

A charming phrase of Freud's seems to hit off the present disarray in the world and the Church. Referring to the chaos of sexual possibilities before they have found a socialized and personal form, he spoke of babies being polymorphously perverse. And it is because this is the chaotic-creative condition to which an individual may tend to regress in periods of grave crisis, becoming again like a child, that the phrase is also an apt figure for any macro-social turning-point.

The seething in the world and the Church is evident enough. What is perhaps not so evident is the promise contained in the very polymorphousness of experiment in society as a whole. Certain individuals and groups within that society can pass through a process of reconstruction whose pattern can then serve as a model for others. Such patterns can be discerned from time to time, at least tentatively.

And in the line of any such reconstruction, two things appear to be prominent. On the one hand, as whenever in times of great unrest archetypal forces and fantasies are released anew to inspire and delude, certain priorities may be perceived again with an obscure clarity. One of these is the priority of love: 'Love is all we need.' It may be a case of a new morality in which particular rules must be and seem to be subservient to love; or it may be impatience with a sexual and marital code that does not respect the persons of the couple; or else the perception that the love of two somehow involves a universal fraternity. On the other hand, to the extent that love does reassert itself as primary in this way, it then demands to be lived out in a perhaps excited release and revolution and its aftermath. Love that prolongs itself throughout a lifetime and in response to infinitely complex calls brings with it the realization that it must grow into fidelity if it is to be itself. And fidelity in turn must become particularized in terms of justice, what is so variously due in our social relationships. And so there comes the rediscovery that love is social, political, even legislative—in the recurrent dialectic according to which love not only gives birth to but is born from justice, not only expresses but finds itself in acts of giving what is due.

The fact that in the process of change and reconstruction we rediscover for ourselves the interpenetration of justice and charity, law and love, does not, however, mean that we are therefore back where we were. Two new elements have entered our modern situation to give thrust to the spiral; our relationships are now planetary,

and we can in principle do something about it. The demands of justice are now much wider, ultimately as wide as the one world we have technologically and psychologically become. Further, as Fr Schillebeeckx puts it in the June number of *Concilium*: 'Today, in contrast with "medieval" man, we know that the social "establishment" is not a divine creation, but a cultural and man-made situation which can be dealt with and reformed.' It is not the relationship of justice and charity that has changed in itself, but merely the present implications. The point is therefore *not* that we now want justice rather than charity; justice and mercy are still both expressive tokens and instrumental causes of charity, but now we wish to extend them more widely *because we are steadily learning the techniques of doing so*, politically and technologically.

*Agapé*, charity, is therefore a love that expresses itself in structures which hold recognitions of rights, as Fr Kerr points out in his article; but the rights we are increasingly conscious of are the rights of the poor, and the poor of the world. And it is these claims that so disturb our present structures—of thought, of relationships, of justice—to the point of demanding that they be remade, as it were from the beginning.

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