

could swallow that kind of communication early in the sermon, we—they and I—could go on to explore ‘God is love’, ‘No one has ever seen God’ in a style of communication which for want of a better word I could call ‘poetic’, meaning indirect and allusive rather than direct and declaratory. The rest of the sermon became an exercise in this style of indirect communication, the only way, it now seemed, in which reflections and half-intuitions of years past could be put into words.

It would be tedious and again pretentious to list the allusions which were drawn into the text of the sermon as it wrote itself. Of course they were not deliberately introduced, but as the words were put down on the page the allusions became more or less conscious—Dante, Aristotle (the *de Anima* on touch!), D. H. Lawrence, Shakespeare, Rahner on the Sacred Heart, apart from Scripture. The question remains in my mind as to whether this sort of sermon is a legitimate exercise, and beyond that what sort of communication is appropriate in theology generally. For instance, there is the play on the word ‘naked’, first in the Isaiah quotation and finally in the last words of the sermon; is this sort of ambiguity, whether or not creative in the sense of Empson’s *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, appropriate to theological communication? I can’t resist quoting here a text I came across while pursuing this question after preaching the sermon; it is a description of Mallarmé’s conversation by a young poet-contemporary, which I found in Anthony Hartley’s introduction to his Penguin *Mallarmé*:

A pleasant voice. Ritual gestures. And inexhaustibly subtle speech, ennobling every subject with rare ornamentations: literature, music, art, life, and even news items, discovering secret analogies between things, communicating doors, hidden contours. The universe is simplified since he sums it up in dreams, as the sea is summed up by a murmur in a shell.

Should a sermon, a piece of theological communication, reach towards the summation of the universe in the dream-murmur of a shell?

Human and Divine Love *

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The subject of love is of universal interest, has engaged the attention of many since time immemorial and will continue to do so. It is of particular interest to Christians who make the claim that God is love.

*Based on a lecture first given to the Society of St Gregory in August 1969.

If this be true, as we believe it to be so in faith, then no other subject has comparable significance.

It is for this reason that I am beginning this paper with a brief personal credo which can be stated simply. If Christianity finds itself in a situation in which few are really concerned with its survival and may find it irrelevant to their lives, I believe that in the final analysis this is so because Christianity has failed in one of its fundamental missions, which is to be the catalyst of love in the world. After every possible case for its present demise—such as its internal disunity, its obsolete language and liturgy, its authoritarianism, its pessimism over sexuality, the disarray of its structures, the anachronism of much of its habits and its legalism—have each been exhaustively examined, I believe there is left one enduring and irreducible reason which is succinctly stated by St Paul:

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

(1 Corinthians 13, 1-4.)

To paraphrase this notion, it can be said that the Church can acquire a most efficient system of collegiality, decentralization, freedom from obtrusive authority; it can settle the issue of celibacy of the priesthood and that of birth control, etc., to the satisfaction of everybody and still remain a voice crying in the wilderness because all these issues leave our neighbours bored and disenchanted. And my sympathy is entirely with a great friend of mine who, after listening to this grand tale of reformation, or rather possible reformation, grunted: 'So what?' Is Christianity really going to make an impression through exercises in democracy and freedom? The sceptics can point out that the principles of democracy were enunciated in Ancient Greece and it is too bad that it has taken two thousand years for the Church to discover it has a problem and to try to do something about it. The cynics will quote, with puckish delight, from the first chapter of Genesis, the bit about God seeing all he had made and finding it very good, and for good measure will throw in Solomon's Song of Songs as a bargain piece. It is too bad that Christianity has had to await two millennia to recognize the intrinsic value of sexuality. Indeed, it is not only pitiable, it borders on the pathetic, given the amount of illumination which the Bible has shed on the subject.

