

enters her chamber to find her dead. By her bedside he kneels, and in that hour the power of past sin is broken, and he leaves the room invulnerable against the sins of past years. A lad, unconscious of his talents and feeling about for his lifework, picks up a book of science, and ere he has read a page he understands his calling. A man with disengaged heart and careless of social ties sees a woman's face, and the current of his life sets in a new direction. No one can explain how the change is effected, no one can describe his own experience. The wind blew where it listed, and it was viewless, but the sound was in the heart, and the power was in the life. Savonarola was checked in love, and turned aside from the world: he gave himself to the service of God, and in the end sealed his testimony with his life. Once and again, in the Duomo of Florence, he referred to his conversion, and he used to say with emphasis, "A word did it," but he never told the word, and that word must always be a secret between a man and God.

JOHN WATSON.

HOLY HATRED.

THERE is perhaps no characteristic of holiness more definite and strong than hatred. Holiness is an implacable hater. But its hate is of a peculiar kind; it is hatred born of love. Hence its intensity and its passionateness; for there is no hatred so intense and keen as the hatred of which the parent is affection.

Some persons appear to think that all kinds of hatred are wrong; that hatred itself partakes of the nature of sin. Nothing could be more untrue. There is, of course, bad hatred, just as there is bad love. If we love bad things, our love is bad; our love is only good when its purpose

and object are good. Similarly with hatred. Its character wholly depends on its motive and object. If we hate good things, our hatred is evil; but if we hate evil things, our hatred is good. Both love and hatred alike are evil, or good, according to their purpose and their source. The difference between them is, that love is good or evil directly according to its object; and hatred inversely—that is to say, love is good if its object is good, and evil if its object is evil; whereas hatred is good if its object is evil, and evil if its object be good. Both love and hatred, therefore, are holy or unholy, according to the character of the source from which they spring. And as our duty is to quench every spark of unholy love, so also our equal duty is to cultivate every germ of holy hatred.

It is, indeed, not too much to affirm that the perfection of holiness is unattainable without the practice of hatred. For what is holiness? Holiness is devotion to God and love of righteousness; and there is no hatred more keen than the hatred of evil engendered by the love of righteousness, and the hatred of sin kindled by devotion to God. They that love the Lord hate—they cannot help hating, the spiritual necessity is laid upon them, they *must* hate—the thing that is evil.¹ Love of God cannot live without hatred of sin. True religious love is never lukewarm, never indifferent. It is not an affair of opinion or taste, but a burning passion consuming all things opposite in their nature to itself. When holy love ceases to burn with the flames of a lively, leaping indignation, it soon flickers down into a heap of ashes cold and dead. In order that we may grow in the beauty and purity of holiness, it is essential to feed well the furnaces of holy hatred; for the gold of goodness is often refined in the white heats of indignant hatred against evil.

Holiness has few foes so deadly as indifference. In all

¹ Ps. xvii. 10.

high and noble pursuits we find that vacillating indifference is fatal. In the world of thought indifference is destructive of success. The half-hearted never reach the heights of knowledge, nor discover hidden truths, nor attain the grace of style. In politics enthusiasm and work are indispensable to victory. No social reform, no moral improvement, no benevolent enterprise, was ever carried to a triumphant issue by wavering and lukewarm advocates. Even in the ordinary avocations of industry and commerce failure awaits flabbiness; none but the determined and the zealous can command success. The same law holds sway in religion. Religious indifference leads inevitably to religious failure. Religion without earnestness, without enthusiasm, without passion, soon ceases to be religion, as fire without fuel soon ceases to be fire. Neutrality in religion is tantamount to irreligion. "They that are not with Me," said Christ, "are against Me." "No man can serve two masters; he must either hate the one and love the other, or else hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."¹ In religion all halting between two opinions means deciding against God.

Mere acquiescence in religion, or in the appearance of religion, without a passion for holiness, is amongst the worst of all forms of anti-Christianism. It is better to be an open enemy than a lukewarm friend of the Christ. It was lukewarmness which drew down the Divine malediction upon the Church of the Laodiceans. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." "Be zealous therefore and repent, that I may come in to thee and sup with thee."² The godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of invariably works zeal, invariably works revenge; a zeal for goodness

¹ Matt. xii. 30; vi. 24.

