

Procreation—Spiritual and Natural

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“For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord” (I Samuel 1: 27-28).

In the sorrow and shame of her barrenness Hannah, beloved wife of Elkana, knelt at the door of the Tabernacle in ancient Shiloh and, with upturned eyes and lips that barely moved, in her heart petitioned, “O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine hand maid, but wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life” (I Samuel 1:11).

And the Lord remembered Hannah and she conceived and bare a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “Because I have asked him of the Lord” (I Samuel 1:20).

“And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her...unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh. And the child was young... and she brought the child to Eli and said, Oh my Lord... For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore, also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord” (I Samuel 1: 24-28).

In this, Hannah’s touching expression of gratitude to the Lord, there is pictured in the internal sense, a spiritual love of offspring - a love as firm and patient in its acknowledgment of eternal values as it is gentle and willing to subordinate possessive pride to an uncompromising devotion to use. So in the literal narrative Hannah relinquished her maternal rights and affectional hold on Samuel, that he might be lent to the Lord, and serve under the example of Eli—high priest of God.

“The love of infants,” we read in *Conjugal Love* 385, “is conjoined perpetually with conjugal love.” This is so because two universal spheres proceed conjointly from the Lord for the sake of conserving the universe in the order of its creation.

One is a sphere of procreating, which is identified with conjugal love. The other is a sphere of protecting things procreated, which is identified with the love of infants. Note, procreation is the use of conjugal love. Protection of that, which is procreated, is the use of the love of offspring. Both uses are necessary to the establishment of heaven and, therefore, must not, yea, cannot long be separated.

A heaven from the human race, we know, is the end and purpose of creation. Essentially it is a state of mind in which there is a full and complete conjunction of good and truth. This also is a description of the conjugal state, for which reason, no individual permanently enters his heavenly home unless his conjugal partner is at his side. It is not the Lord’s will that this state of heaven or the conjugal state remain static to eternity, but that it increase each day in perfection and beauty, in wisdom and delight. Therefore, an active love is given to married partners in

heaven, a very special angelic love called conjugal love, and this is nothing less than a love of procreating, of multiplying and bringing forth, as of self, ever new states of perceptions and affections of tenderness and mutual love—ever new state intelligent and wise in their application to use. These are the spiritual offspring of heaven, brought forth from the marriage of good and truth in the minds of conjugal partners—with some even while they live together on earth. These are the spiritual offspring which draw husband and wife into a heavenly oneness, as they themselves, the offspring of God, eternally approach their Heavenly Father. Truly, conjugal love is a love of procreating.

And during the few short years that husband and wife dwell together on earth, conjugal love insofar as God wills and man in freedom and from conscience cooperates, will express itself in the procreation of natural offspring, that new, specific uses may continuously enrich the kingdom of heaven.

If the very use of conjugal love was not that of procreating natural and spiritual offspring, there could be no heaven from the human race. It is said, a heaven from the human race, and yet such speech is from appearance. Heaven is from the Lord. It is given through men for men by the sole means of conjugal love, for conjugal love brings forth from the Lord alone, natural offspring who, as vessels receptive and responsive to life, constitute heaven; and conjugal love also brings forth to eternity spiritual offspring—those ever new and delightful states of love and wisdom which husband and wife beget each day, and which proceed through them to create that substantial paradise called heaven, that very real environment which corresponds in its every finite perfection to angelic thoughts and affections.

Now the love of offspring, which flows forth from the Lord and is conjoined to conjugal love on every plane, is, essentially, a love of protecting that which is procreated both spiritual and natural. States of love and wisdom, begotten of the marriage of good and truth accrue to husbands and wives throughout their married life, and must be protected from spheres of alien thought and affection, lest man profane what is holy. Husband and wife, therefore, must share the responsibility of protecting intimate states of tenderness with which the Lord has blessed their marriage. They must guard against thoughtless and insensitive neglect of those mutual needs of inmost friendship. They must seek and keep as a sacred trust, the confidence and respect with which each partner entrusts the other. And they must delight in rendering, each to the other, every sincere help and comfort that dignity, modesty and humility afford. Only thus can the Lord protect and multiply their spiritual offspring which, like the promised seed of Abraham, are to be numbered as the stars in the heavens and the sand upon the shore.

