

7. Faith can influence a natural demonstration in so far as the habit of faith extends to the same truth that is being demonstrated. The Christian who is also philosopher, knowing by faith that such a natural truth is also guaranteed by divine authority, has in addition to the certitude of his demonstration a certitude communicated by faith.

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RADIO ADDRESSES DURING THE ANNUAL MEETING

Panel Discussion: *Philosophy as a Way of Life*

Prof. Fitzgerald: The Department of Speech of the University of Notre Dame is happy to present the program which raises the significant issues of our day, Topics of Importance. Each week at this time on this station, members of the Notre Dame Debate Team and their guests discuss an issue which challenges all thinking Americans. Today a special panel is on hand. The American Catholic Philosophical Association has been meeting on the Notre Dame campus for the past three days and several members of the Association have taken time out from a busy schedule to appear on "Topics of Importance." To introduce them, here is Dr. Vincent Smith of the Notre Dame Philosophy Department, Editor of *The New Scholasticism* and author of the *Footnotes on the Atom*.

Dr. Smith: Here with me today are the Rev. Dr. Charles A. Hart, National Secretary of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, the Rev. Dr. David Dillon, of St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and the Rev. Dr. Henry DuLac of the College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. One of the topics at our meeting is the notion of Christian philosophy, and I am going to begin our panel discussion by asking for a definition, first of all, of philosophy itself. Dr. Hart, would you care to comment on that question? What is philosophy?

Dr. Hart: I think, Dr. Smith, that we could do no better than to go back to the original meaning of the term—philosophy. It comes from two Greek roots meaning "love of wisdom." To the Greeks, wisdom meant knowledge of ultimate causes, and the unified view of reality which would arise by that search for ultimate causes.

Dr. Smith: Does philosophy have anything to do with life or is it merely a kind of abstract, impractical discipline? You know philosophy has a bad reputation among many people. What does philosophy have to do with life?

Dr. Hart: It seems to me that in a practical way philosophy gives that larger view of things of which overcomes or counterbalances the narrowing effect of science. A scientist has to specialize; he must make his view of reality a very limited one. But much of the meaning of things, that broader meaning by which men live, is lost in this division of reality by scientists.

Dr. Smith: Doctor Dillon, I am going to ask you if you can supplement that question. Could you give us some examples of the kinds of problems that arise in philosophy? What questions would philosophy treat?

Dr. Dillon: Well, philosophy itself is not considered as one science or one discipline only but actually it embraces many. For example, logic or metaphysics and general psychology. Some of the problems that philosophy would discuss would be such things as the nature of the soul and the immortality of the soul in psychology; all the problems in logic and problems in natural philosophy; the problem of motion and of change.

Dr. Smith: Does philosophy have anything to say about God?

Dr. Dillon: Yes, it does. It says quite a bit about God. Ultimate philosophy, that is metaphysics, discusses the existence of God and His nature.

Dr. Smith: How would you say that this kind of knowledge, which you call philosophy, differs from the kind of knowledge we get through revelation, through something like the Bible?

Dr. Dillon: The knowledge we get through philosophy is discovered by man's reason alone. He must see the evidence of what he holds. The knowledge we get through revelation, for example the Bible, is brought to us by faith, that is, we take on God's word what we accept. These two branches of knowledge are radically separated because of the different ways we know them. In the one case we see, in the other case we hear God.

Dr. Smith: We are going to have a discussion at our meeting tomorrow of the problem of Christian Philosophy. Now let's agree with Father Dillon that philosophy is not a matter of revelation. In what sense can we speak of a "Christian Philosophy" Dr. DuLac?

Dr. DuLac: We can talk about Christianity influencing philosophy, especially in those very truths where the revelation of God and what man can find by his unaided reason coincide, where those two ways of knowing touch. For instance, we might say that God has revealed something to us about the Trinity; that there are three persons in God. That we could only know because God tells us so. That wouldn't be any matter for strictly philosophical discussion. But there are some other things, such as the fact that the human soul is immortal and spiritual. That would be a matter that is touched on both by philosophy and by God's revelation.

Dr. Smith: In what way would Christian religion come in to aid philosophy? Would the revelation of God have any control over the philosopher's decisions or arguments in Christian philosophy?

