

Therefore, neither knowledge nor virtue can be itself the end. Besides, the practice of virtue is no little thing. The yoke is sweet but it is still a yoke, and a yoke it must always be. But pain or even difficulty even in the slightest degree is utterly incompatible with felicity. The Stoic might have stood firm while his neighbors were intoxicated with pleasure, but we must not be naive—he wasn't exuberant with happiness.

Wealth, honor, fame, power, body-goods, pleasure, goods of the soul; the guest list is complete. None of these things taken separately nor the combination of all together can satisfy the demands of beatitude. Some of the goods are mutually exclusive; all of them will pass away. This alone is proof enough, felicity is not found here.

Humanity has many desires; only divinity can fulfill them all. In comparison with God, the goods of man, wealth, fame, power and all the rest, are not unlike visitors rapping at the door. We should not attempt to avoid them, nor should we send them away; these are friends; they have been sent by God. Welcome their company, enjoy their stay, however brief it might be. Remember—with them we have much in common! For if not visitors, what then on earth are we?

—Stephen Peterson, O.P.

## THE WORD OF GOD AND THE PSYCHIATRIST

**B**ENNETT CERF told a story recently about a little girl in an orphan asylum, who was so painfully shy and unattractive that she was shunned by the other children and regarded as a real problem by her teachers. She had been transferred from two other institutions and now the directors were seeking a pretext to send her on her way again. One afternoon they finally found their pretext. The little girl was seen fastening a letter in a branch of a tree that overhung the asylum wall. This was against all the rules and they could scarcely conceal their elation. Hurrying to the spot, the matron pounced on the letter and tore open the envelope. It read: "To anybody who finds this: I love you."

This is the kind of story that makes us re-think our ideas on what love is. From our childhood we have known that the Gospel message is one of

love. The theme of love is the never-old plot of story, play and movie, and we hear that love is what makes the world go round. And if the playwright, the ad-man and the novelist do not convince us, there are those soul-searching words of our Lord that leave little room for hedging: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment and the second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (*Mark* 12:34). We have heard these words in childhood, in adolescence, and now in our mature years. We have heard them with our ears, but have we heard them with our heart?

It is worth noting that these are not mere exhortations to those who would be perfect, like our Lord's advice to the rich young man to sell all that he possessed and give it to the poor if he would be perfect. These are the commands of the Lord to all who would follow Him, to all who would lead the Christian life. The Scribe who questioned Jesus about the greatest commandment agreed completely with Him, repeating almost word for word the two commands. We too, when we hear them agree with them in theory, but do we give our whole-hearted assent? Do we not have to admit that often they remain mere words, not changing our lives and motivating all of our actions. But see what Jesus said to the Scribe: "And Jesus seeing that he had answered wisely said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." When we assent to the truth of these commands of Christ, we are not far from the kingdom of God, but we are not yet in the kingdom. To arrive in the kingdom we must not only hear Christ's words and assent to them in faith, but we have to actually love the God Who is Love and all other human creatures that He has made.

When we reflect on the sublimity of this love that Christ commands us to have and on its unqualified character, we see it as something that should be flooding our lives with warmth, giving our most trivial actions deep meaning. Instead we are overcome with the awareness of our repeated failures, of such feeble attempts to love, of lip-service paid to the ideal without heart-service. Possibly we begin to rationalize it away as impractical and impossible of fulfillment. Little by little we drift away from all real effort to love with our whole soul and mind and strength.

Perhaps we never really understood what it meant. We heard it first in childhood before we had any notion of the meaning of love, and how could we be expected to practice what we did not understand? Children only experience the pleasure and warmth of *being* loved; some go on all during their life seeking this kind of love. Then all our attempts to love

are really masking our need to be loved, to be assured that we are lovable. Love of our own self and our welfare is indeed the beginning of all love, but it is only the beginning. If all our loves are selfish need-loves, they simply cannot reach out to embrace God and all other men. We still love as children, trying to perform an adult's work of loving with the equipment of a child. We have not done what St. Paul urges us to do in his great poem in praise of the love that is charity: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have put away the things of a child" (1 Cor. 13:11).

But even if we do succeed in putting away the things of a child and discover that child's love, basking in a mother's warmth and pleasure, is not real love, we are still frustrated and confused when we try to go out to others in love. Do we not meet all too often with apathy or resistance, and after repeated attempts and failures seek others more worthy of our love? All too often we find that loving God is not easy and often involves considerable pain and sacrifice. Does love cause pain and suffering? Even the happiest marriages fail to satisfy all desires and are hemmed in with difficulties and demands and hardships. The number of marriages that are failing is an indication that many are incapable of lasting love. Frustrated and lonely and confused by our failures in loving God and fellow-men, some give up and turn to the pleasures of the world; try to lose themselves in drink or work or debauch. Love did not work. It is not the answer. Christ could not possibly have meant what He said. One is reminded of the cartoon from "Season in Hell" showing the tortured individual leering out of the flames and saying: "I tried loving on earth, but what did it get me?"

