

The Scriptural Presentation of God's Hatred

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There are, in the main, two terms that are translated by the word "hate" in Scripture.¹ The Old Testament word is *sana*. The Greek term is *miseo*. The lexicons do not shed much additional light on the meaning of this word either in the Hebrew or in the Greek.

In Gesenius' *Hebrew-English Lexicon to the Old Testament* we find the following:

... TO HATE, whether persons, Ps. 5:6; 31:7; Deut. 22:13; II Sam. 13:15, 22; or things, Isa. 1:14; Ps. 11:5; Prov. 1:22. Part. *sonay* subst. a hater, an enemy, Ps. 35:19; 38:20; with suff. *sono* one who hates him, Deut. 7:10; also *sonay lo* Deut. 4:42; 19:4, 6, 11; Josh. 20:5. Fem. plur. *sonot* female enemies, Eze. 16:27.

NIPHAL, pass. Prov. 14:17.

PIEL, part. *mesanay* hater, enemy, Psalm 18:41; 55:13; 68:2; etc.

Derivatives, *sanly*, *senayah*.

Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* adds little to the above, except that it notes:

1) That the term in some instances stands opposite *ahab*.

2) That *ayab* and *tsar* are somewhat synonymous.

It is also interesting to note that this lexicon, in discussing the use of this verb in connection with Jehovah as subject, makes Ps. 5:6 and Ps. 11:5 refer not to persons, but to wickedness. Gesenius, cited above, gives Ps. 5:6 as a reference for divine hatred of persons, but refers Ps. 11:5 to divine hatred of things.

Concerning *miseo*, Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* remarks:

1) That this is the term used by the LXX for the Hebrew *sanay*.

2) That the translation is "to hate, to pursue with hatred, detest; pass. to be hated, detested." That it is used with *tina* or with *ti* in various passages.

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3) “not a few interpreters have attributed to *misein* in Gen. 39:31 (cf. 30); Deut. 21:15ff.; Matt. 6:24; Lk. 14:26; 16:13; (John 12:25); Rom. 9:13; the signification *to love less, to postpone in love or esteem, to slight*, through oversight of the circumstance that ‘the Orientals, in accordance with their greater excitability, are wont both to feel and to profess love and hate where we Occidentals, with our cooler temperament, feel and express nothing more than interest in, or disregard and indifference to a thing’” (Fritzsche, *Comm. On Rom. 2*, p. 304; cf. Ruckert, *Magazin f. Exegese u. Theologie des N.T.*, p. 27ff.).

From the above sources, therefore, we learn little that will help us in our discussion of this subject. It becomes plain, of course, even from remarks made in the lexicons that the attempt is made to soften the meaning of the word “hate” in those instances where Scripture presents God as the subject of the verb “to hate” and persons as the object. Without at this point entering into any argument and exegetical study of this issue, it may nevertheless be pointed out:

1) That the lexicons do indeed give both the Hebrew and the Greek verbs the denotation of active hatred.

2) That the lexicons do *not* attempt to soften the meaning of the word when applied to *men* as the subject or to *things* as the object.

3) That no linguistic reasons in favour of softening the term and interpreting it as meaning “to love less, to postpone in love or esteem, to slight” are presented. If there are reasons, therefore, they must be exegetically discovered. We shall have to turn, therefore, to the various passages of Scripture where these terms are used in order to arrive at a clear understanding of their meaning. And we are especially interested in those passages of Scripture in which God Himself is presented as the subject of the verb “to hate.”

Instructive, in the first place, are two passages which do not speak of God actually hating but which potentially attribute to Him a hatred of His people. This ascription of a hatred of His people is pictured as potentially arising from the mouth of the enemy. Significantly, too, this hatred is presented as the direct opposite of God's love of His people.