Where natural offspring are given, they too are to be loved and protected. If this love of natural offspring is itself spiritual it will look to the child's use. It will look to his protection and education that the use for which he was created may be rightly performed. If, however, our love for our children is centered in self, we will love them because they assist our selfish ambitions and reflect our personal characteristics. We will love them because they puff-up our ego, and delight our own self-intelligence and abilities. And when they cease to further our selfish aims and especially when the fulfillment of their needs threatens to deprive us of proprial delights, then the evil nature of this love is seen—it comes forth as a desire for the prevention and even

the destruction of offspring. For this reason it must be a guiding principle that the love of self is not to interfere in any way with the law of offspring in marriage (*Arcana Coelestia* 2039).

It is a law of order that every love contains its own inherent wisdom: It follows that in the degree we desire to educate our children for a genuine use, in that degree the Lord will give us the wisdom to accomplish this. And in this work husband and wife must stand united as a single authority and law. For parents represent the Lord with infants; and in this capacity a great responsibility is placed upon them a responsibility to make their lives worthy of this trust; for children are far more deeply affected by observation than instruction. Nothing is of greater import than to surround them with a sphere of conjugal love, of love to the Lord, and trust in His Divine Providence. Powerful, indeed, are the remains implanted when children join their parents worshipping the Lord discussing matters of religion and the church—and exhibiting tender thoughts and considerations for one another. And when the time comes to transfer their infantile trust from parents to the Person of the Lord, it must be done in such a way that they become increasingly aware that there is a Divine Law outside all men and that this law cannot be broken without punishment and the loss of happiness. Concerning this we read: “It is of mercy to be punished, because mercy turns all the evil of punishment into good...for all man kind are evil, and of himself every one would rush into hell, wherefore, it is of mercy that (by punishment) he is delivered thence” (*Arcana Coelestia* 587).

All New church men must work towards conjugal love whether or not in the Divine Providence they have found their conjugal partners on this earth. The greatest means of attaining this goal is the development of a true love of offspring. With those who have no children of their own, this love must manifest itself in more general ways. They will regard with the utmost concern the preservation and furtherance of all educational efforts, doing everything in their power to promote the distinctive institutions, which protect our young people. In so doing- we emulate the example of Hannah—we introduce our children into the love of the Lord to serve under Eli—the high priest.

Now Eli, the venerable and much loved old priest represents Divine good and truth which instruct in all education for use. As parents we must do as did Hannah and house our children in a sphere of service to the Lord, under the watchful direction of good and truth from the Word. By so doing we will find that it is this good and truth that leads our children to recognize the Lord; even as Eli informed Samuel that it was the Lord who called him. For it is written, “And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for Thy servant heareth” (I Samuel 3:9-10).

Inasmuch as conjugal love and the love of offspring are interiorly conjoined, it follows that one cannot exist in man without the other. The needs of husband and wife are intimately bound up with the requirements of the family. Spheres of mutual love are interwoven with parental affection and infant response. This is so because conjugal love is the highest form of love to the Lord, and its greatest expression is the procreation, protection, and education of offspring.

Fulfillment of our obligations in this use involves the sacrifice of many selfish delights. The demands upon our time and energy build up until in certain states we feel that nothing can ensue but failure. The demand for patience, sympathy, understanding, and tenderness seems always to exceed our ability to respond. And at times husband and wife must struggle with all the strength and courage the Lord will give them to try to find the happiness in each successive state, instead of complaining of external hardships and apparent sacrifices.

But with all performance of use, the Lord gives happiness; and this, that man may find encouragement and inspiration to carry on. Yet so often we fail to find this delight because it has been obscured by dissatisfaction or refusal to trust in Providence. And yet, if we will reflect, we *will* see that even adversity can serve as a powerful means of drawing husband and wife ever more closely together in their love to the Lord, and their whole-hearted trust in Him.

There are no greater delights than those which accompany the love of infants. For angels continually surround little children with a sphere of innocence, and this parents are privileged to feel. The wholehearted affection, their complete dependence and trust so readily given, and the delightful sincerity of infants serve as an inspiration to so present ourselves to our Heavenly Father. “Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”

When children are grown the love of offspring does not cease. For as conjugal love increases in perfection to eternity, the love of offspring grows deeper. So it is that celestial angels, because of their willingness to be led by the Lord, have the tenderest of all love for infants. “Suffer little children to come unto Me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God... And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them “ (Mark 10: 14, 16).

Amen

Lessons: I Samuel 1, 3:1-12; *Apocalypse Explained* 988:5-6, 991:2-3; *Conjugal Love* 69, 188:3, 385; *Heaven and Hell* 402