

illusionated spirit, may come to you and say, "See, this is new ;" but it is only the old story: " It hath been of old time which was before us."

*Verse 11.*—And then, to add to all, and thus to deepen its mournful solemnity, "there is no remembrance of them that have gone before," and future ages will cherish no remembrance of the present. If there is any one thing which could reconcile man to this strange profitless existence, it would be the hope of being remembered hereafter. It would be something to feel that we have not been quite useless, that the world will be the better for us, and will gratefully acknowledge the debt when we are gone. But even this satisfaction is denied us. Oblivion, with cold finger, draws the curtain upon each act of the drama. How is it possible to hope for any progress? Men do not rise upon the stepping-stones of the past to a higher outlook and a wider grasp and an onward movement. The dreary round continues, and man beats himself against his prison walls in vain if he tries to break out into a purer atmosphere and a higher life.

J. J. STEWART PEROWNE.

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*CHRIST DEMANDING HATRED.*

LUKE xiv. 26.

THIS demand has, at first sight, a strangely stern and harsh aspect, and must have staggered many of those who were now following Jesus. And I have no doubt that the paradox was intended to stagger them, and to arouse them to thought. The crowds now flocking around Christ were attracted by diverse and mixed

motives. Some were there perhaps through mere curiosity, to see what this famous prophet would do or say next. Others were doubtless attracted by his character and teaching; but, even in their case, lower motives might possibly be blended with the higher. Some probably were there, not well knowing why, but just because others were following Jesus; perhaps because their "fathers" or "mothers" or "brothers" or "sisters" were in the crowd. Many, again, were doubtless drawn by purely selfish considerations, imagining that, if they courted this worker of miracles, they would at least secure some material benefits. And then, if He were really the Messiah, to attach themselves to Him would surely bring the greatest advantages to "their own life," and also to their families and friends.

Now, Christ desired to sift this heterogeneous crowd. They ought to know what discipleship implies, and so He will tell them. This mere crowding after Him is not discipleship. They cannot be truly his disciples—they cannot obtain those blessings which He has to bestow—except at a certain "cost." This cost they ought to "count." He would not, indeed, have them to be mere selfish calculators, but neither would He have them to be mere selfish dreamers. He desires enthusiasm, but He desires also thoughtfulness. Surely on a great question like this of attaching themselves to Him, involving as it does such important issues, they ought to be at least as thoughtful as in ordinary matters. A man does not begin to "build a tower" without considering how much it will cost, and whether he has sufficient money to finish it. A king does not engage in battle with another king without first asking

himself whether his army is large enough to give him any chance of victory. If, then, they are wise, they will exercise a similar thoughtfulness; they must not crowd after Him in this reckless inconsiderate way; they must ask themselves whether they are really prepared to become, and to remain, his true followers. And these are his terms: "If any man come to me, and 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."

We can at once see how this strange demand would be likely to winnow that miscellaneous crowd. All who heard it must have understood Jesus to mean at least this—that his claims were paramount, and in case of conflict were to override the claims of the nearest and dearest relatives. And this of itself was doubtless enough to disgust many in that crowd. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:" such words had a kind of magnetic attraction. But the words, "Whoso loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me," would rather exercise on the multitudes a kind of magnetic repulsion. Yet the attraction and repulsion were alike due to the inherent greatness of Christ. It was just because He was the Son of God, able to give rest to all the weary, that He had a right thus to claim the supreme homage and affection of human souls. Still it was a claim which must have sounded strangely to the multitude. Who was this Jesus of Nazareth, forsooth, that He should thus place Himself above even those whom the very Decalogue commanded them to honour? Nor was this all: Jesus uses also that strange word "hate." Hate their "own life"! Why, it was just be-

cause they loved their own life so intensely that many of them were now following Him, in the hope of securing some material benefit. Thus the word "hate" was likely to arrest those who were actuated by frivolous curiosity or by mere selfish expectation. It was a word likely to freeze all inconsiderate enthusiasm. It was a word likely to arouse to earnest thought even those who had been drawn to Jesus by the beauty of his character and the power of his teaching. It was a word, therefore, which was well adapted to sift the crowd. The unspiritual would probably be driven away by it in disgust. Whereas, those who were attached to Jesus in virtue of their spiritual susceptibility, would probably still cling to Him, and wait for his own explanations. The attraction which bound their souls to Him was too strong to be broken by any single word, however unexpected or however inexplicable.

