

"Did I say," said he, "that I was an enemy to God? I take it that I may feel a repugnance to a character, and yet not be an enemy to the man who bears it."

I replied: "If a man thoroughly dislikes his wife, with a settled aversion, is not his mind enmity to her? Yet you would not call him her enemy. But suppose a man to be utterly opposed to the measures of a king, and that he refuses to submit to him, and neglects every duty toward the government, talks to others against it, and his actions are in opposition to it; is not he justly called an enemy of the king? Surely he would be treated as such, under whatever name he might be arraigned."

"He might not be a personal enemy, to the king," said he.

"As to all purposes of loyalty he is a rebel," I replied. How remarkable it is that Christ sums up the whole moral law in this, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thou shalt love thy neighbor." God makes religion, that is, our duty, to consist in, and flow from love. Would it have satisfied you, had that dear son of yours written to you, saying, 'Father I am not your enemy, but I feel utter repugnance to you: I do not and I cannot love you?' What if you should have said to your wife, 'Let us separate; I am not your enemy, but I totally disapprove of your principles and conduct, and take no pleasure in you?' All this you feel toward God."

"Well, I know I do," said he; "and a man may be perfectly justified in feeling so toward his wife, a son toward his father."

"Justified," said I, "if the characters of the father and the wife are really such as these alienated minds assert. Allow that, in the judgment of competent people without number, they are, on the contrary, eminently lovely and good, what would that prove as to the son and the husband?"

"It would prove the men differ honestly about the same things," said he.

I replied, "If a little child at table says, 'Mother, my milk is sour,' and the mother tastes it and finds it perfectly sweet; and the child still insisting that it is sour, the mother hands it to two or three grown people, and they also say it is perfectly sweet, what then?"

"Why," said he, laughing, "either the child's taste is out of order, or its out of temper."

"Mr. Winn," said I, taking a tortoise-shell case out of my pocket, and drawing forth a little key, "There is the key of my little daughter's coffin, as lovely a child as ever drew the breath of life, my only child. God took her away from me. Your children and your wife were your all. Agnes and my wife were my all; my child is dead, and my wife is hastening after her. The bitter sorrow awaits me which you have drunk to the full. How does this make me feel toward God?"

"I should like to hear," interrupting me.

"Mr. Winn," said I, "it makes me say, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee?' and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

"I presume you do not mean, by all that, that you love Him better than before?"

"Better than before?" said I. "There is no comparison that does justice to the case; I love Him, I worship Him, I serve Him, so far as my desires are concerned, as I never did. Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

"It is a mystery to me," said he, "and I suppose it is to you. It must be what you call sovereignty, or election.—something over which you have no control."

"Why," said I, "you said just now, speaking of yourself, 'I am a rational creature; I have sense and reason; I am not a machine nor a beast.' Will you allow me to be the same in those respects as your self?"