Dr. DuLac: It might very well. Not in the sense that Christian revelation would influence all of philosophy, nor simply in the sense that faith

might offer some new matters to consider. That certainly can happen and has happened in the course of history. But it can possibly have an influence that would be more profound than that. I don't think we would say that faith would offer a new object for philosophical consideration in the sense that it would change any particular philosophy or any branch of it, but only in the sense that it can possibly help us know better the things that we know in philosophy.

Dr. Smith: That is a very interesting analysis, Doctor, and I am going to present another question which I think follows fairly logically from what we have been discussing. We have a Christian philosophy, why do we not have a Christian mathematics or a Christian logic or a Christian physics or a Christian chemistry? Dr. Hart, would you comment on that subject?

Dr. Hart: Well, I think that is rather easily answered in that where we have Christian philosophy it pertains to ultimate things, such as the ultimate nature of man, his ultimate goal, his relation to God. In other words it pertains to his very being. Now when we go into mathematics or similar fields, we are taking aspects of being. Consequently there is never any particular revelation on mathematics, generally speaking. But both revelation and unaided human reason have very definite information on the existence of God, the nature and destiny of man, and man's relation to God. If reason and revelation therefore overlap, it is possible that their views may influence one another and the result is a "Christian Philosophy." Where the two modes of knowledge do not come together, it is impossible to have such a philosophy.

Dr. Smith: I know you are very much interested in the subject of Christian literature, Dr. Hart, from your courses back at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C., from which you come. Would you say that we can properly speak of a Christian poem or a Catholic novel?

Dr. Hart: I think that is quite possible because here again we are dealing with matters of ultimate concern. The concern of the artist, for example the litterateur, is often with matters which are the concern of the revelation. So in those fields we can have a truly Christian literature, a truly Christian poem or novel.

Dr. Smith: But not a Christian mathematics or physics?

Dr. Hart: I think it would be impossible to have a Christian mathematics; we could have a mathematics of Christians but not a Christian mathematics.

Dr. Smith: Would you two other members agree with this analysis that there is a Christian philosophy, a Catholic novel in Christian literature, but there is no religious mathematics or Catholic physics or chemistry? Would that be acceptable?

Dr. Dillon: Yes, I think what Dr. Hart says is true. The reason for that is, as he brought out, that Christian revelation was not given to man simply as another form of knowledge but a knowledge as to enable him to go to heaven. So it is understandable that there will be many intellectual disciplines that will have no relation to man's ultimate end and for

that reason revelation won't tell us anything about them. But there are certain other disciplines which naturally treat of the same problems that man knows about from revelation as well as reason. And there I think you have two sources of information which may well influence one another.

Dr. Smith: Now let me ask this question. Is philosophy capable by itself of providing man with sufficient inspiration, sufficient illumination, to lead a good life and to reach his destiny? In a word, do we also need a religion, a Christianity, for example, in addition to philosophy? Doctor DuLac, would you care to comment on that?

Dr. DuLac: I think the experience of mankind brings out the necessity of something more than man's just using his own mind and relying on the resources of his own reasoning to find out the answers to these important questions. Certainly among the great thinkers of the world there are many solutions that have been true and valuable. But for people at large and for a solution to all these problems, I think we must turn to more than simply these things man can find out by his unaided reasoning. The question is rather does he find them out by himself alone? And I think that our experience shows that he very often does not.

Dr. Smith: Do you think these ultimate truths were discovered in any material way prior to Christian revelation?

Dr. DuLac: Certainly, a great many of them were. Such truths as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, and even some things about God's nature were discovered by the Greeks, particularly, the greatest of the Greek philosophers, namely Aristotle.

Dr. Smith: Do you think that we might introduce at this time the problem of whether all men have some knowledge of God or whether most men have no knowledge whatsoever of the Supreme Being? Do the generality of men in the human race reach any kind of knowledge without any religion, without any formal theology at all? Dr. Hart, would you care to comment on this?