But this paradoxical utterance must have been in some sense a truth, or Christ would not have used it even as a fan. Our Lord was not afraid to utter paradoxes, because He spoke to men as exercising common sense. He educated his disciples to look through the mere letter to the spirit of his utterances. The metaphors and aphorisms of his teaching were all intended for men who think, or who need to be aroused to thought. And so He was not afraid to utter this paradox about "hating" father and mother, because He knew well that the whole spirit of his life and teaching was enough to prevent his disciples from understanding the word in its bare, bald, literal meaning. M. Rénan, indeed, in his "Life of Jesus," speaks of Him as here "trampling under foot everything that is human—blood and love and country;" "despising

the healthy limits of man's nature ;" "abolishing all natural ties ;" and "forgetting the pleasure of living and loving." But we may be sure that Jesus was better understood by the Galilean fishermen than by our learned Frenchman. *They* would not be likely to make any such mistake. However his words might drive away the frivolous and the selfish, those who knew Jesus and had been attracted by his character and teaching must have felt that He could not possibly be demanding that they should, in any absolute or unqualified sense, "hate" their own relatives and friends. M. Renan can make liberal enough allowance for "Oriental insincerity : " apparently he makes less allowance for Oriental aphorism. But the disciples of Jesus, when they heard these words of his, although they might not know exactly what the words did mean, would know very well what they did not mean. How could their Master intend that they were, literally and absolutely, to hate their friends, when He had Himself exhorted them to love even their enemies ? The whole life and teaching of Christ protest against the notion that He despised the ties of natural relationship. Did *He* trample upon love of country, who Himself wept over doomed Jerusalem ? Did *He* despise the claims of motherhood, who thoughtfully cared for his own mother amid the agony of the Cross ? Did *He* teach men absolutely to hate their brethren, who taught that the spirit of hatred and contempt was the very spirit of murder ? Did *He* bid mothers and fathers literally hate their children, who had Himself taken little children into his arms and blessed them ? To ask these questions is to answer them. And yet we are told that Jesus "boldly preached war against

nature, and total severance from ties of blood," and "demanded" that his disciples "should love Him alone" !

But further, the word "hate" cannot be here a mere hyperbole, meaning that we ought to love our relatives and friends with a diminished affection. Such an interpretation would also be opposed to the teaching of Christ and the genius of Christianity. "Love one another," says Christ, "*as I have loved you.*" "Husbands, love your wives," says the Apostle Paul, "*even as Christ also loved the Church.*" What limits shall we set to affection which is thus inculcated? Clearly it is the purpose of the gospel to purify and strengthen—not to diminish—all true human love. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." Jesus might wish his disciples to love their relatives and friends otherwise than they had done before, or He might warn them that their love would not now be able to manifest itself after the same manner as before; but He could not surely wish that their love should grow absolutely less. If love be really pure and unselfish, it cannot be excessive. We may, indeed, love the Divine Lord too little; but we cannot love any human being too much. We may sometimes admire a man too much; or we may trust him too much; or we may love him, to a certain extent, mistakenly—on grounds which exist merely in our own imagination: but even though he be unworthy, we cannot absolutely love him too much, if only our affection be intelligent, pure, and unselfish. When one friend commits a sin in order to please or to benefit another, the evil does not lie in any excess of true affection, but in a defect of conscience, of will, of godliness. And we shall never love the Divine

Lord more, by merely trying to love our human friends less. The word "hate" here does not mean to love with a diminished affection.

What, then, does it mean? "The letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive:" nevertheless, to kill the letter is not the way to reach the spirit. The word "hate" is a strong word, and I believe that it points both to strong feeling and strong action. The words "hate his own life also" are the key to the whole aphorism. A disciple is to hate his relatives and friends in the same sense in which he is to hate himself. In what sense, then, can a man hate himself? He can hate what is mean and base in himself. He can hate his own selfish life. To cling to life is natural; to desire ease and comfort is natural; to gratify the appetites is natural: but all this natural life, whenever it comes into collision with the spiritual side of our being, may be even hated. It is not merely that the Christian may, after a struggle, prefer to remain true to God and Christ, rather than gratify the selfish cravings of his own natural life; he may positively hate these selfish cravings when they are tempting him to forsake his duty. The word may be paradoxical; but is it too strong? Have we never felt disgusted at our own selfishness? Have we never experienced a strong revulsion of feeling when we have been tempted by "our own life"—by our natural liking for what is agreeable to that life—to shirk our duty, and to do something mean and base? In the old Greek drama, Admetos is disgusted with the life which, in selfish cowardice, he has purchased by the sacrifice of his wife Alkestis. And we can well conceive that many a Christian martyr may have felt disgusted with his own life,

when he was tempted to preserve it at the cost of denying his Lord. It is thus, then, that a man may hate himself. Not in the bald literal sense ; for he still cares for his own true best life, and wishes that to be developed and strengthened. But he does, in a sense, hate himself when the self in him rises in rebellion against God and Christ and duty.

