

Love Sinners and Hate the Sins in the light of feelings

Love the sinner and hate the sin is like somebody saying they have nothing against black people and try hard to embrace them. Both types of person are trying to convince themselves of what is not true. They do hate sinners and do not really accept black people when they have to persuade themselves with some difficulty to accept them. Love the sinner and hate the sin really means love the sinner but hate the sin. There is a but there. When they cannot just love people but have to say they are sinners but we love them anyway that is not real love. It is slow poison.

II. PASSIONS AND MORAL LIFE

1767 In themselves passions are neither good nor evil. They are morally qualified only to the extent that they effectively engage reason and will. Passions are said to be voluntary, "either because they are commanded by the will or because the will does not place obstacles in their way."⁴⁴ It belongs to the perfection of the moral or human good that the passions be governed by reason.

1768 Strong feelings are not decisive for the morality or the holiness of persons; they are simply the inexhaustible reservoir of images and affections in which the moral life is expressed. Passions are morally good when they contribute to a good action, evil in the opposite case. The upright will orders the movements of the senses it appropriates to the good and to beatitude; an evil will succumbs to disordered passions and exacerbates them. Emotions and feelings can be taken up into the virtues or perverted by the vices.

1769 In the Christian life, the Holy Spirit himself accomplishes his work by mobilizing the whole being, with all its sorrows, fears and sadness, as is visible in the Lord's agony and passion. In Christ human feelings are able to reach their consummation in charity and divine beatitude.

1770 Moral perfection consists in man's being moved to the good not by his will alone, but also by his sensitive appetite, in the words of the psalm: "My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God."

IN BRIEF

1771 The term "passions" refers to the affections or the feelings. By his emotions man intuitively feels the good and suspects evil.

1772 The principal passions are love and hatred, desire and fear, joy, sadness, and anger.

1773 In the passions, as movements of the sensitive appetite, there is neither moral good nor evil. But insofar as they engage reason and will, there is moral good or evil in them.

1774 Emotions and feelings can be taken up in the virtues or perverted by the vices.

1775 The perfection of the moral good consists in man's being moved to the good not only by his will but also by his "heart."

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Bible says, Hebrews 1:9, "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." "Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good" (Romans 12:9). Psalm 97:10 says, "Hate evil, you who love the LORD, Who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked." Amos 5:15 says, "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate."

To hate means to will evil for another person so to hate a sin is to will evil to a sin as if it were a person. You cannot really hate something except on the personal level. Religion says we must love the sinner and hate the sin. This is contradictory if you mean that you can feel hate for a sinner for being a sinner and love for the sinner for being a sinner.

At most you can feel love for a sinner in some ways and not as a sinner. You might love Hitler's drive and ambition but not his sins. If love the sinner and hate the sin means anything like that it is endorsing hatred for a person. You can murder a person because you see enough good in them and this good makes the bad they do make you angrier.

Bad means that which should be willed out of existence. If it were possible to make evil vanish by the power of your will you would have to do it. Religion says you should feel you want it to cease to exist. Thus calling somebody bad is hate speech. It is saying the person should cease to exist if he or she is bad. If something deserves it, then you should feel with

all your power that it should be destroyed. Your feeling of hate reinforces your attitude of hate or the way you look at the thing as hateful.

Love sinner and hate sin is often presented as an outlook rather than feeling love for the person and feeling hate for the sin. Loving the sinner means seeing the person as doing their best and being flawless under the circumstances. The act then is seen as something that is not coming from the person but as something that is parasitic on the person. This fails to understand what an act is and accuses you of being a robot. If you are a robot then you cannot be a sinner! If you objectify sinners you will soon end up killing them faster than you would if you seen them as people to be hated. Psychopaths kill far more easily than hate-mongers.

The love the sinner and hate the sin brigade often seem to say you must not judge. The person who judges seems to be the person who the ill-feeling is reserved for. The judger is never seen as doing their best. So assessing an action as bad is seen as worse than any sin including murder!

People can learn to feel the right or best emotions at the right time for such emotions. Few of us are masters at this. It is said that does not mean we cannot or should not be faulted if we feel inappropriate emotions or don't feel appropriate ones. But the problem is that fixing your emotions and conforming yourself more emotionally to reality is a lifelong journey. If you are really trying, feeling the right things won't happen overnight. It would be wrong to condemn a person who is trying for say feeling happy that an enemy has died. The person may be battling this feeling. Also, if it is wrong to have inappropriate feelings Aristotle said that if you can't help but feel your emotions you are responsible because you made yourself the kind of person who feels that sort of emotion. Aristotle sees the wrong emotions as a sickness and feels we can train our responses by forcing ourselves to act in the right and moral way. If the emotions rebel at first we will develop the ability to enjoy the right actions. Dennett says that educating ourselves about the bad effects our actions have on others can help us have the right feelings. Notice how Aristotle held that your feelings indicate what you are as a person, what kind of person you are. Thus to love the person who has a lot of bitterness and spitefulness inside means that you love the person as bitter and spiteful for they are part of the person. This teaching makes it impossible to love the sinner and hate the sin and even to love the person with nasty feelings never mind a sinner.