In Deuteronomy 1:27 Moses is reminding the children of Israel of their unbelieving murmuring and rebellion at Kadesh and of their blasphemy at the time when Israel had listened to the majority report of the ten spies. He reminds them that they had said, “Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.” Two observations may be made here:

1) It is obvious, even though the term love does not occur here, that the term "hatred" is used as the direct opposite of "loved." The truth was, of course, that the Lord had brought His people out of the land of Egypt because He loved them. A little later in the same book of Deuteronomy this is literally stated: "But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh King of Egypt." But at Kadesh the wicked blasphemy of rebellious Israel consisted exactly in that they attributed their being brought out of the land of Egypt to the opposite motive: hatred instead of love. It is to be noted, too, that this statement is concerned with *motives*. Love and hate are attitudes of the heart and constitute the motives behind certain activities.

2) Secondly, it is evident that even in this blasphemy the true operation of hatred is depicted, namely, destruction. Arising out of this hatred, according to the blasphemy of that unbelieving generation at Kadesh, was the divine purpose and intention to deliver them "into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us." Hence, the operation and manifestation of hatred is destruction. He who hates someone wills that person's destruction.

In Deuteronomy 9:28 the same ideas occur in a different connection. Here Moses refers to his intercession in behalf of Israel at Kadesh. The entire content of this intercession is worthy of note in connection with our subject: "I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou has redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin: Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm" (vv. 26-29).

We may note the following here:

1) At the very heart of Moses' intercession is his appeal to the honour of God's own name. He prays for God's own name's sake. His intercession is concerned not, first of all, with the woe or weal of the people of Israel, but with the glory of God's name, and with the salvation of His people only for God's name's sake. Hence, he appeals to the fact that God's greatness, God's mighty hand, God's ability to bring them into the promised land are at stake. His appeal is

that it would bring dishonour upon God's name, and that too, at the mouth of the Egyptians, should God destroy His people.

2) In connection with the preceding element, stands the fact that Moses bases his intercession on the fact that Israel is God's inheritance. In verse 26 he speaks of "thy people" and "thine inheritance." And again, in verse 29 he concludes with this plea: "Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance ..." The implication is obvious: it is divinely impossible that God should hate and destroy His elect and redeemed people. They are precious unto Him, and He loves them.

3) It is evident that God's hatred appears here as the very opposite of His love. Moses suggests that if God should destroy Israel, the Egyptians would say that God hated them. And this, such is his plea, would bring reproach upon God's name: for the fact is that Israel is God's people, His inheritance, the object of His love, and that God had already revealed this by devoting His greatness and power and mighty hand and stretched out arm to redeeming and delivering them out of the land of Egypt.

4) It is also evident that the result, the end, of divine hatred is destruction. In fact, this forms an integral part of Moses' reasoning in this intercession. For God's name's sake, Moses fears that if God destroys His people on account of their stubbornness and wickedness and sin, the Egyptians will say that God hated them. They will conclude that God brought them into the wilderness to slay them because He hated them. The reasoning here is from effect to motive. And in his intercession Moses takes for granted that such reasoning would be correct, and that therefore God cannot destroy His people.

5) Finally, we should note that the divine hatred is ethical in its character. It is inseparably related to God's holiness and righteousness. For Moses pleads that God will "look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin." The implication is, clearly, that if God would indeed do this, He would certainly destroy them in divine wrath and hatred. His hatred and His wrath have as their objects all that which and all those whom He beholds as being contrary to His own holiness, His own infinite perfections. For this same reason, Moses in beautiful and concrete language pleads that God will behold His people in the light of His covenant and His promise: "Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

In Deuteronomy 12:31 the people of Israel are warned not to inquire after the manner in which the heathen nations of Canaan served their gods, nor to imitate those heathen nations, as follows: "Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord

thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods." And in Deuteronomy 16:22 is found a prohibition against the setting up of an image, "which the Lord thy God hateth." Examples like these can, of course, be multiplied. They are cited here not as examples of a divine hatred of persons; fact is that they do not speak of persons, but of actions. But these passages are cited because they point to the intimate relation between God's holiness and God's hatred. As the Holy One, God hates that which is contrary to His own holiness. And it is as the Holy One that He is to be worshipped by His people. For this reason, his people may not worship Him after the manner of the heathen; nor may they set up a graven image. For these are an abomination unto Him: that is, He hates these things.

