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Comments

- Translator not totally familiar with the English language so that on first reading I definitely had the impression that it was a translation

However, on re-reading it and making corrections it seemed to flow better. This may be because I am not standing outside it any longer!

Parts of it are pretty dense and may cause difficulties. I have unpacked as much as I can.

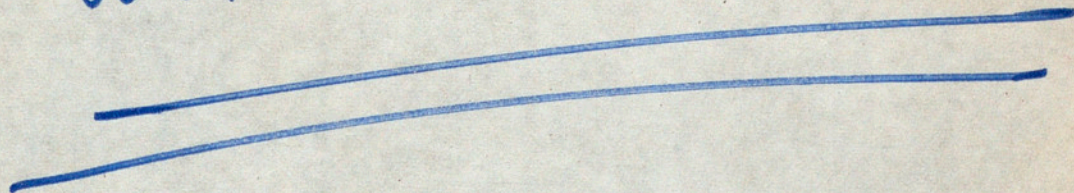
- Capitals and small letters are random. I await instruction before correcting them.

- The sign \succ on the left hand page indicates a problem which needs recourse to the original.

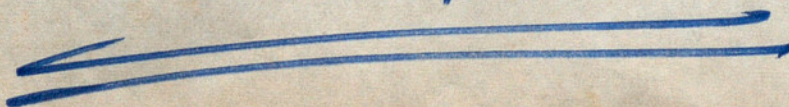
- one word on top of another (which is not deleted) is an alternative suggestion.

- I began instinctively changing dialog \rightarrow dialogue. So the change can be ignored.

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SEP. 29 / 1977



THE GODS AND THE LORD

many gods & one Lord

RAIMUNDO PANIKKAR

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INTRODUCTION

"God stands in the divine assembly, among the gods, and he dispenses justice." Ps. 82,1.

An ancient truth is finding new life at this moment. The authentic novelty of this truth is grounded on its proven antiquity. Nothing is as new as authentic tradition which is not a mere echo of the past but a privileged contact with our perennial roots across the changing times.

If, in fact, the Age of Religious Wars has been closed, then there has also been a decline in authentic religious debate even in those areas of so-called comparative religion and apologetics. That many religions exist and that each serves a salvific function, and moreover, that each occupies a set place within the scheme of salvation, are all irrefutable modern facts and accepted by all serious students of religions.

In no way does this imply ^{sliding} slippage into syncretism. Recall that syncretism excludes the existence of particular religious since it annihilates them in the name of a supposedly pure, but in fact, inhuman religion. Imbued with doctrinalism, syncretism demands that everything be contracted into uniformity since it cannot tolerate the existential and historical tensions of the old religions or of the more recent new, but not so-called, religions. True religious dialog does not consist in philosophical comparisons of religious doctrines since the goal of all religions is salvation and salvation

does not depend, in the final analysis, on orthodoxy but on orthoproxis^a. Orthoproxis^a is the only "locus" to discover the religious significance of orthodoxy. The battle against heresies pre-supposed in each case, an orthoproxis^a which remained unchanged. Thus it was enabled to make energetic war in the name of orthodoxy. The challenge of heresy is always an authentic possibility which belongs to the very foundation of religion, but it must not be transferred from its authentic sphere to our modern encounters between religions.

In other words, each religion has a peculiar notion of salvation that reflects a determined cosmovation. But in the final analysis religion is not a discussion of one or various images of the world but the existential realization, that is, the concrete and possible realization of salvation.

It seems that this traditional conviction about religion is being felt anew. We illustrate it with the following old argument:

If, with proper distinctions, we insist that many names for God exist, then we are repeating modern and accepted facts. But, if we were to add that the existence of these different names ^{for} of God allude precisely to the existence of many gods, then we are a challenge to many loyal and convinced "monotheists". In fact, no religion has ever doubted the existence of the other gods. Each religion has its own God, just as each man, who is authentically religious, has his own God, his living God whom he loves, invokes and venerates with a new name which is exclusively his own. The

which is not the

"only" is redundant here { the one unique and ---
a unique and ---

very name of God is always a vocative. Only God can call himself in the nominative case. If we use the nominative, we make God disappear since we are then expressing ourselves in "concepts" and we talk "about" God and no longer "to" Him. Even these concepts of God do not agree among themselves. Thus the Buddhist concept, ^{which} ~~that~~ denies the existence of God as a being, has nothing in common with ^{the} ~~an~~ Islamic concept of God.

One could propose the claim that behind all these representations of the "absolute" lies the only unique and hidden reality, but then we would no longer be talking about the living and true God, ^{the God} ~~felt~~ and intended by the man who prays and worships. Religious dialog should not insult religion by lowering it ~~into~~ a philosophy or metaphysics: If philosophy has its own contribution ~~then~~ it is the task of clarification, ^{it} and ~~should~~ take care not to become a substitution for religion.

It must remain clear that the drive to understand the relationship between the various distinct gods and the adored, feared and loved "God" ~~does bring~~ up an important and unavoidable problem in Religion, but ~~it~~ does not answer a purely religious need, ^{namely, / the} ~~that is,~~ salvific need within a religion or within the religious believer. Thus no religion makes salvation dependent on philosophical knowledge of the essence of the absolute.

It is noteworthy that the exclusive and selective Jewish religion of the Old Testament did not discuss the existence of many gods. Yet it admitted that each people had its own God,¹

1. Cf. Jq., 11, 24.

which of
2 possible
meanings.

{ in the hard like St. Thomas, one must touch, feel and love directly.
{ in the hard, one must, like St. Thomas, touch, feel and love directly. □

that these gods are powerful² and that in other countries other gods should be invoked.³ Jewish religiosity is based on the event in which Yahweh chose His own people⁴ and thus it is specifically forbidden to adore other gods.⁵ The prophets and the psalms make fun of foreign gods and dare them to defend themselves and to show off their power.⁷ Finally, the God of Israel, after an interior development within biblical history, will reveal Himself, in the New Testament, as the Lord of all gods,⁸ ~~and~~ ^{He} Who is, above all, more powerful than all the gods, "since Yahweh, our God, is God of gods, the Lord of lords."⁹

All this was not philosophical or theological speculation on the oneness and essence of God, but the very revelation of the Lord who guides the gods, who inspires religions and who saves men. Although we have claimed that the question "What is God?" is not the final question and still has significance, ^{yet} ~~yet~~ the question "What is the Lord"⁹ has no meaning. One can only ask: "Who is He?" and human reason can never answer. The answer can only be a revelation, an epiphany, a self-manifestation of the Lord. One can "believe" in any god, but to believe in the Lord, then, like Saint Thomas,¹⁰ one must touch, feel and love directly.

2. Cf. 2K., 3, 17.

3. Cf. IS., 26, 19.

4. Dt., 7, 6.

5. Ex. 30, 3; Dt., 5, 7.

6. Is., 3, 8 and 28; 10, 10; 19, 3; 40, 18-30; 41, 4-7; 44, 9-20., Jr., 3, 5 and 26-28; 5, 7; 10, 1-16; 14, 22. Ps., 21, 7; 115; 135.

7. Elias defies the priests of Baal, 1 K. 17!

8. 1 Tm., 6, 15; Rv., 17, 14; 19, 16.

9. Dn., 2, 47; 11, 36. Ps. 136, 2 - 3.

10. Jn., 20, 28.

There scarcely exist other religions in which a proliferation of gods is greater than in the religions of India. If the Rig Veda admits 33 gods, then tradition alludes to a million gods. However it is difficult to find another country that has underlined so emphatically the unicity of the Nameless-- since ~~the~~ Lord remains behind the veil--~~than~~ ^{and} India. ^{As} long as he himself does not tell his own name, that is, unveil himself, the Most Holy (garbha-grka) remains anonymous and in obscurity.

The Veda: ^{says} "Wisemen contemplate it under many forms",¹¹ and thematically calls the gods Indra¹² or Agni,¹³ The wisemen call him by many names.¹⁴ Yet he is the only Lord,¹⁵ "in Him all the gods are one."¹⁶

This situation requires no ^{further} more proof nor reference to other religions. We merely intended to illustrate in a new light the conviction already mentined and briefly ~~to~~ outline our Christian interpretation.

Man has always tired to achieve universal validity for his ideas, and perhaps it is possible to characterized our

11. De. 10,17.

12. Rg. Veda., X., 114,5.

13. Ibid., III, 56, 17.

14. Ibid., II, 1, 19.

15. Ibid., I, 164, 46.

16. Ibid., III, 54, 8; VIII 25, 16.

The issue lies not in the fact that
that "two plus two equals four" but
in the additional claim that
"three plus one" also equals "four" which
shows that the same truths cannot
be reduced to arithmetic formulations;

times as that moment when the thrust for such ideal knowledge has surpassed all earthly limitations for the first time. For example, as long as we seek to broaden our space-time domination, what was at one time valid and universal for the Mediterranean culture, no longer has to be so to us. One is apt to object to this danger of relativism, ^{by saying} that here and everywhere "four" can always be reduced to "two plus two." This objection does not deal with the issue, granted that we distinguish carefully between relativity and relativism. It is not an issue that "two plus two equals four" but the additional claim that "three plus one" also equal "four" and thus show that same truths cannot be reduced to arthimetic formulations; and finally that whatever appears problematic to one culture is not due to "four" but perhaps (on the one hand, ["] to the addition of two plus two, ["] or, on the other hand, ^{to} on the entire process itself.

Today we are demanding a single norm of world-wide extension to maintain the pretension of universal validity. The norm must be valid for all men. All pretension to validity can be maintained only if it is possible to demonstrate that it is valid not only for the Inca, Japanese, Esquimo, the West, but for mankind in his totality, as we appreciate him today. Obviously no conceptual system, ~~or doctrine, or~~ philosophy or theology can pass such a test. Thus we see signs of a human

mutation in our day. After our dogmatic slumbers, the Copernican revolution, the Middle Ages and our modern epoch, we could-- following custom--speak of our times as a terrene or planetary epoch and, which interests us most, a step away from the spirit-^{removed}soul illusion of modern man. In other words, since Plato, the psyche, or spirit, reason, intellect, will, feelings, etc., has enjoyed indisputable primacy. But now a shift is manifesting itself--such that both atheism and materialism represnt^e only two impatient and unilateral reactions--which not only desires to recover a sense of the body, of simple and naked existence, but also to develop a sense^{of} unity between the unconscious and subsistent with both the concrete and material. ~~But~~ ^{KT} the most important aspect of this process is that within it the absolute declares its freedom, that is, its independence from our desires and metaphors. "God" no longer must be "defended", "proven" or "justified" since (gradually) the absolute has liberated itself from the tangle of our ideas, images and theologies. It appears freshly as the self-revealing God, that is, no longer is^{as the} existence or essence of God but as the God of Revelation; in other words, it appears, in actual human consciousness, ^{as a result of} ~~due to~~ the internal evolution of the western spirit and its encounter with other religions, as it has always been: as the LORD.

Without a doubt, it must be admitted that human

(please note -there is no page 8 - go to page 9.)

from 7 goes to 9

* perhaps add: "ie, the one lord and the many
gods"

reflection can, in a cancer-like fashion, suffocate everything, and in this case, refer to God, "the kyrios", as to one of his names, considering his divine "lordship" as a mere "attribute" of the divinity. This is precisely what we must avoid. None of the divine attributes is conceptually exhaustible and thus it is possible, for purely dialectical purposes, to pick any name of God (for example "God" itself) and ascribe to it the "qualities" which we reserve for the "Lord." All is possible but one must never forget that every name bears its own particular weight and likewise its own circumstantial tradition. In this sense, without believing it necessary always to continue referring to our point of view, it appears legitimate to distinguish between the one-unique Lord and the many gods.

Perhaps we can better clarify our position by offering our christian interpretation of the problem.

From ~~that~~^e moment whereⁿ we begin to take seriously the drive to catholicity which is inherent in Christianity and which we are in fact expressing ~~whereas~~^{whenever} we repeat that Christ is the Lord, and whenever we attempt to comprehend these two fundamental truths of Christianity^{*} and apply them to the polychromatic mosaic of all the religions of the world, ~~then~~^{from that moment} (repeat) we hold in our hands the elements necessary for our interpretation.

It is sufficient here to summarize what on other occasions we have developed in detail. Thus we limit ourselves to pile^{ing} one affirmation upon the other in the hope that they will become self-evident in virtue not only of the same spirit of Christianity but also of the historic-religious situation of the world.

*

----- among many.

This must be so, not for strategic or political purposes, but because to contend otherwise would already imply an error from a purely theoretical point of view. It would fundamentally (basically) and from the outset, falsify the encounter and relationship between Xnty. and religions.

tenses, meaning not
really clear

9 F

Christianity, or faith in Christ, is not a religion among many. Any such contention would basically and ^{from} on the outset falsify the encounter and relationship between Christianity and religions; this must be so, not for strategic or political purposes but because it would already imply an error from a purely theoretical point of view. [Reads better with sentences reversed. cf. opp.]

Christ did not found a religion, and much less a new religion, in the same way Mohamet founded Islam or Buddhism began with the Buddha. He did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them.¹⁷ Furthermore he possessed a priesthood not according to Aaron or Levi¹⁸ but according to the order of the "pagan" Melquisedec, and He chose to consummate his sacrifice outside the Holy City.¹⁹ Christ acted before Abraham,²⁰ and He introduced Himself as the Beginning that did not speak,²¹ and claimed that his own would recognize²² him as the Alpha and the Omega²³, as the mystery which has already acted and which was not revealed until a determined moment in history, the last days.²⁴ The good news of Christianity does not rest on its rise as a new religion but precisely on its continuation and solid linkage with the beginning of universal history,²⁶

17. Cfr. Atharva Veda, XIII, 4.

18. Cfr. Mt., V. 17.

19. Cfr. Heb., V, 19; VII, II.

20 Crr. Heb., XIII, 12-13.

21. Cf., Io., VIII, 25, apud Vulgatum.

23. Cf. Ap. I, 8; XXI, 6; XXII, 13.

24. Cf. Heb. I, 2 IX, 26; Gal., IV. 4; etc.

25. Ef. I, 9 ss; III, 9; Rom. XVI, 25; etc.

26. Cf. Ef., Iv, 24; Col. III, 10; II Cor., V. 17; Rom., VI, 4; VII, 6; etc.

word order needs changing

// needs rephrasing //

and with the entire cosmos, as its fulness and consummation.

This is not all. Our epoch is very attentive, and with reason, to the historicity of Christianity. This is to say, among other things, that historic Christianity cannot be separated from its pre-history. Christ did not fall from heaven like a meteor. He has a pre-history, ⁽ⁱⁿ⁾ the prophets *as well as* ~~the~~ ^{the} and messengers outside Israel ~~as well~~. He cares for, and has been shepherd to, all the religions. In other words, Christianity is in no way a religion, understood in an exclusive sense, ^{this} which would make it completely a historical-- ⁱⁿ such that it ^{would, at the same time,} renders every other religion false and superflous. ~~at the same time.~~ It is not a religion that has come to stand *as a* substitute for all the rest.

Christianity, ^{(or better said,} the Church as the "geometric point" of the faith ~~and~~ which, phenomenologically, we should qualify as always striving to be so--is the fullness, the goal and destiny of all religions. The Christian faith seeks not to destroy nor substitute for the other religions but to convert them. The Church is the small mustard seed which, once grown, shelters, among its branches, all the birds of the religious sky; she is the yeast ²⁸ that ferments within the dough of every religion. Obviously we are dealing with a conversion that presupposes a unique dialectic of death and birth, of death

27. Cfr. Heb., I, 4 ss., etc.

28. Cfr. Gal., IV, 4; Col. I, 19; II, 9; Ef., I, 10; III, 19; IV, 13; Jn., I, 16; etc.

and resurrection which guarantees that the converted religion is not a new religion ^{but} yet precisely the same ^{only} but resurrected, ^{transformed/reborn} converted; in like manner the Risen Christ ^{or} and the baptized person ^{are} yet the same man but renewed. Analogously, converted Hinduism would not imply another religion but fullness and transformation of the same Hinduism.

Up to the present it has been a working rule of thumb to say that Christianity limited itself to ~~the~~ converting ~~of~~ the "pagan" religions of the Mediterrenean basin. The truth of the matter is that Christianity actually is ^{ted} the conversion ~~of the~~ greek, latin, celtic and gothic religions.

Moreover the identification of Christianity with this "converted" paganism which today we call "Christianity", ~~which~~ is certainly valid and noteworthy, ^{without doubt} but admittedly very limited, ^{and} has been a barrier to its authentic universality.

These are the reasons ^{for our} with ~~which~~ we claim that Christianity is not a religion but the perfection and transformation of them all. If the other religions remain unconverted this is due possibly to the fact that the goal up to now has not been to convert but to change them. ^{Previously} ~~Once~~ there existed a theological colonialism. Nevertheless we must immediately ^{add} admit that colonialism as such does not strictly merit a negative evolution.

Thus we arrive anew ^{at} to our point of departure. In effect, under the title of The gods and The Lord, we are referring precisely to (this state of the question.) Christ is not another God who wants to substitute for all gods, neither is He a new avatar, a new incarnation beside other

incarnations, rather he is the Lord of creation and history, the Lord of the gods who are truly and sincerely adored, the
²⁹
 unseen gatherer of all good crops.

In synagoga deorum, in the assembly of the gods, there is no struggle for priority or the victory of the one (only) God above the others. The Lord ^{reigns} thrones above them all and each has power, inclusive of "divinity", precisely because the Lord who dwells in each with greater or lesser integrity, has bestowed it to each one.

"No one can confess that Christ is the Lord except
³⁰
 through the Holy Spirit." And it is possible to invest this phrase and argue that whenever anyone prays "Lord!" through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "he lies" and alludes to the [?] Lord Jesus, unknowingly. But this lordship of Jesus is not ^{the same as} that of the powerful or rulers. His throne above the gods is a
³¹
 service and a seeking of the last place.

It is not our intention to develop all these ideas here, nor to treat these religions of the world thematically. This introduction proposed only to highlight a ^{little} ~~bit~~ the background and internal unity of the following chapters. ^{nor} Neither did we attempt to treat these issues in a manner (purely a priori.)
^{Rather, here} Herein we have ~~only reproduced what has been the result of certain~~ personal and intimate experiences. // In this attitude, that is to say, in the silent suffering before the absolute, perhaps the only value of the following pages resides. //

After the entire tribe had listened for a long time
in silence to this miracle of the white man, the elder of
the tribe, whose wisdom had earned him authority and
respect, spoke:

Aug 11/9 [

A THEOLOGICAL MEDITATION UPON AFRICA

AFRICA WILL BE CHRISTIAN IN HER OWN ^{WAY} FASHION OR SHE WILL NOT BE ^{XN. AT ALL}

It is not important whether the character in the following tale was a missionary or some other European, but it is certain that a representative of western civilization allowed some surprised members of an African tribe to listen to the voice of a small portable radio. After all the tribe had been attending silently and for a long while to this miracle of the white man, and elder of the tribe, whose wisdom had earned him authoritative respect, spoke: "Mighty miracle! but not let us turn off that box because it draws out the music of the jungle..."

Each man is a limited and concrete being, and just as he cannot serve two masters, neither can he, in fact, be the child of two distinct cultures; ^{in other words} that is to say, he must choose between the small noise box or the symphony of the forest. Africa is in this situation. A situation but not ^a dilemma since a simple historico-theological reflection will uncover that the issue is not ^{over} about a personal decision between alternatives but ^{is} ^{primarily} above all, is an historical process within whose evolution true human liberation balances the interplay of social forces that comprise it. Furthermore if we keep in mind another sociological reality we simply cannot permit "freely", that is to say, automatically, that the small noise box dominate, ^{and} the melody of the jungle wuld necessarily be shut off.

From an intellectual point of view it does not appear to me ^{to be} legitimate to deny the vital importance of this problem. Frequently the well-known saying of Novalis ~~bears~~ ^{merits} repetition: "Europe will remain Christian or it will not exist." Whoever approves of this insight no doubt detects the supposition which gives special meaning to our epigraph about Africa. The epigraph appoints a profound value to tradition and thus emphasizes the situation that no human community or culture can survive unless it remains faithful to its past--in the case of Europe, ^{to} with its Christian past--. It is inconceivable that a similar thesis ^{to be} not applicable to Africa. The formulation of our thought hides a double meaning, in which the entire tension and problematic of the actual situation in Africa clearly appears: either Africa will become Christian in a fashion distinct from Europe, or it will no longer remain Africa. ^{By} On falling into the second alternative, Africa would limit itself to exist ^{ing} geographically as an African land mass the same way Australia is applied to Asia on the map.

No Christian text claims that any inroad of the faith must leave the law intact and not modify it, nor that grace does not transform nature in some way, ^{not} that the cross does not demand abnegation ~~and~~ even unto death. Theoretically speaking one must admit that both situations are possible, considering them from the Christian point of view, and that we gain nothing by taking shelter in a comfortable humanism which,



Needs rephrasing



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Even if it were performed unconsciously and with the best of intentions, this would be merely a power game of the superior capacity of one culture. ----

in the final analysis, ^{is} (would only be) an inadmissible concession. History offers us evident examples of peoples who paid the price of their conversion not only with the denial of their vital tradition but even ^{with,} its death. [Never again should one demand, and ~~if~~ calling it by a very strong name, yet not ~~un~~mindful of unavoidable prudence, that which can ^{only} be labeled as "spiritual blackmail."] This would be merely a power play, even if it were performed unconsciously and for the best of intentions, of the superior capacity of one culture to impose a faith which can rule over every form of culture and which can be identified as the new goal of a humanity which, in European terms, can be simply classified as "savage."

In effect, whoever does not admit the possibility of a "savage" Christianity, has not cut the tap root of pelagenism. The grant of soverign ^e freedom to the supernatural leads us to extend ⁷ the biblical warning: "Whoever loves his life will lose it" (to entire peoples and cultures.)

That yeast which is able to transform the massive dough of an extended culture can only be brought into existence precisely within that fermenting culture.

The theological mentality of that ^e so-called epoch of great discoveries was characterized by two basic factors: by the identification ^{both} ~~not only~~ geographically ^{and} ~~but also~~ theologically ~~of~~ Christianity and Christendom, and ~~by~~ the conviction that the cultures of the so-called primitives were destined to disappear

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9. []

mediterranean or Mediterranean (p. 18)⁹

(faint handwritten notes)

since all their values--their "music of the jungle"--~~in fact~~
 were ^{in fact} not authentic, ~~values~~ ^{for} since they could be perfectly ^{well} replaced
 by western values. But ^{with} to the profound transformation in
 European history and after four centuries of experiences with
 Asia, Africa and the Americas, such thinking has lost all its
 grip: ^{hold} not only relative to the medieval base of the first
factor but also relative to renaissance optimism of the latter.
 Basically, Christianity is not knitted to a particular culture
 (within its sway cultural pluralism is possible) and non-
 european cultures are not "primitive" but rather original and, in
 a certain sense, ~~are~~ more authentic than the European variety.

Furthermore, it must not be forgotten--and this
~~is the~~ most important factor which complicates the problem
 considerably--that by right Christianity is not a pure essence
 fallen from heaven, but is a church incarnate in space and
 time; yet on the other hand it is not possible to forget that
in fact the space and time of the church are mediterrean
 categories. A chemically pure Christianity, an absolute ^(ly) African
 church would imply, hic et nunc, a schism. This is what high-
 lights the gravity of the historical moment. ^{One can only} ~~It is only possible~~
 at this time, ~~to~~ point to hints of a possible and just solution
 within a spiritual climate of authentic renunciations on both
 sides, however costly they may be. For ^{certainly} a fact theological
 colonialism is as dangerous and harmful as ecclesiastical
 nationalism.

Only in moments of calm and ^{clear} clean visibility, clean from the clouds of prejudices and resentments, (one) can look upon the two continents from three or four Mediterranean perspectives. Yet even here Europe always appears as a terrible and rocky crag whereas Africa apperas as a ^{the} looming mirage of a somolent beast sunk in a profound dream. The African soul trembles within a people who lack instinctive sensitivity, whereas the European soul smiles with a certain malaise within various races of conflicting instincts. Only the Christian spirit (which is not to be compared with the Greeκ nous and much less with the Latin mens) but only as incarnate spirit, is capable of clasping man within his totality in a synthesis of love which respects both his humanity and divinity, and in which man shares both equally. We shall analyze in detail the concrete matrix in which this synthesis is performed.