We need to do much better than to have two reformations, one in the sixteenth century and one in the twentieth, to impress a world that has touched down on the moon and is on the way to the other

planets. The news that produces seismic seizures in Rome or Brussels is translated into a mere journalistic ripple in a world that is punch drunk with its own technological and industrial achievements. A world that seems to have everything lacks one thing, namely, the capacity to ensure that its anger, hate and destructiveness will not prove greater than its sense of peace, its capacity to love and the dynamism of being truly creative. But the command to love preceded the discussion on democracy, however important the latter issue is. The words to be found in the 19th chapter of Leviticus in verse 18, which state categorically that we have to love our neighbour as ourselves, have reverberated throughout the Old and the New Testament; and in that magnificent 4th chapter of the first epistle of St John we find the crux of the matter in the words:

No one has ever seen God but as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us.

As long as we love one another. . . . I now address myself to the main theme of this paper which is the tentative contribution of a psychiatrist, using the discoveries of his subject to analyse a little deeper the mystery of love as encountered in man and in Christ. Scientists are not very fond of mysteries and the approach of the psychological sciences presents a particular challenge. The contributions of the psychological sciences have undoubtedly illuminated our understanding of love immeasurably; on the other hand, it would be a gross exaggeration of the facts to pretend that such studies have exhausted either the complexity or the mystery of the experience we call love.

Nevertheless the insights which are emerging from dynamic psychology and other psychological approaches are proving of great interest to me personally, not only in the understanding of human love but as instruments with which to explore the nature of divine love. There is a paradox here. The work of Freud and his successors, which has proved so much of a scandal to the Church in the last fifty years, is, in fact, when properly understood in its depth, an exciting and illuminating discipline furthering the understanding of the nature of personal relationship mediated by affective bonds. Affect is the global term used to describe feelings and emotions and a substantial portion of psychology is concerned with the detailed intricacies of feelings and emotions in personal relations. A particular criticism of all psychoanalytic findings has been that it is based on the results of a few patients who were clearly abnormal and these conclusions are not applicable to the general population of human beings. Undoubtedly caution is required in drawing conclusions from the particular, and generalizing without further careful studies. On the other hand the study of the individual in great detail as in psychoanalysis allows the formation of penetrating insights into the sequence of pathological events in the life of that individual. It is the abnormal that gives us clues about the normal which we take for granted.

Let me illustrate this point by considering three aspects of love, namely, separateness, freedom and the absence of fear. Human beings start life in a symbiotic state, in a nine-months' gestation period ending in a biological separation at birth. There follows a process covering nearly two decades of gradual separation between child and parent in which there is a progressive shift from dependence to independence, from similarity and imitation to separateness and differentiation culminating in the second half of the second decade. Now the young person enters into a phase of marked independence with sufficient acquisition of physical, intellectual and emotional growth to take the initiative in life in a way which allows him or her to separate from parents, find his or her own job or profession and enter into heterosexual relationships.

It is well known that if growth has not taken place normally, then this step of separation from parents cannot be accomplished. The person is not able to detach himself or herself from the emotional ties of dependent relationship and, to the extent that they do not possess themselves sufficiently as separate persons, they cannot enter into relationships of love. In extreme cases they cannot leave home at all and remain with the parents or parent substitutes. They are unable to offer themselves to others because emotionally they are still extensions of their parents, to whom they are attached with pieces of emotional elastic. They can go so far from their basic attachment, father or mother, but they are not free to detach themselves and they have to return to the source of their security and reassurance for their survival.

This freedom is very different from the traditional understanding of freedom associated, for example, with the notion of sin in the catechism. In order to sin there was needed sinful matter, full knowledge and full consent. Full knowledge and full consent here and in so much of our thinking has hitherto implied intellectual insight and rational freedom. Clearly these are important but they are insufficient for the freedom of human action. Freedom of human action also requires a separate identity. By identity here is meant a self-possession, consisting of a separate existence from parents which is sufficiently free from anxiety, guilt and parental standards to initiate freely personal relationships. Such freedom is not a matter of conscious willing, as is recurrently shown in psychiatric clinics. Young men and women wish to leave home and cannot do so. Freud's emphasis on the unconscious is crucial here. Our behaviour is not only mediated through our conscious self but also through the unconscious part of ourselves within which reside, amongst other things, experiences of fear, conflict and uncertainty, at times determining totally the outcome of our behaviour.