We next turn to two of the Psalms which instruct us concerning the divine hatred.

The first is Psalm 5, and the passage which is pertinent is verses 4-6: "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." In this passage it is evident:

1) That the objects of God's hate are not merely things or actions—sin, wickedness, evil. The objects of the divine hatred are the workers of iniquity, foolish men, bloody and deceitful men, and that too, according to the context, as enemies of God's people. It is important to note this. Some attempt to separate between the sinner and his sin, and they claim that God hates sin, but not the sinner. This is clearly contrary to the language of this passage, according to which God hates "all workers of iniquity."

2) In this passage the operation of God's hatred is depicted as being unto destruction. "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing."

3) That to abhor a man (v. 6) is essentially the same as to hate him. The bloody and deceitful man is repulsive to Jehovah: in His infinite and perfect holiness He repels such a man.

4) That God's hatred, in the psalmist's consciousness and experience, is contrasted with his love, here specified as His mercy. We must not overlook the fact that this is the case, according to the context. The psalmist, as one of the righteous, is confident that Jehovah will hear his voice; and therefore in the morning he will direct his prayer unto the Lord (vs. 3). The reason for this confidence, negatively speaking, is expressed in the passage under our consideration. God is

not a God that has pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Him. Hence, the foolish shall not stand in His sight; that is, there shall be no fellowship between God and the foolish. On the contrary, He hates all workers of iniquity, will destroy them that speak leasing, and will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. And then, by way of contrast, the psalmist says: "But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple."

5) That throughout this psalm there is an underlying distinction, of which the psalmist also is aware, between himself and his enemies, between the righteous and the wicked. There are here distinguished from a spiritual, ethical viewpoint two classes of men: the righteous and the wicked. The former are the object of His love, His mercy, His blessing; the latter are the object of His hatred, His wrath, His destruction.

Another Psalm which speaks the same language is Psalm 11. This psalm also speaks of the wicked as over against the righteous. It is the language of the righteous man, the child of God, in the midst of enemies, wicked men, who "bend their bow, ... make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart" (v. 2). In the midst of his enemies the psalmist has his confidence in Jehovah, Who is "in the temple of his holiness" and Whose "throne is in heaven." His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. It is this sovereign and holy Lord of Whom the psalmist says in verse 5: "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth." And then, in verse 6, the effect of this hate of God's soul is depicted in terms which remind one of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." It is evident in this passage, therefore:

1) That again, as in the other passages considered, the divine hatred is an attitude of God that is inseparably connected with His holiness. God's hatred, therefore, is not simply arbitrary, but is always ethically consistent with His own infinite holiness.

2) That by no stretch of exegesis can it be maintained that the Lord hates sin, but not the sinner. The text explicitly states that "the wicked and the lover of violence his soul hateth." In fact, it is difficult to understand how anyone can make the claim that this passage speaks only of a divine hatred of sin or of a sinful action, but not of sinful persons. Moreover, not merely the violence and the wickedness experience the operation of God's hatred, as if that were possible; but the snares and fire and brimstone and burning tempest (the holocaust of the

divine wrath which is the expression of His hatred) come upon the wicked and constitute the portion of their cup.

3) That this hatred is an attitude of God's soul. This expression is significant not only because in a general way it is emphatic. We may take the expression in its literal meaning: God with heart and mind and will, intelligently and volitionally, hates the wicked and them that love violence.

4) That here again the underlying supposition is that from an ethical viewpoint there are two classes of men: the righteous and the wicked, the former the object of God's love, the latter the object of His hatred. For we must remember that though the passage does not literally and directly mention God's love of righteous men, this is nevertheless the implication. In the first place, this is the implication of verse 7: "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright." And, in the second place, we must remember that the Lord's trying of the righteous (v. 5) is essentially always an act of love.