Dr. Hart: I think that would have to be answered in the negative. For instance, the notion of creation which seems so simple to us was a notion that was absolutely unattained by the highest achievements of the greatest Greek minds. Somehow or other, whatever the reason may be (Christians might say it was original sin), truths that men could have come to without the aid of revelation, they evidently did not achieve. And even those truths of which Father DuLac spoke seem to need a strengthening and reinforcement of revelation in order that they might be held by men at all. So it seems to me that this becomes a moral necessity if men are to gain a clear ultimate viewpoint by which they are going to live. This is the need of added revelation.

Dr. Smith: Well, that is a very fine and interesting answer, Doctor. I would like to bring up, however, the question I was leading to a moment ago, and that was whether or not men have a responsibility to seek out these ultimate answers? All men, not just Catholics, not just professional philosophers, not professional theologians, is there any responsibility for all men to ask these questions about the ultimate meaning of life?

Dr. Hart: I think that is a very definite responsibility; undoubtedly this is man's greatest responsibility: to know why he lives, to know what end he must achieve according to his nature. These seem to be absolutely important truths that are the only true source of happiness to man. As Christ, the Son of God, says: "Not by bread alone does man live but by everywhere that proceedeth from the mouth of truth." If men are unhappy today, it is because they do not know the manner of men they are and they do not know the goal towards which they move. Much of their unhappiness lies in their failure to exercise their God-given faculty of reason for the understanding of themselves and the purpose of their existence.

Dr. Smith: Now granted that men are unhappy because they are not seeking the meaning of the ultimates or are not living according to the knowledge they so obtained: Is there any assurance that they will be happy and that their problems will be resolved if they do seek and find answers to these ultimate questions. Dr. Dillon, could you comment on that question, please?

Dr. Dillon: Do you mean the answers that philosophy gives to such problems?

Dr. Smith: To a return to the question with which we began, namely, the practical value of philosophy. Is philosophy likely to make men happier, more contented, more adjusted? Is it likely to make their world a better world in which to live? For example, is it likely to contribute something to the solution of our present conflict between the East and the West, between capital and labor, between the various races of men? Can philosophy help men on the road to this happiness which they are not finding now mainly because they are not getting knowledge of the ultimate truth about life?

Dr. Dillon: I think we may say that while a great deal of philosophy is theoretical, it is also true that much of it is practical and somehow or other come to bear on very practical problems. The fact that today we think in a certain way or hold certain theories is ultimately due to philosophers who preceded us. For example, today we speak of the conflict between the East and the West. The reason for that is due to philosophers who lived hundreds of years ago. Though most men have never read their writings or even heard of them, nevertheless men today are speaking these older ideas as they have come down from generation to generation. Whether we like it or not, philosophy has had and does have powerful influence on the practical affairs of life which are necessarily based on the ultimate views men assume.

Dr. Smith: Father DuLac, I am going to come now to the problem that is of major concern to any discussion of the relations of philosophy to other forms of knowledge. What about the scientific character of philosophy? Does philosophy prove anything?

Dr. DuLac: Well, that is what the different divisions of philosophy attempt to do. The word science may possibly call for a little clarification. We're accustomed to using this word for experimental sciences—where a

man proposes a theory and then seeks to verify it or reject it by carrying on some kind of experimentation. Another meaning of the word, and one which is certainly legitimate, indicates a kind of knowledge that may be arrived at without any kind of experimentation, but, nevertheless, a knowledge where one can give a certain sure reason for the proposition that he holds. We've all studied some geometry. It would be an example of a science without experimentation but one which nevertheless arrives at very certain conclusions. Now that is the kind of non-experimental knowledge one is striving for in the various philosophical disciplines. Obviously we do not always obtain that kind of very certain knowledge about every proposition. Very often we have to be satisfied with the reasons which are less than the certain ones. But the science is a science by reason of having these sure reasons that we understand.

Dr. Smith: Well, let's try to get an example of what you are describing. I am going to ask you this question, Dr. Hart. Let's take the problem of the immortality of the soul. Do you think this is one of the questions that can be solved with certainty by philosophy and, if you do, what would be the reasons that you would give for the immortality of the human soul?

