

ALCIPHRON

LOVE AND CONTEMPORARY MARRIAGE

The turn of the century marked the beginning of a new enlightenment. Such thinkers as Freud, Marx, Darwin, Russell, Barth and others have bequeathed to us such a vast amount of knowledge, the significance of which may not be realized for another hundred years. It has forced us to view man and his universe in a totally new way.

Traditional customs, beliefs and values are no longer appropriate in this new era. They have to be revised or rejected completely.

None of us consider this a pleasant task; our parents (and theirs) had well-defined value systems which were passed on and into which each of us found our place. It was relatively easy and anxiety-free. But, no longer! We, of 1972, cannot fit into value systems which are no longer appropriate. We are forced to take it upon ourselves the responsibility to decide the nature of the value systems of today and tomorrow. We are all familiar with the urge to shun the responsibility which intelligent thinking demands. But our dilemma is such that there is no escape. Our thinking will require its best in such areas as law, morality, marriage, politics, religion, science, to mention but a few. These concepts will, and must remain with tomorrow.

What follows is an exposition of my thoughts on the concepts of 'love' and 'marriage'. My observations lead me to believe that these two concepts are very much in need of re-evaluation in the immediate future.

Perhaps one of the most important areas under discussion today is marriage. Marriage of the past has been intimately connected with family and state. Society perpetuated itself by means of the family and through which its members received their primary socialization so necessary for coping later on with the responsibilities of citizenship. It was necessary for the family to have its roots in a stable marriage. Now, the only stable marriage is that which has its roots in love. (i.e. Christian love, or Agape) But, throughout history, Agape did prevail, rather, Philia or Eros, which say "I love you because...", but Agape says "I love you for which you need only TO BE." It is still very unreasonable to expect everyone to love in the latter

manner; but that does not remove the necessity of this form of love. It must eventually prevail if man is ever to fully 'come of age' (Bonhoeffer). Today and yesterday, marriage lacked this cohesive form of love; but marriages were necessary for the perpetuation of society. It was therefore necessary for the state to legislate — to create laws — to ensure relative stability in the family, and hence, society. In the absence of Agape was law — it was (and is) necessary. If and when we as people can love as Jesus, St. Francis of Assisi, Socrates, Gandhi and St. Paul did, then the necessity for marriage laws will no longer exist, for love is a law unto itself to which all other laws are subordinate.

Common-Law:

In the history of most societies there has always been in one form or another common-law marriage. Usually it is defined as "any marriage which does not have legal, social or religious sanction."

Common-law arrangements are common in our society; perhaps more than at any time in our history. But are they all common-law?

Let us suppose a man and woman share true Agapeic love. What need have they for getting 'churched'? Or obtaining social consent (via marriage certificate)? None! Although I do not doubt they would not. But that is not my point. This marriage would not be a common-law

marriage; quite the contrary, it would be a true marriage.

In my opinion, no less than 90% of those who marry today are not in love; nor do they possess the capacity for genuine Agapeic love. The individuals involved may remain together or not, but they are not true love-marriages. These are the common-law marriages.

But these marriages must stay together for the sake of the state; therefore, since Agape is not the cohesive force, the must exercise its force. But, so long as the law is doing what each individual should be doing, the development of Agapeic love is in jeopardy because the onus is off the individual to pursue the development of Agapeic love.

How shall we ever learn to love this way? I am not competent to answer that question, but of the following I am certain — Jesus

commanded us to love one another. But this is absurd, for love cannot be commanded — love is obeyed.

So long as men pursue the satisfaction of their hedonistic desires, they shall never know the fruits of love. But, yet, it is love they are really seeking.

How then are these concepts to be treated? What form will they take? Will the society we need require the family? Marriage? Love? Where do you fit in? Do you fit at all? Need you? Can you escape these questions?

Stan Dalton

P.S. Do not consider your education complete without reading Shulamith Firestones book, The Dialectic of Sex, available at the book store

Editor's note: Never consider your education complete.

ALCIPHRON:

THE

MINUTE

P
H
I
L
O
S
O
P
H
E
R

University of Toronto
Summer Courses
in

NICE, FRANCE

In addition to the regular Summer Session, the University of Toronto is offering Degree Courses in Nice, Jul 6 - August 18. Credit courses in English, Fine Art, French, History and Political Economy will be given by professors from the Universities of Toronto and Nice. Classes will be held each weekday at the Faculté des Lettres and the Ecole internationale d'Art de Nice.

Accommodation will be provided in university residences, private homes, and pensions.

Cost? Approximately \$750.00 (includes round trip, tuition for one course, room and board).

Further information:

Toronto-Nice Summer Programme
Division of University Extension
119 St. George Street
Toronto 181, Ontario

(416) 928-2405