

True love, a love that is internally complete, is one in which we choose the person for the sake of the person, — that in which a man chooses a woman or a woman chooses a man not just as a sexual 'partner' but as the person on whom to bestow the gift of his or her own life. 'Sexual' values, vibrantly present in their sensual and emotional reactions, contribute to the decision and make it a more intense psychological experience, but it is not they which determine its authenticity. The essential reason for choosing a person must be personal, not merely sexual. Life will determine the value of a choice and the value and true magnitude of love.

It is put to the test most severely when the sensual and emotional reactions themselves grow weaker, and sexual values as such lose their effect. Nothing then remains except the value of the person, and the inner truth about the love of those concerned comes to light. If their love is a true gift of self, so that they belong each to the other, it will not only survive but grow stronger, and sink deeper roots. Whereas if it was never more than a sort of synchronization of sensual and emotional experiences it will lose its *raison d'être* and the persons involved in it will suddenly find themselves in a vacuum. We must never forget that only when love between human beings is put to the test can its true value be seen.

When a person's choice is a mature and valid act and love is integrated as it should be in the inner life of the person it is transformed both in its psychological and in its emotional aspect. For while not only sensual but emotional experiences too are of their nature unstable and changeable — and this always causes a certain anxiety, even if it is not always conscious — a love which has matured within the subject frees itself from this anxiety by its choice of person. The emotion becomes serene and confident, for it ceases to be absorbed entirely in itself and attaches itself instead to its object, to the beloved person. The purely subjective truth of the emotion has given place to the objective truth about the person who is the object of choice and of love. As a result the emotion itself seems to acquire new properties. It becomes simpler and soberer. Whereas that idealization of which we spoke in our 'psychological analysis' is characteristic of

purely emotional love — the emotions themselves tend to endow their object with various values of their own creation — the love for a person which results from a valid act of choice is concentrated on the value of the person as such and makes us feel emotional love for the person as he or she really is, not for the person of our imagination, but for the real person. We love the person complete with all his or her virtues and faults, and up to a point independently of those virtues and in spite of those faults. The strength of such a love emerges most clearly when the beloved person stumbles, when his or her weaknesses or even sins come into the open. One who truly loves does not then withdraw his love, but loves all the more, loves in full consciousness of the other's shortcomings and faults, and without in the least approving of them. For the person as such never loses its essential value. The emotion which attaches itself to the value of the person remains loyal to the human being.

Wojtyła - Love + Responsibility, Ch. 2 - (1960)

### The Commitment of Freedom

Only true knowledge of a person makes it possible to commit one's freedom to him or her. Love consists of a commitment which limits one's freedom — it is a giving of the self, and to give oneself means just that: to limit one's freedom on behalf of another. Limitation of one's freedom might seem to be something negative and unpleasant, but love makes it a positive, joyful and creative thing. *Freedom exists for the sake of love.* If freedom is not used, is not taken advantage of by love it becomes a negative thing and gives human beings a feeling of emptiness and unfulfilment. Love commits freedom and imbues it with that to which the will is naturally attracted — goodness. The will aspires to the good, and freedom belongs to the will, hence freedom exists for the sake of love, because it is by way of love that human beings share most fully in the good. This is what gives freedom its real entitlement to one of the highest places in the moral order, in the hierarchy of

man's wholesome longings and desires. But man longs for love more than for freedom - freedom is the means and love the end. He longs however for true love, for only if it is based on truth is a genuine commitment of freedom possible. The will is free, but at the same time it is obliged to seek the good which is congenial to it, it can seek and choose freely, but it is not free from the need to seek and to choose.

~~The will cannot, however, allow an object to be imposed upon it as a good. It wants to choose, and to affirm its choice for itself, for choice is always the affirmation of the value of the object chosen. Thus, in choosing a woman a man affirms her value - and this means her value as a person, not merely her 'sexual' value. Sexual values, after all, tend to impose themselves, whereas the value of the person waits to be chosen and affirmed. For this reason the will of a man who has not yet succumbed to mere passion but has preserved his inner purity is usually the arena for a struggle between the sexual instinct and the need for freedom. The sexual instinct endeavours to impose its own object and its own aim, endeavours to create a fait accompli within the person. The term 'sexual instinct' is used here not in its proper and full sense, as it was understood in the preceding section, but in a more limited sense. I have in mind some of its manifestations as a result of which sexual values take possession of an individual's senses and emotions, and, so to speak, 'lay siege to' his will. When the will succumbs to sensual attraction it begins to feel desire for another person. Sentiment frees desire of its carnal, 'consumer' character, and gives it instead that of longing for 'a human being of the other sex.' Nevertheless, as long as the will merely capitulates to the object of sensual attraction and emotional yearning it cannot make its proper creative contribution to love.~~

The will loves only when a human being consciously commits his or her freedom in respect of another human being seen as a person, a person whose value is fully recognized and affirmed. This commitment does not consist primarily of desire for that human being. The will is a creative power capable of bestowing goods from within itself, and not only of appropriating goods which already exist. Willed love expresses

itself above all in the desire of what is good for the beloved person. Desire for the person as such gives the will no opportunity to reveal its creative potential, it does not constitute love in the full positive meaning of the word. The will of its nature desires the good - the good without limits, which is happiness. In striving towards this it seeks out a person and desires that person as a concrete good which can bring happiness. Man desires woman, woman desires man: at this stage love is concupiscence. But the senses and the emotions come to its aid, and a love so assisted may easily be the occasion for the will, with its natural aspiration to the infinite good which is happiness, to start wanting this good for another person too, the person who is for the senses and the emotions an object of desire. And this is where the tension between the dynamic of the sexual urge and that of the will becomes evident. The sexual instinct makes the will desire and long for a person because of the person's sexual value. The will, however, does not stop at this. It is free, or in other words capable of desiring everything relating to the unqualified good, the unlimited good, that is happiness. And it commits this capacity, its natural and noble potentiality, to the other person concerned. It desires the absolute good, the unlimited good, happiness for that person, and in this way compensates and atones for the desire to have that other person, a person of the other sex, for itself.<sup>31</sup> We have here, of course, been speaking of the sexual urge only in one particular aspect. For the will does not merely combat the urge: it simultaneously assumes within the framework of betrothed love responsibility for the natural purpose of the instinct. This is of course the continuation of the human race, which concretely requires that a new person, a child, shall be the fruit of conjugal love between man and woman. The will makes this purpose its own, and in consciously working towards it seeks greater scope for its creative tendency.

