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must be built with the stones available in the area. Since stones vary from one area to another, a house in one location may not look like that in another. The house of God is not made of stones that are uniform in knowledge, perception, ability or aptitude. It is composed of those who are joined together by mutual faith in Jesus and cemented by love. The foundation for all is the eternal abiding principle in confessional form, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." "If any man come and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting."

RELIGIOUS HATRED

BY FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

(Editor's Note: After preparing the foregoing article I decided that our readers should hear from one capable of a more scholarly approach. I append this chapter from "The Early Days of Christianity" by Dr. Farrar, who was at the time Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; Archdeacon and Canon of Westminster; and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen. He deals with 2 John 10, 11. We ask that you read it carefully.)

It will be seen, then, at a glance, that Truth and Love are keynotes of the Epistle, and that the conceptions which prevail throughout it are those with which we have been made familiar by the previous Epistle. And yet one passage of the Epistle has again and again been belauded, and is again and again adduced as a stronghold of intolerance, an excuse

for pitiless hostility against all who differ from ourselves. There is something distressing in the swift instinct with which an unchristian egotism has first assumed its own infallibility on subjects which are often no part of Christian faith, and then has spread as on vulture's wings to this passage as a consecration of the feelings with which the *odium theologicum* disgraces and ruins the Divinest interests of the cause of Christ. It must be said—though I say it with deepest sorrow—that the cold exclusiveness of the Pharisee, the bitter ignorance of the self-styled theologian, the usurped infallibility of the half-educated religionist, have ever been the curse of Christianity.

They have imposed "the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men on the general words of God," and have tried to

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enforce them on men's consciences with all kinds of burnings and anathemas, under equal threats of death and damnation. And thus they have incurred the terrible responsibility of presenting religion to mankind in a false and repellent guise. Is theological hatred still to be a proverb for the world's just contempt? Is such hatred—hatred in its bitterest and most ruthless form—to be regarded as the legitimate and normal outcome of the religion of love? Is the spirit of peace never to be brought to bear on religious opinions? Are such questions always to excite the most intense animosities and the most terrible divisions?

Is the Diotrephes of each little religious clique to be the ideal of a Christian character? Is it in religious discussions alone that impartiality is to be set down as weakness, and courtesy as treason? Is it among those only who pride themselves on being "orthodox" that there is to be the completest absence of humility and justice? Is the world to be for ever confirmed in its opinion that theological partisans are less truthful, less candid, less high-minded, less honorable even than the partisans of political and social causes who make no profession as to the duty of love? Are the so-called "religious" champions to be for ever, as they now are, in many instances, the most unscrupulously bitter and the most conspicuously unfair? Alas! they might be with far less danger to the cause of religion if they would forego the luxury of "quoting Scripture for their purpose."

If this passage of St. John had indeed authorized such errors and excesses—if it had indeed been a proof, as has been said, of "the deplorable growth of dogmatic intolerance"—it would have been hard to separate it from the old spirit of rigorism and passion which led the Apostle, in his most undeveloped days, to incur his Lord's rebuke, by proclaiming his jealousy of those who worked on different lines from his own, and by wishing to call down fire to consume the rude villagers of Samaria. It would have required some ingenuity not to see in it the same sort of impatient and unworthy intolerance which once marked his impetuous outbursts, but which is (I trust falsely) attributed to him in the silly story of Cerinthus and the bath. In that case also the spirit of his advice would have been widely different from the spirit which actuated the merciful tolerance of the Lord to Heathens, the Samaritans, to Sadducees, and even to Pharisees. It would have been in direct antagonism to our Lord's command to the Twelve to salute with their blessing every house to which they came, because if it were not worthy their peace would return to them again. It would have been alien from many of the

noblest lessons of the New Testament. It would practically have excluded from the bosom of Christianity, and of Christianity alone, the highest workings of the universal law of love. It would have been in glaring disaccord with the gentleness and moderation which is now shown, even towards absolute believers, by the wisest, gentlest, and most Christlike of God's saints. If it really bore the sense which has been assigned to it, it would be a grave reason for sharing the ancient doubts respecting the genuineness of the little letter in which it occurs, and for coming to the conclusion that, while its general sentiments were borrowed from the authentic works of St. John, they had only been thrown together for the purpose of introducing under the sanction of his name, a precept of unchristian harshness and religious intolerance.

But there is too much reason to fear that to the end of time the conceit of orthodoxism will claim inspired authority for its own conclusions, even when they are most antichristian, and will build up systems of exclusive hatred out of inferences purely unwarrantable. It is certain, too, that each sect is always tempted to be proudest of its most sectarian peculiarities; that each form of dissent, whether in or out of the body of the Established Churches, most idolizes its own dissidence. The aim of religious opinionativeness always has been, and always will be, to regard its narrowest conclusions as matters of faith, and to exclude or excommunicate all those who reject or modify them. The sort of syllogisms used by these enemies of the love of Christ are much as follows—

"My opinions are founded on interpretations of Scripture. Scripture is infallible. My views of its meaning are infallible too. Your opinions and inferences differ from mine, therefore you *must* be in the wrong. All wrong opinions are capable of so many ramifications that any one who differs from me in minor points must be unsound in vital matters also. Therefore all who differ from me and my clique are 'heretics.' All heresy is wicked. All heretics are necessarily wicked men. It is my religious duty to hate, calumniate and abuse you."

