



# Buber

Between Man and Man

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# Between Man and Man

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The translator has pleasure in acknowledging the generous help of Mr. Kurt Emmerich, who gave unstintingly of his time and knowledge in the earlier stages of the translation, and of the author himself, who read not only the entire MS. but also the proofs, and made countless valuable suggestions.

Martin  
**Buber**

Between Man and Man

Translated by Ronald Gregor-Smith

With an introduction by Maurice Friedman



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## FOREWORD

The five works which I have brought together for English readers in this volume have arisen in connexion with my little book *I and Thou* (1923),<sup>1</sup> as filling out and applying what was said there, with particular regard to the needs of our time.

The first of these works, *Dialogue* (1929) proceeded from the desire to clarify the “dialogical” principle presented in *I and Thou*, to illustrate it and to make precise its relation to essential spheres of life.

*The Question to the Single One*, which contains some political inferences, is the elaboration of an address which I gave to the students of the three German-Swiss Universities at the close of 1933. The book appeared in Germany in 1936—astonishingly, since it attacks the life-basis of totalitarianism. The fact that it could be published with impunity is certainly to be explained from its not having been understood by the appropriate authorities.

<sup>1</sup> English edition (R. & R. Clark, Edinburgh), 1937, 3rd impression, 1945.

There follow two addresses on major problems of education, the first given at the Third International Educational Conference at Heidelberg in 1925, the second at the National Conference of Jewish Teachers of Palestine at Tel-Aviv in 1939. Both addresses treat of the significance of the dialogical principle in the sphere of education, the first for its groundwork, the second for its most important task.

The volume concludes with my inaugural course of lectures as Professor of Social Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1938). This course shows, in the unfolding of the question about the essence of man, that it is by beginning neither with the individual nor with the collectivity, but only with the reality of the mutual relation between man and man, that this essence can be grasped.

MARTIN BUBER

Jerusalem

## INTRODUCTION

by Maurice Friedman<sup>1</sup>

When Dag Hammarskjöld's plane crashed in Northern Rhodesia, the Secretary General of the United Nations had with him the manuscript of a translation that he was making of Martin Buber's classic work *I and Thou*. It is because of this book and the philosophy of dialogue that it presents that Dag Hammarskjöld repeatedly nominated Martin Buber for a Nobel Prize in literature. *I and Thou* is recognized today as among the handful of writings that the twentieth century will bequeath to the centuries to come, but for many readers this compact and poetic little book needs an introduction to be properly understood and applications to concrete fields of human experience to be properly appreciated. More than any other work of Buber's, *Between Man and Man* provides this introduction and these applications. The opening essay on "Dialogue," in particular, with its contrast between "dialogue" and "monologue" and its personal

<sup>1</sup> Author of the comprehensive study *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960).

anecdotes, represents the best introduction to Buber's philosophy of dialogue, while the other essays in this volume show its applications for such concerns as religious ethics, politics, social philosophy, marriage, education, psychology, art, the development of character, and philosophical anthropology, or the study of the problem of man.

In his Foreword to *Between Man and Man*, Martin Buber states that the five works brought together in this volume fill out and apply what was said in *I and Thou*. "Dialogue" clarifies the "dialogical" principle presented in *I and Thou*, illustrates it, and makes "precise its relation to essential spheres of life." The terminology and scope of *I and Thou* are different from those of "Dialogue," however. In *I and Thou*, Buber contrasts man's two primary attitudes—the two ways in which he approaches existence. One of these is the "I-Thou" relationship, the other the "I-It." The difference between these two relationships is not the nature of the object to which one relates, as is often thought. Not every relation between persons is an I-Thou one, nor is every relation with an animal or thing an I-It. The difference, rather, is in the relationship itself. I-Thou is a relationship of openness, directness, mutuality, and presence. It may be between man and man, but it may also take place with a tree, a cat, a fragment of mica, a work of art—and through all of these with God, the "eternal Thou" in whom the parallel lines of relations meet. I-It, in contrast, is the typical subject-object relationship in which one knows and uses other persons or things without allowing them to exist for oneself in their uniqueness: The tree that I meet is not a Thou before I meet it. It harbors no hidden personality that winks at me as I pass by. Yet if I meet it in its uniqueness, letting it have its impact on me without comparing it with other trees or analyzing the type of leaf or wood or calculating the amount of firewood I may get out of it, then I may speak of an I-Thou relationship with it. The person that I meet is, by courtesy of our language and our attitudes, a "person" before I meet him. But he is not yet a Thou

