

## DESIGNS FOR LOVING

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‘WHAT is this thing called love?’ The question has been debated times without number: by the great poets, philosophers, mystics; by alert little logicians and portentous statisticians; by playwrights, novelists, songsters; and of course by lovers of various kinds, from those who indulge in a fever of passionate introspection to the simpler souls who sometimes briefly wonder in a bemused and befogged sort of way what has hit them. The plain man may well find himself confused by the variety of often conflicting answers given to the question, the variety of names given to the experience or to different aspects of it. In an interesting analysis of *Moral Values in the Ancient World*<sup>1</sup> Professor John Ferguson discusses such concepts as the Greek *eros*, *philia*, *philanthropia*, *homonoia*, the Latin *amicitia*, *pietas*, *humanitas*, and the Hebrew *chesed* and *’ahabah*—the former of these last two being the steadfast, covenanted loving-kindness of God and *pietas* of man, the latter the deeper, unconditioned love that has in it something alike of *eros* and of *philanthropia*<sup>2</sup>. But the two worlds of thought, the Jewish and the Graeco-Roman, were fundamentally different and could impinge but little on one another until Christianity brought to the world its new inspiration, its new concept of love, and what was in effect a new word to describe it: *agape*.

Again there has been a great deal of discussion about the difference, and the relationship, between *eros* and *agape*; and again the discussion has led to confusion because of the varying interpretations or emphases put on the words by various writers. Some have seen the two simply in terms of a contrast between getting and giving, between a love that is selfish, possessive and greedy and one that is selfless and undemanding. But this is altogether too *simpliste* if one admits that the ‘divine frenzy’ of Eros can inspire

1 Methuen, 256 pp., 22s. 6d. Eight chapters deal with Greek ethical ideas; two with Roman; one with ‘the contribution of Judaism’: the final chapter discusses the concept of *agape* in the light of the New Testament evidence. The author’s wide learning enables him to introduce in passing some interesting asides, such as the fact that Marx borrowed his ‘opiate of the people’ dictum from Canon Charles Kingsley; but does not prevent such a surprising remark as that in the study of love Plato is Europe’s profoundest thinker ‘apart from Freud’ (pp. 165, 90).

2 *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 224-5.

to deeds of heroic self-sacrifice or on the other hand that there is a sense in which it is true to say that 'there is a yearning in God that needs satisfaction',<sup>3</sup> that Eckhart was right when he said that 'God needs man' and Julian of Norwich right in speaking of the 'love-longing' of Christ.

Others have put more stress on the idea of *eros* as an irresistible 'fate', a tyranny, a madness; the literature of the world, ancient, medieval and modern, is indeed full of this theme, but it is clearly a mistake so to restrict this to the concept of *eros* as to make *agape* by comparison seem a coldly reasonable affair. The erotic imagery of the *Song of Songs* is traditionally applied to mystical love; and it is to the same sort of imagery that the mystics themselves turn to describe their experiences. Nor, as we shall see, can one hope to define holiness—as opposed to rectitude—in terms of what is coldly reasonable and right. And if, as Professor Ferguson remarks,<sup>4</sup> when St Ignatius cried 'My Eros is crucified' he was referring to his own sensual nature, and it was Origen who interpreted the word as referring to Christ, still, the identification was accepted, and became part of the traditional language of mysticism.

A similar antithesis appears in the discussion of love and marriage. It will be remembered that M. Denis de Rougemont in his *Passion and Society*<sup>5</sup> approached the problem of 'romantic love' historically, from the study of 'courtly love', of catharism and manicheism, and from the examination of the Tristram-Iseult theme and its derivatives. For him, the antithesis as it exists for us today is clear-cut indeed: 'Passion and marriage are essentially irreconcilable. Their origins and their ends make them mutually exclusive. Their co-existence in our midst constantly raises insoluble problems, and the strife thereby engendered constitutes a persistent danger for every one of our social safeguards.'<sup>6</sup> Mr William P. Wylie in his *The Pattern of Love*<sup>7</sup> borrows from Pro-

3 Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

4 *op. cit.*, p. 101.