In this way true love, profiting from the natural dynamic of the will, attempts to give the relationship between man and woman a thoroughly unselfish character, to free their love from utilitarian attitudes, whether we think of the first or the second meaning of the verb 'to use'. This is the significance of

what we have called here the struggle between love and the sexual instinct. The sexual instinct wants above all to take over, to make use of another person, whereas love wants to give, to create a good, to bring happiness. We see yet again how important it is for betrothed love to be permeated with that which constitutes the essence of friendship. From the desire for the 'unlimited' good of another 'I' springs the whole creative drive of true love — the drive to endow beloved persons with the good, to make them happy.<sup>32</sup>

This is, so to speak, the divine aspect of love. In point of fact, to desire 'unlimited' good for another person is really to desire God for that person: He alone is the objective fullness of the good, and only His goodness can fill every man to overflowing. It is through its connection with happiness, with the fullness of the good, that human love comes closest to God. True, this 'fullness of good', this 'happiness', are not often expressly understood in this way. 'I want happiness for you' means 'I want that which makes you happy' — but I do not for the moment enquire what that may be. Only people of profound faith tell themselves quite clearly that 'this means God'. Others do not complete their thought, but leave a blank to be filled in as it were by the beloved person: happiness is whatever you yourself want, that in which you see the fullness of the good for yourself. The whole energy of love is then concentrated in the claim that 'it is I who truly desire this for you'.<sup>33</sup>

The great moral force of true love lies precisely in this desire for the happiness, for the true good, of another person. This is what makes it possible for a man to be reborn because of love, makes him aware of the riches within him, his spiritual fertility and creativity: I am capable of desiring the good for another person, therefore I am in general capable of desiring the good. True love compels me to believe in my own spiritual powers. Even when I am 'bad', if true love awakens in me it bids me seek the true good where the object of my love is concerned. In this way, affirmation of the worth of another person is echoed in affirmation of the worth of one's own person — for it is awareness of the value of the person, not of sexual values, that makes a man desire the happiness of

another 'I'. When love attains its full dimensions, it introduces into a relationship not only a 'climate' of honesty between persons but a certain awareness of the 'absolute', a sense of contact with the unconditional and the ultimate. Love is indeed the highest of moral values. But one must know how to transfer it to the ordinary affairs of everyday life. This is where the problem of educating love arises.

### *The Education of Love*

What does 'the education of love' mean? Can love be improved by education? Is not love something complete from the start, something given ready made to a human being or to two human beings, what might perhaps be called an adventure of the heart? This is a very common assumption, especially among young people, but it is one which tends to prevent what we have called here the integration of love. Love so conceived is merely a psychological situation, and it seems unnatural to subject it to the dictates of objective morality. This however is the opposite of the truth: love should be governed by a norm or principle from which the full value of every psychological situation must be deduced: only then will the situation attain its proper fullness, only then will it express a commitment of the person. For love is never something ready made, something merely 'given' to man and woman, it is always at the same time a 'task' which they are set. Love should be seen as something which in a sense never 'is' but is always only 'becoming', and what it becomes depends upon the contribution of both persons and the depth of their commitment. This commitment is based on what is 'given'. Experiences which have their roots in the sensuality or the natural sensibility of a woman or a man constitute only the 'raw material' of love. There exists a tendency to regard them as its finished form. This is a mistake, and at the bottom of it lies that utilitarian, 'consumer' outlook, which as we know is contrary to the very nature of love.

Man is a being condemned, so to speak, to create. Creativity

is a duty in the sphere of love too. We find that what develops from 'promising' raw material in the form of emotions and desires is often not true love, and often indeed sharply opposed to it, whereas a truly great love sometimes develops from modest material. But such a great love can only be the work of persons and — let us add here to complete the picture — the work of Divine Grace. Their workings will be examined in this book. We shall examine love primarily as the work of man and try to trace the main directions which his efforts take. But the operation of Grace is implicit in these efforts, for they are the contribution of the invisible Creator who is Himself love, and has the power to fashion any love, including that which in its natural development is based on the values of sex and the body — provided that human beings are willing to be His conscious co-creators. There is no need to be dismayed if love sometimes follows tortuous ways. Grace has the power to make straight the paths of human love.

To answer our questions (what does 'educating love' mean and is it possible?) we must, I think, simply return to the arguments put forward in this chapter. We must also go into them more deeply in the light of the Gospel, interpreted more fully than it has been hitherto. But even at this point it is obvious that the education of love involves a variety of actions, which are for the most part interior though they find exterior expression, actions which are in any case profoundly personal. The purpose of these actions is what we have called here the integration of love 'within' the person and 'between' persons. These reflections on love have, however, repeatedly reminded us that there is an insidious possibility of disintegration in relationships between men and women. It is, therefore, essential to round off the discussion by showing clearly how the love of man and woman can guard against disintegration. This will be the purpose of our discussion of chastity.

## CHAPTER III

# The Person and Chastity