In Proverbs 6:16-19 we also read of Jehovah's hatred: "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." Concerning this passage in relation to our subject, we may observe the following:

1) Again it is plain that God hates certain men, sinners, not merely their sin. We recognize the fact that literally only the last two of this series of seven mention men: a false witness and he that soweth discord among brethren. This alone would be sufficient proof in support of this observation. We ought also to recognize that the text does not intend to teach merely that the Lord hates a look, a tongue, hands, a heart, and feet. Also these expressions refer to men, not merely to actions or to parts of a human being. They are very graphic figures of speech referring to the whole man from the point of view of certain concrete manifestations of his wicked nature. What we have in the first five of this series is the figure of the part for the whole.

2) It is plain also here that God's hatred is not arbitrary, but is in perfect harmony with His holiness and His holy Self-love. Pride and the proud man, the lie and the liar, murder and the murderer, etc., are contrary to God's holiness; and therefore they are the object of His hatred.

3) When we note that in verse 16 there is synonymous parallelism, we may observe the close association between the idea of God's hatred and the idea of being an abomination to Him. To be the object of God's hatred is essentially the

same as being an abomination unto Him, and vice versa. This is significant: for it means that Scripture speaks more often of God's hatred, even when it does not literally employ the word "hate." The same is true of passages which speak of the destruction and punishments which God sends upon the wicked. We have already noted in several passages the cause-effect relationship which there is between God's hatred and His destruction of the objects of His hatred. Because of this relationship it is always true that when Scripture speaks of the destruction and punishment of a man, we must view that destruction as the revelation of God's hatred.

Thus, for example, when we read in Proverbs 3:32 that "the froward is abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous," this passage also refers, in the light of Scripture, to God's hatred in contrast with His love, His wrath in contrast with His favour, His curse in contrast with His blessing. The same is true of a passage like Proverbs 6:12-15: "A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy." That sudden calamity and being broken without remedy are the manifestation of the divine hatred. In fact, it is significant that in the very next verse, already cited, literal mention is made of that which Jehovah hates. Or when we read in Psalm 92:7: "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever," then the reference to God's hatred may not be ignored.

Passages of this kind can be multiplied, both from the Psalms and from Proverbs, as well as from other parts of Scripture. We call attention to some of these passages: Psalm 1; Ps. 7:11-17; Ps. 18:26ff.; Ps. 21:9-13; Ps. 31:17-24; Ps. 32:10; Ps. 34:16-17; Ps. 36:8ff.; Ps. 37; Ps. 40; Ps. 52:3-10; Ps. 57:4; Ps. 58:7-12; Ps. 59:6, 12-18; Ps. 69:17ff.; Ps. 104:35; Ps. 109; Ps. 125:4-5; Ps. 143:12; Ps. 138:6; Ps. 146:7-9; Ps. 147:6; Proverbs 3:32-35; Prov. 10:2-3, 6-8, 16, 24, 29; Prov. 11:20; Prov. 12:7, 21, 22; Prov. 13:9, 22; Prov. 14:11, 32; Prov. 15:6, 8-9, 25-26, 29; Prov. 21:12; Prov. 24:15-20.

But there are more passages which speak directly and literally of God's hatred.

In Isaiah 1:14 the Lord declares to Jerusalem and Judah which are become spiritually Sodom and Gomorrah: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when

ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.” Apparently here God’s hatred is directed against things rather than persons. Yet the context shows very plainly that also here God’s hatred is directed against men. For the Lord declares, “How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves,” etc. (vv. 21-23). And we read of the operation of that hatred and its effect upon personal objects, adversaries: “Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin ... And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed” (vv. 24-25, 28). We may remark in passing that passages like this cannot possibly be understood except on the basis of the truth that the church is here addressed organically, as a whole in which there is present a two-fold seed, the carnal and the spiritual, the reprobate and the remnant according to the election of grace. There is one factor which prevents Israel from being completely like Sodom and Gomorrah and which prevents its complete destruction; and this factor is mentioned in verse 9: “Except Jehovah of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.”

In Isaiah 61:8 we read of both God’s love and God’s hate in such a way that it is again very clear that they are always in harmony with His perfect holiness and also that they are direct opposites: “For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.”