5 Faber and Faber, revised and augmented edition, 1956, 336pp., 30s. The author has largely re-written Book II and added to Book VI; he mentions the substantial criticisms of his thesis made by Fr D'Arcy in his *The Mind and Heart of Love*, but has not allowed these to lead to a substantial alteration of the thesis.

6 p. 277.

7 Longmans, Green, 212pp., 16s. The author leans heavily on Professor Lewis and still more on the late Charles Williams: some readers may well find his style, and sometimes his thought, too reminiscent of the latter's particular brand of romanticism, which incidentally leads him sometimes into over-emphasis: it is surely an exaggeration, for

fessor C. S. Lewis the term 'Mother Kirk' to describe 'all those institutional Christian bodies and individual persons who adhere to the traditional doctrine of marriage as handed down by the Western Church',<sup>8</sup> and notes her 'curiously equivocal' attitude to 'the sexual side of marriage':<sup>9</sup> on the one hand the glorification of marriage as a sacrament, on the other hand the puritan streak in so much Christian thinking, the legalist emphasis (the 'insistence on the *legal* side of marriage as apparently the only thing that matters, the only thing the Church will worry about'),<sup>10</sup> and again the 'widespread idea that sexual sin is the worst, if not indeed the only, sin, and the even more widespread idea that all forms of extra-marital intercourse are equally sinful'.<sup>11</sup> It may—and indeed must—be said that these last two ideas are no part of the Church's teaching; it remains true that they are in fact widely accepted as such, and it is difficult to explain this apart from a misplaced emphasis in the thought of some who represent the official teaching and, in the matter of the equality of extra-marital sins, on an exclusive preoccupation with the legal, as opposed to the human, aspects of behaviour—for in fact it is obvious enough that there is a world of (moral) difference between a loveless, commercialized sexual act and a truly loving though illicit union of lovers.

Mr Wylie devotes much attention to the idea of 'recognition' in explaining the phenomenon we call 'falling in love': the lover seeing in the person loved, as Williams put it, 'the life he was meant to possess instead of his own', or, in Professor Guitton's phrase, the person loved seeming 'to be familiar even before being known'.<sup>12</sup> But here again confusion appears, the doctors disagree: 'that there is such a thing as "love at first sight" few would be prepared to deny', writes Mr Wylie; for Rougemont on the other hand love at first sight and the 'irresistible' nature of passion are merely 'tropes of a romantic rhetoric';<sup>13</sup> once again everything depends on just what one means by 'love'. Mr Wylie can appeal

instance, to say that passionate love without sexual fulfilment is *always* 'frustrated' (p. 54)—or for that matter that Williams himself 'blazed an entirely fresh trail of thought' (p. 82).

8 p. 2.

9 p. 14.

10 p. 21.

11 *ibid.*

12 *op. cit.*, pp. 80-1.

13 *op. cit.*, p. 314.

to the *stupor* which fell upon Dante, as it has doubtless fallen upon innumerable human beings, in the moment of meeting and 'recognition'; but Rougemont can rightly claim that 'if desire travels swiftly and anywhere, love is slow and difficult':<sup>14</sup> what we have to ask is whether, when we speak of falling in love, of being in love, and of loving, we are using the word each time in the same sense.

One can in fact hold that love at first sight does happen without being thereby committed to regarding the love as irresistible fate; Fr D'Arcy's criticism of Rougemont was precisely that he left no room for any intermediate (Apolline) love between the dark pagan Eros and supernatural *agape*, nor explained how *eros* can be transformed into *agape*;<sup>15</sup> Mr Wylie on the other hand surely overstates his case when he writes of the Church trying 'desperately hard' to keep religious experience and romantic love apart,<sup>16</sup> but he does clearly state that the transformation of the latter into *caritas* is precisely the end at which human love should aim.<sup>17</sup>