Now, in this sense also, a man may hate his relatives and friends. He may hate that in them which is mean and base. He may hate that in them which seeks to drag him away from Christ. He may hate the selfishness lying in their love for him, which leads them to tempt him into sin. He may hate the selfishness lying in his own love for them, which tempts him to disobey God in order to please them, or in order to retain their friendship. Just as he hates all selfish life, so he may hate all selfish love ; and this hatred he may manifest in deliberately choosing to renounce the favour and affection of his friends, rather than recant his allegiance to Christ.

Consider the case of these multitudes who were now following Jesus. They had no conception of the ordeal of suffering which discipleship might involve. They naturally clung to their own life ; but, if they became his disciples, they might be summoned even to die for his sake. Jesus warns them of this possibility. He asks them if they are prepared to make this sacrifice. Are they ready to regard as an enemy that natural love of life which at such a crisis would tempt them to forsake Him ? And in like manner Jesus warns them that, if they become his disciples, the feelings and attitude of their own kindred towards them may altogether change. " I am come to set a man at vari-

ance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law : and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child ; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." Jesus asks them if they are prepared to face such contingencies as these. Are they prepared to see the natural affection of their relatives freezing into an unnatural hatred? Or are they prepared to steel their own hearts against the entreaties of those relatives who will beseech them to forsake Him? Are they ready to regard as an enemy that natural affection which at such a crisis would tempt them to violate their spiritual instincts? Are they ready thus, as it were, to hate their own friends, to turn away even with loathing from all that selfish love which would seduce or drag them from their Lord ?

It is quite possible to be disgusted with those whom we nevertheless still love. When Peter's affection for his Master led him to deprecate the sufferings to which Christ was looking forward—"Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be unto thee!"—Christ's reply was sharp and severe : "Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art an offence to me ; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men!" And all noble souls experience somewhat of this revulsion of feeling when their friends become their tempters. Our spiritual instincts, if they are healthy, despise that species of affection which can only be purchased or preserved at the cost of desecrating the sanctities of our own nature. When those who ought to encourage us in goodness, and to fortify the citadel of

our virtues, begin to assault that citadel at the gate of affection or friendship, our better nature rises in defence, and barricades the gate. In Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," we see how a pure-minded sister, who would willingly have died for the brother whom she loves, recoils from him with horror when he beseeches her to save his life at the cost of her own debasement. In George Eliot's "Romola," we see how a noble-minded wife recoils with contempt and scorn from the husband whom she had loved and trusted, when he tries to justify his own selfish baseness, and treats her ideal of duty as a sentimental fancy. And it is not an unusual thing, even in ordinary life, for a Christian to be disgusted with the suggestions and counsels of worldly relatives, and to harden his heart, as it were, against the impulses of natural love, when these would prompt him to violate his conscience in order to gratify or benefit his friends. It is here, I think, that we are to look for the explanation of Christ's demand for hatred: in the positive *revulsion of feeling* with which the faithful soul turns away from the temptations of affection, and in the positive *sacrifice of friendship* which may be involved in allegiance to duty.

Nevertheless the word "hate," being originally and designedly paradoxical, remains of course, under whatever explanations, paradoxical still. No Christian is permitted literally to hate any human being, far less those who are bound to him by natural ties. All love is purified and ennobled by being taken into the keeping of Conscience, and a Christian will not love the less purely or permanently because his affections may have to struggle with spiritual dis gusts and antipathies.

Mere natural affection, on the other hand, if it be gratified without regard to moral considerations, becomes corrupted in the process. It is no uncommon thing for an unscrupulous love to pass into an implacable hatred. The man who commits a sin in order to please or benefit a friend, is really drying up the springs of his own best affections. Whereas, the man who, rather than sin against God, is willing to incur the displeasure or even to lose the friendship of those whom he loves, is thereby rendering himself capable of a diviner affection. Many are the evils wrought in the world by over-indulgent and self-indulgent love. The strongest and truest love is that which is capable of the courage and self-sacrifice involved in the infliction of necessary pain. And, therefore, just as he who "hateth his life in this world" really "keeps it unto life eternal," so he who, according to Christ's paradox, "hates" his friends, really loves them with a deeper, more abiding, and more unselfish affection. T. CAMPBELL FINLAYSON.

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THE SOLILOQUY OF JOB.

SECOND MONOLOGUE. (CHAPTERS XXIX.—XXXI.)

FROM a purely literary point of view the Second Monologue is even more beautiful than the First. It has, indeed, no passage of such sustained grandeur, none so rich in instruction or so profoundly suggestive, as the disquisition on Wisdom and Understanding in Chapter xxviii. ; but for grace and pathos, in charm of picturesque narrative, and pensive, tender, yet self-controlled emotion richly and variously expressed, it may be doubted whether Chapters xxix. and xxxi.