Those who have gone thus far in elevating hatred into a Christian virtue ought logically to go a little farther. They generally do so when they have the power. They do not openly say, "Let us venerate the examples of Arnold of Citeaux, and of Torquemada. Let us glorify the Crusaders at Beziers. Let us revive the racks and thumbscrews of the Inquisition. Let us, with the Pope, strike medals in honor of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Let us re-establish the Star Chamber and entrust those ecclesiastics who hold our opinions with powers of torture." But

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since they are robbed of these means of securing unanimity—since they can no longer even imprison “dissenting tinkers” like Bunyan, and “regicide Arians” like Milton—they are too apt to indulge in the party spirit which can employ slander though it is robbed of the thumbscrew, and revel in depreciation though it may no longer avail itself of the fagot and the rack.

The tender mercies of contending religionists are exceptionally cruel. The men who, in the Corinthian party-sense, boast “I am of Christ,” do not often, in these days, formulate the defence of their lack of charity so clearly as this. But they continually act and write in this spirit. Long experience has made mankind familiar with the base ingenuity which frames charges of constructive heresy out of the most innocent opinions; which insinuates that variations from the vulgar exegesis furnish a sufficient excuse for banding anathemas, under the plea that they are an implicit denial of Christ! Had there been in Scripture any sanction for this execrable spirit of heresy-hunting Pharisaism, Christian theology would only become another name for the collisions of wrangling sects, all cordially hating each other, and only kept together by common repulsion against external enmity. But, to me at least, it seems that the world has never developed a more unchristian and antichrist phenomenon than the conduct of those who encourage the bitterest excesses of hatred under the profession of Christian love. I know nothing so profoundly irreligious as the narrow intolerance of an ignorant dogmatism. Had there been anything in this passage which sanctioned so odious a spirit, I could not have believed that it emanated from St. John. A good tree does not bring forth corrupt fruit. The sweet fountain of Christianity cannot send forth the salt and bitter water of fierceness and hate. The Apostle of love would have belied all that is best in his own teaching if he had consciously given an absolution, nay, an incentive, to furious intolerance. The last words of Christian revelation could never have meant what these words have been interpreted to mean—namely, “Hate, exclude, anathematize, persecute, treat as enemies and opponents to be crushed and insulted, those who differ from you in religious opinions.” Those who have pretended a Scriptural sanction for such Cain-like religionism have generally put their theories into practice against men who have been infinitely more in the right, and transcendently nearer God, than those who, in killing or injuring them, ignorantly thought they were doing God service.

Meanwhile this incidental expression of St. John’s brief letter will not

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lend itself to these gross perversions. What St. John *really says*, and *really means*, is something wholly different. False teachers were rife, who, professing to be Christians, robbed the nature of Christ of all which gave its efficacy to the Atonement, and its significance to the Incarnation. These teachers, like other Christian missionaries, travelled from city to city, and, in the absence of public inns, were received into the houses of Christian converts. The Christian lady to whom John writes is warned that, if she offers her hospitality to these dangerous emissaries who were subverting the central truth of Christianity, she is expressing a public sanction of them; and, by doing this and offering them her best wishes she is taking a direct share in the harm they do. This is common sense; nor is there any thing uncharitable about it.

No one is bound to help forward the dissemination of teaching what he regards as erroneous respecting the most essential doctrines of his own faith. Still less would it have been right to do this in the days when Christian communities were so small and weak. But to interpret this as it has in all ages been practically interpreted—to pervert it into a sort of command to exaggerate the minor variations between religious opinions, and to persecute those whose views differ from our own—to make our own opinions the exclusive test of heresy, and to say with Cornelius á Lapide, that this verse reprobates “all conversation, all intercourse, all dealings with heretics”—is to interpret Scripture by the glare of partisanship and self-satisfaction, not to read it under the light of holy love.

Alas! churchmen and theologians have found it a far more easy and agreeable matter to obey their distortion of this supposed command, and even to push its stringency to the very farthest *limits*, than to obey the command that we should love one another! From the Tree of delusive knowledge they pluck the poisonous and inflating fruits of pride and hatred, while they suffer the fruits of love and meekness to fall neglected from the Tree of Life. The popularity which these verses still enjoy and the exaggerated misinterpretation still attached to them, are due to the fact that they are so acceptable to the arrogance and selfishness, the dishonesty and tyranny, the sloth and obstinacy, of that bitter spirit of religious discord which has been the disgrace of the Church and the scandal of the world.