The fact is that if we are dealing with the calmer forms of affection, with *philia* or *philanthropia* or *humanitas*, we feel we are on solid ground; we can at least to some extent see clearly; once we get into deeper waters we tend to feel lost in hopeless confusion; for humanity *is* in confusion; at any deep level human reality and experience are wildly untidy, and the untidiest thing of all is love which, whether as the *eros* of sexual passion or the *agape* of the mystics' union with God, refuses to be fitted into neat formulae or abstract theorizings. The historical thesis that 'romantic love' somehow appeared for the first time in eleventh-century Provence can only be accepted, if at all, after we have ruthlessly purged the term of many elements normally associated with it; it cannot simply be equated with *eros*; *eros* and *agape* themselves seem to refuse to keep in an orderly fashion to their respective sides of the fence; nor can we equate them, as a contrasting pair, with Dionysus and Apollo, or with darkness and light or death and life or desire and *benevolentia*.

If we set all theorizings aside and start simply from the data of our untidy experience we seem constrained to say that a love

<sup>14</sup> p. 313.

<sup>15</sup> *The Mind and Heart of Love*, p. 40.

<sup>16</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>17</sup> p. 133.

which can truly be so called—that is, which is not a mere matter of chemical reactions, of lust, of fantasy, of narcissist-projection—does come to human beings in a variety of ways and guises, in varying degrees of suddenness, of force, of depth, of irresistibility, of calmness or frenzy, of idealism or earthiness, of hunger and selflessness, and may be found to have as its object almost anything from the immensities of the Godhead to a bedraggled rag-doll or the dents and wrinkles in an old boot. We seem constrained moreover to go on to say that like most if not all sublunary realities—and even our sublunary apprehensions of divine reality—it is a paradox, and therefore cannot be understood unless we fully accept and grasp the two sides of the paradox. Professor Ferguson may argue that *eros* in its inmost nature is ‘the love that gets not the love that gives’:<sup>18</sup> the fact remains that in authentic love as we know it the distinction is blurred if not abolished, there is both getting and giving and the giving is a form of getting, the getting a form of giving. The same is true of the distinction between selfish and selfless, once the fact is learnt and lived that the highest self-realization is to be found in the selflessness of love; or between possessed and possessing, since where there is real love there is an equality underlying all differences and each of the lovers is both possessed and possessor. The same love may include—and perhaps in its perfection fuse—the frenzy of *eros*, the reasonableness of *philia*. Even that death-wish which has been seen as the logical outcome of the frustrated desire of *eros* for complete fusion can find some sort of echo in the longings of *agape*—did not St Paul long to ‘be dissolved’ and be with Christ?—for the infinity of desire is as true (though in different senses) of the one love as of the other.

From the kind of love that is so overwhelming as to be comparable to possession by a *daimon* to the placid, uncomplicated affection of simple souls at the other extreme there is in fact an infinite variety of kinds and degrees of love; and in the Christian view of things there seems to be no reason why any of them should not be transformed into *caritas* provided only that the people concerned are prepared to accept the realities of the situation however paradoxical and perhaps unpalatable. Professor Ferguson, criticizing the pagan ideal of autarcy or self-sufficiency, notes how in *Peer Gynt* the motto of the trolls is ‘To thyself be

<sup>18</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 101.

enough' but of the humans 'To thyself be true', and adds that 'however flounderingly the humans might behave, we cannot but see it as the nobler and higher aim'.<sup>19</sup> The tragedy is that we flounder intellectually as well as morally; without knowing it we deceive ourselves, we lose sight of reality, of the truth, and so come all too easily to living in a fantasy world while allowing real living and loving to pass us by.