In Hosea 9:15, in connection with its context, the hatred of God and its manifestation toward ungodly Ephraim are depicted very sharply: “Give them O Lord: what wilt thou give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doing I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers. Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (vv. 14-17). In Amos 5:21 the hatred of God toward apostate Israel is mentioned in a context which speaks of the day of the Lord: “Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what

end is it for you? The day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light! Even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (vv. 18-20). And then: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts" (vv. 21-22). And then, verse 24: "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." And in verse 27: "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts."

The ethical character of God's hatred is set forth plainly in Zechariah 8:16-17: "These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord." Similar, from this point of view, is the passage in Malachi 2:16, if we adopt the King James translation: "For the Lord, the God of Israel saith that he hateth putting away; for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."

The notable passage of Malachi 1:2-5, quoted in Romans 9, speaks very plain language: "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, they shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel." Here the contrast between the love and the hatred of God, between Jacob and Esau, between Israel and Edom, between the salvation and bliss of Israel and the everlasting desolation of the objects of God's hatred, is brought into very sharp focus.

In the New Testament, with reference to the attitude and activity of God the only passage which speaks directly and literally of His hatred is the so-called *locus classicus* for sovereign predestination, Romans 9. There we find the well-known words, in verses 10-13: "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not 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, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." To this passage, in its context of the example of Pharaoh and the figure of the potter and the clay and the vessels unto honour and unto dishonour, vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction, we shall return presently. But even now let it be noted:

- 1) That this passage speaks of a hatred of which God is the subject.
- 2) That this hatred is very evidently personal, both as far as its subject and its object are concerned: God hated Esau.
- 3) That God's hatred stands here in sharp contrast with His love.
- 4) That, while it must and can very well be maintained that this word as it occurs in Malachi 1 is also both personal and individual, nevertheless, regardless of what the meaning may be in Malachi, here in Romans 9 and in the peculiar connection in which the apostle Paul adduces it, it is undeniably personal and individual. The reference to the objects of God's love and God's hatred respectively is very definitely to the two children, Jacob and Esau, that were in Rebecca's womb.

We are now ready to attempt a formulation of the concept of God's hatred. We shall limit ourselves in this connection to the idea of God's hatred as such, in order to treat separately the question of the objects of that hatred and the origin of God's hatred of those objects.

In the light of the Scripture, especially the passages cited, we posit the following:

1. In the first place, we may state the God's hatred as such is not, in the positive sense of the term, one of His attributes, or virtues, as are, for example, God's love, God's righteousness, God's holiness. God is in himself, apart from any relation and attitude toward the creature, love. He is righteousness. He is holiness. But in this sense we never read in Scripture that God is hatred; and this cannot properly be posited of God. With the divine Being and life as such there is no positive attribute of hatred. Hatred is negative.

2. In the second place, and in close connection with the preceding, we would maintain that God's hatred is implied in and is an aspect of His holy Self-love as that Self-love is revealed toward the creature. It is the contrast, the counterpart, the antithesis of love. In the revelation of His love of Himself to the creature outside of Himself, God's hatred is the "no" of the "yes" of God's love. From this already it would follow that the revelation of that hatred stands essentially in the service of the revelation of His love.

3. Hence, in the third place, God's hatred must be defined and circumscribed in terms of His love. We may therefore state the following:

a. If God's love is a bond of fellowship, a virtue and power that unites, draws, fastens to Himself, His hatred implies a gulf of separation. It is the negative aspect of that virtue of and power of love which separates, repulses, drives away.

b. God's love is ethical in character. It requires an ethical subject and an ethical object. Thus it is with God's hatred. Just as animals and inanimate objects cannot properly be said to be the object of love, so also animals and inanimate objects cannot properly be said to be the object of hatred.

c. God's love can exist only in the sphere of ethical perfection. It requires an ethically perfect subject, but also an ethically perfect object. The corollary of this is that God's hatred is the attitude of aversion, of repulsion, on the part of the ethically perfect subject toward the ethically corrupt object. Just as love implies the longing for and the delight in the ethically perfect object on the part of the ethically perfect subject, so God's hatred is the aversion for and the repulsion of the displeasure in the ethically corrupt object on the part of God, Who is the implication of all infinite perfections. It is the thought and the will to repulse and to destroy, to cast out of His presence and to make miserable all that which and those who stand contrary to the ethical perfection and holiness of the divine nature.