THE ENCOUNTER

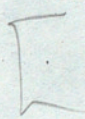
It is common practice to retell the experience of a certain African tribe whose totem was destroyed during a night wind-storm. Forty-eight hours later the entire tribe had ^{disintegrated} ceased to exist being no longer able to support the weight of existence without the ^{symbolic} symbolic medium which allowed them to communicate with the real and transcendent world. Their lives had lost all "existential meaning" and the passing of this meaning took with it their vital breath.

Capitals or not?



>

rephrase in 9



It is an obvious fact that African man is at the point of losing faith in his own religio~~city~~. ^{Although} Whereas in Africa, unlike ^{omit} (the usual situation in) other continents, the growth of christians surpasses the average population growth-rate, nevertheless the Islamic religion exceeds all other religions in numbers. But Christianity is ^d speaking precisely in those areas where it was able to free itself from western culture and simultaneously create an Afro-Christian life by rooting itself at ^{to} greater or lesser depth within local traditions. The quest of civilization ^{for} which keeps apace with evangelization usually takes the lead and generally becomes a serious competitor with the latter.

Can we conclude from these reflections that the Church is, or ought to be, an enemy of African "development" and "progress"? Obviously not! In the first place, it would be more exact to conclude that the Church, unlike post-renaissance suppositions and most like her Master, has never forgotten that He came to preach the Gospel to the poor and that He spoke his most harsh words against those who found favor in the world, and in the second place, one is obligated to prevent the Church from ~~erroneously~~ judging "progress" and "development" as autonomous values that simply in themselves are good and desirable. All things follow their proper rhythm and adhere to their proper hierarchical order. ~~And~~ ^T this order is obvious and the rhythm vibrates in harmony with the growth of the Church, which has been left by the Master to the free co-operation of his followers. Precisely

To this whole situation we must add another element: ? [
although the whole of Africa wants - - [

(3 suggestions rather than use "connect by identity")

eg - "These two extremes are internally
at root, fundamentally identical, } =
- " " " " " " " " connected. } =
= " " " " " " " " one and the same.

an in balancing of these rhythms is one of the greatest dangers,
on a sociological order which threatens Africa today.

To all this we must add another element of the situation: whereas all Africa wants to assimilate imported European and American values, yet for a fact, however positive these imported values may appear, to the African mentality, they are nothing but clay replacements of their fading religiosity. Just as the old African religion had offered a "way" ^{an} to access to the jungle, likewise Christianity has been reduced, for the most part in Africa, to a passage-way, obviously effective, leading to the values which Christian peoples are presumed to possess.

We are convinced that the most urgent priority for Africa today is to make contact with the witness of the two extremes of the Christian life, ^{these being} and as extremes they are: a purely escatological Christianity, with no compromise or relation with modern culture, and a Christinity, purely incarnated and rooted within a technological culture, not as its slave but as making possible the full experience of the Christian life. ^{So} Their two extremes in depth are connected by identity. The first plants the wheat, the other reaps. The tension between these extremes produces the spark of divine grace, which alone allows for true growth.

Furthermore, by contact with these two extremes ^{polarities} one can achieve that other way, which has already been alluded to,

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Needs rephrasing

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and which does not seek (so much) a quick effective road to a converted Africa ^{as} but an Africa which is the ripen^{ed} fruit of a slow conversion and proper introduction to the universal circle of ^hcatolicity. ^{Further} More thoughts related ^{on} to this conclusion ^{make up} compose the third ^{part} point of our meditation on Africa.

THE RELIGIOUS CRISIS OF A CONTINENT

It frequently happens that in the mission countries parents send their children to the christian schools for the sole purpose of learning a western language and technology. This supposes implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, a concern not to be influenced by the light of Christianity which can be emitted by such an education. ^{what, in fact, happens is} It happens, in fact, that the "better" students know how to brush off (perfectly) even the smallest particles of Christianity which ^{may} can be generated by the civilized education offered by these schools and univrsities. Until a short time ago it was common to propose the "civilizing" potential of Christianity as an effective weapon among its apologetic arsenal.

It is obvious that the vast African continent, even though it appears to share a certain unity, in fact has no true common unity; there exists ^{more notable differences} between East Africa, South Africa and Centzal Africa, differences more notable than between European countries. In the following pages we will be referring to ~~the~~ ^{the} so-called Black Africa, with allowances that our analysis is applicable, mutatis mutandis, to the rest of the African continent.

--- which was also the subject of endless discussions,

.. the fine degree to which --

(New sentence: -)

It must be remembered too how --

The theological principle of accommodation, which was much discussed in the previous era, is not an adaptation which is employed as a major spiritual stratagem, nor is it brought to hand as an effective conversion tactic. It is grounded (both) on the right, and on the need that the Church adapt herself to human values in order to continue their ransom by a gradual integration within their ontological growth and thus contribute to the final renovation of the fact of the earth and all things. The actual form of western Christianity, this was also tirelessly discussed does not seem capable of attaining a similar integration. ^{However,} But we do not want to distract ourselves with this special problem but must go on to reflect upon certain values which the Church desires and hopes to harvest from the African contribution.

THE TELLURIC

It is sufficient to recall the constant struggle by Christianity against any form of "spiritualized" gnosis in order to comprehend to what fine point the african presentation of the essential union of man and planet is truly christian, and recall how guardedly the Church reaches out towards more emphasis on the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh and of the New Earth and New Heaven. The salvation of man does not consist in ransoming the highest part of his soul

--- which, using western categories, includes both its
veg. & min. depths.



onward? —

but in the divinization of his total being as the work of Him who is divinity incarnate. The evangelic message is not one for the intellect but a complete form of life which includes-- using western categories--both its vegetative and mineral depths. The compenetration of the African with the earth, his planetary roots, his instinctive feelings, his mysterious rhythms synchronized with the earth, the continual adaptation to the cycles of nature, *all* ~~which~~ remind us that man is much more than pure intellect and *far* ~~even~~ much more than pure natural history, and that his spirit is by essence carnal and his flesh inextricably spiritual, that the adoration raised towards God is more than a respectful homage of the spirit, and finally, that human solidarity unites not only all men, but also extends to all things.

It is evident that many forms of African life are exaggerated or must be experienced within a solid framework in order to be effective, but this does not preclude *the fact* that within this framework there is an hierarchy of values which the African church could confirm in a community of the sons of God, re-united within the Mystical Body yet visible within the Church.

THE ANGELIC

In the Bible one learns that the Creator "thou~~gh~~t" that it was not good for man to be alone. In effect, man is not the only inhabitant of this planet, a fact which Africa so vividly reminds us. Man not only lives with his peers but also has to make allowances for the spirits of whom Ecclesiastes

warns us not to speak evil. Animism could be a degenerate form of religion but, in reality, the African outlook ^{view} ^{of} ~~unto~~ a cosmos filled with forces and spirits is not ^{so} as absurd a situation as the rational philosophy of religion of the past century proclaimed. The material universe is not beque^ath~~ed~~ to man nor does he possess, in the true sense of the word, an existence separate and independent from the spiritual. The notion that each item has its own spirit does not necessarily imply any type of personal linkage between spiritual and material beings. Africa never, or almost never, formulated such a doctrine. Nevertheless, the African conscience preserves a certain sensibility which opens ~~unto~~ the vast adventure of a unified creation, an adventure of universal proportions, ~~and~~ in which man participates.

THE DEMONIC

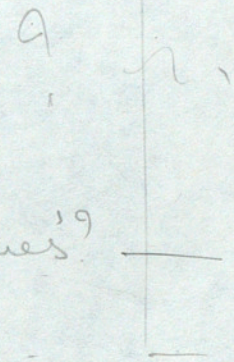
Well known is the theory which claims that the first tactic of the devil, in the technological West, is to make himself forgotten or denied since his mere presence would serve as irrefutable testimony of the supernat^{ur}ional. The West no longer interprets history as the battle~~field~~ on which not only man but also the entire universe struggle to return to God thru^{ough} cosmic conflicts. Man occupies a predominant place in this conflict yet he is not the only one. Whereas our tradition upholds that demons and angels are pure spirits, ~~yet~~ the African, due to his highly developed sensitivity, perceives the presence

and effects of beings which he would call impure, not only because they are inwardly contaminated but because they are prisoners and slaves of things. But such a conception of the demoniacal, translated into rationalistic terms, could lead to a gnostic view of the world; however this did not happen among the Africans since their experience with the demonical does not principally act upon their intellect. This serves as a transition to the following point of view.

THE MYTHICAL

Without losing ourselves in a detailed investigation of this complex phenomenon, we can say for sure that the post-Kantian culture of the West has found some positive meaning in the myth. Man is not ^{just} only intellect and intellect in itself is not pure reason. The African people offer us an image of a particular innocence of the spirit which is not closed to profound feelings for the mythic; ^{It} that is, ^{the} a conviction that contact with reality consists not merely ⁱⁿ as a quest for knowledge nor implies a simple act of the will, but involves a total and vital communion with reality insofar as it feels itself enveloped by it and not only in the present but, above all, in the past-- quite concretely in initio, that is; in that illo tempore of the myth. Thus the myth demands cult, which is an active participation in the mystery of the universe. The Christianization of the myth is no less essential than the conversion of ideas.

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(...:) Needs rephrasing

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Not all African values are to be judged as positive; yet their encounter with European culture need not be completely negative especially if we look at them from a Christian perspective. Obviously the problem is difficult and it is a good beginning if we are conscious of the difficulties.

Christianity simply cannot reject the culture which is ^{its} (their) framework regardless of its defect or irresponsibility; much less can it identify herself with it and take a position in its favor in order to end up the victor. For this reason it is presumptuous to be anxious to predict the African future; yet, one cannot deny ^{that} ~~the following~~: whatever shape this future will take, the seed of the kingdom of God must be planted in this virgin and millenary soil. And this seed, the smallest of all, is not a fully grown tree nor is it a bower or a stout trunk transplanted from some other region, but the pure, genuine, naked, simple--and difficult--message of the kingdom of God, stripped of all accruements. The effect, ^{or} better ^{stated} said, the growth, ~~will~~ come by increments.

AN OUTLINE OF AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY

A general observation

^{Briefly,}
~~In short~~: experience, especially African religious experience, carries with it universal validity since it is not something peculiarly African but something universally human.

This uncovers for us a mantle that is primogenitively telluric, common to all humanity even if it has been more or less suffocated by the weight and drive of "reason", including that of the intellect and will, which characterizes the development of Western culture and also the outer face of the Church over the previous centuries.

Thus the African contribution to the life of the Church would not be a mere African "continentalism" but an authentic "catholicity". - The contribution of Africa to the living Church would be a revitalizing ^{sh} the root-leveled connection of man to the entire cosmos and his communion with all creation. It is this dimension that has been forgotten in the one-sided development of the West.

Since we are ~~not~~ ^{rather} dealing with a problem that is ^{not} entirely African but ^{rather} human, it is necessary that Christian Africa be given an opportunity to unfold herself freely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the hierarchy, and furthermore, she must be given sufficient scope and power with which to find her proper structure.

THE PROBLEM OF BEING

It is ^{{ customary } →} established custom to ask if the basic difference between European and African spirituality rests principally on the fact that the African spirit has a distinct approach to the problem of being. To my understanding it would be even more correct to speak of the distinct manner by which

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peculiar as odd, bizarre —
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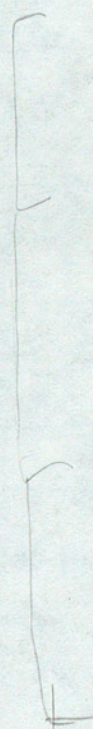
the African spirit receives the vital experience of reality, and, above all, how she ~~experiences~~ it. To identify with Being then Being with substance is a process that is strange to the African awareness of reality. The intent of wanting to explain African "philosophy" in categories of Being does not seem to me to be a justified interpretation. The comparison of God to Being (from which contemporary western thought labors ^{vitaly} particularly to liberate itself) not only ^{seems} appears to me to be foreign to African man, but ~~it~~ also does not even appear as a properly positive characteristic of Western Thought. To this one must also add that it is not essential to Christian thinking. That "revelation" by God to Moses, recorded in Exodus, does not uncover "Being" but an "I exist" who speaks and reveals himself as the Only who can claim: "I exist", and of whom, in a strict sense, it is not possible to claim: "He is" without diminishing it. The anthropocentric drive of human "reason", (as it developed in the West) or, in other words, the shift from God as an "I", "I exist" to a God as He, "He is", stained ~~historical~~ christianity with a peculiar color which ^{is neither} from the outset ~~is not~~ the only possible hue, nor ~~does it~~ accords with African religious experience. Regardless of how important for the West ~~is~~ an effective personalist correction of the "You are" ^{may be,} it would only satisfactorily ^{replay} replay the anthropocentric perspective, which, by natural development and by vocation, belongs to Africa.

The difference rests, at root, in a distinct "interpretation" of God. One must rely both on courage and

'analogous' or 'homologous'? 

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needs re-working



humility to admit the following: whereas "Brahman" and "Jahveh" point to the same reality which we could name God, --notwith standing ^{the fact} that these two conceptions which approach the absolute from two ~~distinct~~ ^{sides} (yet analogous) --, the African interpretation proceeds along a third way towards the same goal. This way can be called pre-metaphysical, or even primitive, ^{of the word} in the native sense. [One could surmise that this way does not distinguish sufficiently between the immanent and transcendent aspects and that ~~this conception~~ is afflicted with an overdose of the "sacred." And, above all, the African experience of God could not be discarded without at the same time erasing the special link between God and the divinity, and also dissolving that "face" of the absolute, which, due to our human limitations, we call God. ^A One task for African theology ^{might} ~~could~~ consist in expanding the ^{of P} ~~divine~~ names, de divinis nominibus, ^{to include} with new and "ineffable" names, which, ~~furthermore~~, would be predicted of God by an approach more "corporeal", more embracing and less restrictive, ~~less~~ ^{not so} "graphic", but, at the same time, much more vibrant and concrete.]

^{Furthermore} Also the doctrine of "creation" awaits completion in Africa, ^{This} ~~certainly~~ ^{does} ~~not to~~ disprove or destroy what has ^{thus far} ~~been~~ developed, ~~thus far~~ but ^{for} ~~to~~ allow the Mystical Body of Christ to grow in fullness, beauty and grace before God and men. We lack space to expand this significant and delicate topic ^{beyond} ~~from~~ these few data. ^{points}.

THE TRANSCENDENTALLY ONE (unum)

It is obvious that the African outlook is "unifying" and "all-embracing" and everywhere tends towards unity. Unity, unum, thus maintains in this outlook a certain primacy in relation with all the other transcendental properties of the absolute which are usually called the transcendentals.

Nevertheless one must be cautious before equating the African "unity" with the Thomistic unum. A first reason has already been alluded to in the above paragraph. If (only with great caution) one can identify the African cosmovision with any philosophy of being, then one must (even) be ^{careful} more cautious ^{when} in applying a theory which is systematically connected and whose ~~contest~~ ^{value is uncontestable,} carries indisputable value to a particular mentality which either has not reached the point of technical concepts or it is not even conceivable.

The second reason, (much more significant) ~~than the first~~, arises from the question of methodology. Putting aside the issue about the value of Thomism or any other theological "system", it is simply not a correct methodic procedure to compare two "realities", two "things" which pertain to distinct orders. Furthermore, the religiosity, or the religious mentality, of the African derives more from the power of religion and from a "total awareness" than from any "system" or even a theology. In other words; it is possible to develop the African soul by means of the Gospel, to attempt the containment and capsulation of the African spirit from the Christian point of view,

and it is also possible, if one so desires, to compare "religions" among themselves but what is simply not admissable is to compare ^aone "religion" with a "philosophy", a mentality with a system. Only in the second instance should the data be explained in philosophical categories, and this is always a secondary process.

AFRICAN PSYCHOLOGY

The use of the two categories, "metaphysical" and "psychological" introduces a distinction, which in my opinion, is not African.

In the first place, it presents African "psychology" as a metaphysics. (Since) the African feels and experiences what we are accustomed to describe as "soul" (psyche) not as a separate aspect of his spirit or aspect of man but as a cosmic reality, as joined to the universe, as a feeling that pertains not to himself alone nor as exclusively his own. The fear of the African and even the awe and trembling which Western "experts" discover in African religions are not "psychological" pictures but telluric experiences. This is why there are no apprehensive individuals but a conscious participation--even if frequently automatic--in a cosmic labor and in the destiny of the earth. Thus technology and science ^{are} ~~one~~ more successful in driving away this type of fear than psychopathology or psych^{iat}ry. African thinking still participates in an undifferentiated and ^{total} full reality which ~~similarly~~ ^{in a similar fashion,} existed in the West before the rupture (Cartesian) caused by reason. The psychology of the African spirit is more an echo of the earth's rhythm than a reflection bouncing off the structure of his "soul".

In the second place, we discovered that African "metaphysics" is psychological. ^{it is} Not as a pure "idea" and much less as a developed system. "Reality" is not experienced (seen, thought, lived..) as being ^{anything} but as "life"; (also) one could say, in psychological terms: ^{anything but} as soul. Animis, the soul of both the world and man and also the great spirit are not "things", "substances" nor even "beings" but...more like (it is difficult to find precise words) epiphanies, "manifestations", "aspects" - (surely of distinct nature) - of one and the same reality. Thus individualism, even in its personalist ^{disguise} disguise, will always be a stumbling block for the African spirit: ^{From} its relation to theological themes such as sin, death, salvation, responsibility, freedom, etc., one ^{can} must draw conclusions that are profoundly significant. Not a single one of these themes is experienced as personally important because, in the last analysis, the very psychology of the African is metaphysical.

SYMBOLISM

^{like} Similarly to [?] (the discussion about) Indian symbolism, the African conception of symbolism did not arise from a platonic-aristotelian framework. In scholastic terms, symbol for the African is not a means through which (medium quo), but a means "that" (medium quod). Nor is it sufficient to verify simply that the African experiences in symbols while the Westerner thinks with concepts. As the concept pertains to the order of

logic, so the symbol (African) pertains to the metaphysical order. The first implies "through" "quo"--the second, "that" "quod". Obviously we have emphasized the "quo" of the concept and the "medium" of the symbol because the symbol cannot be reduced to a "what" in the final reality, but always remains a revelation, a manifestation, a "medium" of that reality. The concept is, ^{so to speak,} after a manner of speaking, a transparent "medium" which permits us to penetrate the other thing, the reality isolated by the concept, granted that we are not imprisoned within the concept (as happens frequently in the West). On the other hand, the symbol is not something distinct from reality but the thing itself, gathered under a symbolic veil. It is, ^{one could say,} in a manner of speaking, the phenomenon of the thing, ^{that is} the phenomenological appearance of the noumenal "thing in itself." The entire Catholic doctrine of the Son as Symbol, as ikon-image--of the Father, of the sacraments as "symbols", and of creation as a "copy" or "garments", ^{that is,} as "symbols of God", could be ^{more} adapted easily to the ^{is} type of symbolism than to the current competition of symbols extant in the West. Finally, in the same area we could draw out ^{much} such fertile materials with which ~~one could~~ to construct a theology.

FORMS OF EXPRESSION

We have said that the symbol is not only, nor even especially, a medium of expression but ^{is} ~~it~~ itself ~~is~~ the expression of reality. We would relapse into a vulgar pragmatism,

> meaning⁹: "the importance of time and space in the
experience of the African and the thought⁹ [
of the Westerner. --

and would imitate with little originality what the West has already done to concepts, if we were to attempt^{ed} to teach by means of symbols (as is the usual habit) ^{treatng them} as if they were concepts. ^{as is usually the case} The symbol which is converted into a means to an end is thereby destroyed. The concept^{ed} as the "fruit" of "conceiving" implies a loss of "virginity". But the symbol remains in the state of innocence of the human spirit. To change it into an "object" means to profane it and to destroy it. A symbol lives and exists in itself, and one can create symbols or participate in ^a the symbol but one can never "use" ^{them} symbols. There exists a certain "intuition" of the symbol and a type of symbolic knowing. ^{The phrase} "symbol of the faith" (which is usually translated as "creed") has some connection with what we are saying.

The purpose of this essay is to highlight the originality of African "thought" without using categories which would limit an elucidation of Africa to Western canons. An analysis of rhythm is, in this sense, a test case.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the experience of time and space to the African or in the thought of a Westerner. Without investigating the question in detail, we will limit ourselves to an observ^eation that these two extremes touch one another. The experience of rhythm is prior to that of time and space, ^{and they} which could be conceded as two distinct types of experience. ^Rhythm is, in a certain way, the mother of time and space. It carries them ⁱ on her womb before giving them birth. Time and space exist undifferentiated within rhythm. In ^{a certain} one way one experiences rhythm as the "wedding" between time and

space. This is exactly what an excited child of the West feels when he hears African drums. But in reality this already implies a secondary experience since rhythm is not so much the result of a union between time and space but is the originating womb out of which twin space and time is born. This description of rhythm is not only significant for Art and Expression. The intuition of rhythm is also decisive for the African representation of history, and consequently, most important, for sacred history, and from here for all theology. The appreciation of history as the unfolding of a divine plan within space and time is enriched even more when it is conceived as a rhythm of the world, as a rhythmic momentum of salvation, like a jolt of creation prior to space and time ~~and~~ which widens within space and time as the divine^e human whirl of the universe. From this point of view the entire problematic of the "theology of mysteries" is cast in a new light.

THE MYSTICAL

And, now, as a mere supposition, I ask myself, *if whether there is a sense in which* in a certain sense, the necessary absence of union with God, which is commonly verified in African religions, is not rooted in the dualistic hypothesis presupposed by the question and foreign to the native intuition of the African spirit. Certainly there exists a religious haughtiness ⁱⁿ Africa which almost leads the African to ~~an~~ arrogance in his humanity. Perhaps at the root of this hauteur are certain convictions that man is the agent and

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needs rephrasing

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and keeper of a fragment of God, and that he himself ^{together with} plus his surrounding world, constitute a portion of God.

REFLECTION UPON MONOTHEISTIC AND POLYTHEISTIC RELIGIONS

The science of comparative religion normally divides the world religions ^{into} between monotheistic or polytheistic. This is a distinction which places Christianity ⁱⁿ among the first group, and the other so-called "primitive" religions in the second. ^{Personally's} For ourselves we doubt the claim of this distinction not only in relation to Christianity but also ^{as regards} relative to the primitive religions. This problematic is a good example of the misunderstanding of the essence not only of these religions in particular but ^{also} of the fundamental structure of religion in general. ^{as well as} Not only this distinction, ^{is} but many other opinions, ^{as well as} are grounded in the excessive rationalistic interpretation of the past century. We support our claim with three brief ~~and concise~~ observations.

1: POLYTHEISM

It occurs to us that the expression "polytheism", not only, in regards to its etymology but also in regards to itself, is a recent phenomenon, and is indeed an unfortunate, ^{even equivocal}, appropriation of the term, ~~and even equivocal~~. ^{Firstly,} In the first place one should ^{remember} be mindful that no polytheist even called himself by such a name and, ^{by} in the second place, this name was introduced precisely by non-polytheists to combat polytheism. This implies

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meaning not clear


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a compromise much more than a caricature.

There would be no objection ^{to} ~~against~~ polytheism if it only denoted a multitude ^d of "gods", at least in the sense of the Hindu "devas", or a simple plurality of superhuman beings or ~~of~~ celestial spirits. But "polytheism", as it is used in the Study of Religion, says much more; ~~Thus~~ it is ~~to be~~ understood ^{as} ~~and~~ contrasted with monotheism, ^{and} ~~it~~ is accused of saying many whereas monotheism speaks about one. But this is an error. Here we run ^{up} ~~against~~ the first equivocation since neither ~~the~~ so-called polytheism ~~nor~~ ~~the~~ so-called monotheism use the word theos in the same sense.

