

Truth Exclusive

June 21, 2008

At a public conference I gave recently (not in Germany), a liberal of a venerable aspect and age doubted whether human beings are really that valuable. I deliberately sharpened the reply: "Place all the horses on earth in one pan of a pair of scales, and in the other pan one wretched but human beggar, which pan weighs heavier?" Instead of answering the question he said, "That's religion, that's not common sense." At which point I became a little angry . . .

It was not so much his love of horses that was upsetting. After all, the horse is a noble and useful animal, and all the horses of the world are certainly worth a great deal. Nor was it even his implicit scorn of religion that was disturbing. After all billions of human beings alive today see no reason to take seriously what they understand to be religion. What was terrible was the heresy of heresies underlying his hippophiliac answer, namely the assumption that one truth can contradict another.

Of course liberalism is now as common as daisies (or dandelions), so the good man was most likely unaware of the objective enormity of what he had said. But what he had clearly implied was that there is one truth for common sense and another truth for religion. In other words truth is not one, nor absolutely exclusive of error, but there are different truths for different people at different times, above all in different domains, and they can flatly contradict one another without any problem. Thus what is true for common sense can be false for religion, and vice versa.

This disbelief in the oneness of truth, or in its attainability by human beings, is, if it is a conscious denial, the crime of crimes, and if it is an unconscious assimilation of the disbelief in truth so widely shared today,

it is the loss of losses. To starve the mind of that truth for which it is made is a crime as infinitely greater than starving stomachs of food, as eternal life is infinitely greater than this little life we have on earth, 70 years or so. This is because disbelief in exclusive truth, or in its possibility, cripples thinking at its very root, turns minds into mush, and ultimately crumbles the indispensable natural foundations of that supernatural Faith without which we cannot save our souls (Heb. XI, 6).

The venerable lover of horses came up after question time to smooth things over: "I only meant to say that the question in that sharpened form is not common sense," he said. It was much to be feared that he had little idea of all that he has lost.

Kyrie eleison.