Separateness and freedom are intimately linked with absence of fear. The fear of our aloneness, the fear of initiative, the fear through lack of confidence in our own unaided resources, the fear of making

mistakes, the fear of losing control, the fear of being incompetent—all these fears inhibit movement towards others or, if there is movement, it is towards persons or environments which are in fact parent substitutes. In the last decade or so the changes in the Church have made us aware how much the authoritarian structure of the past acted as refuge for personalities who moved from one dependent relationship in which their lives were organized by parents to another similar relationship in which the Church continued the role of the parental figure instructing them and freeing them from the responsibility of initiative. Similarly, in marriage such men and women choose spouses to whom they relate in this child-parent manner. Years later the marriage breaks up as the emotional dependence gives way to independent maturity as a result of which the one spouse experiences the other as an irrelevant person in his or her life. Indeed, when people say they have fallen out of love with their spouse and in love with somebody else, very often they are expressing the changes within themselves which require different, at times radically different, emotional relationships in order to do justice to their personality. A high percentage of priests and nuns leaving the Church at the present time are men and women who find their way to these vocations not because they had a genuine vocation but because the structure of the priesthood and of the religious life could contain this emotional dependence which was their primary need, although totally unconscious. With a marked shift in the atmosphere within the Church, synchronizing for many with their own maturation out of such needs, such people find their old way of life totally irrelevant to their newly discovered identity.

Such men or women, married or celibate, entered into their vocations believing that they were in love with God and their neighbour. A few years later their husband or wife, their superior or their community become objects of anger, experienced as stifling, suffocating intruders in their lives, and very often in consequence they lose touch with God and their faith. What is the explanation? In my view, we cannot love unless we first truly possess ourselves in such a way as truly to consent to our separate identity and are free to offer it to another person; to offer it in such a manner that we do not lose our individuality and yet can become fused into one through love. To achieve this we need to possess an identity which gives us a sense of inner continuity and sameness, the capacity to remain the same person despite changing demands in relationships and circumstances. It is of the essence of human love to possess a separate, clearly delineated identity which is freely available to another person in a way that can become fused and detached in an unceasing sequence of closeness and separateness: closeness which is not afraid to make available the whole of oneself socially, physically and emotionally to another person; separateness which allows fusion to take place without losing oneself in the other person or taking the

other person over. Love requires *mature dependence*; by this I mean the capacity to accept one's own need of another in a process of complementary fusion without losing one iota of oneself in that process, and acceptance of another person which does not need to take over control of the other person's freedom as a condition for our availability. When these conditions do not exist, then in my view the true circumstances for love do not exist; instead the danger of mutual deceit and exploitation exists.

Of course my description is that of the ideal. The overwhelming majority of human relationships contain an admixture of love and exploitation, conscious and unconscious.

The intensity of love in turn depends on the degree to which two people possess themselves consciously, have access to their unconscious, freely offer themselves, recognizing their constitutive need of each other but never losing in the process the separateness on which their identity depends. In brief, I am suggesting that love demands a personal availability to another person the depth of which depends on the degree of self-possession which is not lost in the encounter of fusion.

Such total independence which acknowledges total dependence without personal diminution immediately suggests itself as a model of love in the Trinity in so far as there three persons make themselves totally available to each other in relationships of equality and complementarity without losing their separate identities. The nature of this relationship, as indeed the identity of the persons, is a mystery which we can penetrate only to the extent that the divine persons have chosen to reveal themselves. This revelation is in its most complete form in Jesus Christ and the second half of this paper is a brief outline of love in terms of availability, comparing the availability of Christ and of human beings.