4. Finally, we may state that there is most perfect harmony and unity between this hatred of God, as an aspect of the revelation of His holy Self-love, and all the other attributes and virtues of God. This follows both from the fact that God's hatred is the antithesis of His love, and from the truth of God's simplicity. Here, of course, we come face to face with the truth that *a priori* God's hatred is absolutely independent and sovereign. This stands in connection with the next question to which we will address ourselves. But first let it be emphasized that God's infinite and perfect hatred is rooted in his absolute holiness and goodness. He is the Light, in whom is no darkness at all. As the Holy One, He loves and seeks and delights in Himself. And for His own holy names' sake, as the God Who always maintains Himself in His infinite holiness, He reveals Himself as the God Who hates with perfect and infinite hatred all that stands contrary to His holy Being. And this hatred is operative in wrath, in the curse, in the destruction of the objects of that hatred, whatever and whoever they may be.

We are not ready for our second question, namely: who are the objects of the divine hatred? We may ask this question from a two-fold point of view. In the

first place, who are they historically? Who are they as far as their ethical character is concerned: What is their historical and ethical identity? And, in the second place, when we discover that historical and ethical identity of the object of God's hatred, in contradistinction from the objects of God's love, what is the origin of that distinction, and, therefore, of that hatred?

In answer to the first question, we must note that everywhere Scripture pictures the objects of God's hatred from the point of view of their spiritual, ethical character. This is true in the various passages cited which speak literally of God's hatred. This is also true of all the passages mentioned which speak by implication of God's attitude of hatred as it is revealed in the operation of that hatred in wrath, the curse, and destruction. It is the ungodly, the foolish, the workers of iniquity, the transgressors, etc., that are the object of God's hatred and of the revelation of that hatred in wrath and the curse both in time and eternity.

Moreover, we must understand, in this connection, that the Word of God throughout draws a very sharp line of demarcation between the godly and the ungodly, the righteous and the wicked, the church and the world, the children of light and the children of darkness. We must not fall into the error that is so common today, and that sounds so piously evangelistic, of speaking simply of the "unconverted," conceiving then of the unconverted from our own point of view, not as God sees and knows and views them. When Scripture makes the distinction between the godly and the ungodly, it always refers principally to the ungodly that will never be converted, the ungodly that can never be converted, the ungodly that will persist in his ungodliness until he is cast into everlasting destruction. Nor must we say that we cannot very well make these the object of our contemplation for the simple reason that we do not know who they are. For, in the first place, while it may be true that the individual identity of the ungodly to a certain extent may belong to the realm of the secret things, nevertheless the fact that there are such men belongs to the revealed things of God. This must be reckoned with, both as far as the preaching of the gospel is concerned, lest the preacher delude himself that all men are potential converts, and as far as the life and calling of God's people in the midst of the world are concerned, lest they make common cause with the wicked. In the second place, we must not forget the principal truth: by their fruits ye shall know them. And, in the third place, the question is not whether we in every case can individually distinguish the ungodly, but whether God knows them, and what is His attitude toward them. And then the fact is that God does not have before His divine eyes a mass of unconverted men who are possible candidates for conversion; but there are be-

fore Him the righteous and the unrighteous, the godly and the ungodly—two distinct classes of men.

