



The
William Booth
Collection

THE GENERAL'S LETTERS

GOOD HATERS

From the "War Cry," August 22nd, 1885.

My DEAR COMRADES,

I think sometimes that if some people had the privilege of making the Bible over again, they would take all the hatred and cursing and hell out of it. To them there is nothing more mysterious and distasteful than the full-handed penalties connected with the law of Israel, the tremendous curses so freely scattered about by Moses and David and the Prophets, the straightforward denunciations of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the red-hot damnation of the Book of Revelation.

These burning hatreds and straightforward condemnations are too strong for many. Their favourite notion is that no sin is very diabolical, and that no transgressor is very wrong, even the devil himself being an object of pity. They would explain away the rigid laws and anathemas and penalties of the Bible, and introduce in their place a goody-goody kind of article, which, though it would make no one extraordinarily happy, would not make any one very miserable, but would be calculated to reach their ideal of perfection – that of making things agreeable all round.

These people have no curses, no penalties, in their programme; their laws are little more than good advice; they have no real devil – only a myth, a shadow, a resemblance, a "Personification of evil," as they call it. The fact is they have no sin – in the proper sense of the word. With them wrong-doing resolves itself into mere mistakes, or misfortunes at the worst.

But this, my comrades, every one of you will feel to be very different to the spirit and letter of the Book of God and the constitution and instincts of every man's own nature. There is within all of us, born in us, a marvelous capacity for hatred and contempt and scorn. If there is no legitimate purpose for these capacities, what are they implanted within us for? If there is nothing for us to hate which it is right to hate – which it will be for our good and the good of others that we should hate, – why are we made thus? There must have been a mistake in our constitution, and this we cannot for a moment admit.



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Then, my brethren, was not man made in the image of God? And what a tremendous hater God is! What descriptions we have of His mighty likes and dislikes in the Book in which He has revealed His will! And what an awful expression of His scorn and loathing and distaste for evil he has given us in the destruction he has again and again inflicted on men! And what an emphatic expression of his hatred of sin He has given us in the creation of hell, with its unquenchable fires and undying worm!

My comrades, we are the servants and disciples of Jehovah, and we do not want to be better than our Master or wiser than our Lord. If we are like Him, we shall love as He loves, and we shall hate as He hates. Let me give you two or three hints as to the right kind of hatred – the hatred of the Bible, the hatred of God.

1. This is the hatred of evil, of iniquity, wrongdoing. A good hater hates sin as sin. He hates it because of its consequences, with which the history of his race is crowded, of which the world around him is full, and of which he has any amount of evidence in his own memory. He hates it because of the misery and disease and bloodshed and death and damnation it has wrought for his fellows. But in addition to these things, he hates it because it is in itself rebellion against God. A good hater sees the transgression of the pure, holy law of God to be a black, vile, detestable, damnable thing, irrespective of the form it assumes, the blandishments that surround it, the dress it wears, the advantages of money or pleasure or fame it seems to bring with it. He pierces through its disguise, discerns its true character, discovers it as evil, and utterly shuts his ears to all its honeyed words, and his eyes to all its fascinating appearances; he calls it by its right name, and damns it from the centre of his soul, so avoiding being damned by it. He loathes and scorns and hates it, votes that it shall be destroyed, brings it to the Blood, and shouts over its destruction.

He hates sin with all his might. Will any one tell me if he can hate it too much? Can any one hate lying too strongly? Look at this vile sin. Turn it over – the deliberate act of deception: only think what would happen if it were to get the upper hand! Would it not destroy the very government of the universe and plunge all into confusion? Look all the black catalogue of sins over one by



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one, after the same fashion. Think how they would end the existence of the New Jerusalem as they did that of the old, and blight every prospect we have of Heaven.

Look at the crime of seduction, of which we have been writing and reading and thinking so much of late. Bring out the victim, pure and innocent. Remember her ignorance. Think of the falsehood and treachery with which her ruin is contrived. Ponder over the cruel, diabolical selfishness which for a little earthly gratification can deliberately entail such an eternity of tears and woe; and then say whether any man has within him too much bitter loathing to bestow upon this horrible sin.

2. The right kind of hatred is consistent with pure love. Here is no personal feeling of revenge. That must be left to devils and sinners. Their hatred is only another form of their selfishness. You cannot arouse it without touching their own interests. They hate in order to gratify their sense of personal revenge. Pure hatred goes on the lines of love to God, and means happiness to all good beings.

3. This hatred is consistent with happiness. Selfish, sinful hatred, and quarrelling, and revenge, and cursing, mean inward and outward misery. To get into this spirit and live in it is just for a man to get into hell before his time; is to lure and bring the fire and the worm and the devils up to him, instead of waiting to go down to them.