for me until I step into elemental relationship with him, and if I do not step into this relationship, even the politest forms of address do not prevent his remaining for me an It. I cannot, of course, produce an I-Thou relationship by my own action and will, for it is really mutual only when the other comes to meet me as I him. But I can prevent such a relationship from coming into being if I am not ready to respond or if I attempt to respond with anything less than my whole being insofar as my resources in this particular situation allow.

I-Thou and I-It stand in fruitful and necessary alternation with each other. Man cannot will to persevere in the I-Thou relationship. He can only desire again and again to bring the indirectness of the world of It into the directness of the meeting with the Thou and thereby give the world of It meaning. So long as this alternation continues, man's existence is authentic. When the It swells up and blocks the return to the Thou, then man's existence becomes unhealthy, his personal and social life inauthentic. This applies equally to the contrast between "dialogue" and "monologue" that Buber makes in "Dialogue." However, here the concern is basically the relationship between man and man and, only insofar as the term is extended to art, the relationship between the human and the nonhuman.

In defining "dialogue," Buber introduces a concept that exists only implicitly in *I and Thou*, that of "experiencing the other side" of the relationship. This act of "inclusion," as Buber calls it in "Education," is that which makes it possible to meet and know the other in his concrete uniqueness and not just as a content of one's experience. In "technical dialogue," of course, no such experiencing of the other side takes place, since here the concern is only with what is communicated and not with the partners in the dialogue themselves. Still less is there "inclusion" in "monologue disguised as dialogue," that absolutization of oneself and relativization of the other that makes so much conversation between men into what Buber, in a later essay, calls

“speechifying.” The mark of contemporary man is that he does not really listen, says Buber. Only when one really listens—when one becomes personally aware of the “signs of address” that address one not only in the words of but in the very meeting with the other—does one attain to that sphere of the “between” that Buber holds to be the “really real.”

“All real living is meeting,” says Buber in *I and Thou*, and *Between Man and Man* again and again points to this seemingly evanescent sphere of the “between” as ontological reality. To say that “all real living is meeting” is not to say that one leaves one’s ground in order to meet the other or that one lets oneself get swallowed up in the crowd and trades in one’s individuality for a social role. “In the graciousness of its comings and the solemn sadness of its goings”—gracious because one cannot will both sides of the dialogue and sad because every I-Thou relationship must inevitably turn into an It, while the It need not become a Thou—the I-Thou relationship “teaches us to meet others and to hold our ground when we meet them.” This means that experiencing the other side, or, as Buber later calls it, “imagining the real,” goes hand in hand with remaining on one’s own side of the relationship. Therefore, even the imaginative experiencing of the blow that I give to the other or of the pleasure that the other’s skin feels beneath my caress must not be confused with “empathy,” in which I give up my own ground for a purely aesthetic identification. Also, as Buber points out in “Education” and further develops in his “Postscript” to the second edition of *I and Thou*, in the helping relationships—those of teacher and pupil, parent and child, doctor and patient, minister and parishioner—this experiencing of the other side cannot be expected to be mutual without destroying the relationship or converting it into friendship.