Actually polytheism does not affirm a plurality of the One that monotheism recognizes as unique, nor does it defend a simple plurality of ~~purely~~ "celestial" powers, that is: "divine"; nor the multiplicity of the "supreme" being of monotheism. One would be assuming a too facile position towards polytheism even if it were granted that polytheists accepted ~~a~~ ^{the} plurality of a being who, ^{by} ~~according~~ to their own definition, is necessarily singular and unique.

Moreover, it is an historical fact, repeatedly and obliquely confirmed by the serious student of religion, that polytheism feels itself in no way opposed to monotheism. If one struggles to understand polytheism from within and clearly analyzes the polytheistic experience without anachronistic prejudices, one uncovers that this so-called polytheism is grounded on two principles: the first maintains that in each instance an exhaustive experience of the deity is experienced,

capital Him or small letter him? 

manifested and worshipped; the second affirms that whatever is presented or manifested in each instance never excludes the divinity, that is, it never shuts out the deity. Whoever perceives a contradiction between these two principles could never become a polytheist, but he could be a rationalist.

Before one accuses polytheism of ~~such~~ a gross contradiction, it would be better to examine the roots of ~~such~~ ^{its} suppositions. ^{In fact,} ~~Actually~~ the polytheistic creed does not affirm that "God" exists in plurality, but simply that in this world multiple epiphanies of God are given and in such a way that each of these manifestations can be worshipped absolutely as "God".

Adoration that is considered as a vital, concrete, existential realization of ~~my~~ ^{one's} union with God does not imply, in anyway whatsoever, affirmation or logical predication. The polytheistic creed never speaks about God, never affirms something about God; it only speaks to him; prays to Him. ^{It} never pretends even a single generalization nor ^{ever} insists ~~even~~ on a logical or universal inference. We have said that polytheistic creed worships the divinity which is manifest in each case, as God, but not identified with Him. Proof demands a logical argument which is foreign to the polytheistic creed. The polytheist does not possess a rendered concept of God and yet he is neither an atheist nor a monotheist; his God has not dwended into concepts nor into the flesh.

Furthermore one must note that the words "monos" and "poli" are not even used, in both cases, at the same

exclusive level. If any ^{one} hopes to save the "one" of monotheism, he must beware that it is not a numerical one. And any ^{if one} desires to uncover the meaning of polytheism, he must admit to himself that no multiplication of "unity" corresponds to the "poli".

2. MONOTHEISM

Just as polytheism becomes problematic when it is put against a background of monotheism which is extraneous and opposite to it, ^{so} likewise monotheism is no less burdened with onerous biases if it is simply accepted as an anti-polytheism.

No authentic monotheist would agree to the opinion that he affirms the unity of that "thing" which the polytheist names as plural. Yet this is not all. ~~Just as~~ ^{as} the concept of polytheism was derived from ^a purely rational "superiority complex" on the face of "primitive" religions, likewise the concept of monotheism appeared with the intent of matching Christianity with the other "monotheistic" religions. If monotheism is understood, and here only formally, against a background of polytheism, it is not applicable to Christianity, that is, it is no longer theism.

From the moment that mono-theism is contracted with the poly-theism and the monos is a numerical comparison with the poli, one makes a tyrant of the "proper" God, that is, "one" God who has annihilated, defeated or assimilated all the other gods. "My" God is then my protector and all the others (individuals, nations, races...) do not possess a Lord, a "true"

God. The God of strict mono-theism would be "one" God who takes his place at the head of all the gods and in that spell ~~had~~ "swallowed" their "divinity."

As ~~has been said~~, ^{Polytheism,} and monotheism ^{have been} are presented as relative ~~concepts~~ ^(and insufficient) which adjust to each other but ~~they~~ do not accord with the meaning ^{either} which divinity has in "polytheism" or in theism. We will refer to the first meaning in our third observation about Hinduism; as to the second meaning, ^{the following} ~~these few~~ reflections will suffice:

In theism God is not "one", nor "solitary" nor even "multiple". The drive to predicate a qualitative or quantitative exclusivity to God is nonsensical. If he were so, God would no longer be the Absolute, Supreme, Infinite, Highest or Perfect in all aspects. To limit the monos to God is thus a step towards folly. Monotheism and polytheism are reciprocally exclusive terms. Boethius: Illud vere est unum in quo nullus numerus est (that is truly One in which absolutely nonnumber exists), ~~and following his example, all subsequent scholasticism was~~ launched ^{with this phrase} into the treatise de Deo Uno, concerning the One God, ~~with his phrase~~. Just as ~~it happens~~ in Israel, where monotheism was fixed as an historical response ^{the} in face of other religions, ^{so} ~~likewise~~, the mission of polytheism is to keep the nations open to the self-revelation of God ~~in Christ~~, yet ~~no~~ serious theist worships God in an exclusive or limited sense as if only "his" God existed, ~~and~~ yet at the same time he is not content with the vague notion of God ^{found} within amorphous polytheism.

The vital relationship of a believer with God transcends, in the final analysis, any scientifico-religious investigation which in character is quite technical and its ^{is directed} direction ~~set~~ by liberalism. From the morphological point of view it is not possible to distinguish the worship of a sincere polytheist from an authentic monotheist.

God becomes, through my act of worship, my God, is totally on my side and inherits, (in a manner of speaking) even-though it is not necessary--total divinity. He elicits from me an absolute and total surrender and permits no rivalry with other gods (with other worshipers^P.) Expressed in another way: he abides best in authentic monotheism or polytheism to the degree that one is not self-conscious. This is another objection against the authenticity of their attitude^d. Yet something remains that is unquestionable: theism is neither mono-theism nor poly-theism; the Christian concept of God certainly is neither the one nor the other.

3. The experience of Hindu Polytheism

Perhaps we can clarify our objection by reference to the Hindu case. The scientifico-religious concept of polytheism was essentially constructed upon studies ^f on mediterranean religions (Egypt, Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia)..and on African religions. If one attempts to apply this concept to India, he ^{one} will discover ~~that~~ that Hinduism, according to ^a the selected view point, not only ~~can~~ present itself as a completely monotheistic religion but also as univocally polytheistic. The explanation

of the Hindu phenomenon, such as is offered in the suggestive hypothesis of Max Muller ^{concerning} about henotheism, is valid only for that mentality which affirms the inadequacy of an earlier distinction yet itself remains foreign and external to Hinduism since it quite innocently accepts the supposition that all religions must rigorously be divided into monotheism or polytheism.²

Thus with mutatis mutandis, minutis, minuendis et salva reventia plus making use of particular analogy in view of its greater psychological comprehension, it would be feasible to explain the Indian case along selected aspects from the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

An Hindu on hearing a typical and modern analysis of polytheism would feel ^{it to be} so little involved in his faith just as a Christian would never identify his trinitarian faith with an analysis of tritheism. But the parallel between Hindu and Christian does not lie in their state of mind. Much less does it reside in any coincidence of doctrines since both are quite different. ^{Rather,} In fact there exists a parallelism in ontic intentionality. In reality, by antonymy, the absolute does not possess a humanly actual name. "God", by any name whatsoever, is a concept conformed to man. God is not "God" to himself, He does not worship himself. "God" is a Being worthy of worship ~~and~~ who shows his face ad extra, that is; he is "God" only to creatures. Lacking worshippers, ^(or whatever) things, creation, God does not need to be "God". The classical relatio rationis

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strictly conceptual relation between God and world--of both Christian and Indian scholasticism clearly respects this situation without recourse to mysticism. Thus the earliest Christian heresies are dialectically rooted in the forced need to ^{rationaly} harmonize ~~rationaly~~ Old Testament "monotheism" with the Christological thematic; thus within a monolithic monotheism, Christ could find room only as adapted by the Father, (and not God), or, on the contrary, as a simple name or "mode" of divinity. (Apply this to the so called adoptionism, modalism, nestorianism, patri-passionism, monophysitism, etc.,).

Hence neither monotheism nor polytheism sufficiently explain Hinduism. Yet this does not at all imply relativism but ^{is, so to speak,} rather that divinity, ~~in a manner of speaking,~~ is a reality which is always transcendent and ineffable. Precisely because a name is not an empty fiction, it sews--and at the same time nips --on God each name of God. Indian polytheism is not a simple modalism. The "gods" are actual and are truly "God", yet for all this they are not exclusive in their unity, ^{unlike} ~~as within~~ the Christian trinity ^{which} ~~there is~~ ^{allows} no polytheism. Each god is plainly God and has no other equal. And this must be said of each name of God as long as we do not degrade Him to a concept. All the "gods" are one and the same divinity and without a doubt, each one of them is "God." They are not identical because each is "God", nor distinct because we lack any prior point of comparison whatsoever. To facilitate a comprehension of Hinduism from within, one can herein interpolate the Christian faith on the Trinity. But this is to go beyond our goals.

We resist the urge to strengthen these three observations with other ~~easily profitable~~ examples or to expand ~~on~~ these reflections ^{more (in)} detail. We ~~desired~~ ^{merely wished} only to underscore the need to revise anew ^o these categories that are of current use in the study of Religion, where one tries to comprehend the religious fact from within.
3

AN ENCOUNTER WITH INDIA

A CHRISTIAN AND HINDU MESSAGE

THE PROBLEM

(The task of) ^edemythologizing was initially a narrow response to a need purely internal to Western Christianity. Yet today it has broad and important ramifications for the teaching mission of the Church, that is, for the preaching of the christian message to non-christian peoples: ^{Must we then} so ~~now~~ ^{we have to} proclaim a demythologized christian message? ^{Is} ~~Must~~ the limited success of the christian mission in some countries ^{able} be attributed to the lack of adequate demythologization? On the other hand, demytholization is an urgent problem today since Christianity is in contact with other religions, ^{It is} making it a necessary and inevitable development ^{containing} with the possibility of casting new light upon the Christian encounter with other world religions.

We would like to submit as a second ¹ installment ^{following} these observations about the actual encounter of Hinduism with Christianity, a concrete meeting grounded upon our own experiences.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE

The Christian west once provided evidence of previously religious notions gradually falling into a more insistent

1. This chapter is a condensed summary of materials the author has already treated and is based on published studies and others in preparation.

? "higher" = more ^{developed} advanced ? ←

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unbelief. It is ~~from~~ ² this fundamental experience that gave rise to the task of ~~demythologizing~~. ^{Thus,} In ~~this~~ sense it claims that the traditional apologetics must be revised and reformed. Upon a similar conviction (yet not identical), there is a general discontent ^{with} ~~about~~ current missionology. After so many centuries, ^{while} ~~when~~ there has been ~~was~~ no lack of means, nor risk-taking or courage, the presence of believers has decreased in both quality and quantity, especially in the higher cultures where it does not even keep up with the actual increase in population. Is this bankruptcy due to the style of preaching? Or is the situation so serious that it is not even met at any level of current apologetics? Years ago missionaries would refer to resistance ^{as} ~~inspired~~ by the devil; today they are critically revising their methods.

This topic is supremely delicate and we do not intend to ^{commit a gross calumny and} ~~negate~~ the grandiose labors of christian missionaries ^{around} ~~in~~ the world; ~~which would be a gross calumny~~ -- nor do we intend to deal with statistics or with spectacular conversions, ^{Rather, our interest lies} ~~but~~ with the proclamation of the very Word of God, ~~of~~ the possibility of its reception, ~~of~~ the salvation of nations and also of those human values which are natural to their cultures; we consider the dynamism of _____ and of _____.

There is not the slightest doubt that Christianity has not penetrated these cultures and even among the baptized there remains a split between their deepest life and their so-called christian faith. Today it is fashionable to speak ^{of} ~~about~~ theological colonialism,

2. Cf. C. Bornkamm, "Die christliche Botschaft und das Problem ihrer entmythologisierung," in Theologie heute, Munich, C.H. Beck, 2, 1959, pp. 36 ss.

There is no shortage of texts that

about an exaggerated European shape of Christianity and things along this line. But this ^{does} not advance us much.

Again we intend to limit ourselves to one point of view ⁱⁿ upon this problematic, and we appeal ^{to} that the reader not ^{to} detach our reflections from their context.

THE MISTAKE

In spite of the fact that there exists, and has existed, a ^{very great desire to make} stupendous ^{in the process,} ambition of contact and ~~plus~~ many notable failures, it is undeniable that, in general, there has not yet been an encounter between Christianity and Hinduism at the spiritual level. Agreement cannot be reached. Each speaks a different language and whenever ^{one} each feels ^{he has} they have comprehended the other, ^{in the last resort} then it is ~~finally~~ discovered that words do not have the same meaning. Fundamental notions are not the same; ^{nor are} basic attitudes, silent suppositions, ^{the} pristine composition of spirit, ~~are not the same~~. Moreover this fault appears across the intellectual horizon. We offer some examples: (five)

PANTHEISM

Open any book on Hinduism or Hindu philosophy and one will inevitable) find the claim or defense that the cosmivision of the Hindu is pantheistic. Texts are not lacking that, "ut nobis sonant", echo pantheism. Even some "modern" indian scholars have been convinced that they ^{are} were pantheistic. The entire Greek

theory of prime matter, protohyle, with which the demiurge composed the world (the "creatio ex nihilo" is the Christian echo of this) is something alien to India, and the similar indian notion of a "creation a Deo" has been interpreted hypothetically as "creatis ex Deo." This is not to claim that there are no pantheists in India--just as some exist in the west--but simply that pantheism is not ^{the} a fundamental mood ⁱⁿ of India. The profound meaning of these texts and above all the message they contain is much beyond what, ^{unfortunately} with ~~bad~~ luck, has been tagged as "pantheism".

MONISM

The monism of the Indian doctrine of advaita is almost a dogma among western interpreters, a dogma which, on the other hand, has lured not a few modern indian philosophers. Now the fundamental posture of advaita (non-dualism) is expressed as follows: God and world are not "two" since nothing exists--no "thing", no being--that could bestow a meaning to that "two". Yet God and the world are not "one" since this ^{world} not only imply the collapse of the world--by which the west is so preoccupied--but also it would soil the absoluteness (the basic a-advaita) of God. We note that there is a deep affinity between the Thomist problematic of the "relatio rationis", of creation from God, and the Indian doctrine of advaita.

The unreality of the world

Amid the few terms from Indian philosophy which are current in the west one can claim that "maya" is the most popular. By this one understands "illusion", that is, the

unreality of the world. If one ^{proceeds} ~~precinds~~ from the fact that this word possesses, including gramatically, another meaning--maya is the terminus technicus which designates the peculiarity of being non-divine, which is neither being or non-being, and as such can never be grasped in toto, in statu quietis, in esse completo but only in fieri, in statu viatoris, in esse imperfecto,--which can never be attached to Brahman, at the same level of the Absolute since it does not possess proper real-ity.

THE IMPERSONALITY OF GOD

The maya obstacle that trips western theistic philosophy, even in the case of an open approach to India, is the apparently unanswerable doctrine of the impersonality of God. Here also is a mistake. ^{Proceeding} ~~Precinding~~ from the fact that the Indian concept of Brahman and the semitic concept of God both relate to each other as two poles of one and the same reality, such that they are only two distinct approaches to the absolute, one must keep in mind especially that the very same reasons that compelled the west to appropriate a personality of God were the same ones that led India to disclaim a divine personality. Because the west considers the person--at least in a human personality--the supreme value, it desires to ascribe such a value to God, but in an eminent fashion. India driven by the same reasoning, but seeking the different goal of extricating the human personality from all anthropomorphism, concluded that God was not a person by reason of

having characterized Him as absolute being, spirit and beatitude and never as an inert trunk. In the final analysis, India refuses to see one person in God (and every Christian should be in agreement) since and "I" always postulates a "you" (_____ which could be solved only within the Christian doctrine of the trinity), yet India continues to name the Absolute "Sadcidananda."

BEYOND HISTORY

The modern West is so boastful over "its" discovery of the historical dimension of man, that it has almost blinded itself to the sight that the same human and ontological history is found in the Indian notion of Karma. What is Karma but a condensed temporal existence, perceived precisely as such an ontological homogeneity so as to transcend the individual? By means of the law of Karma the past is inserted into the present and human solidarity falls into an ontological-historical net. Precisely because Indian historicity is so deeply installed in human existence it can offer the impression that India is quite unconcerned about shallow ^{ofio}histiography or about the temporal-spatial boundaries of the outer ripples of human destiny.

We could go on citing more examples such as the error about idolatry or concerning the concepts of the avatar or polytheism, etc.

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Obviously none of this implies that there is no monotheism or idolatry in India, or whatever else we would ~~have~~ liked to ^{have} pointed out. But ^{what} we ~~have~~ wanted to underscore is that the heart of the issue does not lie in the realm of intellect and ideas. If we ignore this fact we could bind ourselves in the following situation, that is: ⁱⁿ with the so-called ^{"tabula rasa"} method of the ~~"tabula rasa"~~ which presupposes the impossibility of preaching the message in so far as ~~they~~ ^{the} continue to ^{are maintained} maintain local ideas about God, world and others. Thus, in the first place, one would have to wipe out the native enterprise; then secondly, one would have to ⁿ introduce new "western" terms that are overbearingly "christian", and only then would one be able to preach the message to the metaphysical, on which this attitude is grounded, precisely signifies a dymythologizing much to the scholastic taste of the west? At the least this should be a caution for all types of dymythology.

THE PRINCIPLES

What then should be done in a similar situation? Should we be content with the simple presentation of Christian doctrine as the intellectual perfection of indian wisdom? If this were possible to any degree, then it would, at the least, imply the negation of the most profound idiosyncrasy of the christian message: a way of life and a scandal rather than a doctrine or credible idea.

EXISTENTIAL INCARNATION

The total mission of Christ consists in creation, redemption and glorification. The mission conferred on the Church by Christ is the co-redemption of the world. Christ, the Redeemer, accomplished his mission through the Kenosis of his incarnation. There is redemption only after incarnation. The disciple is no better off than his Master. Thus, whenever he deals with co-redemption, the Christian must adapt and accommodate himself to the world and the "world" of his neighbor, and must learn how to connect and vitally to engage that world. His rebirth lies there. If the neighbor belongs to a completely distinct culture, then that urge to incarnation implicates a sincere and authentic acceptance of all the values of that culture, even if they are inferior to one's own. It is not a matter of proclaiming Christ's message superficially but of dealing with the total risk of Man. Thus the word of testimony must be incarnated. Lacking this transformation, one simply cannot connect with the depths. The Kerygma comes forth as a message only if it is truly incarnated.

CONVERSION

By conversion we do not mean a total deliverance from error (aversio) so much as a turning to truth and the grasping of it. Existential incarnation, previously introduced, represents,

in this sense, a turning to all the partial truths which are attainable in Hinduism. If one limits himself only to combat error, then, at ^{root}depth, one is merely wrestling with a ^{chimera}guimera without ever engaging the real issue. On the other hand when a christian converts to Hinduism, he is not only enriched from within, but also enters into a superior level. Such a conversion does not imply the abandonment of the christian truth, but its enrichment and ⁿstrengthening. It ^{is} normal that this demands and interior stripping and renunciation, that is: true poverty of spirit is hard to realize, yet it is the only path on which a conversio need not become a type of christian a-versio. In other words, it is necessary to announce the message, but not simultaneously to forget that the message is a service not only unto the Word of God but also unto Man--a love burning not only for God but also for those who have been "implored" by Him--a life spent not only for God but also for the sons of God.

STUDY

It is obviously necessary that the Word of God must be translated yet this ^{is} not always easily realizable. The necessity expresses itself in the fact that the message has come to us as a translation. Christ spoke no Latin, Greek or Hebrew. What the evangelists did for us we, in turn, must do for (the) others. Yet the translation supposes an exact grasp of both idioms. However language is not only technical but also spiritual. Thus if one

does not comprehend the spiritual world of the indian in its depth and width, then ^{one} he is not able to make the "good news perceptible.

The consideration of this last point introduces us to our main problem.

REMYTHOLOGIZATION

What would be the first condition to teach Sanscrit thoroughly to John? One must not only command Sanscrit but must also know John. There actually exists a teaching tradition of Sanscrit among the pundits, ~~but~~ which usually echoes unfruitfully beyond Western man.

If we ask ourselves for the cause of similar failures, we must admit that it lies not so much in deficient knowledge of the object as it does in our ^{meagre} slight comprehension of the subject, or, expressed in another way: the fundamental reason for the failure, it seems to us, is grounded on the western incomprehension of the myth. Lacking a sense of myth, one cannot comprehend the indian; and just as myth without its proper speech, collapses into pure legend or superstition or at best, allegory, so western man, who did not know what to do with his own ~~proper~~ myths, inevitably did not know how to approach the mythic mentality of the indian.

There is not the slightest doubt that since Descartes myth has been repressed in so-called modern philosophy. Myth is absurd when one ^{tries} ~~intends~~ to comprehend ^{it} literally, that is,

"scientifically." The "letter killeth", not only the mythical but also, above all, that part of human existence which shows its truth and makes it home within myth (since we are not pure intellects).

Although ^edymytholization as such is known only to scientific-natural man, involved in modern western technology, yet it is a unilateral outlook since it excludes other possibilities that dwell within the same man which could lead him beyond such a narrow image of the world. The "good news" could serve him as precisely that fresh air, at moments strange yet liberating, which would allow him to breathe and visualize other regions of existence.

We would like to narrate a short parable which, to our understanding, illustrates clearly the spiritual desolation of the west: a young man, sad and ^{down-cast}~~cast-down~~ angrily complains: for three years I have written daily to my girlfriend who now informs me that she will marry the postman!

For three centuries the west alone has communicated with the beloved, with God, with reality, by means of letters, reason, logos, and now has married that inter-mediary and fallen into the hands of con-sciousness and thus shows hatred towards simple existence. Meanwhile the pretension persists that the letter of that other correspondent must be translated into scientific, objective and ^edymythologized script since the amorous idiom of their author is no longer intelligible. However, in classic India^e—which still exists—there is no

concern ^{over} for the postman who reads very little, that is, ~~he~~ does not decode the letters. Philosophy, in the post-cartesian meaning of the term, does not exist. Its way of wisdom is either religion or theology, or an openness or listening to the word, or an assault ^a on the obscure and profound, an attempt to decipher ^{ph} facts. The gospel, revealed as a solution to human problems, as a key that unlocks the enigmas of human existence, as a deed grounded within history, that is, grounded in the past, as a guiding light to reason, or, as a scientific and verifiable fact, another ^e dymythologized item, and ~~which~~ would not be capable of moving the indian heart. Under the best circumstances the indian could intellectually assimilate moral and rational dicta but ^{he} would not grasp the heart of the message.

The first example is a contribution to what could be called mythologization and the second, ^{to} what we have called re-mythologization.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

It is a chapter in the destiny of western Christianity--
if this was its destruction remains---that the passage in the Old Testament in which God (Himself) reveals to Moses as "He who is," was, in the first place, transferred to the metaphysical plane, and in the second place, was interpreted in the sense of

a metaphysics^{sics} of Existence.³

We would like to clarify at the outset that we have no objections ^{to} against this interpretation which represents a large section of the Christian tradition.⁴ But we must immediately add that very frequently ^{the fact is not grasped} one does not get the point that here we are dealing ^{firstly} in the first place with an interpretation, that is, not of an identity, and ^{secondly} in the second place, with one of the possible a priori interpretations of that same text.⁵

Taking this for granted, one would say that the metaphysical-ontological interpretation of the Christian tradition eventhough it is distinct ^{not only} from the Platonic⁶ ontology, and the Aristotelian⁷ and even ^{that} of Fillon,⁸ nonetheless allows, primodially, another meaning. Thus we do not commit the same error with a simple substitution of one metaphysics for another. As a metaphysics it would be difficult to find a better one. ~~But we~~ ^{rather,} desire to leave the biblical account as such and place the listener closer to the revelation. We attempt to discover its meaning inspite ^{it is}

3. Ex. 3,14: Ego sum qui sum, ait: sic dices filus Israel, qui misit me ad vos.

4. See the magistral study by E. Gilson: The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, Paris, Vrin, 1944 (1932) in which he develops the notion that there is no metaphysics in the Book of Exodus rather a metaphysics of exodus.