Dr. Hart: Of course, as we all know, the fact of the immortality is a revealed truth, but those who do not accept revelation, obviously would not be convinced by such revelation. Nevertheless, I think that in philosophy, as in the experimental sciences, we can judge the nature of a thing by the way it acts: As it acts, so it is. Now the philosopher feels that he can know at least something about the question of immortality by his own unaided reason. He says that there is no reason why the human soul should not continue to exist after separation from the body. He maintains this position because of the peculiar types of human activity properly characteristic only of man, namely man's thinking and willing. Let us take the example of man's getting an abstract idea of man. Take a definition of man as that of a rational animal. That definition is obtained by a process of abstraction in the human intellect. The mind sets aside all the particular aspects of man and seeks to gain that common aspect that transcends all time and place; it is thus a universal notion showing that there is no element of the material or the limited as co-cause of the notion. The soul alone is the principal cause of the getting of this idea. Now if the soul thus acts independently of the body, independently of sensation, as a co-cause at least, in the getting of such an idea, when it is in union with the body during this life why should it not continue to act independently of the body when the soul is separated from the body? Here the philosopher is proceeding in much the same manner as the scientist. He is trying to judge the nature of a thing by its peculiar activities. Here is man with his unique activity of rational thinking. He also has a free will which we don't find in the animal. Therefore, we must conclude that there is an immaterial type of principle for these immaterial activities in man, in a word what we call an immaterial soul. This independence of the soul when united with the body points in continued independent existence when separated from the body at death.

Dr. Smith: I see. So you are going from a kind of activity performed by man in thinking, and also in willing to the conclusion that the source of this activity must be something that is not material. Is that correct?

Dr. Hart: Yes, that is our definition of spiritual, namely, that which is in some intrinsic sense independent of the material. That is as far as we can go philosophically in our definition of a spiritual thing. Our one conclusive argument for immortality is the immaterial nature of man's soul. There is also the universal conviction of man in all times and places and condition of culture which confirms the argument from reason as correct. But common consent, of course, by itself, would not be absolutely conclusive.

Dr. Smith: I see, well, that is an example, at least, of the kind of proof that would be given in a philosophical debate. Now let's come back again to the problem of faith as distinguished from philosophical knowledge. Dr. Dillon, is knowledge by faith also certain? If it is, what reason can be given for its certainty?

Dr. Dillon: Well, I think we can best illustrate that by an example. When we speak of faith, we do not mean divine faith exclusively. We have faith also in our fellow men. We have faith in our newspapers and what we read generally, or what we hear over the radio. Before we believe something, we usually make some preliminary judgments. We ask whether the one who wants us to accept his word on faith really knows whereof he speaks, whether he has access to the facts of which he speaks or whether he also is speaking from hearsay. We might also ask the question, does this person wish to tell us of the truth of which he speaks? Does he have reason for deceiving us in some way. The difficulty with human faith is that we can never be absolutely certain because it is always possible for men either to be mistaken themselves or to wish to deceive us. I don't say that they always want to do that but at least it is possible. In the case of faith in God the question is different. We believe what God says knowing that God Himself can never be mistaken and knowing certainly that He would never wish to deceive us. Therefore, when we accept something from the authentic Gospels, we accept it on an authority that is completely infallible and expressed in such a way that men can never change it.

Dr. Smith: Now is that divine faith superior to knowledge obtained by philosophical proof?

Dr. Dillon: From the point of view of assurance and certainty, I think that is true. The example used as to the immortality of the soul is a good example. It is true that the philosopher can prove something about the immortality of the soul but when a man knows that hearing it from God, he is much more certain of it. He has a firmer hold on that truth.

Dr. Smith: Well, if that is the case, then, Dr. Dillon (I suppose I should ask this of Father DuLac in view of the previous contribution he made to our program), why should we not simply take things on the faith in God, and abandon the attempt to construct a philosophy? Why should we have a philosophy at all if the knowledge from divine faith is more certain than philosophy?

Dr. DuLac: Well, I think one reason is that the human mind tries to find out by its own effort as much as it can about the various propositions it knows or hears about. The mind is not content to accept all truths on the word of another. Not that truths known by faith are something inferior, but simply that the human mind does seek to find a reason where a reason can be found. That is the situation that we have in regard to some of these truths that we have already discussed. Man can know that his soul is immortal from the fact that God has revealed it. But he also seeks to ascertain that truth by his own reasoning as Father Hart has shown, and, being a reasoning animal, man seeks to bring the truths of faith into the realm of his own reasoning where that is possible.