It is this emphasis upon the ontological reality of the “between” and upon the possibility of experiencing the other side of the relationship that distinguishes Buber from such

existentialists as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, and even Tillich. "The Question to the Single One" makes clear a fundamental critique of the existentialism of Kierkegaard, who posits an exclusive I-Thou relationship between the "Single One" and God and leaves the relationship between man and man secondary and inessential. But in "What Is Man?" Buber shows that even Martin Heidegger, for all his emphasis upon solicitude and upon *Dasein ist Mitsein* (being-there-in-the-world as being-with-others), does not reach the ground of genuine dialogue. In fact, as I make clear in the "Inter-subjectivity" section of *The Worlds of Existentialism*, the concern of thinkers like Sartre and Heidegger with "intersubjectivity" does not imply the I-Thou relationship, for many interpersonal, intersubjective relations remain fundamentally I-It. One need only contrast Sartre's attitude toward love in *Being and Nothingness* with Buber's attitude toward love in "Dialogue," "The Question to the Single One," and "Education" to recognize how Sartre limits human relationships *a priori* to my knowing the other as subject only when he knows me as object or, at best, to my recognizing his freedom only as a freedom that I wish to possess and dominate by my own freedom through seducing him to incarnate his freedom in his body. Buber, in contrast, sees love as precisely the recognition of the other's freedom, the fullness of a dialogue in which I turn to my beloved in his otherness, independence, and self-reality with all the power of intention of my own heart. It is this recognition that makes Buber the leading representative of those existentialists, such as Gabriel Marcel, Albert Camus, Karl Jaspers, and Franz Rosenzweig, who see dialogue, communication, and the I-Thou relationship not as a *dimension* of the self but as the existential and ontological reality in which the self comes into being and through which it fulfills and authenticates itself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Worlds of Existentialism: A Critical Reader*, edited and with Introductions and a Conclusion by Maurice Friedman (New York: Random House, 1964), Part IV: Intersubjectivity and pp. 535–44 of Part VII: Issues and Conclusions.



But what is the reader to make of the fact that Buber extends the I-Thou relationship from the meeting with man, nature, and art to that with God? Can creation's "signs of address" really be compared with the conscious address made to me by my fellow-man? Yes, if the concept of dialogue is properly understood. Dialogue is not merely the interchange of words—genuine dialogue can take place in silence, whereas much conversation is really monologue. It is, rather, the response of one's whole being to the otherness of the other, that otherness that is comprehended only when I open myself to him in the present and in the concrete situation and respond to his need even when he himself is not aware that he is addressing me. The God that speaks here is the God one meets only when one has put aside everything one thinks one knows of God and is plunged into the darkness, when the "moment Gods" fuse into the "Lord of the Voice." This "Lord of the Voice" does not speak to us apart from creation but right through it. Woman may be the "temptation to finitude," as Kierkegaard thought when he sacrificed his fiancée Regina Olsen to God, but the road to God is through "fulfilled finitude." "The Regina Olsens of this world are not the hurdles on the road to God. They are the road." Marriage is the "exemplary bond" through which we touch on the real otherness of the other and learn to understand his truth and untruth, his justice and injustice. Each man's shortest road to God is the longest available to him—the creation in which he is set and with which he has to do.

God is not met by turning away from the world or by making God into an object of contemplation, a "being" whose existence can be proved and whose attributes can be demonstrated. God is met only as Thou. As I know the person of the other only in dialogue with him, I know God only in dialogue. But this is the dialogue that goes on moment by moment in each new situation, the dialogue that makes my ethical "ought" a matter of real response with no preparation other than my readiness to respond with my whole being to the unforeseen and the unique.

I can know neither God nor moral values as transcendent realities knowable in themselves apart from the dialogue in which I meet God and discover values. For this reason, Buber is best understood not as a theologian—he has no theological assumptions or dogmas on which to build—or even as a philosopher of religion, but as a philosophical anthropologist, an investigator of the problem of man.<sup>3</sup>

It is as a philosophical anthropologist that Buber approaches I and Thou. He is concerned there not with deducing man's place from some over-all concept of being or the cosmos but with that twofold attitude that makes man man. Man becomes man with the other self. He would not be man at all without the I-Thou relationship. And man becomes more fully human through moving from the separateness of the man who is no longer a child to the mature I-Thou relationship. Similarly, in the works in *Between Man and Man*, the genuineness of man's existence is seen as dependent upon his bringing all his separate spheres of activity into "the life of dialogue," a life in which one does not necessarily have much to do with others but really has to do with those with whom one has to do. In "The Question to the Single One," man is recognized as the one creature who has potentiality, the potentiality of each man to realize that unique direction and task that only he can. "When I get to heaven," said the Hasidic rabbi Susya shortly before his death, "they will not ask me, 'Why were you not Moses?' but 'Why were you not Susya?'" Why did you not become what only you could become? This is the existential guilt that comes when one realizes one's vocation and fails to respond to it.

