

Perhaps this is as far as the nominal Christian has learned the truth as it is in Christ. But I am persuaded there is a higher attainment—a state that as yet only the seers and prophets in each age have learned and known; but it is a condition after which we should all strive, and help one another to attain. With this desire I wish to present a few observations in regard to the saying that “we should hate the sin, but love the sinner.”

In the first place it is a thing impossible to do. Secondly, it would be no virtue if we could do it. Thirdly, it is a condition Jesus himself condemned. And lastly, it would tend to blight and debase our own souls.

These may seem glaring statements, but let us unbiassedly proceed to examine them.

In support of these propositions allow me to use at liberty the words and arguments of my late friend, Dr. A. J. Ingersoll, of Corning, N. Y., a man, in my estimation, very near the mind of Christ, truly a seer of this 19th century, and a prophet not unattested by miracles and works of wonder.

The first objection is that we cannot “hate sin and love the sinner.” We cannot separate the two. “Sin is an act of an immortal soul, and therefore an internal entity, and not an abstract principle. After a deed is committed no power can separate it from the soul. All deeds that are sinful are associated with the sinner who originated the sin. If it were possible for me to separate the sin from the soul, I then could be a Saviour, and I would lift the burden of sin from every immortal soul.”

Our second objection is that it would be no virtue in us if we could do it. Let us imagine we can separate the sin from the man. What do we have left? Simply a good, a righteous man, a man who would, in return, love us. This would not be a virtue, but a selfish love, and worthy of Jesus' rebuke, “For if ye love them

which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?” This answers our third objection.

In the fourth place, it would tend to blight and debase our own souls. The foot-note says we are to hate, etc. Jesus says we are to love—a different feeling, isn't it? Now, Jesus does not ask us to qualify or limit our love; men did that in olden times, and still do it. They said, “*hate thine enemy;*” Jesus says, “*love your enemies.*” Men still say you may *hate*; Christ still says in every soul, “*Ye must not hate; ye must love.*”

Now, here is where the error creeps in. We are accustomed to direct our attention to the wrong end of the vision. We look to the object and try to judge of its worthiness. Let us look within ourselves; in our own mind or soul is where the operation of love or hate takes place, and where its beneficial or baneful effects eternally abide. Love makes God-like; hate debases.

It is said that “whatso'er we love, that we become.” It may be true in a sense; in a similar sense also may be true what the Apostle Paul says after a varied and deep experience, “what I hate, that do I.” Hatred, like love, recoils upon the soul. The proper course seems to be to love the good and pure that we may become like it, and not to hate the false and evil, lest we do and become that.

Just here may we be permitted to make a practical application. I question the wisdom of presenting our children books full of sin, and crime and error, that they may, by the process of hating, be made better. O, fathers and mothers, it is a dangerous method. You will find, as Paul did, that what they hate, that they become. Books written in that spirit and with that object, are poison to mind and soul. Let us banish them all from our homes and libraries.

If these views may help any to live better and purer lives; help any to overcome the black sins of hate, anger,