It is for this reason that Dom Aelred Watkin's small, unpretentious *The Enemies of Love*<sup>20</sup> is so important. The book does not of course deal only with these 'enemies'; but the discussion of them lies at the heart of it; and the point of immediate concern to us here is that they are enemies of love because they are enemies of truth, of the truth or reality of love itself. The harrowing sense of insecurity—Does he or she really love me?—makes us demanding of proof and so makes us forget the truth that depends upon giving 'not indeed without hope of return, but without consideration of return'—for love is not 'something that just "happens", it is something that has to be made', and that is the way of its making. The same sort of thing is true of jealousy, of possessiveness, of self-indulgence (as turning the loved person into a means, not an end, and so destroying the reality of love); most obviously of all it is true of 'false romance', which leads us not to love a real human being (or for that matter a real thing) but to create an 'entirely imaginative and fictitious picture' and to worship that, or to create a similarly unreal picture of what love should be like and to blame the other person involved when we find the fiction inescapably confronted by the reality. 'Love should not be blind. . . . We have to learn that it is through things as they are that God works and love grows.'<sup>21</sup>

But if the total reality is accepted, loved and lived, then indeed *eros* can be transformed, can be integrated into *agape*, though it will not be done quickly or easily. Whatever we may think of

<sup>19</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>20</sup> Burns Oates, 118 pp., 10s. 6d. The fact that the author's style is sometimes a little laboured, pedestrian, not without its *clichés*, sometimes a little careless, or that a few statements may seem at least to need qualification (can we truly say that love is never the cause, only the occasion, of pain? Is it not truer to say with Ferguson that love 'may sear its object' since, refusing to achieve good by evil means, it prefers to overcome 'by redemptive suffering?') should not be allowed to obscure the fact that we are here dealing not with abstract theorizings but with reality, with the problems and dangers and pains we all know, and with the (real) glory to which, if properly dealt with, they may lead.

<sup>21</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 69, 72.

the possibility of an instantaneous 'recognition' we must surely agree with Dom Aelred that 'love's complete happiness' cannot be achieved without labour and tears.<sup>22</sup> We shall be on the road to the fullness of reality only if we can accept what seems to be the pattern of all created reality as we know it: the birth of life out of death, of light out of darkness. This, certainly, is the pattern of the soul's progress in the love of God as the mystics (elaborating and applying our Lord's words about the grain of wheat and the mystery of rebirth through the dark waters) describe it for us; and a line in a responsory in the Breviary puts the process very succinctly (and at the same time describes the course of many human love-relationships) when it speaks of the soul first catching sight of God (*quem vidi*) and falling in love with what it glimpses (*amavi*), then trusting (*credidi*) when darkness succeeds the flash of enlightenment, and then finally loving with the deeper love which is called *dilectio* and which has in it the element of deliberate choice—'my beloved, chosen out of thousands'—and therefore the steadfastness, the covenanted commitment, of the Jewish *chesed*, the love that as Professor Ferguson points out finds its tenderest expression in the story of Osee, the love that 'is not broken when the one loved turns aside'.<sup>23</sup>

From *amor* to *dilectio*, from *eros* to *agape*: the more perfect love is born, in darkness, out of the less: it transforms it; it does not abolish, it integrates. As Christians we are meant, not to make a picture of God's love by cutting it to the pattern of our chaotic experience of human love, but to decide what human love ought to be like by comparing it with what we can discover of the uncreated Love. And of that we discover something from the Bible in general and the picture of the incarnate Word in particular, and from the lives and the love of the saints. Both sources show that the *eros*-qualities of love have certainly not disappeared: we find here something dangerous and fierce like the pentecostal wind and fire, unpredictable like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, prodigal like the woman with her pot of precious spikenard or like the father of 'the prodigal' in the parable; we find a love both tender and terrible; unconventional, as Christ was unconventional; not 'respectable', any more than Christ was 'respectable' when he consorted

<sup>22</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>23</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 219.

with publicans and sinners; disorderly, if order is to be defined in terms either of worldly prudence or of a smug decorum. Professor Ferguson rightly contrasts sanctity with the 'philosophy of safety' (though his interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of the golden mean may be questioned);<sup>24</sup> the Horatian *est modus in rebus* is no motto for a saint; holiness is not merely superlative justice or righteousness; the Christian moral life is based on the virtues but it includes also the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, the suprarational 'divine instinct' or impulse, the mighty Wind and Fire whose effect was to make the onlookers think that the Apostles were drunk—and the well-known prayer, *Anima Christi*, contains the phrase *inebria me* which in fact means 'make me drunk'.