The true teacher is not the one who pours information into

<sup>3</sup> Buber himself makes this point in all explicitness in his "Replies to My Critics," translated by Maurice Friedman, in *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* volume of *The Library of Living Philosophers* series, edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman (La Salle, Ill.: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1965).

the student's head as through a funnel—the old-fashioned “disciplined” approach—or the one who regards all potentialities as already existing within the student and needing only to be pumped up—the newer “progressive” approach. It is the one who fosters genuine mutual contact and mutual trust, who experiences the other side of the relationship, and who helps his pupils realize, through the selection of the effective world, what it can mean to be a man. In the end education, too, centers on the problem of man. All education worthy of the name is education of character, writes Buber, and education of character takes place through the encounter with the image of man that the teacher brings before the pupil in the material he presents and in the way he stands behind this material.

“What Is Man?” is the culmination of the philosophical anthropology of *I and Thou* and the earlier works in *Between Man and Man*. Here the problem of man is dealt with historically and analytically. The ages when man is at home in the cosmos are set in contrast to those when he is not at home, those when he becomes a problem to himself. Our age is seen as the most homeless of all because of the loss of both an image of the world—modern physics can offer us only alternative equations—and a sense of community. The split between instinct and spirit that Freud and Max Scheler take to be the nature of man is actually the product of the decline of trust in communal existence, of the divorce between man and man. The real problem is not the conflict between the individual and the society but is the individualism or collectivism that in equal and opposite ways destroys the true life of dialogue. Man is neither a gorilla nor a termite. He is a creature of the “between,” of the happening between man and man that cannot be reduced to a sum of two individuals or to a merely psychological reality within the minds of each.

“What Is Man?” also lays the groundwork for the last important stage of Buber's philosophy, his systematic development of

his philosophical anthropology in *The Knowledge of Man*.<sup>4</sup> The essays in this volume—"Distance and Relation," "Elements of the Interhuman," "What Is Common to All," "Guilt and Guilt Feelings," "The Word That Is Spoken," "Man and His Image-Work," and "The Dialogue Between Martin Buber and Carl Rogers"—represent a new development in Buber's thought, and their significance can hardly be overestimated. They bring Buber within the ranks of "technical philosophers," in the strictest sense of that term, and they show in all fullness and concreteness the implications of Buber's anthropology for theories of knowledge, social philosophy, language and speech, art, education, and psychotherapy. Yet they would be unthinkable without the method of the philosophical anthropologist that Buber has developed in "What Is Man?": the participation of the knower in that which is known, the recollection of the whole event as opposed to the psychologist's attempt to observe his own experience as it is happening, the toleration of the strictness of solitude and aloneness as well as of the belonging to groups in which one still retains a boundary line of personal responsibility.

*Between Man and Man* is itself a classic, one whose reissuing has long been demanded. Walter Kaufmann makes central use of Buber's essay "The Question to the Single One" in his study of Nietzsche, and William Barrett acknowledges in *The Irrational Man* that Buber has put his finger on the weakness of Barrett's own master, Martin Heidegger, in the criticism of the latter in "What Is Man?" Aristotle, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Scheler, Freud, Augustine, Pascal, and a host of other thinkers of the present and the past are encountered and brought within the focus of Buber's developing dialogical thought in the five works

<sup>4</sup> Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, edited with an Introductory Essay by Maurice Friedman, translated by Maurice Friedman and Ronald Gregor Smith (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

in *Between Man and Man*. This new edition of *Between Man and Man* contains an Afterword on "The History of the Dialogical Principle." In it Buber presents the first account in English of the development of the I-Thou philosophy from the eighteenth-century philosopher Jacobi and the nineteenth-century writers Feuerbach and Kierkegaard to such eminent thinkers of the twentieth century as Gabriel Marcel, Karl Löwith, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Ferdinand Ebner, Karl Jaspers, and Karl Barth. This Afterword adds richly to the understanding of Buber's own thought and of the central place he holds in the ever-broadening movement of thought in our age that is concerned with the life of dialogue.

