

Excerpts from John Wesley's Sermon "Catholic Spirit" – A Modern Translation

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Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without doubt, we may...

It is very possible that many good men...may entertain peculiar opinions...And it is certain, so long as we know but *in part*, that all men will not see all things alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding ...

But there is even more. Although every man necessarily believes that every particular opinion which he holds is true ... yet can no man be assured that all his own opinions...are true. In fact, every thinking man is assured they are not, seeing...: "To be ignorant of many things, and to mistake in some, is the necessary condition of humanity." This, therefore, he understands, applies to himself as well. He knows, generally, that he himself is mistaken; although in what particular opinions he is mistaken, he does not ... know. ...

Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same liberty of thinking that he desires they should allow him, and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He is patient with those who differ from him, and only asks him with whom he desires to unite in love that single question: "Is your heart right...?" But what is properly implied in the question?

The first thing implied is this: Is your heart right with God? Do you believe his being and his perfections, his eternity, immensity, wisdom, power, his justice, mercy, and truth? ... Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, ... Does he dwell in you and you in him? ... Is your faith ... *filled with the energy of love*? Do you love God ... "with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your soul, and with all your strength?" ... Are you employed in doing, "not your own will, but the will of him that sent you," ... Is your heart right toward your neighbor? Do you love as yourself, all mankind without exception? ... Do you show your love by your works? ... If you are thus minded ... then "your heart is right, as my heart is with your heart."

"If it be, (then) give me your hand." I do not mean, "Be of my opinion." You need not. I do not expect or desire it. Neither do I mean, "I will be of your opinion."... Keep your opinion and I will keep I mine; ... Leave all opinions alone on one side and the other: only "give me your hand."