5. In our opinion the patristic interpretation of the text does not reinforce the sense of the "ipsum esse" of Aquinas (S.T. 1 q.13, a.2) but rather the sense of the living God as Lord, according to the very next verse in the text.

6. Cf. Sophist 248 E.)

7. Cf. Metaphysics, II, I (1003 to 31), etc.

8. He not only uses but also . But one finds the true name of God in . Cf., 121, (Buechsel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament II, 397 art.)

of the fact that we see ourselves forced to use philosophical terminology. In this particular passage we come upon a four-fold meaning:

- a) The formula has a supratemporal meaning. It desires to express that Jahweh is that who is, was and ^{will} shall be.⁹ This affirmation could be Greek,¹⁰ or Indian.¹¹ One finds an echo in the words of Christ¹² in the New Testament¹³ and, in general, within the¹⁴ tradition.
- b) The passage also has exclusive meaning. No other God exists but the God of Israel.¹⁵ He is the only one.¹⁶ Jesus uses the same words in this sense and the Jews surely understand^{stood} them as an affirmation about God since the unity of God was Israel's primary characteristic.¹⁷
- c) Also our text suggest that Jahweh is that who is there, as if to say: I am here, He who speaks, who reveals^a himself to you--

9. Cf. Bueschel, 10 c. cit.

10. Cfr. the splendid riddle of the oracle of Dodova:

(in Buechsel

loc. cit.; also Plato: Timaeus, 37 D.

11. Purusa evedam sarvam ad bhutam yac ca bhavyam ("God--is all that he has been and will be"). Rg. Ved., X, 90 2. Cfr. also Ramanuja, Gita-bhasya, IX, 19 where he interprets the sadasat (Being and Non-Being) as designations for God in the Gita--- in the present--sat--and past-future--asat--.

12. Cfr. Jn. 8, 58 where there is a clear contrast between the of Abraham and the of Jesus. Jesus uses the word in the sense of his temporal transcendence. See also Jn. 8, 19 where Jesus also related the to his supra-temporality.

13. Cf. Rv. i, 4, 8; 6, 17; 16, 5.

14. Cf. Gregory Nacienzen, Orat., 30, 18, etc.

15. Cf. Dt., XVI, 4; I Mac., XII; Dt., XXXII, 16; Ecclticos 1,8.

16. Cf. Ex., 20, 2; Is., XLIV, 6-8; ELV, 5.

17. Cf. Jn. 10, 31-39.

precisely here with you--Who watches for you--all of you--and Who desires to liberate you; I am as present to you as I was when I made the alliance with your father Abraham. This passage wants to stress providence, the true care God has for his People. The God of Israel is an invisible, terrible and transcendent divinity, and at the same time He is a father, husband, friend who reveals Himself by saying: I am here and granted that I always am and have been with you, I have noticed what you have suffered under the Egyptian yoke, and now I have decided to save you and to select you, MOses, as my prophet.¹⁸

d) The true force of this text seems to be lodged in the confirmation of the personal character of Jahweh. The divinity does not reveal itself here as Existence but as an "I". It does not say that He is Being but that He is I. "I am that I am". The stress is placed upon the I. He has no predicate, not even that of Existence. He does not reveal himself as substance but as Word, as act, as person, precisely not as "he is" but as an "I am", because God, at least the God of the Old Testament, can not make claim that "he is" but only an "I". If one tries to subordinate him to some predicate, one could no longer interpret this text: I am existence but as: I am the I.¹⁹ One can relate the expression used by Jesus to this text where He applies to his own person the _____.²⁰

18. I owe the insight to develop this third notion to J. B. Lotz.
 19. The consequences of this interpretation are of enormous importance but do not effect our present effort. See my essay, "The existential phenomenology of truth" in Anuario filosofico de la Sociedad Goerres, Munich, 1 956.
 20. Also. VIII, 24, 28

AN EXAMPLE: THE PERSON OF CHRISIT

Our aim is to synthesize and illustrate the text by means of a central example. We read in the Acts of the Apostles, that the apostles, immediately after Pentecost, preached Christ--

²¹---both in the temple and in houses of Jesus.

This expression was also used to indicate the initial attempts to preach the message to pagans. ²² It is also reflected in the basic structure of the Letter to The Hebrews ²³ : "at various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son."

Western Christianity, over the past centuries, and especially Catholic theology have stressed the so called historicity of Christianity and of Christ, in order to maintain their realities in the face of modernist and docetic tendencies. It was felt that if the actions in Bethleham and Jerusalem were truly historical, then Christianity was grounded upon a firm and immovable base. Up until the Second World War it was a matter of honor for any theologian of renown, of whatever school, to write a history or life of Christ. We will forbear an analysis of the entire problematic which this implies here and also for the task of a theology of the Word for the West, and limit ourselves only to non-Christian India. We

21. Cf. Ac. 5, 42.

22. Cf. Ac. 8, 5 and 35.

23. Cf. Heb., 1, 1.

re phrase



would be happy if some applications from our analysis could be made to the West of today, but we are unable here to assume that task.

Phillip, Paul, the Apostles preached Jesus, the Christ; that is, they grounded ^{their preaching} it upon a miraculous action in Jerusalem, which no one could deny; upon a messianic faith they preached the identity of Jesus with the Christ. In one way or the other, a faith in Christ was presupposed. Only at Athens, where this supposition was not implied, the scandal of Paul was not effective, and was melted down by the indifference and laughing smiles of the Athenians. Likewise, Europe, over the past centuries, has allowed (on the one hand, authentic Christic awareness to be distorted and has tolerated, on the other hand, a sweet devotion to Jesus—among believers—and also scepticism about Jesus—among non-believers, and thus when Europe preached the good news of Jesus to India, India did not comprehend it as concerning the Christ but as a manifestation of a new avatar, as a new edition of ^{ITS} his original and ancient religious doctrine, as a new form, (and more actual) of morality and religion. India developed the impression that the figure of Jesus was a challenge to her ancient religious models. Summing up and speaking pastorally: the Christian message, in general, has not even reached the level of a problem of conscience in which it is necessary to choose one or the other; ^e theoretically this indicates that the majority of the converted have not grasped that Jesus affirmed himself as the Christ.

First, I would like to begin by describing concisely

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and at the same time somewhat critically, the typical indian reaction to current apologetics and theyⁿ, to outline schematically the fundamental themes of a re-mythologized message.

Nearly twenty centuries ago, Jesus of Nazareth identified himself as the Son of God; he died on the cross in belief of the world, rose on the third day and established a church on His Apostles so that his message would be transmitted and now it has been delivered to you, my friend!

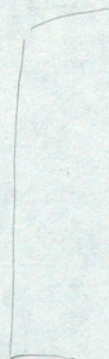
To a believing Hindu none of this presents difficulty. Since, parallel to Jesus, he is aware of many others. The world is full of divine men whom God sends here and there to save the world. All preach alike: love, goodness, charity, compassion and ^{so on} such. Above all, theologians construct (in each case) a doctrine, which is better or worse and can be adapted to men according to their temperament, culture, time and space. The Hindu believer is also disposed to declare himself a Christian whenever Christian doctrine authentically appeals to him (yet at times he conceals the fear that he is dealing with a religion that is much too Western). There is only one item in Christianity that he has never been able to comprehend, and, ^{nor is there} inclusively, there is ~~neither~~ the slightest possibility of ^{his ever} comprehending it since he is conditioned by his environment; we refer not to any absolute demand of Christianity (this can be admitted easily since at depth, they are all alike) but to its pretension ^{to} of exclusivity.

If human history is so vast and multiplex, if humanity is so old and so distinct, why must there be only one avatar? Why must the world remain in darkness and the help from

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God appear as an exception to a special tribe? And why, finally that monopoly? Obviously in no conversation would it be possible to admit, for a fact, that ^{your} my religion is diabolical whereas yours ^{mine} is divine, that ^{your} my avatar or ^{your} my shape of the divinity ^{is} obscure and formless, ^{and} ^{more} smaller ^{and} weaker than yours, since we are not engaged in an infantile debate that the size of my ^{father's} daddy's coat is bigger than your father's coat. Certainly classical apologetics can offer rational arguments to these objections and demonstrate that Christian affirmations are not inhuman; but ultimately every argument is reducible to the fact that God wants it ^{so} such and that He Himself revealed his desire ^{to be} of being venerated and adored only ^{ough} thru His Son Jesus christ. In the ^{face} fact of such an argument, an Hindue will think ~~---~~ even if he will not express it ~~---~~ that, given this situation, he would prefer to wait for such an important revelation.

Preaching would have a different effect when ~~it is~~ ^{were it} related to what we have called Christic consciousness. If the preaching of the Christian message ignores Indian Christic consciousness, then it risks ^{profound} basic failure.

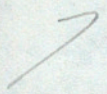
I ^{shall venture} dare to expand briefly on this indian discernment. While doing so I ~~would~~ ask ~~that~~ the Western Christian thinker to listen to me ^{calmly} with a virginal calmness and not ~~to~~ reach at once with ecclesiastical and historical ^{na} tintinulations at my reflections.

Jesus, the Christ, is not an incarnation of God suddenly fallen from heaven. To judeo-christians he was the Messiah promised and foretold much earlier; to greco-christians he was the

answer to a deep hope, the actual logos. That logos became flesh, says John, and by his incarnation he completely recast the hellenic concept of logos, (the same way that Christ was not simply the adaequatio of the jewish messianic faith but its adimpletio). If we begin with logos in India, we would have to say the contrary in order to make the same claim: flesh became logos since logos could not become what it already was--it did not come down--. The destiny of the flesh is not its destruction or annihilation but its divinization, its incorporation into the divinity, which is produced precisely through the incarnate logos; moreover, this resurrection of the flesh not only happened through the logos, but within it. Yet this is not all.

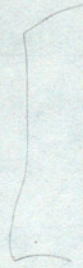
Just as the indian religion carries strong vestiges of a trinity in God which is not found in the Trimurti but in the Sadcidananda) so Hinduism possesses a definity christic consciousness, which has nothing to do with its avaitic doctrine but with the multiple ways of conceiving "isvara", its interpretation of Antaryamin, and above all, its theandric experience.

If we were to characterize Christ as an avatar, or as an apparition of the divine in human form within space and time, as an historical descent by the divine, we would then be making it impossible for the indian spirit to identify Jesus with the Christ. For Jesus would then be so completely an incarnation and only an incarnation, and thus so historical, that he could not transcend history.



Questions need
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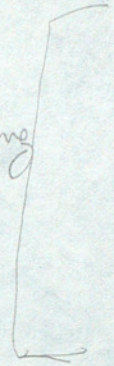
The basic scheme of the message, ^(extremely) most condensed and for that reason partly deformed, would be as follows:

Only God exists, God ~~(both)~~ the absolute reality, and all the "rest"; ^{anything else} what there is furthermore, can only be in so far as it rests upon Him and "is" in Him. Creation is not existence ripped away from God ("this is precisely sin) but more truly a call to go higher, up towards His abode. One must not ask: who is called upward? Since that "who" is precisely the one called, summoned existence. I am nothing more than this spoken word. God is not the "other" but the "One", and I myself am not "another" but a "not-yet-one", a "not-second" still however not "one". This tension, interior to the Trinity,--without impairing its ab-soluteness and simplicity--is an essential element ⁱⁿ of the trinitarian revelation of God. India does not comprehend it and nevertheless continues to ask: what is this Being, that without being God, in case he is God, only can be God? How can "Being" exist, a "creation" which must at the same time be a not-be? What is in God that is both divine and creative? ^{and}

The Christian answer now is obvious, ~~that is~~ Christ, the total Christ who holds in Himself the new earth and the new heaven; ~~this~~ is that theandric reality, in which all that exists participates. Thus, this Christ is the ontic mediator, in his temporal enterprise. Up to now we have excluded time from our consideration. This Christ is both creator and glorifier, that is; the completion of temporal existence. This Christ is the divine source that call each being and lets each being exist; ^{in brief,} ~~is a word,~~ this

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Christ is truly and really God. We now come to the true temporal message; this Christ is also redeemer, because that rising to the heights of God signifies a true return and a real ascent. (That Christ, who furthermore has cared for the world since it is his body (in eternity) and must achieve becoming it (within temporal passage and in so far as it is not thus, it simply is not) and who, consequently, has called prophets to exist, and founders of religions, saints; that Christ has revealed at the final days His real head.) Not only has He allowed His predestined members to exist but He himself was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate and rose on the third day in order to continue the fulfillment of his mission unto the end (1 Cor. XV, 28).

This can all seem too philosophical and in fact it has only been possible to formulate (philosophically) this overly compact synthesis (but we never had the intention of engaging in a philosophical discourse). Now (since we have anticipated that discourse) we are able to formulate more simply our fundamental scheme:

We begin with the Eucharist, that is, with the Eucharist understood literally as sacrifice, as sacrament and as doctrine. Divinization is possible; moreover, it is a fact: the unity of what has been called the creative with the very Trinity (just as the Father and I are one..John XVII, 21). God comes to us and is not limited to an arrival but becomes one with us. It is a true union through which alone we truly arrive at "existence", etc. Thus, this Eucharist, this cosmic yet personal Christ is identical with the historical Christ of Nazareth.

This is precisely the scandal inaudible in India; not the claim of an incarnation, nor that God has come down as a man, not that the Logos has become enfleshed but that all flesh can reach up to existence, to God's existence, that the myth has become history, that union with God is attainable not by a renunciation of all history but precisely thru ^{only} ^{it's} his divinization.

In other words, historicity is not the base but the crown of preaching, the historical Jesus is not the point of departure but the "eschaton." The foundation of evangelistic preaching is not faith in the historiography of Jesus but faith in Him who can come to us only through a personal contact within an intimate encounter (with Him). It is a common claim, and rightly so, that faith is a gratuitous gift from God, but it is at times overlooked that this gift, in order to be effective, (in so far as Christ comes down to us,--in whatever way--in order to let us participate in his mystery) always presupposes an encounter with Christ; at the least, an hour of Damascus. Each believer is a man of grace even if later he loses it through lack of faith. But we need not be quite conscious of this aspect. The encounter occurs; actually we can remain blind to it, more so than Paul, ^{was} since he was affected physically. It must not be forgotten that the decisive element in our encounter with God is not ^{the} ^{ness} to be conscious of it, but the fact of actual encounter, and the most important aspect is not that I-reach-God, but that the divinity touches me.

In other words, it all comes down to allowing the primacy to the person of Christ; or, better expressed, of not

robbing him of the primacy which belongs to Him and which He effectively expresses. This primacy (from the outset) must be admitted in a completely existential mode, ~~or~~: We are not saying that I, as a missionary, preach the primacy of Christ, nor even that what I preach ^{is} from Christ and allow Him to speak and act through me, ^{rather,} but we are dealing most positively ^{with the fact} that He presents Himself and in so far as He acts ^{ough} through me and works through my mediation and at times without me or even against me, ~~that~~ I remain his instrument and not He mine, ~~that~~ He really makes himself present and comes, ~~that~~ He realizes the sacrifice, lifts up the heart and enlightens the spirit. He must increase and I must decrease. The preaching of God must not be understood primarily as an objective genitive but in the subjective genitive, ~~or that it is~~ ^{it} ~~not~~ my proclamation of the revealed word but a divine proclamation of His very words even though they come through my mediation.

This is what we really wanted to say when we referred before to the living liturgy and to orthopraxis. Cult is the characteristic locus of preaching, above all because cult, as such, is already proclamation and (precisely) preaching comes from God Himself who claims response. Lacking cult there is a communication of doctrine and not the preaching of the Word of God. ^{Because} Since Christian doctrine carries a supernatural character, a simple transmission of doctrine would remain sterile ^{since} because it would be incomprehensible in the minimal sense that it would not be simultaneously enveloped with grace with which to protect it and ^{with which} to respond to that inner claim for a response.

Supposing that only a few Christians survived on the earth, and deprived of all documents and such, they gathered on a lonely island where they continued the proclamation of the Christian message, nonetheless, even under these circumstances, that proclamation would be significant. In order to skip over particular theological problems let us suppose that one of the survivors is a priest. This priest would then assume the role of the teaching church and would have papal power. He would have the faculty of exercising his power over the head of the Church, that is, to re-call the sacrifice of Christ, and in this way his preaching would not strictly necessitate testimony of history since Jesus, in whom they believe^e, is not primo et per se, a figure in past history but the living and resurrected Christ, present in their Mass and active in their hearts. Owing to the fullness of their faith, the survivors on that island ^{would} will not refer to historical documentation about the historical existence of Jesus. Yet they would not doubt the historicity of Christ since that is already implied in their living faith. Speaking figuratively, ^{one could} situate India on this island. ~~Actually~~ she is not interested in past history precisely because she is passionately concerned in the present, in the actual presence of Christ. The historical Christ is encountered in sacrifice and sacrament, in prayer and in faith. This alone is decisive.

PLURALISM IN HINDUISM
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS
THE PARADOXICAL ACT

Hinduism, seen from the perspective of doctrine, reveals a calm co-existence between totally opposite doctrines. An atheist as well as materialist, monist either as bhakta, or an advaitin or a visitadavaitin can all be Hindus. There are six philosophical systems, the six classical darsanas: Samkhya, Yoga, Vaisesika, Nyaya, Purva-Mimamsa and Uttara-Mimamsa or Vedanta. Each system considers itself complete and denies access to the others. Only Vedanta has engaged in any compromise. The rest are as exclusivistic as only philosophic systems can be. Yet without a doubt all these systems possess, ^{so to speak} to say it that way, a citizenship certificate to Hinduism.

Thus within Hinduism we find a paradoxical situation, at least to a certain way of thinking, in which one can be a Hindu and still uphold quite diverse opinions, and even be ^{devoted} addicted to other distinct "religions." No one denies to all these different philosophical systems ^{excluding} (not to the religious systems such as Sivaismo or visnuism) the right to call themselves ^{ves} Hindu. In relation to its Hinduism there is a completely calm harmony between them all. One does not enter into polemics at the existential levels but only at the essential.

Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy

Is there not within Hinduism heresy? Is there no place for heterodoxy? Certainly there is. The classic treatise of

philosophy speak of ~~the~~ six orthodox systems and of those that are not. The orthodox are called astika (from asti, as, the root of the verb "to be"). The heretical are nastika. The first say "yes", the other say "no". Obviously we are not referring to a simple affirmation or negation but to an acceptance or a refusal. Of what? A doctrine? Certainly not, since a multiplicity of doctrines exist, a terrible thicket for the logical mind. The concern is simply ^{with} the refusal or acceptance of the authority of the ^vBedas; ~~precisely~~ its authority and not its doctrine; ~~of~~ its existential value and not its essential content. Thus, orthodoxy and heterodoxy are not co-relative primarily and in themselves as ideas or intellectual convictions but as ~~to~~ a more ^{full} amply faithfulness to the existence of an authority in the ^hBedas ~~and~~ which is not diminished through any doctrinal distinctions.

One can list examples from the modern period which illustrate this so-called indian syncretism, such as Ramakrishna, who experimented with various doctrines and even various religions--christian, islamic and hindu--and who became an instant convert, in good faith, to one and each. The syncretism of Gandhi and the philosopher Radakrisna^h, are other examples of the paradoxical situation of this co-existence of diverse systems, doctrines and practices within Hinduism and each one has the right to claim, in a manner of speaking, authentic citizenship.

Recall the trials of the first Christians during the persecutions when they were challenged; believe what you want

but sacrifice to the gods. You are not obliged to reveal your thoughts but only to sacrifice to the gods. There is something more important than thinking: the act of sacrificing to the gods. This act does not pertain to the order of thought but to that of Existence--with God and with men--and you do not have the right to separate yourselves from Existence. From the point of view only of orthodoxy one is open, at times, into the temptation of giving in to the persecutors (since various interpretations are possible) but no Christian could do so from the point of view of orthoproxis. (He was concerned with existing and not with thinking.)

HINDUISM

Hinduism is not an "essence"

Hinduism cannot be defined as it had been hoped in the beginning. To set a point of departure foreign to the actual reality is to open oneself to gross error. The basic reason for such exposure is the application of categories to Hinduism which are not only foreign but also invert the sense of the question. It is customary to list under a determined "eidos" whatever is strange, and this produces false problems. In a most brief summary (which is a synthesis of forty centuries and hundreds of schools and practices of salvation) I now will sketch first what Hinduism is not.

It is neither an essence nor a doctrine. It does not even have a name (no Hindu would designate himself as such;

Christians and mohammadans, label him thus in order to isolate him). Neither is Hinduism an idea. Thus one does not need a coherent flow of ideas. Up to now there has been no successful exposition of Hinduism, since it is neither essence nor doctrine. Hinduism does not even have a founder, now a beginning, nor boundaries. Just as it slips beyond all containment it evokes all definition. It is obvious that it has no dogma in the strict sense of the word.

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The principle of identity prior to the law of contradiction

One can defend this thesis: whereas the development of Western thought and culture rests upon the law of contradiction the development of indian culture is grounded, on the other hand, on the priority of the principle of identity. Obviously this is not to say that the law of identity was unknown and unused in the West or that contradiction was ignored in India. As a matter of fact it seems to me that since the Greeks, Western developments have rested on the primacy of the law of contradiction, in other words, on the intuition that no being can be and not-be at the same time. We understand this "at the same time" as a positive datum without which the principle of contradiction would be meaningless. It is obvious that if we lacked this type of principle of identity interior to the principle of contradiction, a being could be and not be (today white, tomorrow black, now present, later absent). If we would step beyond the time of these two consecutive moments of our being in question, we would be approaching the Indian mode of thought.

The primacy of the principle of contradiction implies individuation but also atomization of beings. In the West, each being is alone, that is, is condemned to be itself and no other. According to the principle of contradiction, being is immutable, untransferable and unique. Basically each being, by remaining itself and no other, is limited by its contrary. A is limited by Not-A, which contradicts A. This is the only presupposition the West needs in order to operate its mechanism of thought which need limits and boundaries in order to be operable, otherwise everything would slip into confusion and indistinction. Thomas Aquinas observed ^{that} our reason, in order to think, proceeds "componendo et dividendo." Thus human thought was placed under the perspective of the principle of contradiction in order to preserve it from error and confusion. But this demanded a great price: it excluded itself from the domain of the infinity^e, of existence which has no limits nor substitution above it. The Supreme Being can never be submitted to the principle of contradiction. Not to claim exemption would be to deny infinity. The principle is valid only for mortals. To extend it to Existence, by antonymy, not only is invalid but is alien to existence. Obviously this is not to claim that within the infinity there lies a contradiction, but neither is there posited a non-contradiction. This principle is valid between mortals and whenever human reason attempts to apply it to the great ideas of infinity (Existence^e and beings, eternity and time, God and world) it stumbles into countless antinomies as is quite obvious from the many examples in Western philosophy.

On the other hand, Indian culture rests on the primacy of the law of identity. Moreover, India symbolizes an impassioned response to the principle of identity, that A can be identified with A. What predicate P can be really identical to subject S? In this world no such predicate exists that could completely exhaust the subject, no P could really even equal S. This is the case even for "I". If one claims: "I am", then this proposition does not claim perfect identity. I am not my body, nor my soul nor my spirit. In no way can I exhaustively express my own total reality--who am I? In the final analysis there is no absolute identity between the "I" and "myself", since I myself am not "I" but only "me"). No "self" exists that is identical to itself, with the exception of the absolute (in Indian terms: the identity of atman-brahman; yet in this case atman is no longer a "me"). Only in the Divine Being, being and existence, essence and existence (in scholastic terms) are they the same? But it was not a slight price India paid in this case. Discursive thought was unable to move amid such heights. The law of "one of two" no longer refers to this level of the infinite, which is one of "not alone but with." Thus if one desires to apply this method to mortal affairs, one encounters the weakness and deficiency of that thought which generates its own limitations yet refuses to allow a distinction--absolute and ultimate--between God and world, body and soul, good and evil, one religion (as way and doctrine) and

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another. Every distinction presupposes a principle of differentiation which is distinct from the "thing" and must not only be isolated from but at the same time superior to the thing. A condition that cannot be met at the ineffable level.