² Rev. iii. 15, 16, 20.

which takes revenge upon past days wasted in evil.¹ The true penitent is zealous towards God, zealous of good works, zealous of spiritual gifts, zealous for the salvation of others,² zealous towards every manner of noble ideal—zealous on behalf of all things honourable, venerable, nobly serious, righteous, pure, lovely, gracious, virtuous, praiseworthy, good³—and zealous against all things false, cruel, shameful, mean, unlovely and untrue. To be neither cold nor hot in antagonism to evil, neither cold nor hot on behalf of righteousness, is to be very far indeed from the kingdom of God. Nearer to the kingdom are they who have greatly sinned, and greatly repented, than they who do not even know that they are poor and naked and wretched and blind, and go on in comfortable and self-satisfied indifference to the horrors of sin and the sublimities of holiness.⁴ In matters of mere opinion on questions of religious interest there may legitimately be much wavering and vacillation; but any vacillation or wavering in reference to the eternal verities of righteousness and holiness is spiritual ruin.

Everywhere in the Bible the religious life is represented not as an easy drifting with the stream of things, but as a resolute battling against the stream; not as a placid performance of mechanical routine, but as a passionate pursuit of living ideals. In religion there is no colourlessness, no complacency, no satisfaction either with things as they are, or with ourselves as we are. Religion is a conflict, a wrestling, a race, a hunger, a thirst, a stern resolve to gain at any cost the priceless pearl, a sleepless vigilance lest we should miss the moment of the Bridegroom's coming, a panting, a yearning, a longing, a covetousness, a zeal, a flame of love, a fervour of hatred. There

¹ 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

² Acts xxii. 3; Titus ii. 14; 1 Cor. xiv. 12; Col. iv. 13.

³ Phil. iv. 8.

⁴ Matt. xxi. 31.

is, indeed, great quietness, peace, rest, stillness in religion—but it is the stillness of awe, the rest in the Lord, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, the quietness which is strong in eternal hope—the hope anchored within the veil. Yet notwithstanding the sweet rest and calm peace of religion, its sober strength and its serene tranquility, it is a life of unceasing battle, of unresting enthusiasm, of passionate hatred and passionate love.

In its dual character of blessed peace and truceless war the life of partial holiness in man resembles the perfect holiness of the All-Holy God. God is in Himself the perfection of peace, yet is He unceasingly at war with every manner of evil. No terms seem too strong to the inspired penmen of our Holy Scriptures for describing God's abhorrence and antagonism and hatred against evil. The Bible gives a long catalogue of the objects of God's hatred—false ways, vain thoughts, the froward mouth, lying lips, the serving other gods, the proud look, the high stomach, evil imaginations, false oaths, unkindliness to neighbours, vain oblations, formal worship, paraded prayers and fastings and alms, leading little children astray, unclean altars, the sanctuaries of hypocrisy, the substitution of ritualism for righteousness, with every manner of wrong and evil way.¹ The prophets of the Old Testament heap image upon image to convey to the minds of men the intensity of the Divine hatred against all falseness and unreality and sin. God's anger, they say, is like a flaming and devouring fury; it is a bow full of deadly arrows, a great cloud with thunderings and lightnings, a destroying enemy, a violent storm of indignation.² But these vivid images of the Old Testament grow pale in the presence of the still more terrific language of the New Testament—the woes, and outer darkness, and

¹ Ps. cxix. 104, 113, 163; Prov. viii. 13; Jer. xlv. 4; Zech. viii. 17; Isa. i. 10-15; Matt vi. 1-18; Mark ix. 42; Lam. ii. 7; Matt. ix. 13.

² Cf. e.g. Lam. ii. *passim*.

unquenchable fires, the indignation and wrath against the worldly rich and the self-complacently full, and the religiously unreal, proclaimed by our Lord; the tribulation and anguish denounced by St. Paul against every soul of man that is self-seeking and factious, that does not obey the truth, but obeys unrighteousness and follows evil.¹

Yet strong and terrible as is the inspired language descriptive of the Divine hatred, none will shrink from embracing it except those whose sense of the infamy and pestilential character of evil is dim and weak and dull. For how could God, the God of love, the all-tender Father of the children of men, who yearns with an ineffable yearning for our highest good, *not* be jealous² when He sees us giving our hearts to the evil ways which He knows must end in our utter shame and ruin? How could He *not* hate, with a jealous fierceness, the sins and iniquities which make shipwreck of the souls whom He has eternally loved, and for whom He did not hesitate, in the boundlessness of His affection, to give His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die? It is because He so loves us that He so hates everything injurious to our true interests and our final welfare. Because He is our Father He is—He must be—lovingly jealous when He sees us selling our spiritual birth-right for a poor mess of carnal pottage; wasting away our spiritual excellences on concupiscences fraught with misery and shame; setting our affection on secret yet plausible foes; exchanging the bliss of immortality for the treacherous joy of a fleeting hour; recklessly casting the pearl of our life to be trodden under foot by the swine of sin. God sees these things, as we cannot see them, in all their vileness and wretchedness and horror; and, seeing them, hates them with a hatred unimaginable to the feeble, broken vision of our sin-blurred spirits. Yet if we would imitate

¹ Luke vi. 24, 25; Matt. xxiii. 13; Rom. ii. 8, 9.