Yet however high his mystical soarings the Christian can never leave the pedestrian path of virtue, of the ten commandments; his behaviour may be suprarational, never irrational; the 'frenzy' must be divine, not subhuman; and the greatest heights and depths of *caritas* are always characterized by those 'calm' qualities of which St Paul speaks in his panegyric: *caritas* is always patient, kind, trustful, enduring, never envious or insolent or proud. . . . The paradox is maintained: our Lord in the Gospel constantly speaks of rewards, yet St Catherine of Siena is rebuked for her egoism when she expresses her longing for heaven; God's love for us is prodigal in its generosity—'while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us': the love, as Professor Ferguson points out 'is not conditioned by human merit'<sup>25</sup>—yet he is none the less a 'jealous God' a 'burning and consuming fire'. Even in regard to the basic issue of the goal of love, of fusion or union, there is paradox rather than mutual exclusion: St Paul's 'I live, now not I', St Catherine of Genoa's 'My Me is God', the story of St Catherine of Siena's change of hearts with Christ, the very phrase 'living in love' or the word of John Donne, 'inter-inanimation', the mystics' description of the soul as *scintilla Dei*, the spark coming out of and having to return to the eternal Fire,

<sup>24</sup> It is quite true that 'you cannot have too much goodness' (p. 40); but that is surely not what the doctrine implies. You can fail in courage either by defect (cowardice) or excess (rashness): but the excess is not (using words strictly) an excess of *courage*; it means that the energies which might have been the *material* of an act of courage become, because for example of excessive precipitation, the material of an act of foolhardiness; once one has so to speak found the formula of true courage then of course one cannot have too much of it.

<sup>25</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 219.



or again what Professor Guitton has to say of the discovery of the greater self through learning to live in the divine 'erosphere': all these seem to imply something deeper, more radical, perhaps more catastrophic, than the word 'union' (as opposed to 'fusion') need suggest; and, as we have seen, the way to this goal is darkness, is a kind of death—Christ's themes of the grain of wheat, of the losing and finding of life; the self-naughting of the mystics; the traditional Christian word 'mortification' which has a so much wider content than the Greek *askesis*—so that to desire the goal involves desiring the death-darkness that leads to it, implies then a sort of death-wish.

But this death-wish *is* a life-wish: the aspect of fusion (or absorption *into*) can never in the Christian view be separated from the aspect of duality (or union *with*), for if a love-relationship ceased to be a dialogue, a *communicatio*, and became instead a devouring-and-being-devoured it would cease to be love. The fusion-aspect in isolation is indeed death because unreality, fantasy: in 'integral' love a real (though not physical, not 'ontological') death and death-wish are there, but it is a 'death', a darkness, accepted as the means to that life which is to be the final word.

If then with Kierkegaard we say that as God creates *ex nihilo*, out of nothingness, so he reduces us to nothingness in order to make something of us even now; if with Thomas Merton, echoing a host of mystics and spiritual writers, we say that a man must be poor and stripped and naked before the water and the Spirit can re-create him; if, stressing the 'erotic' element in the Christian process, we remember that 'Eros is passion' and that the very word suggests that a man in the power of Eros 'is an object, not a subject, a sufferer, not an agent', if we recall the Greek vase which depicts Eros moving 'with powerful wings over the face of the waters' like the brooding Dove of *Genesis*—for Eros 'is the great urge by which the year renews its life' and in some of the very oldest religious mysteries 'the cult of Eros was fused with that of the Earth Mother'<sup>26</sup>—if we recall all this we must also recall that it is only one aspect of the paradox: there is the calmer side, the lighter side (using the word without levity), the Apolline side, patient, reasonable, gentle, the side of unassuming commonsense and above all of humility—for humility is truth, accepting the facts about ourselves, accepting (among other

26 Cf. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–80.

things) the fact that in the sphere of *caritas* we are not cut out to be eagles like John the Divine any more than in the human sphere we are cut out to be among the world's Great Lovers. . . . Not eagles but sparrows; and God does not demand of sparrows the epic soarings of eagles. But if we may recall this side for our comfort we must also recall it as a warning against the danger of any turning of the acceptance of darkness into a cult of darkness—or for that matter the danger of thinking that all is lost unless we *feel* the divine fire burning within us, *feel* possessed by a divine frenzy.

