

works of the new life. Both these are the result of the one moral power. It is the moral influence of the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, which at once destroys sin, and perfects all the graces. Sin is not a physical entity, to be removed by a physical act of destruction. It is a moral quality to be removed by moral influence. We speak now not of sin as guilt, but of sin as character.

What, then, is that moral quality which makes character sinful? We reply, a relation as motive to will, which contravenes, or tends to contravene the law of right. To illustrate, the parental instinct in its simple, natural, almost unconscious form, is certainly not sinful. It is God's gift, not to man alone, but also to the lower order of beings, serving His beneficent purpose. It is in itself a very beautiful thing; one of God's most excellent gifts to sentient creation. In the lower orders of being it acts as a simple instinct according to its law, and when the purposes of that law are fulfilled, it ceases to exist. Although, then, a very beautiful thing, it has no moral quality. It is only in man, the moral being, that it rises to the dignity of one of the noblest of the virtues, or sinks into a maudlin, sinful weakness. How so? By right or wrong relation to will. If common sense, and prudence, and experience, and moral obligation, and religious duty are all forgotten in the presence of the parent's simple fondness, and if the wayward fancies of the child through that fondness rule both parent and child, then the parental instinct becomes a sinful element of character. To become a virtue it must not die; but it must take its proper place under control of reason, conscience and religious faith, where it may help to the grandest acts of self-sacrifice, of heroic suffering, or of patient toil. It is when they lose their proper place and relation that these native elements of character become sinful. But what is their proper place? Not that of master; it is not theirs to control the being. The will must be the imperial master, the centre of the personality, not the slave of a passion. But to be thus master in the midst of contending passions, the will must be supported by its God-given foundation of right, truth, and love. Standing on these the will is *free*, the will is master, and all lower motives serve, obey, assist.