

## Second Chapter.

### LOVE.

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#### XVII.

##### Natural Love.

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”—*Rom. v. 5.*

Sanctification does not *exhaust* the work of the Holy Spirit. It is an *extraordinary* work, necessitated by man's *fall into sin*. *Love*, of which we now will treat, is His deepest and most proper work, which He would have wrought even if sin had *never been heard of*; which He will continue after death; which He works now already in the angels, and which He will continue in us in the mansions of the Father's house evermore. Necessarily, across the path of quickening love falls the dark shadow of that terrible operation of *judgment* and *hardening* which the Holy Spirit works in the lost. We will close with a sketch of *the unpardonable sin* against the Holy Ghost.

Our subject is not love in general, but *Love*. The difference is evident. Love signifies the only pure, true, *divine* Love; by love in general is understood every expression of kindness, attachment, mutual affection, and devotion wherein are seen reflections of the glory of Eternal Love.

Love in its general sense is also found in the world of animals; a love so strong sometimes that it shames man, casting reproach upon his conscience. The tenderness of the mother hen is proverbial. The same hen which at other times runs away at the distant approach of dog or cat, flies at the ugliest cat or fiercest bulldog when she has chickens to defend. Every mother bird defends her eggs at the price of her life. And altho neither cat nor dog had the least consideration for the mother love of hen or duck, yet both manifest the same love for their young ones. The most bloodthirsty animals, even tigers and hyenas, are never more enraged than when the hunter approaches their whelps too closely. It is unnecessary to say that love in this sense has no moral value. Yet it is not valueless. Christ made the love of the mother hen a type of His own love for His people and for Jerusalem. And when our small boys are furious when they see the male rabbit kill his young while the female fights for them, there is in their boyish hearts a pure voice of praise for the superior love of that little mother. However, praise for this love which is merely instinctive, increaded, and irresistible belongs, not to the mother hen or mother lion, but to Him who created it in them.

Turning from the love of instinct to the world of men, we are surprised to meet phenomena closely resembling it. A coquettish maiden, apparently devoid of all devotion, becomes a wife and mother, and suddenly she seems to have been initiated into the mysteries of love., Her infant is the only object of all her thoughts. She suffers for it without complaint, fondles and cherishes it; and if a cruel dog were to attack the babe, as a heroine the otherwise timid maiden would fight the monster.

And yet with all these similarities there is a difference. Love in that mother is *weaker* than in the animal. For hours she can leave her child in the care of others, while the brooding mother bird scarcely leaves the nest at all. The former has affection for other members of the family, but the latter with shrieks drives away all that dare approach the nest. In a word, the animal's maternal love is more absolute, and in this respect excels the love of the young mother. But when the chickens are half grown, the mother forgets and forsakes them; while the love of most mothers for their tender infants gradually assumes a nobler character, rising from *instinctive* love to *spiritual* love. A mother's power lies in the fact that she prays for her child.

Evidently we must distinguish here two kinds of love: a lower form which springs from the blood, which the mother has in common with the bird, but which is less constant; and a superior love of another sort lacking in the hen, by which the human far surpasses the animal.

This lower form is *from the blood*; not altogether instinctive as in the dove, yet nearly so, *i.e.*, independent of the moral development of the mother. This can be seen in girls of inferior moral development, who, when they become mothers, fall almost desperately in love with their babes; while in others, who stand much higher morally, maternal love is much more moderate. And this shows that the irresistible passion of maternal love lacks a higher motive. Like the animal's love it springs from nature. And when we see and enjoy the spectacle, we realize that the glory of it belongs, not to the woman, but to Him whose work we admire in the inclinations of the creature.

Next to this instinctive love we find in the mother something superior; not only in the few, but in all. And we say this in spite of the fact that there are unnatural mothers who are almost entirely devoid of this higher love. Only, it should be remembered, that the human soul contains much that is suppressed, which, once was active; that in dehumanized women, when only partly reclaimed, this nobler feature often reappears; yea, that in the lives of such mothers, amid sin and shame, there are momentary sparks of a higher love which illumine their moral darkness like a flash of lightning.

This higher grade of maternal love bears an entirely different character. The sight of the sweet and lovely babe may support it, but can not account for it, nor produce it. It has a higher origin. Its sign is: a mother carrying her child to *holy Baptism*. For altho much of



this is done out of custom and from love of display, yet essentially it is the declaration that a human child is greater than young bird or animal's whelp. Even when the French Revolution had temporarily abolished *holy* Baptism, it replaced it by a sort of *political* baptism. The young mother is constrained to see in her child something greater than mere "*clods of infant flesh*." And altho in many mothers it has become almost imperceptible, sunk so low that many have been seen to drag their children into the paths of sin; yet in nobler natures, and under more favorable circumstances, this refreshing parental love has the power to develop the energy of the moral growth of future generations. In understanding the difference between father and mother one will be able to distinguish, this lower and higher mother love, even in their finer variations. Of course, the instinctive love is not so strong in the father as in the mother; hence the love which bears the moral character of duty and vocation is more conspicuous in the former.

But even where this wonderful mingling of *instinctive* and *moral* love in the mutual love of husband and wife manifests itself most beautifully, in parental love and by counter-action in filial love, and as a connecting link in fraternal love, it is still a form of love that can exist in total independence of the conscious love of God. Often it strongly expresses itself among pronounced unbelievers.

And the same is true of that freer expression of love which, independently of the ties of blood, often develops itself in beautiful forms between friends, between congenial minds, between comrades in the same struggle, between the leaders and the led; yea, which from the things visible can rise to embrace the things invisible, and unfold itself in fairest forms of love for art and science, for king and country, for the nation and its history, for inherited rights and privileges—in brief, for all that inspires the breast with the noble feelings of consecration and sacrifice. For, whatever its wealth and scintillating beauty may be, in itself it is apart from the Love of the Eternal. In order not to betray their accomplices, hardened criminals have endured cruel tortures upon the rack with marvelous constancy. Communists, dying upon the barricades of Paris in defense of the most blasphemous barbarism, have displayed a heroism similar to that of our heroes at Waterloo and Dogger-Bank. Profane and wanton soldiers have cast themselves upon the enemy with rare contempt of death. But in all these manifestations of love, blood heated by passion on the one hand, and impure motives on the other, may play their part and rob it almost entirely of its divine character.

Yea, even in its highest manifestations among men, such as pity for the suffering and mercy toward the fallen and perishing, it may still be devoid of the spark of *holy* Love. There are natural men who can not bear the sight of suffering; who are so deeply affected by the heart-breaking spectacles of sorrow and mourning that they must show pity; to whom the offering of sympathy is a natural necessity; who count the soothing of other men's sorrow a joy rather than a sacrifice.



But even in this highest form, most closely approaching the divine mercies, it is frequently without any connection with the Eternal Love. It may be an impulse from instinct, an inclination from temperament, the effect of a noble example, or for the sake of fame almost everywhere obtainable by works of mercy; but the love of Christ is lacking. It is not the throbbing of the Love of God that vibrates in these manifestations. There is love that is to be appreciated; but the Love of which St. John declares that God is Love, is found only when the Holy Spirit enters the soul and teaches it to glory “In the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given us.” ([Rom. v. 5](#))

