

The Lamb Teaches You to LOVE

G. Steinberger 1915

"Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). How did He love? He loved His own more than Himself, and this is really the "love of Christ." Natural love loves according to its own inclination; the love which the Law commands loves because God wills it. It loves from duty and loves its neighbor as itself (Luke 10:27). But the love of Christ loves others more than itself. How far we still come short of that! So many times we have begun to love, but have soon grown weary and proved unfaithful to the sacred task. Only in the school of Christ do we learn the true meaning of love. There we learn to love in *God's* way, to love with that love which is in God's own heart. There is no place where sin creeps in more frequently than in the realm of affection. One does less harm by hatred than by false love. Often our enemies have not hurt us so much as our "good friends." If we desire that our inward man shall grow and prosper, then let us undertake a thoroughgoing investigation of ourselves and allow our hearts to be cleansed of all impurity. In the great chapter on love we are told that "love rejoices in the truth."

Love is truth! Love constantly seeks the eternal in its neighbor, and it points toward this with gentleness and seriousness, and even, if necessary, with unswerving insistence. Carnal love is blind, but divine love has an open eye for truth. Carnal love loves in order to be loved. True love loves without expecting any gratitude. It does not consider what it can achieve for itself, but, rather, what can be produced for the Lord. True love seeks from Jesus only Himself; and from men, not their recognition, still less their money, but only their immortal soul.

Love is self-giving! It loves all the way to death, even if it is brought to the cross with the Master. Carnal love also loves unto death, yet not unto Christ's death but unto spiritual death. Alas, many friendships lead to this! Wounds are received which cannot be healed through a whole long life. Once they spoke in love to each other about all things. They could not live, if they did not see each other every day. But then after some years, the burning love turned into bitter hatred. Carnal love always ends in hatred. By carnal love is not meant sensual love, but false love among the pious.

God, in His grace, permits even a downpour of bitter, unrighteous rebukes and an icy, loveless north wind to beat upon love's edifice. The poorly-built house falls together with a crash that is heard far away. Where one ceases to love with the love of Christ, there unrighteousness, confusion, and death, are the inevitable result. And to love in God's way can be learned only in the school of the Lamb.

Love is obedience. When and how do we love in God's manner? For many, this is a burning question. In I John 5:2 we are given a striking answer: "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments." He who loves God will by his love bind men to God, not to himself. John rejoiced when his disciples left him and followed after Jesus, because he loved Jesus. He who keeps God's commandments, loves; for by his obedience he leads his brethren upon God's Way, and this is true love. Such a love conquers at last and is understood, even if throughout all its life it may have been regarded as harshness. Every friendship which does not rest upon this foundation is enmity. On the whole, this matter of cultivating friendship is a difficult point. It requires much grace and truth from above. Very few can say as the ancient Church Father said about himself and his friend: "We were acquainted with only two ways, the one to the Church and the one to the teachers of the Church; we spoke of only two things, God and His Word."

Love is life! Without love we cannot live. Even as our spirit is created to know, so is our heart created to love. Our heart is created for love even as the bird is created for flight. Love is our life's beginning and end. It is the soul's light and source of warmth. He who sins against love lays hands upon his own life. Love is the greatest power. Only as long as we love do we live. Where love awakens, the dark tyrant of ego dies. Love is the bond of perfectness; it comprehends all, even God. Love is the one commandment which the Lord has given His own. Love is the mark of the new birth and the proof that our faith is genuine. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and compensates for the presence of Jesus Himself. What is the reason that God's children have so little love? Because they have too little of the Holy Spirit. How then shall we obtain more of the Spirit? By beginning to love more. Then the Triune God places Himself on our side, for He is, above all, the God of love. "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion" (Col. 3:12). Put on compassion and you will be as though "clad in festive garments, as though you had drunk of the wine of gladness and were refreshed by the peace of heaven, as though you had hind's feet, and arms as strong as Samson." Do you think that the Good Samaritan was a happy or an unhappy man? Who was more tired that evening, the priest or the Samaritan? Who do you suppose was the happier, he who gave away his

dime or he who kept it in his pocket? Oh, you poor children of God, who stand and wait for power from above, who seek after deeper peace and richer joy! Begin to love, and you shall begin to live! The Corinthians desired to do something extraordinary. But Paul showed them a more excellent way, the way where:

*Love beareth all things,
Believeth all things,
Hopeth all things,
Endureth all things.*

Not only some things, but *all* things. No one can deny that this type of love is something extraordinary. Yet the opportunity to experience it is open to all. Faith is the beginning and love the goal of our life. Both come from God and lead to God. God has given us so rich an opportunity to achieve joy in life, just because He has given us so rich an opportunity to love. For all that calls love into service will but increase our happiness. Come, let us learn of the Lamb, that we may see what love is! Let Him be our light, Who has loved unto death! Love leads to suffering. Christ's love brought Him to the cross. Only he is able to love, therefore, who is able to suffer. As long as we expect thanks for our love, we do not love from a pure heart.

Taken From: *In the Footprints of The Lamb*