

Of the Hatred of God.

by John Gill

God hates sin, but loves his elect, and his hatred of sin is a will to punish it, while his hatred of sinners is a will to punish the individuals who commit the sin.

Scripture: Psalm 5:5, Psalm 97:10, Proverbs 6:16-19, Isaiah 63:10, Amos 5:15, Zechariah 8:17, Malachi 1:2, Matthew 7:23, Romans 3:5, Romans 9:11-13

Topics: "Sin and Righteousness", "God's Hatred"

Description

John Gill addresses the concept of God's hatred, clarifying that while God does not hate His creatures, He does hate sin and the actions of sinners. He emphasizes that God's hatred is not a passion like human emotions but is rooted in His perfect holiness and justice. Gill explains that God's love for righteousness necessitates a hatred for unrighteousness, and this is reflected in His will to punish sin and sinners. He also discusses the distinction between God's love for the elect and His comparative hatred for the non-elect, which is based on His sovereign will rather than any inherent malice. Ultimately, God's hatred is directed towards sin, while His love remains steadfast for His chosen people.

Transcript

A Body of Doctrinal Divinity

Book 1--Chapter 18

OF THE HATRED OF GOD.

There are some^[1] that deny that hatred belongs to God; or that he hates anything; and urge a passage in the Apocrypha, ``Thou lovest all beings, and hatest none of these that thou hast made; " (Wisdom 11:24) which is true of the creatures of God, as such; for as they are made by him they are all very good; and are loved, delighted in, and not hated by him. Nor is hatred to be considered as a passion in him, as it is in men; who is a pure, active Spirit, and is solely agent, and not a patient; is not capable of suffering anything: much less as it is a criminal passion, by which men, in their worst estate, are described, "hateful", and "hating one another", (Titus 3:3) since he is a perfectly holy Being, and without iniquity.

Yet the scriptures do, in many places, attribute to him hatred both of persons and things, (Ps. 5:5; Zech. 8:17) and most truly and rightly; and this may be concluded from love being in God, as has been shown; though this is made use of as an argument against it, because opposite to it; but where there is love of any

person or thing, there will be an hatred of that which is contrary to the object loved: thus good men, as they love those that are good, like themselves, and good things, so they hate that which is evil; they love God, the chiefest good; and they hate sin, the chiefest evil, as diametrically opposite to him, (Ps. 97:10; Amos 5:15).

So the righteous Lord, as he loves righteousness and righteous men, his people; as they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and found in the ways of righteousness, so he hates unrighteousness, and unrighteous men; for to the Son of God he saith, "thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows", (Ps. 45:7) besides, it is a virtue, yea grace, in good men, to hate sin that dwells in them, and is committed by them, as the apostle did, (Rom. 7:15) for without the grace of God it is not hated; and also to hate them that hate the Lord, as David did, and for the truth of which he appeals to God, "Do not I hate them, O Lord that hate thee?

I hate them with perfect hatred" (Ps. 139:21, 22). Now if it is a virtue, or owing to the grace of God in them, that they do hate sin and sinners, then this must come from God, from whom all grace, and every good gift comes; and consequently must be in him, in a higher degree, even in the most perfect manner; to all which may be added, that hatred, when ascribed to God, sometimes signifies no other than his will to punish sin and sinners, and his execution of it, (Ps. 5:5, 6) and so is an act of justice, of punitive justice; "And is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance?"

No; he is righteous in that, as he is in all his works (Rom. 3:5). For the further illustration of this point, I shall consider both what that is; and who they are God is said to hate. 1. What that is he hates, that is sin; and this is consistent with his not hating any of his creatures; for sin is no creature of his; he is not the author of sin; all the creatures he made were very good; but sin was not among them; every creature of God is good, and not to be refused, rejected, and hated by men; as none are by God, as such; but sin is not any of them.

Sin must be hateful to God, since it is so contrary to his nature, to his will, and to his righteous law. All sin is an abomination to him; but there are some sins that are particularly observed as hated by him, as idolatry, (Deut. 16:22; Jer. 44:3-5) perjury, (Zech. 8:17) all insincere and hypocritical acts of worship, (Isa. 1:14, 15; Amos 5:21) sins against the two tables of the law; as murder, which stands among the six things which God hates, (Prov. 6:16-18) fornication, adultery, community of wives; the deeds of the Nicolaitans he is said to hate, (Rev. 2:6, 15) theft, robbery, rapine, and violence of every sort; all kind of injury to the persons and properties of men, (Ps. 11:5; Isa. 61:8) and every evil thing a man may imagine against his neighbour (Zech. 8:17).