The thesis I am submitting is that the developing sciences of psychology offer us an ever-richer and more sharply defined notion of human love: love reflects the degree to which we possess precisely a unique identity and are free to offer it to another person in a way that gives the other person full access to ourselves without our sustaining a personal loss in the process which damages our identity. The question which naturally arises for a Christian is whether we can therefore re-read the evidence of the Scriptures about the personality of our Lord in the light of these discoveries and whether we can re-express what they have to say in terms learned from the experiential sciences of psychology. Put concretely, we have to examine the Scriptures for the evidence that our Lord possessed an identity which contained the constituents of precision, clarity, consistency and continuity. To the extent that such a reinterpretation does remain true to this evidence, it will at the very least bear out the theological conviction that human love is an image and derivative of divine love,

though for that very same reason such a reinterpretation must also allow for the possibility that this evidence can control as well as—necessarily—surpass the data of the psychological sciences.

Now in human terms, our identity emerges as an expression of our physical characteristics given to us by our parents through our genetic inheritance and the environmental influences—largely parental—which establish the human bonds through which we recognize ourselves and others as beings worthy of acknowledgement, recognition, acceptance and love. Christ's identity had a truly human source of influence, that of Mary and Joseph, and a divine one, his Father. Such a complex source of origin might have led to confusion, to what it is currently fashionable to call a crisis of identity. In fact none occurred and the episode of the Temple is one of the rare psychological gems in the Scriptures.

Three days later they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him and his mother said to him: 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how your father and I have been looking for you.' 'Why were you looking for me?' he replied. 'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?' But they did not understand what he meant. He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority.

(Luke 2, 46-51.)

This incident can be used by those who wish to emphasize the intellectual side of Christ, as showing his early brilliance confounding the doctors in the Temple. It can be used by those who, obsessed with authority and obedience particularly between parent and child, want to use this as a moralizing model. These interpretations pale into insignificance compared with the psychological significance of the event. At the age of twelve, Christ had already reached a degree of self-awareness in which *he knew* his identity. There was no confusion about where the primacy of his relationship lay. He was asked to detach himself from Mary and Joseph without apparently any sense of anxiety and address himself to a task about which he had no doubt whatsoever. At this early stage he could survive alone without any fear, separate from his parents, and do this knowing that he would cause them suffering, once again apparently without any sense of guilt. This episode clearly suggests that internally by this age Christ had separated himself from his human parents without any pangs of fear, anxiety or guilt, and yet he did so without rejecting them. This is the essence of child-parent separation. The child separates himself from the parents, delineates his own separate identity which he offers to man and God in separate relationships of love without rejecting the parents. This transaction is one which dynamic psychology has examined in detail. In the many instances

where the separation has not taken place satisfactorily, the growing person may remain attached to one or other parent emotionally in a way that prevents him from totally giving himself to another human being. A 'mum's boy' or 'daddy's girl' are the common phrases to denote extreme complex confusion of identity and emotional fixations which underlie much disturbance of personal and sexual relationships.

It seems to me that, although Christ rejoined his family and complied externally with the social requirements of the day, he had already—by the age of twelve—a clear sense of his own relationship with the Father which was in no way confused with his earthly relationship, and this process took place without having to deny the reality of his mother's existence. Thus he avoided so many of the damaging possibilities in human growth in which a man either remains too attached to his mother or in a desperate attempt rebels vigorously against her and subsequently has a hostile relationship against all women to whom he cannot get close in case he returns to the trapped situation of childhood. In these situations love suffers because closeness to a woman is mixed with a mixture of hostility and anxiety that she will deny his independent value and existence. The same can occur with the girl-father relationship. Christ had a normal development in which he experienced closeness with his mother and father and yet could separate from them with an intact self and separate mission which remained enigmatic for them. Such was the degree of his secure self-possession that he did not need to spend anxious hours speculating whether he should put his parents in the know. In the fullness of time they would get to know his mission. In the meantime he knew and possessed himself unequivocally.

This identity is reaffirmed visibly at his baptism and at the transfiguration and finds repeated expression in St John's gospel.

I am the light of the world;
Anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark,
he will have the light of life.

At this the pharisees said to him: 'You are testifying on your own behalf; Your testimony is not valid.' Jesus replied:

'It is true that I am testifying on my own behalf, but my testimony is still valid,
because I know where I come from and where I am going.'

(John 8, 12-14.)