² Exod. xx. 5.

God's holiness, however imperfectly, we must cherish and cultivate a God-like hatred of iniquity. We must abhor that which is evil, that we may go on cleaving to that which is good. We must hate the evil, that we may continue to love the good, not less than because we already love it. For the hatred of unholiness is not only a consequence, it is also a fomentor of the love of holiness. The more we hate evil the more we shall love good; and the more we love good the more shall we hate evil.

Yet while we do not shrink from, but earnestly foster hatred for the sake of holiness, we must be very careful, very watchful, that our hatred is not sinful hatred. For there is a hatred which is wicked and base and unholy, as well as a hatred which is holy and just and true. Nor is it difficult to discern between holy and unholy hatred; between the hatred that is devilish and the hatred that is divine; for holy hatred may generally be recognised by these three conspicuous signs.

(1) First, holy hatred seldom hates persons. It hates things, and it hates them, not because they are disagreeable or unfriendly to the hater, but because they are in themselves sinful and wrong. Unholy hatred is quite opposite in its character. It does not hate any action, or course of action, on account of its essential baseness, apart from all personal considerations—hating the wrong when done to others as fervently as when done to ourselves—but on account of some personal disappointment, some personal discomfort, some personal dislike. If one person hates another because that other person has crossed the path of his purposes, or defeated his hopes, or wounded his self-esteem, or overthrown his desires, or run contrary to his interests and inclination, his hatred is unholy hatred. It was with this unholy hatred that Esau hated Jacob, and his brethren hated Joseph, and Ahab hated Micaiah, and the Pharisees hated the Christ. Their hatred was personal

animosity, and therefore unholy. Holy hatred, on the contrary, is entirely distinct from personal animosity. When it hates persons, it does not hate them as persons, or for personal reasons, but as embodiments of injustice, as tempters and seducers of others, as enemies of righteousness, foes of humanity, displeasers of God. The consuming passion of holiness burns for the purification and exaltation of humanity, and the greater glory of God. And because with all its heart holiness loves both God and man, therefore with all its strength it hates whatever is contrary to human good and the Divine glory. Holy hatred has nothing selfish in it. It hates sin as sin against mankind and God; not merely, or chiefly, or even at all, as an offence against self.

(2) The second mark of distinction between a holy and an unholy hater is that an unholy hater accuses others and excuses himself: a holy hater bitterly accuses himself and sweetly excuses others. The holy hater feels his own sinfulness more deeply than the sinfulness of others. Of all sins he most of all hates his own sins. Like Job, he abhors himself in dust and ashes; like David, his iniquities take such hold on him that he is not able to look up; like Manasses, he feels bowed down with many iron bands by reason of his sins, and unable to behold and see the height of heaven for the multitude of his iniquities; like the Publican, his cry is, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; like St. Paul, of all sinners he confesses himself the chief, carnal, sold under sin, doing the things he would not, and hating the things he does.¹ If we are tender towards our own transgressions, and severe on the transgressions of others, our severity is unholy and our tenderness selfish; but if we hate our own sins, and are gentle towards the faults of

¹ Job xlii. 6; Ps. xl. 12: The Prayer of Manasses. Luke xviii. 13; 1 Tim. i. 15; Rom. vii. *passim*.

others, then both our gentleness and our hatred alike are holy.

(3) The third conspicuous difference between unholy and holy hatred, between sinful anger and the anger that sins not,¹ is that unholy hatred hates the sinner and is indulgent to the sin; whereas holy hatred loves the sinner whilst loathing the sin. Many persons, we know, are angry with others for committing offences which they themselves commit. They condemn lust in others, yet are lustful themselves; they are angry with dishonour in others, yet secretly indulge dishonour in themselves.² Yea, in the fiery smoke of their vehement condemnation of others, they even hope to conceal their own equal guilt. It is far otherwise with holy hatred. Holy hatred burns with indignation at the offence, but yearns with pity for the offender. As it strikes it weeps. In wrath it remembers mercy.³ It is eager to convert, not to condemn. Denouncing woe upon the sin, it proclaims peace to the penitent. It covers the Magdalene's sin, and makes a world-enduring memorial of her tears and her spikenard.⁴ It hates because it loves; and it loves where it hates. Its fury flows from pity, and its wrath is the measure of its mercy. In the All-holy and All-merciful God, both holy hatred and merciful kindness are revealed in their perfection. For it is because God so hated sin, and so loved sinners, that He gave His only begotten Son that sin might perish and sinners might have everlasting life.⁵

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¹ Eph. iv. 26.

² Rom. ii. 21-23.

³ Hab. iii. 2.

⁴ Luke vii. 36-50.

⁵ John iii. 16.