The Christian can never accept *surtout point de zèle*—any more than he can accept compromise or the cult of safety—as his ideal; he will only distort and diminish love, whether of God or of man, if he tries to rid it of its 'erotic' elements. On the other hand he will miss the whole point if he thinks of it as exclusively or primarily a matter of feeling.

'To be in love is not necessarily to love' says M. de Rougemont;<sup>27</sup> and at first sight the statement may look puzzling, we may feel it would be truer the other way round. But he continues: 'To be in love is a state; to love, an act. A state is suffered or undergone; but an act has to be decided upon'; the commandment to love the Lord our God 'can only be concerned with acts. It would be absurd to demand of a man a state of *sentiment*'.<sup>28</sup> This 'being in love' then is not the same thing as Dante's *essere in caritate*. Again, Mr Wylie says that 'from being *in love*' lovers 'have to become *loving*';<sup>29</sup> and he means that from belonging merely to each other they have to grow into belonging to God and therefore to love: they must 'in a sense become love itself': and again it is only this which is *essere in caritate*. Professor Ferguson is closer to Dante (because to St Thomas, since he is discussing Aristotle) when, also distinguishing between state and acts, he says that love is 'in its first sense a state, an attitude, a spirit, an alignment of the personality, what Aristotle would call an *hexis*',<sup>30</sup> that is, a *habitus* or virtue—for virtue is not essentially a question of what we feel but of what we will and do.

Yet once again we have to beware of oneness. To say that we are not commanded to *feel* loving is not to say that feelings

<sup>27</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>28</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 311 (*italics mine*).

<sup>29</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 117-8.

<sup>30</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 231.

are unimportant, still less that we can make a purely unemotional rectitude our ideal. Dom Aelred is here again very much to the point: 'Rectitude unaccompanied by affection is seldom inspiring, sympathy without real human feeling is seldom convincing':<sup>31</sup> and if it is doubtful whether most of us would get far in forming a virtuous habit unless we had sometimes the appropriate feelings to help us, it is certain that we cannot exclude the emotional life from the concept of living in *caritate*, for *caritas* must affect in some degree every level of the personality, must in the end remould the personality as a whole. It would be a tragic mistake to confuse *benevolentia* with the somewhat impersonal, chilly, perhaps even condescending implications of 'benevolence'; Italian lovers say *Ti voglio bene*, and it means literally 'I will you well', but it also means infinitely more than that.

Let us return to the subject of marriage and—not Mother Kirk now but—the Church, Christianity. What ought we to do as Christians in face of the present breakdown of marriage in our society? What is our best defence of Christian marriage as an ideal? Certainly the worst thing we can do is to encourage the idea that for us marriage is a purely juridical or legalistic affair, or that the Church is timorous or grudging in its attitude to passion: we have to expose the hollowness, the sham, the emptiness of false romance by putting something positive in its place, by showing forth the reality and depth and richness of Christian passion, of *eros* and *agape* made one; we have to show forth *eros*, not as a 'mighty god', but as an aspect of the mighty God, and the mighty God crucified. How can we do this in view of the Church's 'intransigent' emphasis on the legal, the contractual? If holiness and conventionality are incompatible, how can the ideal of a holy and happy marriage and conventionality be compatible? The answer is that at all costs we must avoid confusing convention with covenant, with troth, with choice or *dilectio*. M. de Rougemont may or may not be correct in saying that 'when marriage was established on social conventions, and hence, from the individual standpoint, on chance, it had at least as much likelihood of success as marriage based on "love" alone'; he is surely right in holding that in the last resort (since in the last resort, when all ponderables have been duly weighed, the shape of the future—even of the future I and the future Thou—is

