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Do Unto Others . . .

One has only to read the daily newspapers to gauge the amount of intolerance that exists in the world today, for it is most difficult to find a man, or a nation, that maintains an attitude of tolerance and a mind open to evidence and ready to reason. At such a time it is important that we take a really good look at ourselves to make certain that we, in our own smaller circle, are not contributing even on a most limited scale to the tensions and intolerances that we see abroad in the world.

Unfortunately there has been developed among us a feeling that what we believe is the right thing, and that no matter what evidence the other fellow might produce in an endeavour to convince us that there are other sides to a question, we are still right and that the other fellow is wrong. We do not even grant him the right to have his own opinions. In point of fact, many have even got to the stage when another person has only to express an opinion that some new idea or ideology contains some virtue, and that person is branded as having accepted all the practices and theories of the new idea or belief. This has led to the belief that the tolerant mind is merely a cloak for approval — that which is not positively rejected or repudiated, is secretly approved and accepted. It has indeed become a hard world for the person whose allegiance is to truth as verified by experience, whose faith is in the machinery of logic, and who is unmoved by any say-so, no matter how authoritative the source.

We could be mistaken in our ideas and beliefs, and it is rather a salutary thought that possibly we could be wrong, for the road along which man has travelled in his upward march is littered with lost causes, forsaken beliefs, mistaken opinions, and impossible loyalties, the effects of some of which are still with us. It is necessary to insist that toleration does not mean that what is tolerated is approved either in whole or in part; nor does it imply indifference to the subjects involved, or that a tolerant man should not hold to that which he believes. Indeed, the important thing always is, what a man believes to be right, and what he believes to be wrong, what ideals he entertains or whether or not he intends to live up to them in his everyday life. The tolerant man does not have to endure without complaint evil, cruelty, bigotry, injustice, poverty and misery, but he does have to realise, if he desires to take action about them, that there may be other ways than his own of dealing with them.

—Progress