The language of Scripture in describing these ungodly is clear, and the delineation between them and the godly is sharp in Holy Writ. According to Psalm 1, they are the ungodly, those who stand in the way of sinners, who sit in the seat of the scornful, and the wicked counsellors. Psalm 5 pictures them as the foolish, the workers of iniquity, in whose mouth is no faithfulness, whose inward part is very wickedness, whose throat is an open sepulchre, who flatter with their tongue. Psalm 7 pictures them as raging enemies, as the non-turning wicked. Psalm 11 calls them the wicked, who make ready their arrow upon the string, who privily shoot at the upright, who love violence. And thus examples may be multiplied. Cf. Psalm 14:1-4; Psalm 17:9-12; Psalm 18:26-27; Psalm 28:3, 5; Psalm 31:6, 18; Psalm 36:1-4; Psalm 37:12, 14, 21; Psalm 49:11; Psalm 52:3; Psalm 53:1; Psalm 58:3; Psalm 109:5; Prov. 1:10, 16; Prov. 4:16-17; Prov. 10:8-10, 13, 17-18, 23; Prov. 11:12-13, 17; Isa. 5:8, 20-21, 23; Matt. 23:14, 23-24, 27, 29-33; John 3:36; Rom. 1:21-23, 29-32. This is Scriptures' picture of the natural man throughout; and it is the picture not only of the natural man in general, but of the ungodly. True, all men are by nature and considered in themselves ungodly. But in the process of history from Adam onward there is a distinction made. There is the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. This distinction Scripture recognizes throughout. There are men who are by nature ungodly, but who by sovereign grace are distinguished, separated from, called out of the mass of ungodly men; and there are men who are not so separated and who never will be separated, men who before God from eternity to eternity appear no different than in their horrible iniquity. The latter are the object of God's hatred.

In this same connection, we must take note of the fact that Scripture throughout speaks of two classes of men, righteous and wicked, from the point of view of their final destiny and their being on the way to that destination. Here again, it should be noted that Scripture does not merely speak of ungodly men who are potential candidates for destruction but who are also potential candidates for everlasting bliss. On the contrary, it recognizes the fact of the existence of certain men who are on the way to destruction and who shall certainly be destroyed. And distinct from these are the righteous. There are ungodly men, who are as the chaff which the wind driveth away, who shall not stand in the judgment nor in the congregation of the righteous, whose very way shall perish (Psalm 1). There are those, the foolish workers of iniquity, who shall not stand

in God's sight, who speak leasing and shall be destroyed, who are bloody and deceitful and shall be abhorred (Psalm 5). There are the wicked upon whom God will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest (Psalm 11). There are the ungodly, of whom Asaph was at first envious, but concerning whom he learned in the sanctuary of God that God did set them in slippery places and cast them down into destruction (Psalm 73). Examples of this kind could be multiplied. Indeed, they are always pictured in Scripture in their spiritual, ethical character: they are the wicked. And their destruction always stands in unbreakable connection with their being wicked. God is the righteous Judge! And shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? It is emphatically as wicked, as ungodly, that they are destroyed forever. All this does not change the fact, however, that there are such men, that God knows that there are such men, that God's people know and must know and do experience that there are such men.

When we speak, therefore, of God's hatred, we must always remember its ethical character. It is not correct to say that God reveals His hatred utterly without regard to sin. Nor is it correct to speak of elect men and reprobate men without regard to and with no connection to righteousness and sin. In His counsel God beholds His people eternally as righteous in Christ, and as such they are the objects of His love. And in that same counsel He beholds the reprobate eternally as wicked, and as such they are the objects of His hatred. There is no arbitrariness in God's love or in His hatred.

This is by no means the same as saying, however, that God's election and reprobation or His love and His hatred are conditional and based upon foreseen godliness or ungodliness in the Arminian sense of a divine prescience. When we inquire after the origin of God's love and God's hatred, then Scripture leaves no question but that this same ethically perfect love and ethically perfect hatred are absolutely sovereign. This is the clear teaching of the passage in Romans 9, to which we referred earlier. In connection with this passage we should note:

- 1) That we have here a very emphatic example because:
 - a. Esau and Jacob were children of the same parents, and that too, "covenant" parents.
 - b. They were twins: as far as their natural differences were concerned, there was as little difference as possible.
 - c. Esau from a natural point of view should have the preference because he was firstborn. Yet the blessing of the covenant would be bestowed upon Jacob rather than Esau: the elder shall serve the younger.