Who except God can have such self-knowledge at the age of thirty? If Christ was not God, then these words are clearly those of a sincere but utterly deluded human being who could go on and say later on to the Jews: 'I tell you most solemnly, before Abraham ever was I am' (John 8, 58).

Such a claim is either a paranoid delusion or a unique and total possession of self in which neither time nor change can influence an

eternal continuity and sameness of the divine essence. Such total and unflinching possession of self gave Christ an inner availability of himself which formed the basis of his total external availability to others. This, in my view, is the essence of love. In human terms such a secure possession of self implies trust, self-control and the capacity to take the initiative to reach others.

Our Lord's sense of trust is a fascinating exercise in human understanding of personal relationships. The trust in his own judgment was supreme. He had received all from the father and he would give it all to others. There is no uncertainty, no equivocation. He knew well those he wished to choose as his intimate friends and after the original choice there was no doubt, no experimentation, no withdrawal. Here is the prototype of trust in personal relationship in which continuity, reliability and predictability are present. For those who could receive his whole self, and even the apostles found this difficult, there was constancy. No expectations were aroused which remain unfulfilled. Everything which he offered of himself came to pass.

In contrast, human love suffers from the fluctuations of needs and availability. To the extent our needs change, so do the people to whom we relate. Furthermore, we are only available to others to the limited extent we know ourselves. Change in our knowledge of ourselves and of our needs makes us unreliable in our relationships and the person who appears to be the all one day is nothing the next. In this way we arouse expectations in others which we cannot fulfil and if relationships are not reliable and predictable they deceive, mostly without intention or deliberation. We deceive others because we are deceived ourselves.

Christ was reliable. He could be trusted to be available no matter what the trouble or the cost would be.

I am the good shepherd,
I know my own
and my own know me
just as the Father knows me
and I know the Father
and I lay down my life for my sheep.

(John 10, 14-15.)

Human love which can aspire to such perfect trust of one's motivation and certainty of execution, shares and participates in a love that had no limits, made no empty promises and could be relied upon unhesitatingly to fulfil the meaning of unconditional availability.

Love not only requires the freedom to give ourselves to others, it demands that we should be able to understand what the needs of others are. Throughout the ages the material needs of others such as food, drink, shelter, clothes have been recognized and immortalized in our Lord's address on the last judgment.

Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.
(Matthew 26, 34-37.)

There followed the astonishment of the accepted and the rejected. The obvious object of this text is the wilful neglect of the needy, but in my view something of greater significance emerges here. Not only is it incumbent upon us to respond to the need of others but, even more importantly, we have an obligation to recognize the need of others. This is an aspect of the human personality designated by the term *empathy*. By sympathy we share each other's unpleasant experiences; through empathy we have the capacity to put ourselves—in technical language to project ourselves—into the inner world of another person, recognize their needs, remain separate and so available in a way that their need, distress or love, does not overwhelm us. The capacity to empathize is one of the crucial characteristics of human love, for there is nothing more devastating than to be in an urgent need which remains unrecognized by those close to us. There are lots of examples of Christ's empathy, a quality portrayed with stunning brevity in the Gospel of St John: 'Christ could tell what a man had in him' (2, 25). This capacity to identify correctly and identify with the inner needs of those close to us is essential in reaching others. Christ's empathy with the physical needs of his audience is exemplified in the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and in the innumerable episodes of healing. Contemporary psychology has focussed attention, however, on another facet of love. It is possible to reach others physically by doing things to them or for them and it is in this field that so much of Christian endeavour has been channelled. But human beings need to be reached with our feelings. Feelings in ourselves and in others have to be recognized, given and received. To the extent that love is confined to physical and intellectual communication alone, it is a distortion of an authentic human experience. The confusion and fear of sexuality in the Christian ranks have at times almost paralysed our understanding of feelings for fear that these will lead to immoral behaviour. All feelings are initiated in the heavenly experience of oneness between the young infant and its mother in which the feelings of recognition, acceptance and tenderness are exchanged unconditionally through looks, touch and words. These needs remain permanently in human beings and psychoanalysts work continuously with those who have never experienced adequately these feelings and are handicapped in innumerable ways either in expressing or receiving them from other human beings. A good deal of marital breakdown reflects such problems in which the partners can neither recognize each other's needs nor make available the appropriate feelings. The

Western tradition which has emphasized so much the intellectual side of man has been undoubtedly a distinct handicap, at times setting up dehumanizing standards for men and women.