As a consequence of such fundamental refinements, distinct developments of the two cultures resulted which could evolve both in parallel or at variance. Now I shall illustrate this claim with a concrete example.

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Hinduism is a way of living.

We have stated that Hinduism is not an essence, idea or doctrine. It is that which remains after skimming off these others. It is the ground in which convictions, ideas and systems germinate. It is the lattice that upholds subsequent crystalizations, diverse patterns of thinking, and cultures, etc. If Christianity could conceive of herself and affirm that conviction which would permit and surrender her to an incarnation or restrict her universality, at least her basic Catholicity as in Hinduism, then she would be establishing herself not only as a concrete, but also as a universal and cosmic response, to the challenge posed by Hinduism, thus making it possible that dialog^{ve}, or better yet, an authentic conversion, could then lead to a true and decisive

25. It would be worthwhile to analyze the dialectic of contraries, such as light and shadow, in the Katha-Up, 3,1; 6, 5, and life death in the Rg-Veda 10, 121 and 122, and then compare it to the Christian tradition of coincidentia oppositorum.

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encounter.

Speaking in western terms, I would describe Hinduism precisely as an ex-istence, a substance, an awareness, a vase that is open to whatever content. It is--and wants to be-- the real and not mere knowledge of the real. It is truth in the sense of existential truth and not mere truth or knowledge of the truth, which is a limitation and interpretation (and here we touch on the central issue) of the truth. (Hinduism is a truth that even if it is not dressed in a corporeal existence, a truth, which I can testify both as Christian and Hindu, that is yet to be corporally incarnated. If anything is true (repeat all the holy books, either the existing orthodox Hindus, and this constituted the intellectual perspective, the central idea, of Gandhi) then that truth belongs, by its own weight, to Hinduism. Obviously we are not dealing with truth as adequatio, but as reality.

Hinduism understands itself both as sanatava dharma, a fixed reality, truth, substance, religion, morality, all eternal and as a way (dharma means this and more). Hinduism aspires to be this primordial layer, a prime matter, a universal floor, a pre-^sessential existence, etc, which is capable of assuming a thousand distinct forms and ~~to~~ be ^{ing} enriched through distinct sources. Yet the indian concept of Brahman, when related to the current western philosophical concept of God, denies this thrust and any possibility of existential richness.²⁶ Nevertheless Hinduism is an existential keynote in the individual's relation to Karma. It attempts to be

26. Cf.: R. Panikkar, "Das Brahman der Upanisaden und der Gott der Philosophen" in Kairos, Salsburg, 3, 4, 61, p. 182.

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that ontic locus where human existence can flower to its fulness. There really is no Hinduism, but only those living persons in India who welcome and do not deny it.

THE INTERPRETATION

A two-fold method of interpretation is employed in Hinduism. In classical terms: the Karma-vada and the artha-vada, in the sense of to do as Karma (the root Kr means to do) and in the sense of being sent as artha-vada.

Karma-vada.

The first method, the Karma-vada is an hermeneutic of action, doing. Actually it is not so much a method of interpretation as of realization. Not a question of knowing but of doing, not the interpretation of a doctrine but of existential progress along the way of salvation. It does not deal with content but with motivation. Action, act of whatever class, precedes all secondary reflection.

Recently an authority in Hinduism made the claim: "no one can live without faith". This faith, without which no one can live, is Hinduism. The basic element here is not that one lends faith to something or believes in something--~~this~~, speaking is an Hindu, would already be content ~~but~~ faith in itself, in other words, the act of faith with no object. No predicate or corresponding object exists for the act of believing. One can think something or think about something, or, if not, one can have a real thought.

Then one can surely say: cogito cogitatum. Yet in Hinduism one cannot say: credo creditiem. The essentially important factor in the act of believing is the faith. The object of faith can help us speak about faith. But faith, strictly speaking, has no object, objectum, thrown down, cast before it, since--paradoxically--faith is not subjective!

Thus it is that the faith of Karma-vada is a naked faith, without content, a pure openness to the transcendent, a receiving of what comes from without, from the most beyond, above and below. Hinduism is better an "orthopraxis," the living out of an authentic attitude, than it is an "orthodoxy", a truth to be held.

Orthopraxis.

There is also an orthopraxis within Christianity, but the development of western cultures has frequently underplayed it.²⁷ Christianity is more a quest for salvation rather than a doctrine to be held. In the quest, one reaches the goal, the moksa, liberation. "Not everyone who says to me: Lord, lord, will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 7, 21.)

27. The philosopher Sankara also nodded when he asserts an equivalence between jnana and labba. See Brhadaranyaka, Up, Bhasya 1, 4, 6. Neither does Sankara maintain the objectivity of scripture (sroti) in the transmission of knowledge about man (Brahma-sumtrabhasya, 1, 3, 7, or about the world, ibid., 1,4,14; Braha., Up. Bhas., 3, 3, 1., but only in brahmavidya, knowledge of Brahman, as the path to realization. See Kevala Up, Bhasya, 1, 4, where the supra-intellectual character is stressed.

Thus the final goal of religion and of the Scriptures is not a teaching but salvation. Religion is the way to Salvation, a moksa-marga; not a philosophy but a way of approach. One does not deal with knowing. The left hand does not know what the right hand does (Matt. 6, 3) and those whom Christ claims are not aware of it (Matt. 24, 37). One deals with existence. The expression "non-practicing Christian" is a scandal completely incomprehensible in India. To be a Christian implies the effective practice of Christianity, and not the possessing of a doctrine or confessing something as true. To be a Christian signifies that one seeks his proper salvation by means of this road, this marga. It is not comprehensible how the "non-practicing Christian" carries any meaning. "Christian" means assent to the truth of Christianity and "non-practicing" means retreat from the necessity of putting the truth into practice (orthopraxis). Since religion is practice, exercise, it is much more orthopraxis than orthodoxy, which has meaning only within the ambit of the former.

Hinduism is much more an ergon, a liturgy, a way, an action than it is a philosophy or theology. It attempts to appropriate proper salvation (similar to Christianity). John the Evangelist has an expression: "to live the truth" ("He who lives the truth sees the light", 3, 21). The Jerusalem Bible considered this expression (in Greek) too bold and toned it down: "to live in the truth". But it is not only in this passage that St. John expresses himself ^{thus if} (and is not exclusively his phrase: Eph. 4, 15.). Other expressions which refer to orthopraxis are frequently repeated:

"to walk the truth", (John 4,); "sanctify yourself in the truth," (17, 17); "remain in the truth" (2 John 2); "the truth shall make you free," (3 John 2); "become doers of the truth", (3 John 8). The content of this truth is not logical and does not pertain to any rational order... "everyone who is of the truth hears my voice", (John 18, 37). "Anyone who says, "I know him", and does not keep his commandments, is a liar" (1 John 2,4). "This is what loving God is, keeping his commandments" (1 John 5,3). Each religion is more a proxis than a doxa. In relation to this, the hermeneutics of karma-vada, the religious hermeneutics of India, is an interpretation of orthoproxis.

Svarga Kamo yajeta

The criteria by which to grasp the meanings of the Vedas are expressed in the traditional phrase: svarga kamo yajeta (" "). It is by means of this phrase that the Karma vadin, the interpretation of action, determines the meaning of the Vedas. The Vedas do not tell us what things are but what must be done to reach heaven. One must approach the Vedas with the following question: What must I do (to reach salvation)? The meaning of the Vedas is not intellectual information nor the transmission of a doctrine nor the revelation of symbolized concepts, but the revelation of a road. The Vedas do not communicate the content of any truth to me,--I do not read the Vedas for such information--but ^{they} give me guidance by which to effect salvification. The Vedas aspire to be an infallible answer to this question.

Hinduism believes in the absolute exactness of the Vedas. But the fundamental characteristic that we want to emphasize is that the Vedas are free from all existential error, that they do not deceive when they indicate what we are to do. Thus they are infallible in the realm of work but not in the realm of doctrine. To believe signifies: to get on the road, to act, not to hold back, always to be an act (obviously in the realm of the sacred) to seek salvation, to surpass oneself.

To believe means not to hold back, not even to reflect (which always implies a pause eventhough the activity of reflecting must and can have its place). The object of faith can be transposed to a certain intellectual content and be expressed within it, but before all, faith is an act, a dynamism. The task of interpretation does not consist here in finding a doctrine, but only ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ encountering the "meaning" of it and this is what "existential orientation" means. The task of interpretation is to clear the road, to open the heart to the commands, the existential meaning, the direction that I must walk in order to reach the goal. This hermeneutic appeals less to reason than to will; what must I do to get to heaven? How to answer my call?

As long as I approach the text with this question, with this desire, it will indicate what I should do. Obviously the Sruti is not a scientific ~~text~~, must less ~~an~~ metaphisical or theological text, but pertains to the area of orthoproxis. Even the very name ("that which is heard," what is perceived") leads to the same conclusion.

Artha-vada

It is to be admitted that a second dimension exists within this Hindu hermeneutics, which leans more towards doctrine and which constitutes the second meaning of Hindu interpretation. Along with Karma-vada there exists a complete doctrine of scriptural interpretation. The artha-vada (artha means "goal", "end", "meaning") is the unfolding of the meaning of the commandments. Among the six darsanas, the six philosophical systems of India, one encounters the purva mmanisa which limits itself to being a pure interpretation. Thus in no other culture but India does there exist such a developed pure hermeneutic, by which interpretation has been raised to its most precise and even outrageous refinement. There we are given a complete system which is nothing but a basic teachable hermeneutic and which is learned with the only objective of clarifying the meaning of the vedic prescriptions.

In this sense it does not engage in and must less is it considered as something inventive or creative. The basic meaning is always that of Karma-vada. As an example I herein cite only a few of the thousands of interpretative principles, without pausing for their explanation since my only objective is to reproduce in some way their basic thrust.

In the classic works this type of interpretation is divided into presuppositions, general principles, principles for the interpretation of words and principles for the interpretation of propositions.

Presuppositions

1. The first rule reads: "Dharma is the goal of the Vedas." Under this aspect one could translate dharma more concretely as virtue, salvation. Dharma must be realized; within dharma are gathered ontological excellence, the ontic flowering of our own being, and the crossroads of worldly reality, etc. The fact that the first object treated in the scripture is dharma reminds us of orthopraxis and the earlier sections of this exposition.
2. "All that is written in the scriptures must reinforce the commandments."
3. "There are no lies nor errors in the scriptures that have been interpreted."
4. After Sruti (the exact sense, the revelation) comes smrti (that is, tradition). But when they clash, "scripture" precedes "tradition."

General Principles

1. Sarthakyata: All the words have a useful meaning and application.
2. Laghava: "If one meaning is sufficient, it must not be multiplied in looking for others."
3. Arthaikatva: "Each word, each proposition always has the same meaning in the same context."
4. Samonjasyn: There are no contradictory truths.

These four rules are to be followed wherever a contradiction needs to be overcome:

5. Vikalpa: "Wherever the contradiction cannot be overcome, it is possible to choose whatever meaning seems to possess priority. Thus in praxis, in action, is sublimation possible."

Principles for the interpretation of a word

1. "The common meaning is the basic."
2. "If the verb is not expressly determined (within Sanscrit this is a significant diacritic work) one must supply one- which is obvious--but then the meaning of the proposition must not be understood literally by ^{it} only symbolically."
3. "If the proposition has one symbolic word, the entire meaning is to be taken symbolically and not literally."

Principles for the interpretation of propositions.

1. "If the literal meaning is clear and complete, one must not search for more."
2. "An obscure passage can be explained by another more clear."
3. "An incomplete proposition can be completed by another that is complementary," etc.

HINDU PLURALISM

There exists in India an hermeneutical pluralism which has always been accepted and goes back to the most remote times. Here we will point out two important presuppositions that are at the roots of Hindu pluralism.

There exists an original revelation that can be interpreted

If there exists a theological or philosophical hermeneutic, that is, any explication of reality, then this implies that something is given that is to be explained, shaped, understood and even interiorly felt.

Interpretation bases itself, according to its proper meaning, upon the supposition that something is given that must be explained, un-folded in the most profound sense of the word. To this end one must assist at its interior birth. Philosophy is the discovery not the creation of reality. Reality is given over there even if it is hidden. One could say: philosophy stems from what is given to our thinking whereas theology stems from what is given to our believing. In other words: hermeneutics presupposes a distinction between the real and the true, and this produces a most profound effect in the question. Hence only hermeneutics exists and this is possible once a separation is claimed between the real and the true. The interpreter who is motivated by a desire to explain, that is, to extract the truth from the given (from the real), or to discover the truth hidden under the appearance of the truth, has already lost his primal innocence, the virginity of his existence. Due to his intervention one must split reality and even enrich it through his interpretation which uncovers the meaning of the given. Knowledge is neutral, for good or evil. Knowledge is always a second birth. Truth always presupposes a drive towards the depths, even within Being.

One performs an exclusively essential hermeneutic whenever it serves to exhibit the path leading to discovery; whereas an existential hermeneutic is performed whenever its objective is to yield to the journey that each man must effectively make. Basically we are dealing with finding the stariway on which we progress to liberation, the goal, beatitude, heaven, nirvana, etc.

We have touched on a truth that must be clarified; in other words, a truth that must be disentangled from reality. This implies that there is a necessary correspondence between the given and the receptor. India has not overlooked this. Thus nothing exists as given without a simultaneous receiver. The given, considered as a gift, presupposes a given and above all-- and this is what matters here--a receiver. Thus hermeneutics consists in the conscious awareness of receiving a gift, of accepting reality as a gift. All the given is gift. India values above all else this basic existential attitude, or, that manner of approaching the gift not only by intellect, but also on one's knees in order to attract, and to receive it. Yet other approaches to reality as gift exist also. By means of hermeneutics this reality is transmitted into the consciously given. The Indian soul fiercely resists (in-spite of a particular vedanta) being identified with pure consciousness. One can receive reality as gift not only when wrapped in my conscious thought, but also when I approach (even unconsciously) that same reality with the physical hands of my body, or with all the force of faith and obedience. But never in such a way as to possess

reality and exhaust it but only to entrust myself to be possessed and held by it. The meaning of life, of my own existence, and also, minutis minuendis, the meaning of a text is not tied in any way to the grasp I can place upon it but only on the presence of its existence. For this reason we said that the Indian soul never identifies Being and consciousness. For the same reason she never identifies man with his human consciousness, faith with awareness of itself and hermeneutics as a purely intellectual interpretation.

In summary: lacking the prior gift itself and then lacking its perception as a gift, there is simply no hermeneutic.

There are distinct grades of truth and only one reality.

The second supposition at the root of Indian pluralistic hermeneutics is the claim that there are different degrees of truth. Each interpretation uncovers a particular level of truth which relates to the knower of that particular level. Whereas the first supposition rests on the transcendence of reality which is gift and which must be pursued, this second supposition reflects the transcendence of truth which shows itself to us in the same measure by which we are transformed in it. If truth were like a rock without cracks there would be no possibility of encountering it in this life. The possibility of a true hermeneutic implies the possibility of a multiplicity of interpreted truths. Still, on the contrary, this would no longer be an interpretation

which extracts truth from reality. It would be an identification of both, a compenetration.

We shall reflect in more detail upon this foundation of pluralism, which does not consist, since it endeavors to be authentic in a _____ deficiency nor in a surrender to history, but in the very fabric of our mortal existence. Only that modern post-cartesian style, dictated by the mathematical success--the sum of two plus two does not admit of many interpretations (as if reality were exclusively mathematical)---, is opposed to a multiplicity of interpretations. In this practical hermeneutic which we are discussing (the word practical seems more precise than "existential" which carries so many secondary meanings), the chief concern is man's salvation.

Public truth is merely a degree of truth, that is, a relation between truth and myself, a claim that I know this truth, a concrete knower adapted to this truth. This is not an adaequatio between the thing in itself and the intellect in itself but between a given truth and myself which I grasp and desire to hold as reality not only to know it but also to experience it interiorly and to reach salvation along the path that has been cleared by this given reality. This could appear to imply a relativism if we were to forget the basic thrust of Hinduism, or better yet, of Indian culture, that is: that the multiplex of truth is reconciled in the individual singularity of reality.

In other words: India insists on degrees of truth while proclaiming one reality; the west, on the contrary, claims

>

needs rephrasing [

only one truth (there is only one truth and one speaks of a multiplicity of truths at the risk of scandal), while proclaiming a multiplex reality, that is: one graspable reality, one knowable reality, one comprehensible reality, one natural reality, etc. Stairways everywhere, This is one consequence ^{of} that the West's basically ~~relies~~ ^{ance} more on the principle of contradiction ~~and not~~ ^{rather than} on the law of identity as happens in India.

Thus it would seem that this double point of view is related to the primacy of one of the two principles. (If one declares for the principle of identity, then it is the basic norm of reality.) It is as if only P is real when one succeeds in identifying it with S, and then one claims: S is P as A is A. Thus the identity of predicate and subject is true only in the supreme case, Absolute Being. Granted that there is no other P that can fill the condition of S is P, there is only one reality, the unique reality of Absolute Being.

If, on the other hand, primary emphasis is placed on ^{the} principle of contradiction, then this is assumed as the norm of reality. Contradiction cannot exist really. If A is, then it is not possible that A not be. According to this principle, being would simultaneously signify "knowable being." One would finally have to insist that a being which cannot be thought, cannot exist. India, ^{on} to the contrary, resting on the law of identity, would claim that a being is only when it is not (or no longer is) thinkable. Confidence in non-contradiction as the only norm of truth multiples, in Western culture, degrees of reality. A plurality of thinkable

beings exists because a multiplex of predicates applic^cable to the subject exists and this need not imply a contradiction.

In summary: for India one reality exists with various degrees of truth that serve as successive approaches to that reality: for the West, on the other hand, there is only one truth with various degrees of reality that are interpreted as approaches to an ontological participation--to a greater or lesser degree--of the Supreme Being. This most brief sketch of Indian and Western philosophy should be much more developed. Nevertheless I will again briefly touch on the history of philosophy.

Descartes, by introducing his famous principle of clear and distinct ideas as the criteria of truth, molded the modern Western style that relies on the principle of contradiction and judges the reality of things accordingly. In this way the West is forced to uncover various degrees of reality. This is no other than Plato's kai rrolla and along with him, the entire Western tradition: to ov kai ta onta, "Being and beings." From India one could add: ev ws rolla, or: the One conceived multiple, the many as symbol of Unity, Being and other more or less true approaches to Being and its manifestations, its aspects yet always Being. It is strange but sanscrit cannot express "Being and beings." In order to do so it uses two completely distinct words since the verb "to be" has two roots: as and bhu. To express Being, one must use the verb est, asti, but to mean beings one must use another verb: bhutani, debhu (to become). Thus sanscrit would express:

"Being and those that become," instead of Being and beings. Nor is it even possible to conceive that beings simply are the plurals of Being. Neither does Christian creation imply such a multiplication of Being. Here we can grasp the immense distance between Being and beings. The basic lapse of Western languages is to forget this distance: thus frequently each creature is described as a small being.

THE FOUNDATION

The basis for a pluralistic hermeneutic, in my opinion, rests on the ^apresupposition that has great ramifications, not only for Western philosophy, but also for Christianity, and which is the only justification for pluralism.

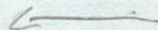
The basic and total lack of being able to investigate the given completely.

All the given, by reason of its givenness, cannot be transmuted within any exclusive process that neglects not only the gift-giving but also the gift-receiving. The gift always bears a secret and transmits a message. For this precise reason it cannot be identified completely with the messenger or put in place of the receiver. The given cannot be reduced by any exhaustive interpretation. The interpretation always remains a means, a principle, a medium quo and can never be identified with the quod. The Meghaduta of classical sanscrit literature, the famous cloud-messenger of the Kalidasa can be taken as a universal symbol of every hermeneutic. This is a double principle with subjective and objective dimensions.

The Transcendence of reality (truth)

Something objectively exists: a reality (or truth) that is transcendent since it is always "yonder" and beyond our capacity to comprehend. The very name of "given" is a fitting expression or a pin-pointing of this state of affairs. In fact, it is never given to us in its totality, since it is always transcendent. This is the principle and nucleus of every religion; thus there is no religion without mystery, transcendence, the absolute, the "yonder." It can be named the "nada," nirvana, God, heaven, etc. The designation is not essential. Even if one preferred to define Buddhism as an atheistic religion, it could not be labeled a religion without this "other," without openness to the absolute transcendent. Obviously we are discussing the transcendent in itself and not only in relation to ourselves, not only quoad nos but also quoad se. We must not think that the transcendent is relative to ourselves and merely relates to the fragility of our knowledge, ^{rather,} but it belongs to the very mystery of this Being or that "thing yonder." Absolute transcendence is inherent to the absolute. Yet we can claim, paradoxically, that ^{was} it always possessed immanently. In other words: God to Himself, if the expression is valid, is always "yonder" of Himself, always distinct, always dispossessed and new. An apofative God is not only demanded by our mental debility, ~~but~~ ~~moreso~~ ~~it~~ ~~is~~ a mark of the absolute (in a manner beyond our comprehension) itself.

9 "falling short"



Is the Trinity nothing else but this peculiar dynamism, this unique surge within the transcendent, the absolute, within God? The Father never expires. He is infinite and constantly giving Himself to the Son, begetting Him yet coming back to Himself within the Spirit. ^{with} In regards to our analysis of hermeneutics, we can add that the interpretation by the Son of the Father is never exhausted since it is infinite. The Son tells us who (is) the Father, but "what" the Father reveals to us in the Son is the infinite Spirit. The transcendent exceeds itself. Being, the absolute (we have no other term) not only surpasses me but it also exceeds itself, in itself. This truth, by antonymy, this given reality is always transcendent in itself, is infinite, to itself.

The imperfection of our knowledge.

The subjective dimension of our presupposition is the imperfection and limiting mediation of our capacity to gather up the given and to receive reality (truth); in a word: the short fall of our understanding.

We are never able to sustain all the given, ^{nor} ~~neither~~ approach it immediately ~~nor~~ grasp it completely--neither all the given nor all the gift---Our understanding is always a contact affair, a deliberate grasping, an intentional handling. It is always a leap; frequently a sudden leap to the other shore, towards the res significata, towards the object named. In other words, in spite of our incapacity of investigating the All, we must nevertheless

interpret. Hermeneutics is a knowing, an unfolding that reveals something but never completely since our manner of progress along the road towards our goal is always cast in the style of viatores and never comprehensores. The entire earthly kingdom of man is under the sign of the pilgrim: philosophy and theology and even faith are still in exodus.

My interest is not to uphold the claim that the entire human-earth kingdom is still in the "moment of realization" or in the state of becoming since these expressions reflect an excessive Western philosophical bias, but one can assert that all of creation is in the state of pilgrimage, even metaphysics. Thus even this last named enterprise must remain open to other new and useful interpretations as long as they are not incompatible or contradictory to itself. In my opinion, the lowest point of Western thought --especially since the medieval period--has been the forgetting of this attribute of pilgrimage, which is not only basic of all creation but characteristic of all that man does, thinks, and is himself. There obviously exists a "cultural sin of the West" whose hybris or pride is still visible in that peculiar self-satisfaction of Western man ~~and~~ which occasionally is expressed in his faith (whereas true faith exists only in fear and in trembling).
Despite the fact that,
 Granted that we are always aware of the lowliness, the provisional character, and ~~even conscious of~~ the limitations of our own personal existence, still there exists a false piety or spirituality,

acceptable among ^{certain} select groups, ⁱⁿ by which the individual can be the personification of individual humility yet the group is bloated in arrogant pride. Thus we can be open to ^{the} limitations and ~~to~~ the provisional character of our individual life but not of our thinking, our dogmas or our metaphysics. Thus even philosophy is on pilgrimage and metaphysics is also provisional.