- 2) This was said unto Rebecca "in order that the purpose of God according

to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.” Hence, when the children grow up and the elder reveals himself as a fornicator and the younger as a child of promise, this must be attributed not to any natural difference, but to the determination and realization of God’s sovereign purpose of election. God’s predestinating purpose distinguishes and makes separation even between the natural descendants of the father of believers.

3) What this purpose of God was is further expressed by the quotation from Malachi 1. And in the light of the context in Malachi, it cannot be maintained that the hatred of God is anything else than exactly such a hatred—the very opposite of God’s love. It is not another kind of love or another degree of love. The text is by no stretch of the imagination to be read as though it said, “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I loved too.” For the hatred of God against Esau reveals itself in a manifestation of wrath against him and his descendants. They are called the people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever!

4) The view that objects that this election and reprobation were not personal, but national, cannot be maintained in the light of:

- a. The fact that the text mentions, in the first place, Jacob and Esau personally, and refers to their personal, prenatal position.
- b. The fact that even the nation of Edom is composed of individual Edomites.
- c. The fact that their personal history is quite in accord with the idea of their personal election and reprobation.

5) It was an election unto salvation and a reprobation unto damnation that was at stake here.

6) It was an election and reprobation which had their ultimate ground in the sovereign pleasure of the Most High, and which were in no wise conditioned by either Jacob’s or Esau’s character and works:

- a. Because the text emphatically mentions this.
- b. Because it is only in this light that the objections raised in the context in Romans 9 have any sense: “Is there then unrighteousness with God?” And: “Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?” These are objections which in their very nature will be raised only against a predestination that is sovereign. Against the Arminian presentation of a conditional election and reprobation such objections would make no sense.

7) This is in full harmony with the figure of the potter who makes out of the same lump one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour. All history, in which vessels unto honour or unto dishonour are formed, is the revelation and realization of the counsel of God according to which He loved Jacob and all His

elect people, but hated Esau and all the reprobate.

8) And, finally, this is in full harmony with the reference in Romans 9:22-23 to the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction. These are the men who are sovereignly ordained to be the manifestations and the objects of God's righteous wrath, vessels ordained in wrath and unto wrath, so constituted and instituted that their end must and shall be destruction.

Hence, we conclude by maintaining the absolute sovereignty of God's hatred, with electing love, sovereign, eternally independent, with a love not caused by its object, with a love grounded solely in his good pleasure, God has chosen His people in Christ unto eternal salvation, the most blessed fellowship and bliss of His eternal covenant. That is the love of His good pleasure. And with equally sovereign hatred, with a hate that is not caused by its objects, but is grounded in His divine good pleasure, God has predestinated the objects of reprobation unto everlasting desolation in the way of their own sin and unbelief.

Many other passages could be discussed in this connection. For example, Isaiah 6:9-11; Mark 4:11-12; Matthew 11:25-26; John 12:39-40; Romans 11:7-10; II Corinthians 2:14-16. Passages like these are especially important because they have to do with the revelation of God's sovereign hatred in connection with the preaching of the gospel.

Jerome Zanchius: "When hatred is ascribed to God, it implies (1) a negation of benevolence, or a resolution not to have mercy on such and such men, nor to endue them with any of those graces which stand connected with eternal life. So, 'Esau have I hated' (Rom. 9), *i.e.*, 'I did, from all eternity, determine within Myself not to have mercy on him.' The sole cause of which awful negation is not merely the unworthiness of the persons hated, but the sovereignty and freedom of the Divine will. (2) It denotes displeasure and dislike, for sinners who are not interested in Christ cannot but be infinitely displeasing to and loathsome in the sight of eternal purity. (3) It signifies a positive will to punish and destroy the reprobate for their sins, of which will, the infliction of misery upon them hereafter, is but the necessary effect and actual execution" (*Absolute Predestination* [London: Silver Trumpet, 1989], p. 44).