

The Human Will

The Will is that faculty or mode of the soul which self-determines, inclines, desires, and chooses in reference to moral and religious objects and ends. These objects and ends are all centred and summed up in God. We say moral and religious objects and ends, because there is a class of propensities and desires that refer to non-moral and non-religious objects.

They are the *natural* or *instinctive* desires, which are involuntary. Speaking generally, the voluntary and moral desires relate to God. They are either inclined or averse to him; they are either love or hatred. The natural and instinctive desires, on the other hand, relate to the creature. Of these latter, there are four kinds. (a) Physical appetites. (b) Family affections. (c) Social affections. (d) Aesthetic feeling.

These all relate to some form or phase of the Finite, and therefore are not in themselves of the nature of virtue or religion, because religion relates to the Infinite. They may be sanctified by the moral and religious desires, and are so sanctified when the religious desires coexist with them; but they are in themselves neither sinful nor holy. They are constitutional, non-moral propensities, flowing necessarily from man's physical and mental structure.

Unregenerate men have them, as well as regenerate. They are none of them the object of a divine command or prohibition, like the moral and religious desires. When husbands are commanded to "love their wives" (Col. 3:19), and wives to "love their husbands and children" (Titus 2:4), they are commanded to love "*in the Lord.*"

The mere *instinctive* love itself is not commanded. This is provided for in the created relation of husband and wife; of parent and child. The instinctive affection as *sanctified* by a connection and union with the religious affection of supreme love of God, is what is enjoined.

The same is true of the love and obedience of children towards their parents (Col. 3:20), of the love and care of parents towards their children (Col. 3:21), of the relation of the citizen to the state (Rom. 13:5; 1 Pet. 2:13, 14), of the relation between master and servant (Col. 3:22; 1 Tim. 6:1, 2), and of the physical appetites (Rom. 14:6; 1 Cor. 10:31). None of these are commanded merely as *natural* instinctive desires and affections, but as *sanctified* instinctive desires and affections.

(Dogmatic Theology (Classic Reprint Edition), Volume Two, Part A, by William G. T. Shedd, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1979 [Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889], 119-120; Paragraph structure modified)