It is a ^{common} customary claim that our modern, technological and secularized world has lost a sense of the holy that could recall us back to order such as mene tekel phores once did, since we are creatures of a machine-age, etc. Here I would like to note something completely personal: when I returned to the West after many years in India, I encountered everywhere in Rome (and this could ~~also be in~~ any large city) the voice, writing and signs of the prophet which reminded us of the transitional and provisional character of our existence. A sign that condenses its meaning and upsets the impatient driver: no permanent parking allowed. (divieto permanente desota) ^{he} cannot stay there, remain indefinitely in his world, since there is no exempt "locus" that is indesinent. We did not have a place to lay his head (Matt. 8, 20). There is no doubt that the West hankered to plant itself throughout the world with its philosophy, science and technology and paid no heed to the sign: diveto permanente, or ⁱⁿ of this particular prohibition, only understood the permanente.

This sign always reminds me of the real presence of God. It is the ⁹ prophets voice of God: everything, not only my personal existence, but also my ¹ phylosophy, metaphysics, even my faith are transitory. "Divieto permanente", no parking. It is

impossible to rest, to cast anchor in this world, not even for our thinking.

An example: creation

The risk for India is ontological monism, which leads to the demand of only one reality. The danger for the West is gnoseological monism, which implicates only one truth. The situation should be ^{further} more developed and in detail (for example, in the two forms of tolerance and intolerance which characterize the East and West respectively). But we limit ourselves to one example:

Earlier I spoke about orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Here we must be on guard for what I will call (pardon the neologism) monodoxy. We encounter a basic example of it in the Christian doctrine of creatio ex nihilo, creation out of nothing. Reference is made here only for the sake of clarity and not to analyze the doctrine in depth. This dogma, which in many ways appears to be the basic point of departure for all Christian hermeneutics (it is commonly held that whoever denies the dogma of creation is not a christian), can be interpreted in three distinct ways, all within the scope--not only of monodoxy--but also and inclusively, of the most strict orthodoxy.

A. The first possibility (we intentionally stress possibility) would be an interpretation according to Indian metaphysics, which has developed other categories and explanations

for the same fact (Gen. 1.1.) without contradicting the traditional Christian interpretation. This Indian formulation could be another hermeneutical possibility of creation. Western theology speaks of the creatio ex nihilo-- a concept ~~which was~~ endorsed only after a stripping away of Platonic influences that alluded to pre-existing matter ()---. In opposition to this ~~claim~~, ex nihilo signifies the non-existence of a primitive substance, a prime matter out of which creation arose.

In this same regard, ex nihilo is to be understood exclusively as the negation of any prior existing primitive matter. On the contrary, one can agree with Leibniz that ⁿothing begets nothing (ex nihilo nihil fit). Whoever does not grasp the historical context of this dogmatic formula cannot understand the creation out of nothing and would end up denying it. India, on the ^{other hand} ~~contrary~~, does not think of ~~any~~ creation out of nothing because ~~with there~~ there ^{was} ~~has never been~~ the Platonic problematic about prime matter. India emphasizes creatio a Deo, creation from God which is different from Creation ^{out of} from God (ex deo), and would imply pantheism. The claim is that creation never was ^{separate} ~~apart~~ or independent from God, and any being that is not God--"created being"--always had an origin from God, a Deo, and always remains in God. Thus creation was never considered as being torn off, ^{as} ~~of~~ being placed outside as a projection, from God ^{so} ~~such~~ that creatures could exist, remain preserved and in themselves ^{and be} ~~considered~~ apart and independent from their source. We are dealing with a formula that can still be sharpened. But it could also be received as an addition. More

precisely, in order that this hypothetical formula of Indian metaphysics--at least in relation with orthodox Christianity--be acceptable as completely Catholic, it would have to be accepted by the Church, or, more precisely, be accepted as an equivalent in depth to the traditional formula. Furthermore this would not be a strange development. The Church has already acted in this fashion in relation to the polemics on the Trinity when She declared that the Filioque carried the same meaning as dia on viov; also in Her declaration that the three Persons are three hypostases () and not three essences (). In this way it was admitted that two formulations corresponded to the same meaning. For this reason a pluralistic hermeneutic is possible in relation to this most basic issue, creation.

B. A second possibility would lie in uncovering a more universal and profound truth that would not deny Genesis but would re-locate it within a more ample dogmatic formulation that would be more universal and more precise. If--and I stress the If--Genesis 1, 1., could be interpreted or set within the Christocentric or christological passage of John 1, 2: all things were made through Him; if one would admit that pure nature was never created but that all things have been made--according to Johh--through the word, etc., that is: if it were possible to blend the dogma of creation with the dogma of a particular Christocentric perspective of being, then we could develop our hermeneutic of creation, which would not be denied but included within the other formulation.

C. The third possibility (and perhaps this is too Indian) would consist in the overcoming of all formulations for the purpose of stressing the mystical intuition (I touch on this with greatest caution). As long as one remains within the on-going mystical insight, ^{one} he retains the option of ^{+translating} (a translation of) it in ^{to} distinct names and philosophies. I am not claiming that all these distinct formulations are equivalent, rather I am maintaining that the experience supportive of the many formulations could be the same. It could be the case that Christ does act in creation and His action is expressed in the traditional way: this is possible because He manifests through the dogma of creation, a hint of an endless and transcendent mystery (faith is not enclosed within formulations). The Indian would not be able to believe in the dogma of creation since he is inclined to preserve intact for himself the very same experience as Christ. This res significata (the thing expressed) ultimately cannot be captured in any exhaustive formulation but is captured only by indirection or preserved negatively--from falsity. This is the domain of a common experience contact in which it is agreed that silence nourishes an understanding that transcends any formulation. A Christian could challenge any Hindu in the arena of dogma by attacking Indian doctrines which are opposed to Christian creation and show them false...but we must not forget that doctrinal formulations are not exhaustive and final. Within certain limits, it is possible to admit the possible validity of both--both a hermeneutic of creation and of no-creation--as two parallel and correct expressions (about the same fact). By means of these examples I have tried to show the possibility of a non-doctrinal hermeneutic. Correctly understood, it is not necessary

to abandon doctrinal formulations yet neither must we regard it as an idol and enshrine it. The essence of idolatry is the shrine. It happens that not only wood and stone at times are enshrined but also formulas.

CHRISTIAN PLURALISM

Within Christianity a pluralism of philosophy and theology exists. Duns Scotus elaborated one philosophy and Aquinas another. We are in a state of generous multiplicity today; The Fathers, the Scholastics, Suarez and Molina, Thomists, Augustinians, also schools of spirituality (Benedictine, Carmelite, Jesuit, Franciscan) are, in their ultimate consequence, different paths that mutually exclude each other. No one, at least within these inner circles of Christianity, would think of condemning or excommunicating any of the others. What is evident, ^{it seems to me} as I see it, is that there is a pluralistic hermeneutic which is not opposed to any demand of thinking or of reality. On the other hand, if there were only one triumphant interpretation, this, in itself, would not mean that it was expressing the truth. Obviously the truth of any hermeneutic does not raise it to an exclusive and exhaustive position.

SYNTHESIS

India gives us the lesson, or, better said, we can learn from Hinduism the following and accept it as a stimulus, both for our personal ^{and} ~~as for~~ our collective reflections:

There exists

1. The possibility of pluralism ~~exists~~ which does not mean a slide into relative agnosticism.

2. This pluralism, upon which all true tolerance is based, can be justified by a firm distinction between orthodoxy and orthoproxis. For example, if I were to identify Christianity with orthodoxy, then everything differing from my thinking would be an error and demand correction. But *it*, on the other hand, the meaning of Christianity is orthoproxis, and as long as I ^{and} ~~or~~ whoever opposes my way of thinking or understanding of dogma are not lacking in sincerity, fraternity and charity, or in good faith, then we both can share in the same mystery. This is the "locus" of true tolerance since it fosters a communion which abides beyond dogma.

3. Doctrinal pluralism not only necessarily favors the transcendence of the reality-truth polarity but also makes up for deficiency of our knowledge.

4. Neither logical possibility nor the obvious truthfulness of any interpretation justifies its existential truth-claim. This requires different data, different criteria,--in regards to the Church (Scripture and Tradition)--that are rooted beyond hermeneutics. That is:

5. Hermeneutics itself urges its own transcendence since interpretation is not an ultimate or definitive avenue to the truth and to salvation.

In other words: hermeneutics must be pluralistic because in the final analysis, it can always be infringed by living, by existence, by faith, by mystery.

If in the Father's house there are many rooms (John 14,2) then various types of hermeneutics can exist on the earth which has not yet reached its Omega.

A CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

ON AUTHENTIC CATHOLICITY

The Kingdom of God is like mustard seeds which a gardener took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches. Thus it is related by Matt. 13, 13-32; Mk. 4, 31-32, and Lk. 13, 18-19. He ^{Jesus} never spoke without parables, but later he would translate it all to his disciples, as the same gospels relate.

Can this "later" have effect even today? Is it possible to extend ^(and transfer) that "later" to our time so that its translation continues to be visible-vital? In no way do we claim that our interpretation is that which Christ gave to his disciples. But is not Christ living today and are ^{we not also} not we His disciples, also? Can He not translate the meaning of His parables to us today?

Furthermore, this is not an isolated parable. Light, yeast, salt, hidden treasure, precious pearl and other such "names" point to the same need and reinforce our position.

Christianity, the Church, faith, ^{and} are small divine seeds that the Son of God planted in this earth. This seed is almost nothing, invisible, fragile, weak, perhaps ugly. Yet ^{it} ~~is~~ ^{it} does ~~and~~ and grows, ~~it~~ ^{and} becomes a large-branched tree. The yeast ferments everything and the light brightens the world. This seed grew and became large, not as a seed but as a tree, as world, as norm..

And as long as time endures one cannot, must not, confuse these two, otherwise the birds of the air cannot nest in its branches nor hide in its cooling shade.

But, who are these birds of the air ^{which} ~~that~~ the Master loved so much and said that the Father constantly cared for? They are neither seed nor tree nor even His. Actually they are the non-christians ^a And their religions that are nested in the tree of life and dwell there. This tree also feeds the birds of the air and even protects them since without the tree they would die. Yet every authentic religion lives from Christ and from his Church otherwise she could not fulfill her mission as instrument of salvation.

Up to now, the Christian tree, with its enormous branches, has taken root only in a particular area of the world. But if it must grow over all the earth, then it must again bury itself within the earth like a seed to die and to rise again. The Christian tree has matured slowly, in fact, it barely survives in the ground where it now stands. Thus on two sides it has made contact with the other religions. Actually this divine seed grows, day and night beyond the gardener's perception. This is to say that also in the garden of other religions, a small grain of mustard lives, and if the owner is not aware of its growth he cannot know how to nurture it positively or it will easily be stifled.

This is not the place to initiate a minute examination of the problematic. We only intend to uncover, here and there, by means of concrete examples, some objective implications:

a) From a purely theological point of view one must admit that the alliance between God and mankind cannot be limited to Israel or to Christianized cultures;

b) From the cultural point of view, one must admit that Christianity ^{must} now at last ~~must~~ become truly "Catholic", that is, ecumenical, universal, if she hopes to keep true to her "moment" and mission;

c) As a consequence of the above, there must be a total revision of the concept of conversion, and finally,

d) a revised concept of catholicity, correctly understood, would present a basis for authentic Christian tolerance. We now attend to this four-fold vision.

THE CHURCH AND THE COSMIC CONVENENT ^A

It is said that the Church must expend great energy to plant Herself within other cultures and societies. Certainly, and if the Incarnation is taken seriously, we must not forget that the human birth of the Lord was preceded by a particular orderliness, a preparation described in the Old Testament. Therefore I intend to examine and to stimulate the reader with these reflections which will be ^{? presented} presisted in an orderly and accumulative fashion.

In order that the Church can plant Herself in another culture on---we speak ^{boldly} fearlessly---that sector where another religion has already struck roots, it will be necessary to engage that matter, that "flesh" and there find the virgin that will consent to maternity. Otherwise there is only a rope, substitution, an auto de fe, and no incarnation.

The most urgent issue of this matter, in my opinion, could be called the discovery and acknowledgement of the cosmic covenant. This is a summary of our analysis.

Both in the general order and in the particular, God upholds cultures and men. He desires to save all men. Analogously we could say that He offers each one sufficient possibilities of salvation, which are inclosed within every concrete and positive religion of mankind, since there is no other quarter for their presentation. Every religion offers itself as a way, more or less perfect, to God, a covenant with the divine, in whose core Christ participates and secures His redemptive victory. In other words, each religion has its testament, its covenant which can be grouped with the covenants of God with Adamⁿ, Noë, etc. This in no way ~~substaracts~~ from the unique and special alliance between Abraham and Jahweh.

Thus it is necessary to identify, in each concrete religion, this testament, that is, the tradition and even the scripture that undergrid the tradition. In other words; ^{one must} ~~it is necessary~~ to re-discover the last and fruitless word of the "prophets" hinted in the Letter to the Hebrews. We must uncover the ^{still} ~~even~~ fresh footsteps of the priest according to Melchisedech, of the Job-like just one, of the Samaritans who have more faith than Israel.

The Church in this sense has an important and double mission. She is Mother to christians and non-christians alike so that all may arrive at the source of light.

The first task is to uncover and clarify the canon of this traditon plus scripture. In each religion there is a quantity

of materials that not only must be gathered together but also analyzed and ordered since it is necessary to distinguish the canonical from the apocryphal content. This task could be accomplished with great or less facility yet it demands a serious and scientific approach to the religion in question. Also, beyond this philosophic-scientific approach, there is demand for an ecclesiastical understanding in order to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff and compose the authentic canon of that religion. One senses the magnitude of this undertaking and also that it can be accomplished only by true men of the spirit who have seriously engaged the religion in question. We propose a vital process and not a mere theoretical inquiry.

Yet this is only half the task. If the first step was an historical-religious investigation, then the second, basically theological, step is to provide an authentic interpretation of the uncovered canon. Analogously--and one must stress that we are dealing with an analogy--just as the Old Testament in novo patet and is contained and interpreted in the light of the New, likewise it is possible to discover the true meaning of the tradition on the scripture in the same light of Christ. Thus it would be possible to develop a rounded doctrine upon the meaning of that scripture.

Christian hermeneutics is open to this approach in its own use of the "sensus plenior", with the fulfilled meaning of a particular part of the divine covenant with mankind. It is obvious, even in the last example, that the last word belongs to the supernatural mandate of the church which does not scoff at analysis,

investigation and working hypotheses but, ⁱⁿ fact, engages Herself in them.

If we speak of effort within the Church, we mean more than mere juridical decisions by the hierarchy; we challenge the total competency of the Church to form a unitive front between the New Law and this other cosmic "Law". (Actually this is the basic christian message since Christ came not to destroy the work of His Father and must ^{ch} less the words of the Holy Spirit within Israel). A similar process of longer or shorter duration, would be an analysis of the zeal, real interests and resources of the entire Church, that have already been mobilized--according to the hidden plans of Providence--in the face of any particular religion. Both science and history, ^{together with} plus theology and--correctly understood--even the hierarchy, each plays a part in this effort.

Evidently problems arise once we touch on any concrete religion and attempt to embrace it. Yet it seems to me that this is the only way that we can prepare for a true incarnation of the Church in each culture and religion. Since this pursuit of incarnation initiates redemption for the other religions and since a full Christian harvest implies the law of death and resurrection, then the beginnings must be equally delicate and crucial. If Christianity must be the catholic and universal "religion", which embraces all mankind, then it must be ready to strip off its western garment and put on, in the true poverty of spirit, other human values. Christianity, we said in the introduction, is in no way a religion but the conversion of all religions.

This is the final part of our analysis: the acceptance within the Church of that part of the cosmic covenant that is still beyond Her scope. The process of discovery plus acceptance is simultaneously, but logically, also diverse. It is not sufficient to uncover a particular canon and interpret it orthodoxically,^{10 x by 9} according to acceptable christian symbolic meanings. In fact we are dealing with the absorption of that concrete portion of the cosmic covenant within the Church. Otherwise the dangers of religious divisions and schisms would be too great. But the Church is both body and spirit. True tolerance averts both anarchy as well as separatism. One of the pristine tasks of the Church is not only to accept that other religion but to transform it by placing Her seal of Christian identity upon its peculiar style of living and interpretation of the same Gospels. It is obvious that this demands great human, and also supernatural hope, faith and maturity.

In my opinion this vision has validity both in theory and in practice. The missionary enterprise of today depends on its basic validity.

I make one final observation on the theme of acceptance. The admission of this more or less amorphous yet vital portion of the cosmic Law into the New Law, with Christ and the Church, must be performed without immediate or necessary reference to the Old Testament. Acceptance and admission are tasks of the Church and arise within the economy of the New Covenant. It would be an

anachronism full of negative consequences --already too manifest~~ed~~ in certain missionary experiences--if an attempt were made to apply norms of Israel to the "pagans." The mission of Israel was most special and concrete. But the "nations" that exist in the post-christian era can approach the Christ without having a forced and immediate passage through the Torah. We stress "immediate" because these other "religions", in their encounter with Christ and the Church, are also linked per eminentiam, in the most perfect manner, to all that has always been, and continues to be, valid in the Old Testament promises. It is not by chance that the "canon" of the Roman Mass recalls Abel, Melchisedech and Abraham.

Herein lies one of the urgent tasks of our era. It demands an intensification of a ^{particular} peculiar attitude among believers in all the world, among thinkers and also missionaries in their career of mercy ~~and~~ which should characterize the entire Church.

THE ONLY "OPPORTUNITY" FOR CHRISTIANITY

Departing from earlier analysis, we now center our attention on a question which is frequently asked today: does christianity still have a chance? ^{This is} A question ^{is} in keeping with the Western mentality but ~~which~~ is not only badly posed but even incorrect. It has a meaning if we grant the supposition that the question implies that the season for Christianity has truly passed. That "passed" reveals, from within the faith, a reflex or even a nostalgia for a faded "hope" that actually has no place in true

Christianity. Yet it is necessary that Christianity have her specific opportunity, that is, an occasion to show her promise of excellence since anything less would make her abandon what she exactly is, a religion, better, ^{or} the universal and catholic religion of mankind, ^{skill,} with promises of fulness and completion--and even of salvation--to all the nations. ^{namely,}

Has Christianity still a chance?

Formulated this way the question would be self-negating. Actually, Christianity barely maintains a chance to mold itself into that universal religion as was presumed in the medieval period and which served as a particular missionary ideal, but is no longer viable in the centuries to come. Yet one can hope for everything from God. Nothing is impossible for Him. For God, the seasons are something totally distinct from cause and chance because He respects man especially in man's "divine" dimension. Statistical analysis, revealing conclusively that by the end of the century, Christians would amount to only 15% of the world population, should have also freed us from such a false ideal.

Hence Christianity has no chance whatsoever of becoming the Universal Church of the near future, much less in the sense mentioned above of quantitative conversions, precisely because christianity is the constant Spring of the world. What is the meaning then of "Spring" and Christianity? A spring-time means that propitious circumstances allow Christianity to fulfill its mission. For what other reason would Christianity want a spring-

time but to fulfill Her mission? Her mission is salvific, that is: the liberation of humanity and spring-time is inherent to her essence such that her very christianity depends on it. This implies a very dangerous approach to secularized thinking--at least to the spirit of Marxism--if one maintains that the mission of the Church abides only in some future horizon or in the future conversion of mankind (as if men were only symbols of some constant immanent future of the world) instead of thinking that its escatological-salvific mission---in its permanence and actuality--refers to an escatology less related to our temporal future than to a terminus (and consummation) of each particular man within his own peculiar and essential time-slot.

In other words: Christianity is spring-time, that is, the only season in which to realize the redemptive mission. Christ endowed this season to His Church. Hence Christianity has only one more chance which reveals itself now in a two-fold meaning, primarily, at the ontological-sacramental level: Christ is the Redeemer of mankind, and the victory of this Second Adonis is as far reaching as that of the First Adam. The faith of the Church saves the world and the redemptive accomplishment of Christ stands for all others in a more perfect way.

Secondarily, in its actual historical-world level, Christianity is faced with a unique moment. That is, Christianity must re-structure herself in a more "catholic"-ecumenical-posture, or minimally let drop her ^emediterranean garments in a self-conscious

manner so that in keeping with the rhythms of these opportune moments she will gradually be putting on that brightly colored coat of Joseph: "polymitica tunica, circumdata varietate". Christianity, as incarnate divine truth, cannot present Herself naked or in scraps as ~~in~~ the gnostic or Montanist modes imply. On the one hand, her actual historial situation demands that she does not identify her clothes with the body, and on the other hand, that she does not insist that her cultural garments, even theological, are usable, "semper et ubique," one and for all.

The first caution is grounded on the primacy of the mystical and ineffable nucleus of Christianity. Hence if we lose the sense of the mystical and the invisible--of the supratemporal and escatalogical and even of that divinely supernatural "myterion" of Christ, the cosmic Christ, in the rigorous Pauline sense then Christianity simply takes a place alongside the religious sects of manking^d.

The second caution which requires the infused and even ecclesiastical gift, of the discernment of spirits, is no less a delicate demand. Moreso because Christianity, with all its rational categories and ~~its~~ life-styles, in spite of its tensions and differences, presently appears, within the universal phenomenology of religions, as just one more religious manifestation within the ^eMediterranean basin. The ^emelding of Christianity with these ^eMediterranean societies could have been a providential boon and even Western spiritual categories could have been the best fitted ^{sited}

to her. But it is still the case that ^{in order to as} ~~remain to be~~ the "good-news" she must reach the poor, those "underdeveloped" as well as those spiritually underdeveloped. This is not a demand that Christianity deny her grand cultural past, but ~~that~~ she must distinguish herself from it. ^{However,} ~~But~~ this is not the place to touch on the problems of how she must reach out to universality without slipping into syncretism or pure transcendence.

"Who does not lose his life..", "If the seed does not die...". Would it be too ^{bold} daring to apply these demands, surely not unknown to Christianity, to the Church Herself, indeed the "Bride" of Christ?

The great challenge to Christianity in our era, in my opinion, is this call to "put on" the likeness of the Master, the slave, and to re-live freely that kenosis, that emptiness--the PARADOX OF THE Cross--before the Lord of History and Christianity has need once again that enemy armies awaken and shock the New Israel, the Church, into her true mystery and call to every-readiness.

HINDUISM AND CHRISTIAN CONVERSION

If it accords with our interpretation of the Church, then we must conclude that theology of conversion must also be basically revised. We highlight one aspect of this problematic with an example.

Christianity does not need to destroy Hinduism; ^{and yet} there is much more than this mere obviousness, ^{namely:} ~~That is,~~ Christianity needs to redeem Hinduism, or, better said, convert Hinduism. Thus

we find ourselves at the heart of the issue. One must clarify, in concreto, how Christianity affirms and culminates Hinduism. It is evident that everything depends on how one interpretes "conversions." It must be pointed out, for example, that the habitual notion of it as held by Mahatma Gandhi--for whatever motives and circumstances that led him to think thus--does not in any way correspond to any authentic christian concept of conversion.

When, as we have observed in the introduction, we maintain that above all conversion is a rebirth, a new birth, so completely radical that it implies nothing less than death and resurrection: death to the old man and birth of the new; then we must point out that the resurrected being is no other than the same who died. Transformation, in other words. A continuity subsists which cannot be overshadowed in the new life of conversion. Mutatis mutandis it is Hinduism, upon conversion, that is reborn. This re-born Hinduism would become Christianity, but an authentic Indian Christianity. The polemical expression "hindu-catholic", which is rather clumsy if it is not further clarified, herein acquires a new meaning.

Since no one is born christian, conversion is a call not only to Hindus and other non-christians--but a call to each man born into the world. Each one is called to re-birth: by water, fire and the Holy Spirit. We have all been called, in distinct ways, to the same conversion towards a living and saving God.

Assuredly conversion is a personal response; yet care must be ^{taken} had not to reduce the personal to the individual. Moreover

we must keep in mind that both social and historical vitality are essential to the concept of person. Many contrary positions to conversion were opposed to all and any vital historical, cultural, social or ethical reversals. Herein we cite one opposition that is characteristic not only of the personality of its author, Pandit Nehru, but also of the actual situation in India: "The Ramayana and the Mahabharata have been spun into the living pattern of millions of lives in each generation over several centuries. Frequently I ask myself what would result if our race would ever forget the Buddha, the Upanishads and the epic literature. This would be an uprooting and a loss of the fundamental qualities which have always been the treasure of our race; this would be the destruction of the past. India would no longer be India."