Many examples of Christ's empathy could be selected, but I have chosen the one in Luke which demonstrates a heterosexual exchange of feelings, touch and words.

One of the Pharisees invited him to a meal. When he arrived at the Pharisee's house and took his place at table a woman came in, who had a bad name in the town. She had heard he was dining with the Pharisee and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment. She waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment.

The Pharisee was shocked; here in all probability was a prostitute touching and kissing his guest.

Then he turned to the woman. 'Simon', he said. 'You see this woman? I came into your house and you poured no water over my feet, but she has poured out her tears over my feet and wiped them away with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she has been covering my feet with kisses ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. For this reason I tell you that her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven her, or she would not have shown such great love. . . .' But he said to the woman: 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

(Luke 7, 36-38, 44-47, 50.)

Here is a superb example of availability and empathy involving human feelings and emotions. Up to now this woman's hands and her body were given to men whose impoverishment was that they could not have stable relationships with one woman. She matched their incapacity to have stable relationships of love, for this is the heart of all prostitution: the incapacity of a man and woman to have anything else except transient contact, unable to offer or to receive any enduring exchanges of love. Christ knew her desperate need to communicate, physically and emotionally, an authentic part of herself which would reach the source of all authenticity from which she could receive the strength and do justice to her femininity in the future and to find peace. He, the author of all love, made himself available to her and reached her through his empathetic acknowledgment of her needs.

Human love also heals and strengthens this way by making ourselves available to others so that they can acquire for the first time authentic experiences in which they discover their capacity to give themselves physically and emotionally in a genuine exchange of love rather than of mutual exploitation, the mark of all prostitution.

Love requires human availability, augmented by empathy and completed by a non-judgmental openness to ourselves and to others.

What is meant by non-judgmental openness? This is a subject which has engaged especially the attention of analysts.

Freud stressed one great shift in human development—namely, that from pleasure to reality. Each one of us starts as a seething mass of physical and emotional needs which in our first few years of life have to be satisfied with minimum frustration. As we grow older, we can tolerate frustration increasingly and learn how to postpone our immediate needs, to defer gratification. This is the process which Freud designated as responding to reality. What happens, however, if our continual needs are not first organized and ordered in an increasingly mature way but denied? What happens to the child who needs attention, physical closeness, expressions of affection and tenderness but cannot have them either because the parents are not available or because they actually reject their child or because its needs are in excess of the parental capacity to match them? If the need for love is overwhelming and yet cannot be satisfied, very often the way to deal with such an impossible situation is to endow the particular need with feelings of shame and guilt or to repress it, render it unconscious. In one way or another there is a part of oneself which becomes split off, condemned and rejected. These parts of ourselves have been called complexes by analysts and they make up the vulnerable bits of ourselves which can only be handled by various continuous patterns of behaviour called defences. These defences include the process of *denial*, in which some painful and vital part of ourselves is denied; and *rationalization*, in which the true motives, usually emotional ones, are substituted by some other explanation; or *projection*, in which impulses, wishes and feelings both positive and negative are experienced as being located in others. These and other mechanisms protect us from experiencing needy or unpleasant parts of others. To the extent we are isolated from such feelings within ourselves, we are incapable of recognizing their presence or validity in others or responding to these feelings when they are offered to us by others. The freedom to enjoy sexual experiences is condemned as immoral because they are unavailable or forbidden in ourselves; the capacity to take the initiative in expressing feelings is condemned as showing lack of self-control; the socially appreciated controlling man may, in fact, have to exercise such a tight hold over his angry feelings, otherwise he may let loose havoc with his destructiveness. Envy is not only a matter of lusting after the neighbour's wife or goods, it may be the expression of a condemned inner world which is freely accepted, experienced and appreciated in another person.

