and, on the other hand, the far larger public world that we have to learn about and yet name the real world. ~~and, finally, between this world as mere construct or hypothesis and the same world as pronounced to be real.~~ ^{rational} ^{pronounced}

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With such rational pronouncement human self-transcendence, in so far as it is cognitional, is complete. But human self-transcendence is not only cognitional; it also is ^{moral} ~~real~~. Beyond questions for intelligence, such as what and why and how and what for, there are questions for reflection, such as, Is that so? But beyond both these types of question there are questions for deliberation. Beyond the pleasures we enjoy and the ~~at~~ pains we dread, there are the values to which we

may respond with the whole of our being. On the topmost level of human consciousness the subject deliberates, evaluates, decides, controls, acts. He is at once practical and existential: practical inasmuch as he is concerned with concrete courses of action; existential inasmuch as control includes self-control, and the possibility of self-control involves responsibility for what he makes of himself. The topmost level of ~~the~~ human consciousness is conscience.

However, man's self-control can proceed from quite different grounds. It can tend to be mere selfishness. Then the process of deliberation, evaluation, decision, is limited to determining what is most to one's advantage, what best serves one's interests, what on the whole yields a maximum of pleasure and a minimum of pain. At the opposite pole it can tend to ^{be} concerned solely with values: with the vital values of health and strength; with the ~~the~~ social values ~~are~~ enshrined in family and custom, society and education, church or sect, state and law, economy and technology; with the cultural values of religion and art, language and literature, science, philosophy, history, theology; with the personal value of ~~see~~ ^{one} dedicated to realizing values in himself and promoting their realization in others.

In the measure that one's living, one's aims, one's achievements are a ~~real~~ response to values, in that measure a real self-transcendence is effected. One has got beyond mere ~~self~~ selfishness. One has become a principle of benevolence and beneficence. One is capable of genuine collaboration and of true love. In the measure that real self-transcendence characterizes the members of a society, in that measure their world not only is constructed by imagination and intelligence, mediated by words and meaning, based by and large

upon belief; it also is a world motivated and regulated not by self-seeking but by values, not by what only apparently is good but by what truly is good.

I have been attempting to indicate what it is to be authentically human. I have placed it in a self-transcendence that is both cognitional and ^{moral.} ~~real.~~ But I must hasten to add that man's achievement of self-transcendence never is some pure and serene and secure possession. It always is precarious. There is ever the tension between the self as transcending and the self as transcended. Authenticity always is a withdrawal from ~~man~~ unauthenticity. Our advance in understanding is the elimination of our oversights and misunderstandings. Our advance towards truth is also the correction of our mistakes and errors. Our moral development is through repentance for our sins. In brief, human reality is dialectical, a resultant of opposed tendencies, an upsurge to self-transcendence along with an ever easy fall from it.

2. On Being Religious

If now we ask ~~Let us now ask~~ how it comes about that people really do achieve self-transcendence, the simplest and most obvious answer is that they do so when they fall in love. Then their being becomes being-in-love. Such being-in-love has its antecedents, its causes, its conditions, its occasions. But once it has occurred and as long as it lasts, it takes over. It becomes the ~~first~~ first principle. From it flow one's desires and fears, one's joys and sorrows, one's discernment of values, one's vision of possibilities, one's decisions and deeds.

Being-in-love is of different kinds. There is ^{the} love of intimacy, of husband and wife, of parents and children. There is the love of one's fellow men with its fruit in the achievement of human welfare. There is the love of God with one's whole heart and whole soul, with all one's mind and all one's strength (Mk 12, 30). It is God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us (Rom 5, 5). It grounded the conviction of St. Paul that "... there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits ~~or~~ or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the ~~world~~ world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe -- nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8, 38 f.).

Being in love with God, as experienced, is being in love in an unrestricted fashion. All love is self-surrender, but being in love with God is being in love without limits or ~~qualifications~~ qualifications or conditions or reservations. It is with one's whole heart and whole soul and all one's mind and all one's strength. Just as a total openness to all questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence, so too a total, unrestricted being in love is the proper fulfilment of that capacity.