Frequently the isolated conversion of an individual not only appears as a negation and excision but also ^{as} a renunciation and contempt ^{for} of all that he was and possessed prior to conversion, even ^{if} as he is helpless to resist the free grace of conversion. This last impulse is not rooted in psychology but in the theological nature of Christianity itself, in its claim to true universal catholicity, that is, in its claim as Fulness of all religions. We are dealing with conversion and not with a man as such, but as person, with his roots and world-vision; not with abstract human nature nor with an individual uprooted from his Hinduism. This outlook implies the conversion of all Hinduism, as doctrine, culture, social order and even as religion. (We point out now) that the vital current of salvation history enters into Hinduism itself.

>

rephrase



As far as exegesis is concerned
 (What concerns exegesis,) one is able to fix the problematic with the following supposition: all Scripture must be interpreted in that sense in which it was written. This would mean the exclusion of the Old Testament from the canon of the New Alliance (since it was not written in its explicit meaning and under the intuition of its time and full sense which was discoverable only in the light of the New Testament.) This is to say, just as a Christian can claim before a Jew that he possesses a more profound and true understanding of the Jewish holy books, likewise he can uncover the true and profound sense of the cosmic covenant, partly written within Hinduism.

The issue lies in separating the apocryphal and suprious elements and determining the canon, and then interpreting the Sruti in keeping with its own sensus plenior which lights up only within the revelation of Christ. This double operation requires a consummate hand and also light from the Church, for Her sensus ecclesiae in order to complete it.

The fact that Hinduism is not open to Christianity in the same way that Judaism resists her fulness within Christianity does not mean that Christ is not present there in any way, nor that the expression "hindu-catholic" is entirely meaningless. Evidently, Hinduism, even in its positive side, as it exists today, is not Christianity. This is expressed exactly: That ^{ground} floor laid by missionary activity is not Christianity, but the sub-floor is, and

it is within this ground that the Church has already truly and invisible sprouted."

Within Hinduism, just as anywhere else--not even excluding the Christian interior life and even the rules of an Order, as Saint Benedict had warned--every good and necessary means can deteriorate into an obstacle, from the moment that it fossilizes and allows no more growth. In other words: each living stone of hope can harden into a stumbling block of scandal.

In an analogous manner, the same pre-Christian Hinduism, which is a providential preparation for Christianity, can be transformed into an anti-Christian Hinduism and into an obstacle. But precisely here we must apply Our Master's command not to quench the smoking fa . . . Although theoretically one must never overlook the all-embracing reality of christology, in practice, it usually results in the frequent acceptance of Christ as another mere avatar or divine manifestation to christians, as an exclusive historical hero of a select society who admits of no relation whatsoever with other prophets, who has not worked before the time of Abraham and who is not symbolized anywhere else, as if He alone were the Light that shines upon all men who are born. This Christ then appears to be the "monopoly" of a certain group and no longer the " _____", the Hope of all the Nations; and everything has happened as if He did not need to be born among us in order to transform Himself among the resurrected. These conditions are usually interpreted in the sense that they were necessary psychological

preparations for man's acceptance of the christian message. Yet this message not only would be foreign to India but also to Christianity itself. I ask myself if we ourselves are the ones who ought to prepare ourselves psychologically to become open (profoundly) to the language of the word of God. What does this passage from St. Paul mean to us: petra autem erat Christus, or, the rock that Moses struck unto water was Christ? (1 Co. 10,4).

I now conclude with a psychological and pastoral reflection that uncovers an important theological problem.

If I ask why a person is an Hindu, he would answer that Hinduism as he conceives it, is the truth. Similarly the Christian would also respond ^{similarly} on his part. But, if I inquire ^{of} each about the faith of the other, the Hindu would admit that the Christian also abides in the truth whereas the Christian, (at least one somewhere) [?] would answer that the Hindu abides in error and should be convicted ^{of} to the truth.

No one would deny that the christian response is not expedient as long as the intent and the subsequent actions are good; it simply expresses a spontaneous murmur of a good heart and a noble soul. Furthermore, it stands for a position that tradition has established as a fixed interpretation of conversion. We now attend to the attitude of the Hindu which interest us more. Many Hindus fall into relativism. and thus they admit: "I am in my truth and he in his". This is syncretism: all religions are equal and also equally imperfect; they are as diverse as the rivers flowing into a common ocean. Yet there are other more traditional Hindus who think otherwise: "I abide in the truth within Hinduism just as the

Christian abides in the truth within Christianity, not because each one possesses his proper truth or a section of the truth but ~~but~~ because we both participate in the one truth even imperfectly. I follow Hinduism, not because it is Hinduism, but because it is the truth. If I am not in the truth or lacking some of the truth, then show me, but in so far ^{as} ~~that~~ I abide in the truth, I am that much a christian in so far as Christianity is the truth." To him truth is not so much an essence which is expressable in propositions but an existence, an authentic way of living. He exists in so far as he abides in truth, and he abides in the truth in so far as He is. Certainly the more mature Christian reaction would grant that essences and doctrines are of considerable importance since man is not reducible to an existence without intellect. But he would intend to lead the Hindu~~e~~ to a more full truth, more vital and even more conscious. This would not consist in a polemic or in a negative criticism but in an existential encounter, in a participation of the life that Christ came down to give to men. Thus Christianity serves as the fulness of Hinduism, not in the mode of a superadded quality but as an interior development, or, speaking most clearly, as a transformation, a metamorphosis, the conversion of Hinduism. Within the dialog^{ue} that Christianity initiates with other religions, one must give full scope to catholicity. Thus, not only is scandal minimized but also love and justice are sustained.

✓ We must remain alert to the "Christi^s" values that Christ has sent to our world since its beginning, and likewise we must never forget that all these values are no more than a relative or pre-christian turth, real but lacking the eucharistic presence of

Christ. On the other hand, we should not forget that the Christian Fulness is gained only by re-birth, through death and resurrection. Conversion is not only a dying (against pessimists and others who characterize Christianity as a religion which negates all the rest); nor is it a simple addition (against optimists who already see the fullness of Christianity within Hinduism). The missionary should not be concerned with the killing of Hinduism, nor, in an excessive zeal, with the conserving of it. It is sufficient that he become incarnate right there where he is led by God and that, within this incarnation, and by means of the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, present within his own person and his circumstances, is ever-alert for salvation.

A. INTRODUCTION

This first part intends to construct concrete descriptive of three basic concepts: pluralism, tolerance and Christendom. ^{ions} ~~No~~ ^{This is} slight task since, if we are to make christian sense, we must use christian concepts, and all true christian conceptions are not only correct and apt but are also original and new since Christ and the Spirit make all things new, including concepts. Thus the very concepts that we have thus far used, have an intrinsic ambivalence, a double meaning: a broad meaning, abstract, general and another particular - concrete, and divided meaning. What is christian is always incarnate; that is; the most absolute and general is ^{contracted} dwindled into a concrete and particular epiphany.

1. PLURALISM

On the one hand, pluralism could be a concept heavy with liberalism; if all systems were equally valid, one could never reach the truth; if the contradictions were necessary then we would have different truths. Ultimately there would be grasping of a definitive truth. This pluralism would necessarily imply ~~a~~ ^{the} concept of tolerance as indifference, a lack of resistance in the face of evil, ~~as~~ a peculiar apathy or pure scepticism before the ultimate questions of human existence; in a word, the miserable accomodation of indifference (if not cowardice). Paradoxically, this would also imply (and herein one detects a certain internal dialectic) that only in this case ~~alone~~ is there scope for individual liberty, ^{freedom for the} ~~an individualistic~~ freedom but not for the community. Liberalism itself a variety of pluralism, prides itself ^{on} ~~as~~ effecting such deep respect for individual liberty that the individual within society (the individual is always encountered within a society) can no longer remain free. This is the tyranny of freedom carried to its grand extreme. In this sense we must reject such a pluralism.

Yet pluralism can have other meanings; ^{it} ~~can~~ also mean that in our real and historical world, no monolithic uniformity exists; it can mean that truth is certainly one but has a multi-dimensional reality not because reality or truth are not one but because we are not one, we have not yet returned to the singleness of our existence. To believe that the truth which we all seek is a categorical truth, out there, in no man's land, would indeed lead to utopianism or simple idealism. Truth always stands as a harmony

and as a bridge; in other words, we always find ourselves on the way towards that truth, but nothing prevents ~~that~~ the way to the highest peak, in all the "mountains" of this world, from being pluri-valent; that is, ~~that~~ there ^{are} be various roads to reach this single peak. In this sense, pluralism does imply a margin of liberty. We are not dealing in this case with the reactionary freedom of ^{the} liberalist outlook but with a mature ontonomy (^{allow} permit me the word), as an ^{me} intrinsic demand of ⁿ distinct hierarchical spheres of existence, without falling into the other extreme: heteronomy. Thus we are not dealing with a plurality of truths, but precisely with aspects of the single truth. Thus one speaks, for example, of a pluralism of the social order that in and for itself cannot be separated from this world for as long as the new earth and new heaven have not yet been accomplished. One speaks also about a pluralism of views of the world and religions. It would indicate a surrender to a malignant ^a temptation if we were to pretend that we have already reached definitive solutions here on earth whereas we have not yet reached the goal, (final) of ^e definitive existence. This ever transitory and pilgrim aspect is not only characteristic of man but also of all human values, not excluding philosophical, theological, and even religion itself since the second "coming" has not yet appeared. Everything on earth is touched with pilgrim values or is to be qualified as a transitory reality; ^{these values} they are authorized only for the passage, and, consequently they are all not only open-ended but also provisional in a sense which later we shall determine precisely; they point to a subsequent definitive state. Within this present order of things we must glimpse at authentic tolerance.

To begin with, —

2. CHRISTENDOM

In like manner the word Christendom has a double meaning. (As a start,) we must distinguish exactly between Christendom and Christianity. Christianity is the doctrine of Christ, better ^{still} yet, the totality of a christian existence.

On the other hand, Christendom was constructed at one time as the symbol of an historical monolithic and harmonious order, as if original sin were not an historical reality. In this situation such a Christendom pretended as if only one true order existed. Christ, Christendom Church, christian politics, family, etc., everything was forever fixed. No other possibility existed but a univocal concept of All, a concept which flows naturally from heteronomous thinking. If the first concept of pluralism led to a feckless tolerance, that is, to indifference, then this concept of Christendom led to intolerance. The individual in this case, is not free; only the totality of the order (be it collective, totalitarian, or whatever falsification of the kingdom of God on earth) was able to enjoy a certain apparent freedom. In this way, at its best, one reaches tolerance and nothing more. Today there is much talk about Marxism as a secularized christendom, without its sacred character. But there also exists within the christian world the temptation towards a christianity without Christ, ^{just} ~~exactly~~ as there is, the danger of fashioning a Christ without the Cross.

If we cling to univocal concepts, everything is guided by a logical and inhuman order which leads us to appreciate the re-action of Humanism. But there also exists a concept of

Christianity that is derived from the conviction that Christianity is not simply an idea and ~~yet~~ plays no part in any purely spiritual or religious enterprise. Accordingly, Christianity must be incarnated in the world yet such an incarnation is dependant on personal and free decisions. This allows for a pluri-valent Christian order. I submit that Christendom is the ultimate christian lattice for earthly realities. Christendom--and this would be a chapter all by itself--need not equate itself with the Church, yet it is linked to Her nonetheless, just as my hand is not my person yet bonded to me. Christendom is the peak expression not of a christian idea, but of the "christic" reality. All human structures are affected by the impact of faith. One extreme does not justify its opposite, and precisely here, within a via media, is the "locus" of true tolerance.

3. TOLERANCE

This brings us to the concept of tolerance which we have almost (already) defined. We commented in the first place, on tolerance as broad-mindedness, as indifference, as agnosticim(s). Since this type of tolerance doesn't allow for the recognition of truth, a christian cannot accept it; we have already eliminated it. Yet it also implies, in a certain way, a tolerancia intolerance^{ia} (intolerance^t tolerance) since anyone who does not accept this form of tolerance is simply excluded from the game of tolerance itself. This is the paradox of some pluralistic societies.

Yet tolerance can be something completely different, and we now go into more detail: tolerance, is not a tactical gambit but an expression of faith, since it is ^{by tolerance that} the christian who ~~by it~~, touches

and transforms everything, and within this out-reach, modifies all that is embraced. This reflex, ^{often} many times can give the impression of an intolerant tolerance, ^{— which} This is ^{the} precisely ^{the} lesson of the Middle Ages.

B. PRESUPPOSITIONS

(Now) Let us be more concrete. For this task we need free hands in order to comprehend and write the pieces that we have identified: ^{se. that} since the hands of intelligence are concepts, ^{then} it is with them we shall grasp a trans-conceptual reality. At the risk of being mis-understood (nonetheless) I ^{will} herein make a short criticism of the West: it appears to me that the western mind apprehends better that it comprehends. Since Descartes, ^{even more} and ^{more so} since Kant, the West ^{has} prides ^d itself on having discovered that knowledge is more an apprehension than a comprehension, more an active intervention "to gather" than a passive attitude that allows itself to be embraced. Thus, the thin^g-in-itself is captured, and as a consequence, also modified, even carried to the extreme of Heisenberg's indeterminacy. The West maintains that to know is to invade with the consequent modification of the captive loot. ^{But} On the other hand, is ^{not} there a knowing that basically is comprehension and not intervention, a being possessed and not a taking possession? In general, ^{our} hands are ^{usually} so pre-occupied with their stock of items that there is little possibility of simply opening them to embrace, with no interest of possession or domination. "Pick up the pieces left

? [

It must be thoroughly
understood that ---

—

over" says the Master (Jn. 6, 13¹²).

Today we know so much that we have even lost the innocence of ignorance. In order to free our "hands" a bit more and thus complete our description of tolerance, I now introduce two lines of thought that will make up the second section of our consideration, and which can be expressed in two concepts.

1. MICRODOXIA

1. Description

By way of introduction let us take a somewhat dramatized example that will help us outline the issue. When the Portuguese arrived in India 350 years ago, they believed sincerely that the so-called Christians of Saint Thomas, the Jacobites, were heretics. This group did not kneel at communion and they even drank out of the chalice; their clergy married, (yet) had not fully grasped the meaning of "transubstantiation" and they read Mass in the vernacular. In ritual celebrations everyone understood what was said and they spoke to each other, and sang in chorus, and were quite disorderly. They used non-precise formulations which could justify the accusation of Monophysitism. In a word, a new schism was forced within the Church, rooted in the identification of Faith with a particularized conception of it. What was actually being judged was the spirit of that age.

Obviously this example is an extreme case, yet critical even in its simplified form. Understand well: microdoxy is not

>

? [

brackets —

9. [

heterodoxy, where doxa is basically correct, yet still somewhat underdeveloped, and somewhat minimized. It is no longer considered doxa, an opinion resting on the opinionated, but mere formula. It is (even) no longer opinion. Just as in our everyday speech, whenever we ask for a more exact question "what do you want to ask by that?", we are not (referring) by that "want to ask" to one man's opinion but to that transcendental other that he-intended to communicate. The doxa of microdoxy, on the other hand, is always fixed; it is always (and this is the essential aspect of microdoxy), identified with the usual formulas yet without having entered into the named reality, into the res significata, as Thomas Aquinas would say.

In microdoxy, the doxa is identified with a determined content, that is, with a determined horizon, with a fully crystalized world-view. Microdoxy is not able to effect a complete horizontal nor any separation whatsoever from this horizon. The problem is not simple since true doxa cannot be identified with any particular conception of the world, nor with any formulation, or formula, yet it cannot simply float in the air beyond formulation, without a body; it cannot exist naked, it must be incarnate. The "Kairos" of the West today consists precisely in that the West finds itself challenged to undergo the same sacrifice, to shed its garments and take on a new body. "Who does not lose his life"....This is ^{also} applicable ~~also~~ to an entire culture and even to particular historical moments here on earth. Microdoxy is an adventure into reality, into true faith, beyond all particular entrenched world-views that are no longer open-ended, mysterious, evocative. On many occasions one

... immediately be added ... —

... but at other times draw justified
criticism since ... — [

The translator, however, had never
thought of it like this. [

often has to
 must agree with persons, like S. Radhakrishnan or Karl Jaspers, when they criticize the thinking of many christians, but it must be said immediately that what they criticize does not effect orthodoxy. They are drawing attention to particular microdoxical conceptions which in some cases are quite acceptable, as in other cases these conceptions correctly draw criticism since they do not authentically reflect the christian truth. What many criticize today is not christian orthodoxy but rather microdoxy.

2. Microdoxical premises

We intend to develop (now) a possible microdoxical interpretation of our problematic, that is, uncover a tacit microdoxical assumption.

When, after three long centuries of the christian presence in Bengal, (for the first time) the Catholic Sacramental Ritual was translated into Bengali language, the translator was visited by a learned professor from Calcutta who congratulated him upon this accomplishment. At last the community could follow understand what was being done in the reception of the Sacraments and could follow understand what the priest was mumbling. The translator never thought of it this way. To him everything was marvously clear and beautiful. The visitor agreed, ^{but} yet nevertheless wanted to point out a particular word that was equivocal and badly translated. Everywhere, "Catholic Church" had been translated by "universal" Church, and the visitor insisted that this was a bad slip since one could not speak of a universal religion but only of a sect, of the "catholic" sect, the religion of the "faringlu". The learned professor from Calcutta

2 [

We will now briefly point out _____ [

In doing so we intend to avoid all _____ [

psychoanalysis and to initiate ---

had never dreamed it possible that the Christian religion could conceive itself as a universal and ecumenical religion that ^{in some way} enclosed and fulfilled ~~in some fashion~~ all the others, and was not on the same level as these others. He had always presumed (and this is the general opinion among Indians) that "catholic" was merely ~~a~~ ^{the} label of a Roman Christian sect..

a) Tolerance, the lesser evil.

At this point we engage the issue. How should a Christian behave in a pluralistic society? Should ~~he~~ ^{he}, for example, be tolerant (and this is the concrete issue) or should he initiate some sort of Apostolate? We briefly indicate now the tacit presumption of the questioner. We avoid all psychoanalysis and initiate a particular deep analysis concerning a typical actual mentality.

The statement of the problem is enclosed in a particular presupposition that makes tolerance appear as the lesser evil. Wherever pluralism is a fact, there is no other way but tolerance. But lacking pluralism, tolerance is not necessary. If we are able (not only within society but within our own family and other personal collectives) to cut out pluralism by supressing it, then there is no reason for tolerance. If one can exist without tolerance, so much the better! This ^{train} logic of thought can be applied to microdoxy itself. It is noteworthy that the first edition of Lexikon fur Theologie und Kirche by Herder lacks an article on "tolerance". The British Encyclopedia makes no reference to it either. Equally

is the fact that
 noteworthy, the Dictionnaire de la Bible has no article on
 "enemy" nor on "violence." The Theologie Catholique treats the
 word "tolerance" from a juridico-moral viewpoint. The article
 cites the theologian, Capello, who, in 1928, defined tolerance as
 "ermissio negativo moli," which strips it of any claim to virtue.
 Thus, tolerance is a compromise, a pure passivity prior to motion.
 It
 Tolerance appears exclusively as a moral issue: whenever a situation
 is defective, then we can be taught technically how to tolerate
 the evil circumstance. Thus we are launched into a sea of possible
 distinctions, direct intentions, indirect, sub direct, etc. This
 appears to be the scope of tolerance. This attitude is rooted in
 a microdoxical conception, whose actual origin is founded in the
 dream of that lost, but now regained, Paradise of Christendom, a dream
 but which could not actually be accomplished. All this presumes
 that diversity of opinion does not belong to the factual experience
 of man and that one must tolerate it in passing but must morally
 annihilate it when possible. Tolerance
 It is the lesser evil.

Following
 Along this line of thought, tolerance would, in the final
 analysis, be a question of prudence. Prudence dictates when and how
 to be tolerant. The politics of adaptation engaged by modern
 missionaries offers an example: Let the "good blacks" preserve
 some of their native customs; let them be kept! It pleases the
 natives! We can afford to be tolerant, and it does not do much
 harm; so thus we gain the affection of the natives. The natives now
 wish to attend Mass barefooted. We can be tolerant if that is

always has ambitions for -- -E
always hopes for - - -

what they want. Tolerance, in this example, is certainly the lesser evil. We could cite many more instances that would draw tears for their pathetic humor.

b) Tolerance, a practical necessity

There is yet a second tacit presumption in the posing of the problem and our generation is now engaged in overcoming it.

This other aspect of the issue would be the following: tolerance is unavoidable; conflicts always abound because the christian is more than man, and has orders from on high to be magnanimous precisely in tolerance, yet, on the other hand, he must never surrender which would imply unfaithfulness to his call. ^{Therefore,} Thus, conflict is inevitable and one must seek out a neutral place, a common spot upon which to live in peace with one another and where one can be tolerant. One can label this natural right, or natural religion, human nature or social order, or intrinsic structure of creation; in a word, it remains in the profane sphere, a neutral philosophy which permits concord, communication and collaboration as if Christ had nothing to do with ^{it.} the case. Only at this price is a response (purchased) to the complaint that the christian simply is not tolerant, that he cannot keep a contract and that he always ambitions something more. By means of this concept of tolerance the Christian is allowed, it is thought, to step down to that level, a selected profane area of creation, where he can peacefully dialog^{ue}

with, and be understood by, others.

This attitude presupposes that to be a Christian is a mere compliment, an accident ^{of} to human nature, as if Christ were merely my God, my idol, prophet; as if He were always only mine and not, as the Liturgy ^{clearly} precisely reminds us, the Alpha and Omega of all things, the Firstborn and Mediator between this non-divine order and God; as if He were not in the same instance Christ creator, Christ Redeemer, and Christ Glorifier, all in a self-same indestructable unity. Since the Christian is transformed into one simple reality with Christ, we, ^{so} as long as we resist the full application to our christian-existence of those four famous adjectives of the Council of Calcedon, we shall always remain uncentered personalities and always suffer a nagging inferiority complex about our faithfulness to our christian vocation and about the realization of our own immutable, indivisible, inseparable, and unconfused christian-existence which is also our human-existence. There are no neutral positions. Precisely because Christ is not only creator, but also Redeemer and Glorifier, there is no shelter for the christian outside the christian reality, no order that does not depend on Christ.

We can say the same thing more simply by changing some of the terms. It happened, as ~~it~~ is well known, in the German reichstag a century ago. A particular senator was ^{discussing} discovering on Providence and Transcendence as attributes of the Absolute with special bearings on the Destiny of the German people, when suddenly another senator stood up, enraged, and shouted: "God is named uncle!" We want to say the same: Christ is the true name. What ^{ever} we cover up

with labels such as nature, society, Christendom...Christ is the real name. It is a microdoxical conception to think that Christ is merely mine or only for orthodox christians--microdox ones--~~?~~. Christ is much more than this, and as long as we do not overcome this microdoxical conception, it is only with difficulty that ^{we} one can initiate dialog^{ue} with followers of other religions without betraying ^{our} one's faith or without nagging guilt feelings. One can understand the cautions of the hierarchy, granted ^{these} ~~there~~ ^{theirs} pre-suppositions.

