

## **Almighty Affection**

I open with an important idea as it was expressed by Olive Schreiner who wrote at the turn of the 20th century:

“From the mysterious drawing together of amoeba to amoeba, their union and increase, on through all the forms of sentient life and in the life of the very vegetable world, the moving original power is always this stretching out, uniting, creative force; shaping itself in the union of male and female, of begetting with their begotten; drawing together creatures of like and unlike kinds, bringing into all the forms of friendship and union and love, it lies at the root of existence.

“It shapes the petals of flowers, not for death but to call the insects to suck their sweetness and carry fertilizings to each other; it sings in the song of all song birds calling to their mates; it blossoms into human speech. To kill, man might have been silent; but to communicate with and bind himself to his fellow, child to mother, mother to child, the sexes to reach each other, man, to reach man belonging to his social organism, man was obliged to blossom into speech. Everywhere this binding, moving creative force moves at the very heart of things. Men have so recognized that his creative power was the fount and core of life in all ages they have tended to call the highest intelligence they could conceive of, ‘the great Creator’.”

The idea is simply that one of the critical factors in creation is the unitive factor – that which searches for wholeness, that which would bind in fellowship, that which would create order out of chaos. Not only is the unitive factor a component of creation, but it is the dominant component. Likewise, it is the dominant line of all the insight of Jesus. Jesus was trying to get you to understand the beauty imbedded in your own creation that waits for expression through your particular personality. That is all Jesus was about when he told people, “You are Light,” “You are salt.” He was trying to get them to understand that they are of utter worth, just by the nature of creation. Our religious tradition has many ways to say it: “Made in the image of God.” The burden of our religious tradition is to try to get you to understand how wildly fabulous you are in seed, at the core; therefore, what an amazing display of God’s Life you could be. The foundation is already there.

The unitive principle, which makes each individual of utter worth, is the central theme of the New Testament – the emphasis which puts the personal in a larger context. The unitive principle suggests that all creation belongs, and that nothing that God has created is outside of His desire that it should belong. So the flower has sweetness not just to have sweetness, but so that bees can do their thing. There is a uniting principle. It says that God is the equivalent of Good. After the Creation He said, “It is Good.”

The church, however, has taught us that we were born in sin, conceived in iniquity. But I don’t think that is indigenous to New Testament insight. Jesus said, “Let the little children come unto me; of such is the Kingdom.” How could the Kingdom be made up of sinful children? He said, “Lest you become as a child.” The theologians come out and tell you that you are born in sin and conceived in iniquity. What nonsense. The New Testament speaks for itself.

You have been led to believe that evil is indigenous to your world and your personality, and that there is not much you can do about it. We are quick to say, “That’s human nature.” What is human nature? Jesus said it is human nature to so love life that you give your life to help others understand that it is a giving universe, and therefore a giving enterprise. Does that sound sinful and self-seeking? No! Jesus wouldn’t tell people who were full of original sin – “You are the Light of the world.” If you don’t give flavor to this earth, it will have none, because, “You are the Salt.”

We need to celebrate a force that is among the highest and strongest forces in the universe. It is the force I call Almighty Affection. It brings unity rather than disruption. Almighty Affection is continuously celebrated in your life. It is so close to you that perhaps you don’t recognize its presence and are apt to be led to believe that the world is really an evil place that you have to get out of. As a matter of fact, the cry of a baby as it breaks forth in light and is separated from unity with the mother is no more than a symbolic statement about the fact that it wants unity again. With every person the unitive principle is celebrated constantly. When you walk up to somebody, what do you do? You either put out your hand or you embrace them. Both are futile attempts to reestablish a sense of wholeness in a divisive world.

Mother’s Day as an event symbolizes something about the nature and structure of Life. When motherhood is flushed out in terms of all of its beauty of concern and loving care it is simply a hint, in the human situation, of what is available continuously in Life. The problem with Mother’s Day (as we celebrate it) is that we make mother, arbitrarily, the symbol of that love, which is not necessarily true. Mother may not be Godly, or God fearing, but we pretend she is anyway on the day of the great cover-up. When we cover up like this, we stab at our own consciousness and our own awareness of what unity means.

The principle of motherhood is what Mother's Day ought to be talking about, and if that principle were being celebrated, then father would get a present, and sister and brother would get a gift. The event of motherhood argues with us about the unitive principle of life and gives us a graphic illustration of what is going on all the time. Every occasion we can think of should be a mother's day, brother's day, sister's day, children's day. We should celebrate to the extent that we are developing with these people a sense of oneness, and a sense of unity. What we ought to have is person day, and see who would get a flower. Because what we are talking about is celebrating those persons in whose life is reflected the will and the loving concern of God, as we have experienced it throughout the world. These people who so reflect God's will would be the ones who are honored with flowers on Person's Day.

What I have been trying to say is that this world, as it has been created, is essentially good. The beauty is built in. If God had His way, there would be concord, and union, and community, beauty and love. That is the good. This idea is so basic to the creation that Jesus dared look at people he had never seen before and say to them, "You're fabulous." "You are great!" "You are not sick, you are well." He had never seen these people before, but he knew they were not outside the purview of God's loving concern – a concern so deep that if he could turn them on to it within their own consciousness, they would be well.

Essential goodness is so basic that whenever it is frustrated we see violence and destruction which are harbingers of death, not life. The breaking up of this implied unity in life is never a neutral thing. Life, feeling itself cut off, will strike out and that striking out is often a symbol of the love principle that has been frustrated and thwarted.

Let's deal with race. I contend that you could give minorities all the houses, all the jobs, and all other things, but if between races there remained hostility, you would have all the preconditions for race war. Racism is really not about denying people houses and jobs, though that is what happens. The underbelly of it is about denying people access to each other. That stabs more at the province of God than denying a house. Give them a house and a job and then tell them this is for us and that is for you, and you have the conditions for destruction.

Why then don't we love and struggle for unity? I mean love that is vast enough to issue forth in many strategies. I do not mean romantic love. I am not concerned about love that is based upon how you look, what kind of hairstyle you have or how fat or how skinny or how tall you are. I mean a love that is based upon the fact that you are a part of the intricate handiwork of God – a love that is based upon your knowing that Life would not have been implanted in you if it was not intended to live through you – a love that makes you super sensitive to everywhere in the world where lives are being used to thwart the lives of others. I believe that an increase of righteousness, justice and love in our community is

waiting for an increase in your awareness that you are essentially grand, good and fabulous. Jesus said it years ago. "The Kingdom is within you." And still you sit! I believe when you understand that, then you will know what it means to love.

The scripture says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." Then the great Teacher comes and says, but how can you love God whom you cannot see and don't even love your neighbor who you can see? And then the other question, obviously implied is: How can you love God or your neighbor, if you don't love yourself? Because in your body, in your psyche, in your soul - there is the place where you celebrate the unifying urge of Life. The loving consciousness of Life is embedded deep in your spirit. At a deep spiritual level you know you belong to the flower, to the wind, to the person, to the neighbor, to God. But you cannot love out there if you do not experience in the life, in the persona, in the soul, if you do not experience what it is to love the Life that moves through you. How can you love anything out there? Jesus said, you have got to love yourself. I say that our problem seems to be that we don't really love ourselves. That is the reason Jesus was always trying to get people to understand – to come up another step, to realize that love of self is the condition that opens a life to the love of the rest of life. How can you love life out there, if you don't love the life that moves in miraculous fashion within?

I like John's phrase because he puts you in proper space. He says, "Little children, love one another." I say, learn to love what God has done that bears your name. Love yourself, that you might love one another, for love is the basis of this life. All of the secrets are hidden there, for God is lodged there.