# 1

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## DIALOGUE

### SECTION ONE: DESCRIPTION

#### **Original remembrance**

Through all sorts of changes the same dream, sometimes after an interval of several years, recurs to me. I name it the dream of the double cry. Its context is always much the same, a “primitive” world meagerly equipped. I find myself in a vast cave, like the Latomias of Syracuse, or in a mud building that reminds me when I awake of the villages of the *fellahin*, or on the fringe of a gigantic forest whose like I cannot remember having seen.

The dream begins in very different ways, but always with something extraordinary happening to me, for instance, with a small animal resembling a lion-cub (whose name I know in the dream but not when I awake) tearing the flesh from my arm and being forced only with an effort to loose its hold. The strange thing is that this first part of the dream story, which in the duration as well as the outer meaning of the incidents is easily the most important, always unrolls at a furious pace as though it

did not matter. Then suddenly the pace abates: I stand there and cry out. In the view of the events which my waking consciousness has I should have to suppose that the cry I utter varies in accordance with what preceded it, and is sometimes joyous, sometimes fearful, sometimes even filled both with pain and with triumph. But in my morning recollection it is neither so expressive nor so various. Each time it is the same cry, inarticulate but in strict rhythm, rising and falling, swelling to a fulness which my throat could not endure were I awake, long and slow, quiet, quite slow and very long, a cry that is a song. When it ends my heart stops beating. But then, somewhere, far away, another cry moves towards me, another which is the same, the same cry uttered or sung by another voice. Yet it is not the same cry, certainly no "echo" of my cry but rather its true rejoinder, tone for tone not repeating mine, not even in a weakened form, but corresponding to mine, answering its tones—so much so, that mine, which at first had to my own ear no sound of questioning at all, now appear as questions, as a long series of questions, which now all receive a response. The response is no more capable of interpretation than the question. And yet the cries that meet the one cry that is the same do not seem to be the same as one another. Each time the voice is new. But now, as the reply ends, in the first moment after its dying fall, a certitude, true dream certitude comes to me that *now it has happened*. Nothing more. Just this, and in this way—*now it has happened*. If I should try to explain it, it means that that happening which gave rise to my cry has only now, with the rejoinder, really and undoubtedly happened.

After this manner the dream has recurred each time—till once, the last time, now two years ago. At first it was as usual (it was the dream with the animal), my cry died away, again my heart stood still. But then there was quiet. There came no answering call. I listened, I heard no sound. For I *awaited* the response for the first time; hitherto it had always surprised me,

as though I had never heard it before. Awaited, it failed to come. But now something happened with me. As though I had till now had no other access from the world to sensation save that of the ear and now discovered myself as a being simply equipped with senses, both those clothed in the bodily organs and the naked senses, so I exposed myself to the distance, open to all sensation and perception. And then, not from a distance but from the air round about me, noiselessly, came the answer. Really it did not come; it was there. It had been there—so I may explain it—even before my cry: there it was, and now, when I laid myself open to it, it let itself be received by me. I received it as completely into my perception as ever I received the rejoinder in one of the earlier dreams. If I were to report with what I heard it I should have to say “with every pore of my body.” As ever the rejoinder came in one of the earlier dreams this corresponded to and answered my cry. It exceeded the earlier rejoinder in an unknown perfection which is hard to define, for it resides in the fact that it was already there.

When I had reached an end of receiving it, I felt again that certainty, peeling out more than ever, that *now it has happened*.