Dr. Smith: I see, so that there is a meeting ground between the philosopher and the man of faith to the extent that the philosopher can analyze and know the same truths that the theologian may know by faith, but for different reasons and under different aspects. Now how is the Christian philosopher related to the man of faith?

Dr. Dillon: The faith that the Christian philosopher possesses can have an additional certitude to that of his own reasoning and that added certitude makes his knowledge something better than it would be if it were known merely by philosophy.

Dr. Smith: Well, let's get down to some concrete cases of Christian philosophers themselves. Dr. Hart, could you tell us some of the names of the great Christian philosophers of the past?

Dr. Hart: I suppose we should mention St. Justin, who was perhaps the first of these Christian philosophers. He was a Greek philosopher who came in contact with the Christians and realized the power to know which they had in their faith. Many early Christians were very simple men, slaves with little education, but by the gift of faith, they suddenly possessed a power and an answer to the problems that often great pagan philosophers were unable to give at all. Then, of course, we have St. Augustine who was really a great power in the formation of what we call a really truly Christian philosophy. In the middle ages we come to St. Anselm, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and a score of others. The interesting thing about them was that all of them worked for a common cause. They made their contributions to a perennial philosophy. They did not particularly care to build up a whole system of their own but made contributions to a philosophical tradition in which their faith played an important part.

Dr. Smith: Could you tell us whether their thought has an applicability to our contemporary problems?

Dr. Hart: Yes, it is very apropos. For example, there the great present problem of whether God exists. That is what is dividing the world today between the East and West. That problem, of course, was settled by the Christian philosophers, both by revelation and by reason, together with all the consequences that follow from the fact that man is a creature of God. There is no more important truth in a man's mind than to know that he must conform to the will of God, and to God's law that is in his conscience. These are the questions that are disturbing the world very

much today, and, though they may seem theoretical in a way, nevertheless they have a great applicability in the issue before the world today between the East and West.

Dr. Smith: Do you agree with that, Dr. Dillon; that has some repercussions on the discussion we were having about the practicality of philosophy a few moments ago?

Dr. Dillon: Yes, I thought Dr. Hart brought that out very well. In any case we are going to have ideas and in any case ideas will influence action. It should be the work of the Christian philosopher to see that true and sound ideas do something towards influencing men's thinking in the right direction today and in the future generations.

Dr. Smith: What do you mean by ideas having influence? Could you give us some examples of that in the contemporary world? Could you take an example from the conflict between the East and West?

Dr. Dillon: Well, I think the most striking influence we have today is Marxism, which was a philosophy developed by Karl Marx, and before him, Hegel, the great German idealist. Those ideas are not only influencing men today but they are being studied regularly by active Communists everywhere.

Dr. Smith: You feel that the great need is to propagate some counter ideas to these false ideas, for example the positive Christian-cultural ideas of Western civilization?

Dr. Dillon: Yes, the Christian ideal has been the general ideal of Western civilization. It has lost hold somewhat in the last couple of centuries, but it can and should be restored.

Dr. Smith: Thank you, gentlemen, for a very enlightening half hour.

Radio Interview: Philosophy and the Unity of Knowledge

Prof. Fitzgerald: I should like to introduce to our radio audience Rev. Dr. Charles A. Hart, professor of philosophy at Catholic University of America in Washington, and National Secretary of the American Catholic Philosophical Association for nearly 25 years. The Association is meeting at the University of Notre Dame this week. Perhaps you could begin by telling us a little of the history of this organization, Dr. Hart.

Dr. Hart: The American Catholic Philosophical Association was founded in January, 1926 at Washington when a group of philosophers met at Catholic University of America for the purpose of encouraging study and research in the field of philosophy and allied subjects with particular interest in Scholastic philosophy.

Prof. Fitzgerald: That might be a good starting point. Just how would you distinguish philosophy from other fields of knowledge, say from the various sciences on the one hand and theology or religion on the other.

Dr. Hart: I think we could start with the original meaning of the terms designating the three fields you have mentioned. Literally—philosophy comes from two Greek words: *philos* and *sophia*. *Philos* means love and *sophia* means wisdom. A philosopher is therefore a lover of wisdom—not a wise man but a humble seeker of wisdom.