The Jews found themselves precisely in this situation with Christ. They could not receive his total acceptance of himself.

The Jews fetched stones to stone him, so Jesus said to them: 'I have done many good works for you to see, works from my Father; for which of these are you stoning me?' The Jews answered him: 'We

are not stoning you for doing a good work but for blasphemy: you are only a man and you claim to be God.' (John 10, 31-33.)

The Jews condemned him because they could not accept his claim of being one with the Father. Christ never wavered or compromised in this claim. He could not judge, condemn or—in equivalent psychological language—reject or deny one iota of himself. To the extent he could accept himself unconditionally as a fully human and divine form, he was able to accept others. There was no part of himself from which he was cut off and there was no person or part of person he needed to reject through failure to comprehend their humanity or need. He was totally open to himself and to others. Human beings fall far short of such acceptance of themselves, let alone of others, and psychoanalysis has proved a complicated but unique way of reaching those portions of ourselves which were locked out of our awareness or capacity to experience, allowing the re-integration of these split-off parts of ourselves. To the extent we accomplish this in ourselves without condemnation we become more fully human and accept others without judgment or condemnation.

This is not to say that from time to time we shall not misuse the gifts of God in ourselves or offend and hurt others with our aggression. Forgiveness and reparation are essential for safeguarding love. We have to forgive ourselves repeatedly without losing our own value as people capable of loving. We have to seek forgiveness from others without losing our innate capacity to love. We have to forgive others without humiliating them or rejecting their renewed endeavours to reach us. Human love often stumbles and falls at this point because we find it difficult to forgive ourselves or others. In these situations our angry rejection of ourselves and others is greater than our loving acceptance.

Thus non-judgmental openness as used in this paper includes the traditional concept of humility but goes beyond this to the fundamental notion that we cannot love others unless first we have lovingly accepted and acknowledged ourselves without condemnation. If we do not judge ourselves we will not judge others; if we do not reject ourselves we will have little need to reject others. It is of the utmost significance that, although Christ was very severe on the Jews in certain aspects of their behaviour, there is no evidence anywhere that he rejected a single human being who wished, however dimly, to respond to him, and such was his availability that he could respond to the slightest intimation. Indeed, the slimmest initiative as shown by the apostles was enlarged and converted to unlimited depths of donation.

One theme of this paper has developed in such a way that love has been equated with availability in human relationships. It is a fitting concept for a liturgical conference. For it is in the mass that we find

the exact equivalent of the two. In the farewell discourse in the Gospel of St John we find these words:

My little children,
 I shall not be with you much longer,
 You will look for me and, as I told the Jews,
 Where I am going you cannot come.
 I give you a new commandment: Love one another.
 Just as I have loved you
 You also must love one another.
 By this love you have for one another
 Everyone will know that you are my disciples.
 (John 13, 33-35.)

Shortly after this Jesus took some bread, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said: 'Take it and eat, this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to them. 'Drink all of you from this, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'

Here we find total and complete availability in which God offers himself to each one of us and which our Catholic tradition retains in the solemn sacrifice of the mass. Human love cannot imitate such complete giving but in all human relationships between man and man, man and woman, this is the prototype it aspires to.

The Earthbound Pangolin

Adrian Edwards, C.S.Sp.

Having once berated (by letter) the present editor of *New Blackfriars* for feeding his readers on the ersatz provender of bloated book-reviews, I find myself involved in the same offence. My excuse is that I have rarely read a book which has aroused in me such ambivalence of reaction as Dr Mary Douglas' *Natural Symbols*.¹ My hope is that this extended reviewed will encourage other people to read this book, which it would be unjust to ignore totally, and pernicious to accept entirely. The book is of significance in both anthropology and theology; is it perhaps the turn of an intellectual tide, a theological anthropology moving in to the vacuum left by secular theology?

This, I believe, is the author's intention: to carry out a counter-revolution in the social sciences, so that anthropology and sociology,

¹*Natural Symbols, Explorations in Cosmology*, by Mary Douglas. Barrie & Rockliff, The Cresset Press, London, 1970, 170 pp., 45s.