What has happened that there are so many failures in the art of loving, so many well-intentioned people giving up the pursuit of Christ's ideal? All these things echo in our minds the words of Carl Jung that "modern man has suffered an almost fatal shock, psychologically speaking, and as a result has fallen into a profound uncertainty." Our times have rightly been described as *The Age of Anxiety* and Karen Horney was not far wrong when she talks about *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*. Too many people are seeking help and relief from their anxieties in psychiatry and psycho-therapy for these to be mere fads; they are more the symptoms of the prevalence of the disease. Can the scientists who see so much of the sickness of the human person tell us anything about the disease and its cure? More and more secular sociologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and psychologists are saying that love—human and divine—is

the ultimate practical answer to the individual and social problems of society. Pitrim Sorokin of Harvard University believes that "without a minimum of love no social harmony, no peace of mind, no freedom and no happiness are possible." Gordon Allport, the social-psychologist at the same University has reached the same conclusion from his studies: "When we imagine a perfect state of being, we invariably imagine the unconditional triumph of love." In the fields of psychiatry and psycho-therapy Sigmund Freud's basic thesis that mental illness is at bottom due to the unconscious distortions of the love-relationships has never been successfully challenged. Carl Jung, while breaking with Freud's "monosexual mania" believes that the symbols that lurk in the unconscious are chiefly those of love-relationships. Dr. Karl Menninger in his famous clinic has found that the only cure for some types of mental disorders is a liberal dose of "unsolicited love." Following the lead of Jung, Allers, Adler, Fromm, and Horney, more and more psychiatrists are coming to believe that the well-being and mental health of human beings depends on their love of God and their fellow-men.

But isn't this exactly what Christ tells us in the Gospel, and what St. Thomas elaborates in his theology, tracing the moral life, natural and supernatural, as a return to God motivated by love. It is not only a command of Christ, but it is the very law of our nature that we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. Failure to do this will result in eternal damnation, and a life of hell-on-earth as well. If we do not love, we are dead spiritually and psychologically. "He who does not love abides in death" (1 *John* 3:14).

Failure to love then is the root of all anxiety and frustration; it is the failure to become a complete human being. Can any of us say that we readily and easily fulfill our Lord's commands in this regard? Do we not often find ourselves darkly and miserably alone, shut up within ourselves and unable to go out spontaneously to others? We feel a vague uneasiness when we hear the gospel words on loving, and yet they still remain mere words; we seem unable to do anything about them. The inability to love or the manifestations of a disordered love can usually be traced to the lack of love in infancy or during the critical periods of childhood and adolescence. What are we to do then? Return to the womb and begin again?

This is the question that Nicodemus asked our Lord when he went to him in the night of his lovelessness, acknowledging Him to be a great teacher. And our Lord said to him: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (*John* 3:1). And

Nicodemus asked incredulously: "How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus answered: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Mark well the words are *enter into the kingdom* and not just *not far from* the kingdom as in the case of the Scribe. We have been born again of water; but have we been born again of the Spirit? The Spirit of God is Love and we must be born again in love, not by entering again into the womb, but by learning to love under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

When Nicodemus asked how this was to come about, our Lord rebuked him for being a teacher in Israel and not understanding when He spoke about *earthly* things. He should have known that we are expected to know about earthly things before we can begin to understand heavenly things. It is sheer folly to demand that we get beyond earthly love, when our biggest problem is getting as far as earthly love. In the normal course of things we cannot love supernaturally unless we have the ability to love in the natural order. This is what we mean when we say that grace perfects nature and does not destroy it. Charity does give us a new power to love, infinitely beyond our human powers, but it accomplishes this by elevating and strengthening our natural loving powers. In *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis makes it wonderfully clear that there cannot be any conflict between our natural loves and our love of God; rather our supernatural love depends on our natural love:

. . . the Divine Love does not substitute itself for the natural—as if we had to throw away our silver to make room for the gold. The natural loves are summoned to become modes of charity while also remaining the natural loves they are. As Christ is perfect God and perfect Man, the natural loves are called to become perfect charity and also perfect natural loves. Charity does not dwindle into merely natural love but natural love is taken up into, made the tuned and obedient instrument of Love Himself.

If we must love God and our neighbor with our whole being in the supernatural order, it might be well to check the instrument that will be used to play this celestial tune. And what better guide could we find than the findings of the psychologists and the sociologists who have reached the same conclusion in their fields as the theologians have in theirs: love is the one thing necessary. It would be foolish to think that theology has all the answers and that the secular sciences have nothing to offer. Pope Pius XII

repeatedly urged Catholics, priests and laymen, to participate in secular and temporal activities:

Be present everywhere for the faith, for Christ, in every way and to the utmost possible limit, wherever vital interests are at stake, wherever laws bearing on the worship of God, marriage, the family, the school, the social order are proposed and discussed. Be there, on guard and in action, whenever through education, the soul of a people is being forged (Pope Pius XII, September 11, 1947).