The view that we should not be too annoyed when things go wrong for there are people being tortured and slaughtered in the world is common. That something worse exists does not make a bad thing less bad. It may make you feel less bad about it. But feeling less bad by Aristotle's reckoning would make you a bad person. A sin is not a thing. Strictly speaking, a person never commits a sin but a sin shows what kind of person he or she is - a sinner and sinful person. To hate the sin is to hate the sinner.

Religion says that love is not a feeling but acting to help others while intending to help them. But we need people to like us so this love will not do us much good. Real love requires feeling or at least trying to like the person. Regardless of what religion says, we do act as if love is a feeling nearly all the time. That cannot be ignored.

Hate is a feeling. But if you are going to make out that love is not a feeling then you have to say that hate is not a feeling. Some teach that hate is merely being willing to hurt others even if you feel nothing bad towards them. Religion uses the excuse, "We feel no hatred for those who go deserve go to Hell for their sins" to answer those who accuse it of hate. Love needs feeling more than hate does.

If love is not a feeling then neither is hate. This teaching allows religion to incite people to hatred and then deny responsibility on the basis that it did not ask them to feel hate. Thus religion then can deny that it incites to hatred if it stirs up huge ill feeling against anybody. That is dangerous. Religion is well aware of all this for there are plenty of examples of people hating each other on theological or religious grounds. Religion has given those people a licence to hate while denying that they hate.

If you hate somebody for insulting you then why can't you hate those who turn away from loving you and loving others and who turn away from loving God to endure the suffering of Hell? They must hate everybody a lot if they would choose torment over love. Whether it manages to get a person to hate or not, the Hell doctrine is an attempt to incite to hatred.

So love for most of us is acting and feeling.

Love in theology and religion is acting.

Two options.

Your mental health will deteriorate fast if people have no warm feelings for you but do good for you. It will not deteriorate as quickly - if at all - if they do but mess you around. The first necessarily will do grave psychological harm and the second may or may not. We do not really want a gospel of love that isn't warm love. Love your neighbour as yourself loses its

appeal in that light.

If you keep the Christian doctrine that when they love you, they do not need to feel love for you and the feeling of love is irrelevant, in mind you will not feel so warm inside when a Christian does something good for you. Christianity's doctrine of love will lose its shine. It is manipulative of Christians to attract people to their religion by engaging in personal warmth.

Real love does not turn into hate. Christianity by saying that doing serious evil is an almighty insult against such a wonderful God, that it deserves everlasting torment in Hell and that it gives others a bad example that could draw them to Hell is making it hard for love not to turn into hate. It would be a betrayal of your friends and loved ones to embrace a religious faith like Christianity. The love will make you suffer. Love shouldn't do that. It should make you happy to help the other person when the other person is going astray or in trouble. Christianity preaches love but then puts barriers in its path. It encourages hypocritical love not real love.

Even if you could hate the sin and love the sinner, you are deluding yourself to manage it. You are demeaning yourself. If you demean yourself you can't think much of those who love you or of other people. You are also offering love based on lies and pretence to the sinner. Its not the real thing. Its true colours will show. Outright hatred would do less harm in the long run.

Some say you have to hate a person sometimes to do the best thing for them. Sometimes parents say they detested and hurt their drug-addict sons and daughters and this fuelled their efforts to help them so that they could be lovable to them again. They hated them and wanted to help them in order to stop hating them and to start loving them again. These parents do not hide behind the love the sinner and hate the sin goody goody hypocrisy. Those who say they do are trying to stop hating their sons and daughters. They are lying about loving them.

For a Christian to condemn the sin of hating sinners for their sins would be rank hypocrisy and would actually show a preference for hating the hater of sin than hating the sinner hated.

The Church says that to sin you must consent to the sin. If the feeling of hate takes you over and you maim and kill people, this is not a sin. If it is not a sin then it must be something good under the circumstances that deserves a reward! You deserve a reward for doing your best even if it turned out terrible.