Because that love is the proper fulfilment of our capacity, that fulfilment brings a deep-set joy that can remain despite humiliation, privation, pain, betrayal, desertion. Again, that fulfilment brings a radical peace, the peace that the world cannot give. That fulfilment bears fruit in a love of one's neighbor, a love that strives mightily to bring about the kingdom of God on this earth. On the other ~~hand~~ hand, the absence of that fulfilment opens the way to the trivialization of human life in the pursuit of fun, to the harshness of human life

that results from the ruthless exercise of power, to despair about human welfare springing from the conviction that the universe is absurd.

The fulfillment that is being in love with God is not the product of our knowledge and choice. It is God's gift. Like all being in love, as distinct from acts of loving, it is a first principle. So far from resulting from our knowledge and choice, it ~~abolishes~~ dismantles and abolishes the horizon in which our knowing and choosing went on, and it sets up a new horizon in which the love of God will transvalue our values and the eyes of that love will transform our knowing.

Though not the product of our knowing and choosing, it is not unconscious. On the contrary, it is a conscious dynamic state ~~manifesting~~ manifesting itself in what St. Paul named the harvest of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5, 22).

To say that that dynamic state is conscious is not to say that it is known. What is conscious is, indeed, experienced. But human knowing is not just experiencing. Human knowing includes experiencing but adds to it attention, scrutiny, inquiry, insight, conception, naming, reflecting, checking, judging. The whole problem of cognitional theory is to effect ~~effect~~ the transition from conscious operations to known operations. A great part of psychiatry is helping people effect the transition from conscious feelings to known feelings. In like manner the gift of God's love ordinarily is not objectified in knowledge, but remains within subjectivity as a ~~dynamic vector~~ ^{secretly} dynamic vector, a mysterious undertow, a fateful call to a dreaded holiness.

Because that dynamic state is conscious without being known, it is an experience of mystery. Because it is being in love, the mystery is not merely attractive but fascinating: to it one belongs; by it one is possessed. Because it is an unrestricted, unmeasured being in love, the mystery is other-worldly; it evokes awe. Because it is a love so different from the selfish self it transcends, it ^{can} evokes even terror. Of itself, then, and apart from any particular religious context in which it is interpreted, the experience of the gift of God's love is an experience of the holy, of Rudolf Otto's mysterium fascinans et tremendum. Again, it is what Paul Tillich named a being grasped by ultimate concern. Again, it corresponds to Ignatius Loyola's consolation without a cause, as interpreted by Karl Rahner, *consolation with a content but without an object*

I have distinguished different levels of consciousness, and now I must add that the gift of God's love is on the topmost level. It is not the ^{sensitive} type of consciousness that emerges with intellectual sensing, feeling, moving. It is not the type that is added when we inquire, understand, think and speak intelligently. It is not the ~~rational type~~ rational type that supervenes when we reflect, weigh the evidence, pronounce judgement. It is the consciousness that also is conscience, that deliberates, evaluates, decides, controls, acts. But it ^{is} this type at its root, as brought to fulfilment, as having undergone ~~the~~ conversion, as possessing a basis that may be broadened and deepened and heightened and enriched but not superseded, as ever more ready to deliberate and evaluate and decide and act with the easy freedom of those that do all good because they are in love. The gift of God's love takes over the ground and root of the

fourth and highest level of man's waking consciousness. It takes over the peak of the soul, the apex animae.

I think many of you will grant that a basic component of religious commitment among Christians is God's gift of his love. The more Christian they are, the more readily we discern in them St. Paul's harvest of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control. But if we hold God gives all men sufficient grace for salvation, if we hold that the grace that is sufficient is the gift of loving God above all and one's neighbor as oneself, then we must be ready to discern a similar harvest of the Spirit in non-Christians.

They too can experience the mystery of love ~~and~~ and awe. They can be expressing their experience by their hierophanies. They can be celebrating it in their rituals, their symbols, their recitals. They can be cultivating it in their schools of asceticism and mysticism. They can be objectifying it in their mythical or philosophical apprehensions of the universe. And when their expression, celebration, cultivation, objectification seem to conflict with genuine religion ~~and~~ rather than manifest it, this fact does not exclude the originating presence of God's gift of his love. As we have already noted, human reality is dialectical; human achievement is ever precarious; a fall into unauthenticity does not imply that the original upsurge was not authentic.