The cooperation of the theologian and the social scientist becomes almost imperative when they both reach the same conclusion about the ills of the times and offer the same remedy. If we are to fulfill Christ's commands in the supernatural order, we must know something about the human personality, its capacity for love and its basic need for love. Before we can begin to love, we must know something about the art of loving. And we can best find out about human love by turning to the findings of the social scientists who are devoting all their energies and skills to its study, dealing with those whose lives are failures because they are unable to love.

Among the best-known contributors to the growing literature of human love is the prominent American psychoanalyst, Erich Fromm. He has some very basic things to tell us about the subject in his *The Art of Loving* (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1956). He tells us quite simply that love is the answer to the problem of human existence, that it is an art which requires knowledge and effort to be learned. Unfortunately most people understand love as *being loved* rather than *loving actively*. Or they think there is nothing to be learned about love because it is just a matter of finding the right object, forgetting that it also involves a power within man:

The attitude that there is nothing easier than to love has continued to be the prevalent idea about love in spite of the almost overwhelming evidence to the contrary. There is hardly any enterprise which is started with such tremendous hopes and expectations, and yet, which fails as regularly as love. If this were the case with any other activity, people would be eager to know the reasons for the failure, and to learn how to do better—or they would give up the activity. Since the latter is impossible in the case of love, there seems to be only one adequate way to overcome the failure of love—to examine the reasons for this failure and to proceed to study the meaning of love.

We could not possibly sketch Dr. Fromm's theory of love in this article, but there are a few important points that he insists upon. The activity of love always implies certain basic elements: 1. *Care*. "Love is the active concern for the life and growth of that which we love." 2. *Responsibility*. "The response to the needs, expressed or unexpressed, of another human being." 3. *Respect*. "The concern that the other person should grow and unfold as he is, for his own sake and not for serving me." 4. *Knowledge*. "I have to know the other person *objectively* to overcome the irrationally distorted picture I have of him."

Love of ourselves and love of others are not alternatives; love for oneself will be found in all those who are capable of loving others. Genuine love implies care, respect, responsibility and knowledge and is brought about not exclusively by the object loved, but is an active striving for the growth and happiness of the loved person, rooted in one's own capacity to love others because one loves oneself. Love is not chiefly a relationship to a particular person; "it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the person's relatedness to the world as a whole, not toward one object of love."

As for married love, Dr. Fromm insists that love is not the result of adequate sexual satisfaction, but rather sexual happiness is the result of love. This is certainly a point that needs to be stressed today. Dr. Fromm himself points out that the illusion of love as mutual sexual satisfaction and love as a haven from loneliness are the two most frequent forms of the ever-increasing disintegration of love in modern western society.

Like the practice of any art there are certain general requirements. It demands discipline, the discipline of one's whole life; concentration; patience; supreme concern for mastery of the art. A whole book could be written about these general requirements and still not exhaust the subject. But in particular, the practice of the art of loving demands the overcoming of one's own narcissism; one absolutely must be able to see people and things as they are *objectively*. And this can only be done by reason, the emotional attitude behind reason being humility.

One must have great faith in oneself and in others, but what matters most in love is faith in the ability of one's own love to evoke love in others. Faith requires courage and the taking of risks, the readiness to accept even pain and disappointment in loving. In short, to love and be loved means that we judge certain values of ultimate concern, and then take the leap and stake everything on these values.

Dr. Fromm's analysis of human love inevitably calls to mind the

fundamental difference between love of friendship and love of concupiscence, known to Aristotle and developed and refined by St. Thomas. The love of concupiscence or pleasure is demanding and urgent; it wants to get something and fasten on it for its own satisfaction. But the love of friendship is genuine love in which we wish good to someone else. This distinction, so clear to St. Thomas and all Christians up until the time of the rise of ethical subjectivism, is now coming back into its own through the experimentation of psychology. So Dr. Fromm can say that most people understand love as *being loved*, as pleasure, rather than *loving actively*, the love of friendship. The basic elements that he lists for the activity of love: care, responsibility, respect and knowledge, can be fulfilled only in the love of friendship. Through modern science and clinical psychology there is an evident return to sound theology.

But no matter how much we know about the art of loving, about the fundamental agreement between theology and psychology, discussion must end before the decisive step in loving is taken. Aware now of the capabilities and competence of the human powers of loving and the tremendous amount of practice and effort that must be expended to remain tuned to the needs and requirements of others, we are better equipped to understand the Gospel message. Realizing that we can never love others unless we first love ourselves, and that our love for God is only evidenced by our love for others, we might re-examine our own ideas about love, try to make them less subjective and sentimental, and then take those first decisive steps in a new approach to the Word of God: "A new commandment I give you that you love one another; that as I have loved you, you also love one another" (*John* 13:34).

—J. D. Campbell, O.P.

## ALL YOU WHO THIRST

"Sheila, come home. Mother is dying."

Six words of a classified ad can sum up untold human misery.

The Church inserts her notices in the liturgy.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, be converted to the Lord thy God." <sup>1</sup>

**I**N THE CHURCH'S case, the children drifting away are the ones in peril. If the Church is sad it is because her children miss the point of life, and miss it by so much that often they think they have grasped it com-