Three christian functions

If one ^{has to} ~~must~~ propose a solution (only as a guideline) one would submit three concepts which could open unto a positive dialog^{ue} and understanding: Christ, and the co-sharing Christian, ^{has} the three-fold function (understood in a meta-theological sense) of Koinonia, diakonia and kerygma.

a) Koinonia

If all men have received from Christ His nature, and if the so-called natural religions and the entire natural plane only has meaning and reality with Christ, in Christ and from Christ, then the Christian, as Christian, does not merely "tolerate" the natural order but cooperates with it, ^s ~~and~~ is present and assist^s ^{He} and is a brother amid brothers and desires^s to collaborate in the formation of the human structure (since it cannot remain on a neutral plane) ~~but~~ not as an "outsider" nor as a condescending citizen, but as one who

- with the full consciousness that he is.
- " " " conscientiousness of
fulfilling

works with full conscientiousness that he is fulfilling an authentic and basic Christian task. The Christian, as Christian, is in communion and in community with all that exists here on earth. The Christian tolerates the non-Christian not by some weight of condescension that drags him to the natural floor, where everyone else is located. Like Christ, he asks no privileges and has none because all the others are likewise in Koinonia, in communion with Christ, in which all, in one way or another, participate.

b) ^{Di}Oikonia

Christ is the creator and this is the ground for Koimonia, yet He is also Mediator and Redeemer which grounds the function and task of diakonia among christians. No one goes to the Father but through the Son; the Redemption is universal and the christian knows that he is annointed to this task; he is servant to the others; he has not only the right to exercise this diakonia but an obligation to it. Love of neighbor is his task on earth. In all circumstances whatsoever, he must pray to be tolerant, in order to serve, that is, to fulfill the task that constitutes, beyond all doubt, his mission on earth.

c) Kerygma

Finally, Christ is the Glorifier; He is Lord and only He can be invoked by the name Lord. He is Lord of all. But only christians recognize and confess it, and this confession transforms the freedom of service into a command from God. This command is not

an absolute imposition, a violence descending from above; neither does it occur to the Christian to tolerate others but he himself cries out for their tolerance.

The Christian announces Christ and every Christian, in this sense, is a missionary, since he recognizes, loves and respects Christ as Lord, and fulfilling this mission with a truly existential fidelity he needs no other justification. A person truly in love does not ask the why or wherefore. The Christian loves the Lord (he can do nothing which is not loving Him) and recognizing the marvelous "works" of the Lord, he joins, ~~himself~~ spontaneously and seriously (not too self-consciously yet responsibly), ⁱⁿ to the same task that the earth, flowers, clouds and rivers do: simply sing^{ing} and proclaim^{ing} the glory of their Lord. Acting completely in good faith, he continues to resound the Kerygma, to announce the Good News without recourse to ulterior motives because only the Lord has the key to the secrets of History. The Christian exists this way because there is no other alternative; a lover, relying only on the Lord since he knows he is, in reality, a useless servant. He sings unto the Lord!

II. ORTHOPROXIS^a

The two presuppositions thus far highlighted are first, the microdoxical supposition that looks on tolerance as a lesser evil; second, an outlook that views tolerance as not yet grounded in ^eonly theoretical, but rooted only in practical, necessity.

Now we introduce the second concept already mentioned and which we name: orthopraxis. It seems to me that the issue of tolerance arises when the excessive intellectual atmosphere that usually pervades it is broken and space must be made on another level. The usual play was to relate the question of tolerance to the truth claims of Christianity.

This seems obvious, but Christian truth is not a mere essence, is not only intellectual harmony, rather, it is, *in the primarily* first place, an existence which achieves its harmony only in faithful imitation; better said, in the realization of Christ. The truth is Christ, and this leads immediately to the concept of orthopraxis.

If we want to uncover the necessary root of tolerance, we need to get beyond mere orthodoxy. This claim can be proved, in the first place, with purely dialectical reasoning. If we were engaged only in theory, *we would have to* one must admit that whoever says A cannot also defend B by virtue of the principle of contradiction.

1. Description

It seems to me that Christian tolerance can have meaning and take its real place only if we introduce the concept of orthopraxis. What is orthopraxis? We shall describe it briefly, then we shall apply it to our problematic.

How must a Christian behave? This is our basic question. We all intuit how he should behave since this *'should'* ought is grounded in existence, in being Christian Man and also citizen of a pluralistic

is including himself. ?

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society. But existence is not simply an estatic substance, a ^{flat} being-there flat, but dynamic (in itself), an unfolding, a becoming. Everything on earth is in passage, in spring-time growth. Man is a pilgrim, his existence still unfolding, a not-yet, but soon. Thus it is written that he will then belong fully to God. The Christian concern on earth is not only with knowing, nor the mere defense of truth; the christian affair is, above all, a union with the truth; the christian art is to become the truth. "One must do the truth" says Saint John. This work sanctifies, this effort justifies, this is what matters. We are ^{here} dealing (and this must be stressed) not with superficial activity, nor with merely moral concern but with practice charged (down) with existence and liturgy and holiness, with which man contributes to his own salvation and ^{to} ~~also~~ the salvation of the world. ^{nor} Neither are we dealing only with the primacy of the existential but also with that theandric process, which has always been called cult, by which the world subsists and reaches its goal. Man is on earth to effect salvation; he labors to help the Universe (without excluding himself) reach God, (in Christ) its goal. An Indian scripture reads: "If the priests do not offer sacrifice in the morning, then the sun will not rise." We are dealing, finally, with authentic and sacred action, true cooperation in the creation and existence of the world. We are not dealing with empty activity nor even with voluntarism nor even with good will.

Orthoproxis ^a is not a candid ethos for work or activity; it is another and different action, more profound, holy, weighted with existence, liturgical. This actually bestows meaning on action.

We can imagine the frustration of a typist who after a full day at the typewriter discovers that there is no ribbon. Action was expended but the result was negative. Orthoprox^ais is not the motion of the typing fingers, but real action, that is, with the ribbon. Christianity has, ~~yes~~, ^{indeed} a theory which is not a theory, rather an action: the redemptive action of Christ, which, in the final analysis, is still active and co-active. Man, in order to accomplish salvation on earth, must assume real responsibility, real co-labor. Eternal life consists, says Saint John, (17, 3), in knowing Christ but this knowing does not subtract from doing (Mt. 19,17). Moreover, love shows itself in works (Jn. 14,15). Lacking work, we cannot recognize God (1 Jn 2,3), nor love Him (I Jn. 2, 4; 5, 2: II Jn 6).

Development of this basic reality would carry us too far from our present theme. It seems, then, that we have to some degree lost our sense of the sacred. For example, when it is claimed that the Church exists for the sake of cult, this has something to do with liturgy but even this is not yet sounding its depths. Cult is an action laden with existence, in which the creature is raised ^{up} into the Creator. Orthoprox^ais is not merely moral behavior, rather it is precisely this action that a Christian must achieve here on earth and Christianity is that ontological "locus" where this is achieved. Orthoprox^ais determines the precise boundaries of orthodoxy. Within these lines, within this action, orthodoxy uncovers its true meaning. Both are co-relative. A non-practicing Christian has

no real sense. This affirmation only reveals a break between orthodoxy and its vital relationship with orthoproxis^a. A Christian is ~~not~~ ^{at root} radically one who believes and not someone who holds Christian doctrine as true or subscribes to everything that the Church has thought and written through her theologians. To believe means more than to affirm truth; it means to incarnate the act of faith, and orthoproxis^a plays the major role in this enfleshment.

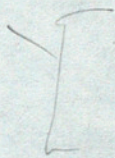
2. Applications

There are three applications to our problem.

a) Scope for diversity of opinions.

If we clearly grasp the meaning of orthoproxis^a, then we should also be aware that the construction of this concept in no way intends to diminish the importance of orthodoxy and the vital role orthodoxy plays. Both are in unity yet the primacy goes to orthoproxis^a. Orthoproxis^a, correctly understood, gives scope for diversity of opinions. If orthodoxy were to define Christianity, then there would be no room for anyone with a different way of thinking nor even room for two theological schools. Both A and B have claims, but there is room only for one. If the essence of the Mass is in sacrifice, it is not in transubstantiation. Radically, this dilemma can never be overcome. As long as the Church does not take sides in the issue, then only one or the other way of thinking can be true; they both cannot be. Thus, if orthodoxy defines Christianity, there is absolutely no possibility of tolerance, nor even the political tactic of tolerance as we have described above. The basic issue is not a theory on sacrifice, but sacrificing itself.

I cannot, for example, claim that I would like
to allow myself to think only certain ideas but
still want to reach my goal.



b) Scope for heresy.

Orthodoxy makes room for diversity of beliefs, or, if one prefers to use a less pleasant term, filled with historical connotations, for heresy. One can be lacking in a total and full possession of the doctrinal complex and still claim to be a Christian. If one prefers to ^{o need} prescind from living examples, we could resort to the dispute of the Donatists. The fact is that one can live beyond the pale of orthodoxy and still remain within the scope of orthopraxis. But, we must immediately ^{add} note: if on hearing this, someone ^{sh} would put it into practice ~~or~~ with the claim that, "I do not need to be orthodox in order to live an authentic existence", ^{at the} in that very instance when the person is conscious of such an affirmation and sets aside orthodoxy as something he refuses to admit, he loses orthopraxis, the irrepressible existential consummation of the act of faith. In full consciousness the claim makes no sense. I cannot claim, for example: I would like to allow myself only to think such and such ideas; yet I would still like to reach my goal. But speaking from the outside, I could certainly claim: that it is possible to live within orthopraxis ^{axis} (for those who are beyond the pale of orthodoxy yet do not consider themselves so) these peoples not only reach their goal within orthopraxis, but also contribute to the redemption of the world.

c) Scope for "non-believers"

This third application makes room for the so-called

non-Christians, other religions and even the doubter. Orthodoxy does not mean, in any way, good behavior or impeccable manners; it means that conduct, that action that allows man to reach his goal; Christians are not exclusively "believers" but also men of hope and love. Salvation can be reached without orthodoxy, which perhaps is the normal path for a major part of Mankind.

One can be ^{righteous} just and still not ^{profess} confess true doctrine; (for outsiders) this has always been the teaching of the Church: there is no salvation without grace, and grace exists outside the Church. Today we see everywhere the good effects of such grace and the vital call for tolerance. This introduces us to the third and final part of our study.

C. CHRISTIAN TOLERANCE

1. Tolerance as a virtue

Tolerance is a virtue. It is not a lesser evil or an accommodation to circumstances; it is ^{much} even more, since it is (Ga. 5, 22) a fruit of the Holy Spirit. This tolerance has three elements:

a) Discernment

Not only ^{between} between good and evil but also lectures the definitive and provisional, ~~between~~ theories and formulas, the res significata and the thing itself, between intentionality and thought, etc.

In 1956, the 2500 anniversary of the Buddha was celebrated; a dean of the Faculty of Indology was president of a particular session of the International Buddhist Congress. When he saw me in

the hall with the other participants, he spoke to me in a manner that was ironic yet polite: "What are you doing here? You are not a Buddhist!" I replied: "What are you doing here? You are not a Buddhist!" He replied: "I am." I responded: "I am also"; and with the same rights and reasons he used to call himself a Buddhist without being so (he was an orthodox Hindu). He had recognized certain truths in Buddhism that allowed him to be called a Buddhist without taking juridical action. Yet he denied the same possibility to me. He believed that the intentionality he permitted himself was not enough for me. It is that intentionality, that discernment which lifts us above mere word-games.

At that moment I had to apply all that I have said about microdoxy. Only an authentic orthodoxy could help us balance this discernment amid the limited claims of philosophy, psychology, culture, history, etc. The intellectual element was a necessary condition to perform an authentic act of tolerance.

Unfortunately, we ^ylive our lives many times amid tragic errors. In this respect, not only the Christological and Trinitarian disputes of the early centuries provide examples, but even our present times abound with them. The same theological reasons (recall my incident with the Hindu dean) that in the Christian West argue in favor of God as a person and still avoid anthropomorphism, are precisely the very same reasons used by Vedanta Hinduism to deny personality to God. Whenever one repeats that the basic stumbling block between Hinduism and Christianity consists in that Hinduism does not acknowledge the personality of God, he then loses sight

of that intentionality, for he could claim that they both almost think ^{almost} the same but in opposed words ^{contrary (terms)} (I say almost, in order to save the Trinitarian issue).

b) Ordered thinking

The second element is ordered thinking. Authentic tolerance not only makes distinctions (the first element) but it also uncovers relations; and these relations need to be placed within an ordered framework. We are not dealing only with relationships between the essential and non-essential, but also between the more and less, the whole and part, leader and led, authority and obedience. This description is sufficient for now.

c) A receptive attitude.

This third element is essential, the specific issue that takes us to the heart of this study: a receptive attitude. We are so little accustomed to the contemplative that the issue may remain somewhat cloudy and foreign. There is a Malabar maxim: when an ant ties up an elephant, it is not the elephant that got close to the ant but the ant approached the elephant. When a christian tolerates, that is, a christian, son of God touches and draws anything to himself, he is not conceding or compromising anything rather it is the other who remains chosen, compromised, obligated to take part.

The tolerance of christian man is not "a change of subject," the effect of a liberal or optimistic outlook on the world; neither is it a prudent tactic, nor the choice of a lesser evil nor mere surrender of a non-essential item. It is something entirely

distinct: it is a passion, a suffering, an enduring, a sharing; concretely, a carrying, a shared-carrying. "I bear all things for the sake of the chosen" (II Tm. 2, 10). Moreover christian tolerance is a receiving, an accepting, a redeeming, a transformation unto resurrection. It is, we would say in reference to the Letter to the Galatians, a virtue, a mystical virtue, yet not merely a passive attitude; it is accepting and receiving for the sake of redemption; it is the door to regeneration and, perhaps, a death unto resurrection. But, what does this mean specifically?

What must a christian tolerate?

Evil! No doubt; and herein appears the parable of the wheat but, in the first place, evil is a rather grandiloquent and abstract word; ^{and} on the other hand, we do not care to enter into an exact judgment about it. Yet this is not all. What must a christian tolerate? I answer simply: the world. The christian must tolerate that he is not-yet, that he is not as he would prefer to be, nor as he would want to be, nor as he wants to be, that he has not reached his goal, the fulfillment of his existence. The christian must tolerate that he is not perfect, that he cannot be a saint in 24 hours; he must tolerate not only that he is a sinner, but also that the kingdom of God has not yet come forth, that everything is ^bsumerged _^ in shadows, a reflection in a mirror.

Who can practice such tolerance?

Only he who maintains this fundamental posture of faith, a basic capacity ^{to} of tolerating ^e himself with all his warts, and ^{of} ^{to}

sustaining, not only his own pilgrim existence, but also that of his neighbor. The Christian must bear the weight of the others plus his own, not only for the sake of a natural, but ^{also} for an ontic, morality; he must bear this incomplete cosmos, this temporal existence, (broken and fragmented.) Whoever is satisfied with himself, who is not open, who does not taste himself, suffer himself as a pilgrim, cannot be tolerant, cannot allow tolerance and neither could he understand this study.

How must a christian behave?

This is a third question in our description of this final element of the virtue of tolerance. He must show himself and behave in a manner authentically tolerant. This is to say that a christian is not one who ^{merely} tolerates the ignorant or non-believers but ^{one} who also helps them. He is a christian who upholds the world and contributes his labor. This mission can be realized only in Christ and with Him, Creator, Keeper and Redemer ^e of the world. This suffering of the world is precisely the art of orthopraxis. The Christian does not judge the world, nor is he a spectator or a being who keeps to himself the just vision of the world. He must contribute something to the world since he has been entrusted with a mission. His faith remains imperfect and his love falters if they do not animate him with hope and love, and, as a christian, he is dedicated to his constructive labor, as a sacred ~~task~~, liturgical and holy, that is, priestly, task. He is a "co-worker", a "co-sufferer", a "co-redeemer." The christian is humanity's true priest and priest of all the cosmos. He must take his place in the cosmic task of forming a new heaven and a new earth. This task is tolerance which can be translated

as patience. At least once in the Vulgate, "hipomone" was translated not as patience but as tolerance. (2 Co. 1,6). Tolerance is that patience by which we shall save our souls and others too. (Lk.21,19). Tolerance also means waiting and hoping, and not exclusively steadfastness and persistence. It appears to me that this would be a most esoteric interpretation. ¹ But christian tolerance means properly to bear and to carry the weight and burden of others, an act, says Saint Paul (Ga.6,2), which crowns the law of Christ. This is the Christian vision. It is not a quest for a powerful and triumphant Christianity but for the making of the Kingdom of God. Certainly this implies involvement on earth and even with those minimal structures of matter destined to resurrection which even now begin the new heaven and the new earth.

The Christian mission is to be the light and yeast of the world. This must be taken in all seriousness, and not as a peculiar compliment for the just but as the essential attribute of Christian existence by which it merits the name. The follower of Christ must carry the Cross and the Cross is that "locus" on earth entrusted to the good servants of God.

1. "Pars fortitudinis", says Saint Thomas, is patience (S.T.II,II,q.136 a.4). Yet Hellenic bravery is not covered by christian patience, not even in a passive way. Patience, "a finished work" (Sant.1,4) is not at all a simple constance and steadfastness in the face of evil, but for man and world it is the norm of enduring destiny. _____ (from the root _____, from which comes tolerance) means to bear, support, suffer, persevere, endure but (never _____ and almost never _____ therefore) hardly the physical taking-upon-oneself but to bear oneself in the sense of saving. From the two verbs to lift and to fulfill, one could say that Christ, in so far as He tolerates, assumes, (in the first sense) bears that object of his tolerance, and thus fulfills it (the second sense). From this perspective it is possible to see that there really is no christian tolerance---as well as any other christian value _____ other than love, which alone is capable of transforming a simple constance into an hopeful endurance.

A cosmic-salvific virtue.

"Your tolerance will win your lives", accords with a Pauline text which is usually mistranslated: "Never try to get revenge, my friends"³. What saves us is not the endurance but the renunciation of self-justification.⁴ Maximus the Confessor has a significant interpretation of Luke, previously cited: God (alone) postponed the eating from the Tree of Knowing Good and Evil until man had arrived to the fulness of his maturity and had been completely divinized by grace. But Adam did not want to wait, he had no patience, he did not obey the rhythm of Creation and thus "he fell" (in a manner similar to the loss of innocence if puberty does not develop harmoniously). The Tree of Life was identified with the Tree of Knowledge. Our present task is to regather everything---already accomplished--and to mend that impatience by means of our own patience."⁵ Authentic tolerance implies this patience since it is that cosmic virtue that awaits the Master⁶ (who, at times, is late⁷ in coming, in order, paradoxically, to hasten the restoration of all things).⁸

2. NUMERICAL CONSIDERATION

In order to clarify these concepts a bit more, I present a most ^{very} brief numerical consideration that ^{which} can outline the burden

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- 2. Lk., 21,19.
 - 3. Rm., 12,19.
 - 4. 2 Co. 6,7.
 - 5. Sant. 1,4.
 - 6. Rm. 8,25.
 - 7. Mt. 25,5.
 - 8. Ac. 3,21.

of our thoughts for those who consider them too abstract. A glance at the statistical chart reveals no significant numerical distinction between Catholics and Christians. Catholics now make up 20% of the world population. By the year 2000 they will represent only 9%, and Christians, in toto, 11 to 13%. Among these, practicing Catholics make up a fifth, or 4% of the world population and by the year 2000 they will represent only 2% (more exactly, 1.8% will be using the Church as the Mother of Salvation). We can develop our argument: one-half of Africa is below the age of 20 years and 20% of all Germans is retired. Asia is growing three times faster than Europe and North America. ~~By~~ By 1980 China could have a billion citizens. Over the past century, Christians increased parallel to world increases. Thus the number of conversions has not varied from a sociological point of view for the past 100 years. But actually and more exactly, the total is less since statistics usually do not include apostates. The situation is not new; it has always been this way. But we are now conscious of it. Vast populations existed in "America" before Columbus!

The mission of Christians cannot be one of domination; and one could also add, not even one of conversion, as it is usually understood, ^{Rather, it must be} but a mission of redemption, of co-redemption. Tolerance thus assumes a primary importance. The Christian is one who contributes in holding up, in redeeming the world, patience. The world is saved by Christians, with Christ, hidden in God. Christian

tolerance is precisely that portentous virtue of becoming responsible for the world, to transform it, that is, to save it, with Christ.

3. CONSEQUENCES

Only three consequences ^{will} shall be derived from these reflections:

1. Easter Consciousness

The first consequence is the awareness of a victorious tolerance. This makes Christian tolerance original; it makes us take serious the Easter victory of christians and Christianity. It is the exact opposite of a certain crypto-heretical attitude: the tacit admission that Creation was a failure for God so that what Genesis, in sublime optimism describes as "very good", really does not meet the requirements of reality, and consequently, we good Christians are under pressure to patch up after the Creator wherever we can. It is true; ^{that} working under merely natural concepts, ^{from} christians are decreasing every year and they cannot avoid a certain inferiority complex. Also, if Creation appears to be a failure, then it is also evident from this same perspective that the Redemption has been a gigantic catastrophe and that the "mirabilis reformasti" or the "felix culpa" of the Liturgy are mere pious sentiments of devout souls devoid of all reality and principles, ^{with the result that} and now christians themselves are reduced to mere anxious and pious folk who are preoccupied in restoring somewhere, somehow, God's work. This could perhaps explain the nervous

9. In relation to the well-known discussion between a mysticism of the Incarnation (presence, work, apostolate..) and a mysticism of transcendence (witness, prayer, eschatology..) as basic christian attitudes, I would prefer to speak about an attitude of redemption and co-redemption (for which orthoproxis is necessary). Only transcendence can be incarnate. Redemption does not mean natural triumph nor simply eschatology, trans-historical existence, but presupposes a transformation of death and a re-birth; yet what is re-born is the same "thing" and not other. Herein we can connect with the central focus of christians: the sacrifice of Christ. The **matter** for sacrifice, the bits of being which the christian collects along his passage through space and time, is precisely the art of christian tolerance.

feelings of the missions in ^{the} face of their fruitless labor. Never! This is merely naturalism; when a Christian suffers, he wins. When he endures the world, he sustains the world. That marvelous disputation between Abraham and Yahweh, first, about 50, then, 45, and finally 10 just men who could avert the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is not a mere caprice of God since a small handful of just men has more weight than the sin of these two cities. There is no other Christian alternative. A true disciple will not be treated better than his Master.

B) Contemplation

The second consequence of Christian tolerance is a new approach to Christian contemplation, serene and balanced, without the rush and impetuosity of activity or activism or the paternalism of humanitarianism. To persist in this new authentic self-composition that makes faith a glowing reality and underscores the "marvelous works of God" which we touched above, is the true fruit of authentic patience. What must be done is not to convert others directly nor make our prayer depend on optimal exterior conditions, to gamble on present favorable possibilities or to lament that we no longer possess an empire, nor minimal authority since even the family has disappeared with everything else, ^{what must be done is} but to bear these circumstances in love of God and in patience with Christ and thus contribute to the Redemption. This is a call to all because whoever does not work, does not take his stand, does not help, whoever does not exercise this christian patience, is a traitor.

If I may be allowed the expression—

c) Ecumenical ecumenism.

Third and finally, christian tolerance has the consequence of effecting true relation with the religions of the world. Tolerance makes a real mark on the world. Here the issue of patience, of suffering, of enduring, ^{of} in being open to others, arises again. Allowing me the expression, I would speak about an ecumenical ecumenism in which this marvelous movement of our time could be extended to all world-religions. Looking in from the outside, it is noteworthy, that psychologically, and we do not underestimate the importance of purely intra-Christian issues, these all appear as family quarrels, as discussions about a closed neighborhood. Yet a more universal ecumenism would not only afford us a better sense of proportion but would also endow us with a bit more brazeness. Whoever has stronger shoulders, can carry more, can assume more and thus can be patient without those paternal concessions that veil one's true intentions. Christian tolerance is a difficult task. It demands faith, hope and love, along with personal, social, cosmic and even mystical capacities. ¹⁰ Saint John tells us that it was good that the Christ went away, so that we can now redeem the world.

EPILOG

We end here. One item must be made clear: we shall save our own souls and ^{those} of others, only with tolerance and patience, or, more purely expressed: Blessed are the meek, for they shall ^{inherit} possess the earth.

10. It would be gratifying to undertake a detailed listing of biblical texts that have bearings on this study. To those already cited, I add: Rm., 4,4; Ep., 4,1; Heb., 10,36; Rv., 2,2; 1 Co., 4,12; 13,7; 2 Co., 11,20; 1 Th., 5,11; Lk., 8,15; Old Testament: Rs., 9,19; 68,8; 60,5; Si., 2,4; Pr., 19,11; Finally: Jn., 1,19; 1P.2, 18-19; Mt. 16,24.