

Holy Violence

by Thomas Watson

To follow God, we must be willing to practice holy violence, provoking ourselves to worship Him and denying our natural tendencies toward sin.

Scripture: Psalm 73:25, Psalm 77:6, Matthew 18:9, Luke 6:12, Romans 8:26, 2 Corinthians 5:14, Philippians 3:13, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Holy Living"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches on the necessity of provoking ourselves to worship God, emphasizing the natural inclination towards sin and the need for violent effort to lift our hearts towards heaven. He challenges believers to examine their spiritual diligence, self-denial, love for God, and pursuit of holiness. Watson highlights the example of Christ's violent sacrifice for our salvation, urging believers to follow His example in fervent faith and dedication.

Transcript

The exercises of the worship of God are contrary to nature; therefore, there must be a provoking of ourselves to them. The movement of the soul toward sin is natural, but its movement toward heaven is violent. The stone moves easily to the center. It has an innate propensity downward, but to draw up a millstone into the air is done by violence because it is against nature. So to lift up the heart to heaven in duty is done by violence and we must provoke ourselves to it. What is it to provoke ourselves to duty? It is to awaken ourselves and shake off spiritual slothfulness. Let us then examine whether we put forth this holy violence for heaven. Do we set time apart to call ourselves to account and to try our evidences for heaven? "My spirit made diligent search" (Ps. 77:6). Do we take our hearts, as a watch, all in pieces to see what is amiss and to mend it? Are we curiously inquisitive into the state of our souls? Are we afraid of artificial grace, as we are of artificial happiness? Do we use violence in prayer? Is there fire in our sacrifice? Is the wind of the Spirit filling our sails, causing unutterable groans (Rom. 8:26)? Do we pray in the morning as if we were to die at night? Do we thirst for the living God? Are our souls enlarged with holy desires? "There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. 73:25). Do we desire holiness as well as heaven? Do we desire as much to look like Christ as to live with Christ? Is our desire constant? Is this spiritual pulse ever beating?

Are we skilled in self-denial? Can we deny our ease, our aims, our interests? Can we cross our own will to fulfill God's? Can we behead our beloved sin? To pluck out the right eye requires violence. (Matt. 18:9).

Are we lovers of God? It is not how much we do, but how much we love. Does love command the castle of our hearts? Does Christ's beauty and sweetness constrain us? (2 Cor. 5:14). Do we love God more than we fear hell? Do we keep our spiritual watch? Do we set spies in every place, watching our thoughts, our eyes, our tongues? When we, have prayed against sin, do we watch against temptation? Do we press after further degrees of sanctity? "Reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil. 3:13). A good Christian is a wonder; he is the most contented yet the least satisfied. He is contented with a little of the world, but not satisfied with a little grace.

How violent Christ was about our salvation! He was in agony; He "continued all night in prayer" (Luke 6:12). He wept, He fasted, He died a violent death; He rose violently out of the grave. Was Christ so violent for our salvation, and does it not become us to be violent who are so intimately concerned in it? Christ's violence was not only satisfactory, but exemplary. It was not only to appease God, but to teach us. Christ was violent in dying to teach us to be violent in believing.

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