3. On Being Christian

Let us begin with a remote analogy. If a man and a woman were to love each other yet never avow their love, then they would have the beginnings of love but hardly the real thing. There would be lacking an interpersonal component, a mutual presence of self-donation, the opportunity and, indeed, the necessity of sustained development and growth. There would not be the steady increase in knowledge of each other. There would not be the constant flow of favors given and received, of privations endured together, of evils banished by common good will, to make love conscious of its reality, its strength, its durability, to make love aware of the fact that it could always be counted on.

I have drawn attention to the interpersonal character of human love to point ~~out~~ all the more emphatically to an oddity in my account of ~~being~~ religious commitment. Such commitment I have described as basically God's gift of his love, man's experience of the mystery of love and awe, a life marked by the harvest of the Spirit, by love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control. Now ~~this~~ this is, indeed, something splendid, but also it is something incomplete. Being in love is not just a state of mind and heart. It is interpersonal, communicative, on-going; it has its up's and down's, its ecstasies and ~~quarrels~~ quarrels and reconciliations, its withdrawals and returns; it reaches security and serenity only at the end of a long apprenticeship.

So it is that the religions of mankind have had their mediators, their shamans, their holy men, their prophets, their priests, their founders, their charismatic leaders. But nowhere more than in traditional Christianity is there stressed the interpersonal character of holy love. There God is one yet not solitary. One God is three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. The Father is not only the light in which there is no darkness (1 Jo 1, 5) but also holy love, agape (1 Jo 4, 8.16). The Son is his Word, his self-communication (Jo 1, 1), sent into the world to manifest his love for the world (Jo 3, 16; 1 Jo 4, 14-16). The Spirit is the gift of God's love flooding the hearts of those that accept God's call (Rom 5, 5; 1 Cor 6, 19). United in Christ through the Spirit, Christians are to love one another, bear witness to God's love, serve mankind, and look forward to a future consummation when their knowledge of God will be not partial but total, like God's knowledge of them (1 Cor 13, 12).

~~Let me conclude very briefly. As it commonly exists, religious commitment has two aspects. It is the fruit of God's grace working secretly within us. But it also is ~~the~~ a response to a religious message, gospel, preaching, tradition. In this latter aspect one ~~in~~ religion differs from another. But in the former aspect all religion can have a common root and ground in the goodness of God giving all men ~~sufficient~~ sufficient grace for their salvation now is the time. But in the former aspect I have wished to suggest all religion may have a common root and ground, inasmuch as one can hold that God gives all men sufficient grace for salvation and that ~~the~~ sufficient grace is the gift of God's love.~~

Let me conclude very briefly. In traditional Christianity and commonly enough in other religions, religious commitment has two aspects. On the one hand, it is the fruit of God's grace working secretly within us. On the other hand, it is a person's response to a religious tradition, to its teaching and preaching, to the good example set by its followers. It is in this latter aspect that one religion differs from another and, I believe, such differences are far from being unimportant. It remains that the former aspect also has its own ~~importance~~ fundamental importance, an importance that resides not only in the vitality, effectiveness, durability, and transforming power of ^{the individual's} religious commitment but also in its relevance for ecumenism and for religious studies generally. For if God gives all men sufficient grace for salvation, if the grace that is sufficient is the love ^{of} ~~of~~ God above all and of one's neighbor as oneself, then there exists ~~a religious~~ ~~basis for a genuine concern and a sympathetic approach~~ ~~to~~ ~~for a genuine concern with religions other than one's~~ ~~own~~ now is the time for all good men to come to the aid in the realm of subjectivity a common core to all genuine religion.

Let me conclude briefly. I have touched on three related topics, on being human, being religious, and being Christian. To be human is to live in the precarious tension of self-transcendence. ~~Humanism is the~~ To be religious is to achieve self-transcendence through the gift of an unrestricted and so other-worldly being-in-love. To be Christian is to nourish religious love by responding to the love that the Father manifested to the world through the sending and passion and death and resurrection of ~~our~~ our Lord.

You seek renewal. Your seeking is a strenuous matter of thirty days of praying and conferring. Let that seeking be evidence to each of you that God's love is already operative ~~human~~ within you. Let it be nourished and grow and expand during the days and nights to come. Be confident that as the Spirit has called you to undertake this renewal, so too he will enable you to achieve the renewal you desire and then to use you for the benefit both of the whole province of Upper Canada and of ~~all~~ all the souls it is our calling and our privilege to serve.