### **Silence which is communication**

Just as the most eager speaking at one another does not make a conversation (this is most clearly shown in that curious sport, aptly termed discussion, that is, “breaking apart”, which is indulged in by men who are to some extent gifted with the ability to think), so for a conversation no sound is necessary, not even a gesture. Speech can renounce all the media of sense, and it is still speech.

Of course I am not thinking of lovers’ tender silence, resting in one another, the expression and discernment of which can be satisfied by a glance, indeed by the mere sharing of a gaze which is rich in inward relations. Nor am I thinking of the mystical



shared silence, such as is reported of the Franciscan Aegidius and Louis of France (or, almost identically, of two rabbis of the Hasidim) who, meeting once, did not utter a word, but “taking their stand in the reflection of the divine Face” experienced one another. For here too there is still the expression of a gesture, of the physical attitude of the one to the other.

What I am thinking of I will make clear by an example.

Imagine two men sitting beside one another in any kind of solitude of the world. They do not speak with one another, they do not look at one another, not once have they turned to one another. They are not in one another’s confidence, the one knows nothing of the other’s career, early that morning they got to know one another in the course of their travels. In this moment neither is thinking of the other; we do not need to know what their thoughts are. The one is sitting on the common seat obviously after his usual manner, calm, hospitably disposed to everything that may come. His being seems to say it is too little to be ready, one must also be really *there*. The other, whose attitude does not betray him, is a man who holds himself in reserve, withholds himself. But if we know about him we know that a childhood’s spell is laid on him, that his withholding of himself is something other than an attitude, behind all attitude is entrenched the impenetrable inability to communicate himself. And now—let us imagine that this is one of the hours which succeed in bursting asunder the seven iron bands about our heart—imperceptibly the spell is lifted. But even now the man does not speak a word, does not stir a finger. Yet he does something. The lifting of the spell has happened to him—no matter from where—without his doing. But this is what he does now: he releases in himself a reserve over which only he himself has power. Unreservedly communication streams from him, and the silence bears it to his neighbour. Indeed it was intended for him, and he receives it unreservedly as he receives all genuine destiny that meets him. He will be able to tell no one, not even himself,

what he has experienced. What does he now “know” of the other? No more knowing is needed. For where unreserve has ruled, even wordlessly, between men, the word of dialogue has happened sacramentally.

### **Opinions and the factual**

Human dialogue, therefore, although it has its distinctive life in the sign, that is in sound and gesture (the letters of language have their place in this only in special instances, as when, between friends in a meeting, notes describing the atmosphere skim back and forth across the table), can exist without the sign, but admittedly not in an objectively comprehensible form. On the other hand an element of communication, however inward, seems to belong to its essence. But in its highest moments dialogue reaches out even beyond these boundaries. It is completed outside contents, even the most personal, which are or can be communicated. Moreover it is completed not in some “mystical” event, but in one that is in the precise sense factual, thoroughly dovetailed into the common human world and the concrete time-sequence.

One might indeed be inclined to concede this as valid for the special realm of the erotic. But I do not intend to bring even this in here as an explanation. For Eros is in reality much more strangely composed than in Plato’s genealogical myth, and the erotic is in no way, as might be supposed, purely a compressing and unfolding of dialogue. Rather do I know no other realm where, as in this one (to be spoken of later), dialogue and monologue are so mingled and opposed. Many celebrated ecstasies of love are nothing but the lover’s delight in the possibilities of his own person which are actualized in unexpected fulness.

I would rather think of something unpretentious yet significant—of the glances which strangers exchange in a busy street as they pass one another with unchanging pace. Some of

these glances, though not charged with destiny, nevertheless reveal to one another two dialogical natures.

But I can really show what I have in mind only by events which open into a genuine change from communication to communion, that is, in an embodiment of the word of dialogue.

What I am here concerned with cannot be conveyed in ideas to a reader. But we may represent it by examples—provided that, where the matter is important, we do not eschew taking examples from the inmost recesses of the personal life. For where else should the like be found?