The teaching of everlasting torture in Hell will be used to scare young people into thinking that if they commit some sins, for example have gay relationships or abandon attendance at Mass, they can go to Hell forever or will go if they do not repent. The Church thinks that they should go to Hell forever. It will hypocritically answer, "We don't want anybody to go to Hell." But what good is that? The point is that they say a person under certain circumstances should be sent to Hell and belong there. To say such a thing is an act of hate. Hate is not necessarily a feeling that you want somebody to suffer. It is the will to see somebody suffer. Suppose a person feels great hatred for you but does not act on it and can't help it. Then suppose that person does good for you willingly and not begrudgingly then that person loves you in spite of feeling the hate. The person who hurts you is hating you in the real sense: hate is trying to bring pain on another. Real hate is not a feeling. It is not hate to feel a great dislike or a vindictive dislike. It is hate to foment it or to do nothing good to weaken it. It is hate to neglect to try to get rid of it.

Religion says that evil and sin in a sense are not real. Religion says that they are not powers but they are simply goodness that is lacking its full potential. For example, hate is falling short of love. Suffering is falling short of happiness. So hate and suffering are good after all! Religion claims that God cannot make evil if evil is a power for that would make God evil. So it argues that he makes all things good and evil is just good in the wrong place. So it would be the case that hating evil if it is not real but a lack should not be as strong as hating it if it is not a lack but a power in its own right. No revulsion would be too much. Suppose religion is right to see evil not as a reality but as a negation of good. In terms of emotions, emotions are not and cannot be fully sensible in terms of rational, it follows that your feelings will see hate and sin and suffering as real powers. It will react as if they are not just good that falls short but actual evil forces. No matter what religion says in theory or in its theology, it is still guilty of causing people to feel hate. To even risk that would be hideous.

Religion endorses extreme hatred of evil so what is the point then of saying evil is misplaced good? You may as well say it is an evil force and that evil is a reality. Is the teaching that evil is good in the wrong place merely lip-service? It is how they treat evil that counts. And they treat it as if it were a force. It will only lead to people being forced and threatened into obeying religion.

If evil is not a defect or a falling short but a real power and as real as electricity, then nobody can say you must love the sinner and hate the sin. If you believe that water should be destroyed with relish then it follows that you are saying people should be destroyed with relish for they are composed of a high percentage of water. Get the idea?

If you love the sinner and hate the sin you are denying that there is evil power in the sinner. You are denying that evil is a

real entity or force. Even believers in the rule say it is rubbish if evil is as real as good and is a power and not to be understood as good in the wrong place. Then the person would be evil. But religion never clarifies this to people. It is only in dusty tomes that nobody reads. Thus religion is forcing people to hate sinners with the sin all the while as it refuses to take any responsibility.

Also, there is the fact that hate really is a power - an emotional power. It is real. Pretending it is just a good emotion that is put in the wrong direction makes no sense. Thus religion is failing to admit that to hate the sin is to hate the sinner. If Hitler was not an evil man but just a saint who fell short of what he could have become, then if you cannot see into somebody's heart, what right have you to assume he fell short? If you don't know how far he fell short in his heart and intentions, then maybe he did his best and didn't wilfully fall short? Who are you to judge?

If you oppose evil, you must be a good person. Whoever does not oppose evil but who lives a good life is not really good. He or she has a bad dark heart.

Religion agrees. It says that is why it is necessary to hate sin in yourself and others. Hating sin is not very nice or happiness inducing. Moreover, if somebody's sinning upsets you, it will lead to more upset in time. You will fear being upset again. It accumulates. Hating sin would be evil for hate means that if sin were able to suffer you would make it suffer. It is personal ill-feeling in a hypothetical but real sense. It seems fake to direct ill-feeling and rancour away from the sinner to the sin. It's artificial and self-righteous. But religion might keep maintaining that it is a necessary evil for the alternative is worse. But then religion should stop pretending to be so safe and goody goody. It needs to tell us the risks of being religious. It should certainly not be influencing and conditioning and imposing membership on children and on the unwary.

Belief in goodness is more important than goodness for there can be no real goodness without it. To really intend something to be good you must have reasonable grounds for thinking it will produce more good than bad. If you do something without knowing what you intend it to be, you intend both bad and good. Neutral means you intend both bad and good for to intend neither is to intend both! The believer has to have more ill feelings towards the sinner who is a sceptic about religion and many ethical teachings than a sinner who steals or rapes or whatever.

The teaching that we must hate the sin makes it easy to hate sinners. Our feelings are not rational and not always controllable. love sinner hate sin will affect emotions and they have a mind of their own. To feel vindictive towards a sinner means you are vindictive to the sinner. The person who hates sinners and admits it is better than the person who uses, "Love sinners and hate sins", to disguise his hate-filled hypocrisy.