31 *op. cit.*, p. 85.

unforeseeable) ‘everything depends on a *decision*’:<sup>32</sup> but a decision, a choice, an act of *dilectio*, a covenant, *not* a convention. Nothing could be more unconventional than the marriage of Osee, but his love triumphed because like God’s love for Israel it was a ‘love of commitment’, a covenanted love. Perhaps it is true that, if ecstatic happiness is made the criterion, most marriages are either total or partial failures, the best of them achieving only a sort of jog-trot equanimity; but if the covenant is kept through the darkness of disappointment or tragedy it may be that the greater fulfilment will come in the end: the patience of the covenanted love may produce a more perfect work than an endlessly unruffled happiness would have done.

Covenant and love (but not conventionality and love) are thus like law and freedom in St Paul: Christ came not to abolish but to fulfil the law by turning it from a bondage into a liberation, and it becomes that when it becomes part of oneself, internalized, integrated, by love—of the law or the Lawgiver or both. Law or covenant without love means bondage; love without law or covenant means chaos and catastrophe; law-as-love or love-covenanted mean both freedom and permanence because a steadfast choice, *dilectio*. And love-covenanted includes passion-covenanted; so that (if we interpret ‘morals’ as meaning ‘purely conventional moral standards’) we can adopt M. de Rougemont’s definition of marriage as ‘the institution in which passion is “contained”, not by morals, but by love’.<sup>33</sup> For continence is of little moral value unless it is positive in purpose; and this is part of its purpose: the channelling, deepening, personalizing of passion in husband and wife, so that it is allowed to become neither a selfish, isolated pleasure-seeking on the part of the one or the other, nor a preoccupation with each other to the point of excluding other claims upon them. Another part of its purpose is of course to restrict the expression of passion (in deed or in heart) to the terms of the covenant; but this too is essentially positive since it means on the one hand the continued creation of all that is involved in the covenant and on the other hand the ability to accept and sanctify—and therefore be enriched by—other affections instead of allowing them to become destructive infidelities.

Professor Ferguson translates *teleioi* in our Lord’s injunction,

<sup>32</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 294, 304.

<sup>33</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 315.

Be ye perfect, as 'all-embracing', noting that while this does not exhaust the meaning of the word it is included within it.<sup>34</sup> *Essere in caritate*: to come to the love of all is the goal of Christian *caritas*; and into that quest any authentic love, if its unruly elements are 'contained', can be integrated. We start from the fact that all that is is of itself holy, coming as it does from the hands of God: all sin therefore, as Dom Aelred puts it, 'must partake in some measure of the nature of sacrilege',<sup>35</sup> just as all sin should be seen less as a transgression than as a rebellion—a rebellion against God, against Love.<sup>36</sup> And it is the sin, the rebellion, that is privation, life-refusal, non-being. There would doubtless be less of a chasm between the Church and the world if we were more at pains to proclaim, and live, the positive content of our heritage, the humanness of our ideal of holiness. 'Charity cannot exist in a vacuum apart from any expression of it in human experience, while purity is a positive quality of love and not the mere negation of lust. The love of man, provided it is love, cannot conflict with the love of God, for love cannot war against itself.'<sup>37</sup> And it is the paradoxical totality of love that has to be affirmed and lived if we are to fulfil the Christian pattern, to become 'all-embracing', complete: it is *eros* and *agape* together, *eros* integrated into *agape*; and there are both darkness and light, death and life, pain and joy, frustration and fulfilment, as long as we remain *in via*, pilgrims on our way; but what we have to believe and proclaim is that this mingling of light and shadow is not final, and that if we are loyal to our covenanted loves divine and human we shall come in the end to gaze on, and for ever live and rejoice in, the 'everlasting splendour'.

34 *op. cit.*, p. 235.

35 *op. cit.*, p. 12.

36 Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

37 Watkin, *op. cit.*, p. 88.