My friendship with one now dead arose in an incident that may be described, if you will, as a broken-off conversation. The date is Easter 1914. Some men from different European peoples had met in an undefined presentiment of the catastrophe, in order to make preparations for an attempt to establish a supra-national authority. The conversations were marked by that unreserve, whose substance and fruitfulness I have scarcely ever experienced so strongly. It had such an effect on all who took part that the fictitious fell away and every word was an actuality. Then as we discussed the composition of the larger circle from which public initiative should proceed (it was decided that it should meet in August of the same year) one of us, a man of passionate concentration and judicial power of love, raised the consideration that too many Jews had been nominated, so that several countries would be represented in unseemly proportion by their Jews. Though similar reflections were not foreign to my own mind, since I hold that Jewry can gain an effective and more than merely stimulating share in the building of a steadfast world of peace only in its own community and not in scattered members, they seemed to me, expressed in this way, to be tainted in their justice. Obstinate Jew that I am, I protested against the protest. I no longer know how from that I came to speak of Jesus and to say that we Jews knew him from within, in the impulses and stirrings of his Jewish being, in a

way that remains inaccessible to the peoples submissive to him. "In a way that remains inaccessible to you"—so I directly addressed the former clergyman. He stood up, I too stood, we looked into the heart of one another's eyes. "It is gone," he said, and before everyone we gave one another the kiss of brotherhood.

The discussion of the situation between Jews and Christians had been transformed into a bond between the Christian and the Jew. In this transformation dialogue was fulfilled. Opinions were gone, in a bodily way the factual took place.

### **Disputations in religion**

Here I expect two objections, one weighty and one powerful.

One argument against me takes this form. When it is a question of essential views, of views concerning *Weltanschauung*, the conversation must not be broken off in such a way. Each must expose himself wholly, in a real way, in his humanly unavoidable partiality, and thereby experience himself in a real way as limited by the other, so that the two suffer together the destiny of our conditioned nature and meet one another in it.

To this I answer that the experience of being limited is included in what I refer to; but so too is the experience of overcoming it together. This cannot be completed on the level of *Weltanschauung*, but on that of reality. Neither needs to give up his point of view; only, in that unexpectedly they do something and unexpectedly something happens to them which is called a covenant, they enter a realm where the law of the point of view no longer holds. They too suffer the destiny of our conditioned nature, but they honour it most highly when, as is permitted to us, they let themselves run free of it for an immortal moment. They had already met one another when each in his soul so turned to the other that from then on, making him present, he spoke really to and towards him.

The other objection, which comes from a quite different, in fact from the opposite, side is to the effect that this may be true so far as the province of the point of view reaches, but it ceases to be true for a confession of faith. Two believers in conflict about their doctrines are concerned with the execution of the divine will, not with a fleeting personal agreement. For the man who is so related to his faith that he is able to die or to slay for it there can be no realm where the law of the faith ceases to hold. It is laid on him to help truth to victory, he does not let himself be misled by sentiments. The man holding a different, that is a false, belief must be converted, or at least instructed; direct contact with him can be achieved only outside the advocacy of the faith, it cannot proceed from it. The thesis of religious disputation cannot be allowed to "go".

This objection derives its power from its indifference to the non-binding character of the relativized spirit—a character which is accepted as a matter of course. I can answer it adequately only by a confession.

I have not the possibility of judging Luther, who refused fellowship with Zwingli in Marburg, or Calvin who furthered the death of Servetus. For Luther and Calvin believe that the Word of God has so descended among men that it can be clearly known and must therefore be exclusively advocated. I do not believe that; the Word of God crosses my vision like a falling star to whose fire the meteorite will bear witness without making it light up for me, and I myself can only bear witness to the light but not produce the stone and say "This is it". But this difference of faith is by no means to be understood merely as a subjective one. It is not based on the fact that we who live to-day are weak in faith, and it will remain even if our faith is ever so much strengthened. The situation of the world itself, in the most serious sense, more precisely the relation between God and man, has changed. And this change is certainly not comprehended in its essence by our thinking only of the darkening, so familiar to