

parents on earth, or had he experienced none from them? Did he come perchance from unbelief to faith, in opposition to them? Well for him if he then learned to love Him whose love exceeds that of children and parents, whose love also fully compensates for the want of it; well for him if God lifted him safely over the first missing round of the ladder—but there is no occasion for us on that account to break out that first round. As life goes on, the love of God increases by means of love to our neighbour. Here, too, natural instinct lends us its assistance. Compassion is a Divine help in learning to love. But too many make the mistake of taking compassion for love, when it is only love's finger post. The scribe's question: "Who is my neighbour?" is that of human nature. Selfishness will always be asking it, but compassion alone will never answer it. Next comes the assistance of conjugal love. What an excellent school of love is marriage. Thousands of marriages are concluded amidst much talk of love, without a spark of the genuine article. That was called love which was only instinct, and the very elements of love are often first studied in married life. Well for those who begin by loving and make further progress afterwards. How could I, in writing this, fail to think of your father and of our marriage, and to praise the mercy of God which made it so easy to me to learn love by experiencing so much of it.

There is even a love of Christ which is yet no perfect love, but may become a stage to it. He is