4. This hatred is perfectly consistent with the glory of God and the welfare of all His subjects.

5. This hatred is in keeping with the pity we all ought to feel for wrong-doers. We have often talked together on this theme, my comrades. Our whole lives are given up to it. To compassionate and plan and labour for the salvation of the perishing crowds about us is the ruling passion of our existence.

Go on with this pity. Let it grow and swell within your hearts until it carries you out to greater sacrifices than ever. Find out all the considerations you possibly can in favour of the



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transgressor, but make no terms with his rebellion. Beware of any kindred pity for the vile rebellion that dwells in his breast. But mind – NO TERMS WITH EVIL.

It is probable that at the Day of Judgment a wonderful change will come over us in this respect. Such a revelation will then be made of the exceeding sinfulness of those who are condemned there that our own hatred of the sin will be made equally to embrace the sinner, and that with the utmost loathing and scorn we shall agree with the sentence that sweeps him away for ever: the murderer and his murderous temper; the haughty pride and the people who cherish it; the hypocrite and his hypocrisy; the seducer and the filthy passion which he allows to rule him will be so linked together that, hated with a joint hatred, they will be hurried away with the approval of the saints who are just turning themselves round to tread, with triumphal march, the golden pavements of Heaven.

Oh, when sin and the sinners who have revelled in its filth, who have defied Jehovah, despised His Crucified Son, and damned one another, are seen in the light of the Judgment Throne, what feelings of reprobation will they raise in the breasts of all right-minded beings who are gathered there!

How long will this hatred of sin endure? As long as it is sin. As long as we are able to discern between righteousness and wickedness, so long shall we love the one and detest the other.

Are there any advantages in this intense hatred? Yes; many. I can only mention them.

There is security. The soul that truly hates sin is not likely to be overcome by it. The burnt child dreads the fire; in other words, he hates it. He knows it burns him – makes him smart. So he will not be so likely to play with it as he was before he found out its burning nature. Men who know the evil of sin, and abominate it with disgust, will give it a wide berth. They will not be lured into trifling with the foe.

This kind of hatred makes good fighters. If you want to see a war to the knife, you must see men fight who not only battle for their cause, but because they hate each other. See how the



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Arabs fought the British the other day! Though beaten and without a chance of gaining any advantage, they fought on, and when wounded they struck out, preferring the gratification of their revenge to the keeping of their lives. Let men, hate sin and devils after this fashion, and they will fight them with all the means and powers and strength they possess.

This bitter hatred of evil is a sure preventive of compromises, those hateful things. A good hater will want no truce. He will say, "Come life, come death, let us fight it out on this line!" He will sooner die than submit.

A good hater is a good lover. The man whose antipathies are strong against evil will have a corresponding affection for what is good and true.

My comrades, do you ask how we can feed this hatred? how it can be increased and intensified? I answer you briefly, for my space is more than occupied.

First, spread right views of evil. How can men be likely to make any dead stand, or suffer any inconvenience in the fight with the devil and sin when they are made to believe there is not much harm in either one or the other? Get into your marrow and blood and innermost being the truth as to sin being the foundation of human and everlasting miseries. Men are blundering about fighting for happiness, many of them in a very commendable manner, but they are on the wrong track; they fight the wrong people. Show them that it is sin and devils that are their foes.

Second, get right views of the remedy. What we truly hate we instinctively seek to destroy if we have the power to do it. Let us open our eyes, my comrades, and get other people's eyes opened also to the mighty power for the destruction of evil which we possess.

Let us see how infinitely preferable it is that sin should be destroyed here than damned hereafter; how much better it is to get it into the fountain, where it can be annihilated, than into the lake of brimstone and fire, where the smoke of its torment must ascend for ever and ever.



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Third, the very essence of this hatred of which I have been speaking is A NEW, A DIVINE NATURE. No arguing, or reading, or education, or religiousness will make a man hate evil with this bitter, indestructible detestation, and love righteousness and the God of Righteousness, with an equally vigorous passion.

But with God's nature we must hate what God hates and love what God loves. You have this, but must not rest in it. You must cultivate the disposition you possess. Hatred, like love, grows on what it feeds upon. Let your hatred have plenty of food.

Go on hating, night and day, in every place, under all circumstances. Bring this side of your nature well in to play. Practise yourself in habits of scorn and contempt and loathing and detestation and revenge; but mind, let your hatred and revenge go in the right direction – the direction of sin – evil – the evil condemned by the Bible, the evil that Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy.

Praying that God may soon avenge us of our enemy the devil,

Believe me,

Yours faithfully in the War,

WILLIAM BOOTH
August 18th, 1885.