And all this is true of each of the divine persons. God the Father has shown his hatred of sin by the judgments he has executed in casting down from heaven to hell the angels that sinned, driving Adam and Eve out of paradise, bringing a flood upon the world of the ungodly, raining fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah; with other instances in following ages, and later ones; and by the chastisements of his own people, when they sin and transgress his law; but in nothing more than by the condemnation of sin in the flesh of Christ, when he suffered in the room and stead of his people, as their Surety and Saviour; and so by the punishment of wicked men to all eternity.

The Son of God has given sufficient proof of his loving righteousness, and hating iniquity, of whom these things are expressly said, (Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:8, 9) and are true of him as a divine person, and as Mediator, and as man; and this he has done by inveighing against the sins of the Jews in his time; by his severe

usage of the buyers and sellers in the temple; and by his exhortations and threatenings to men to sin no more, lest worse things came unto them: and the Holy Ghost is not only grieved by the sinful actions and behaviour of men; but may be vexed by them, so as to turn to be their enemy, and fight against them (Isa. 63:10).

Which leads me to consider, 2. Who they are that God hates; and they are sinners, "workers of iniquity", (Ps. 5:5) not men, as men, but as sinful men; and not all that sin, or have sin in them; for then all would be hated, for all have sinned in Adam, and by; actual transgressions; and none, even the best of men, are without it, (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8) but "workers" of it, traders in it, whose whole lives are one continued series of sinning; to those it will be said, I "never knew you"; I never loved you, I always hated you; "depart from me, ye that work iniquity", (Matthew 7:23), make a trade of it; make it the business of their lives, continually and constantly commit it, (John 8:34; 1 John 3:8, 9) and God is impartial, he hates "all the workers of iniquity; and brings down his indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that does evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Rom. 2:8, 9).

The scriptures speak of an hatred of some persons antecedent to sin, and without the consideration of it; which, though it may be attended with some difficulty to account for; yet may be understood in a good sense, and consistent with the perfections of God, and with what has been said of his hatred of sin and sinners; for thus it is said of Jacob and Esau, personally considered; "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated", (Mal. 1:2) and which was before the one had done any good, or the other done any evil; as the apostle expressly says, (Rom. 9:11-13).

"The children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand; not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her", to Rebekah, the mother of them, while they were in her womb, "the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated". And what is said of these, is true of all the objects of election and non-election. And now let it be observed, that this hatred is to be understood, not of any positive hatred in the heart of God towards them, but of a negative and comparative hatred of them; that whereas while some are chosen of God, and preferred by him, and are appointed to obtain grace and glory, and to be brought to great dignity and honour; others are passed by, neglected, postponed, and set less by; which is called an hatred of them; that is, a comparative one, in comparison of the love shown, and the preference given to others; in this sense the word is used in (Luke 14:26).

"If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple": the meaning of which cannot be, that a man must have positive hatred of such near relations, and of his own life; but that he should be negligent of these in comparison of Christ; postpone them to him, set less by them, have a less affection for them than him, and so prefer him unto them; in like sense are we to understand the above expression concerning Esau, and all reprobates: and that this may appear yet clear, it should be observed, that in this business there are two acts of the divine will; the one is a will not to bestow benefits of special goodness; not to give grace, nor to raise to honour and glory: and this God may do antecedent to, and without any consideration of sin; but act according to his sovereign will and pleasure, since he is under no obligation to confer benefits, but may bestow them on whom he pleases; as he himself says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" (Matthew 20:15).

The other act of the divine will is, to inflict evil; and that is always for sin, and in consideration of it; for though sin is not the cause of the act of the will, it is the cause of the thing willed, which is not willed

without the consideration of it; they are the wicked God has made, or appointed to the day of evil, and no other; ungodly men, whom he has foreordained to that condemnation, vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction by sin; on whom it is the will of God to show his wrath, and make his power known (Prov. 16:4; Jude 1:4; Rom. 9:22).

In the one act, hatred, or a denial of grace, is without the consideration of sin; in the other, hatred, or a will to punish, is with it; punishment being only willed for it: but then God never hates his elect in any sense; they are always loved by him; to which hatred is opposite: he may be angry with them, and chastise them for their sins; yea, he may, as he says, and as they apprehend, in a little wrath hide his "face" from them; but he never hates them; though he hates their sins, and shows his resentment at them, he still loves them freely; renews, and raises them up by repentance, when fallen into sin, and manifests and applies his pardoning grace to them, and never bears any hatred to their persons. ENDNOTES:

[1] Aquinas contr. Gentiles, l. 1. c. 96. Vid. Francisc. Silvester. in ibid.

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