

Love of righteousness

The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

Psalm 11:5-7

In this psalm describing the struggle between the wicked and the righteous, we have a glimpse of the righteous judgment of God. The concept of judgment must be viewed from a number of aspects, from an initial definition and discernment of what is right and wrong, then the testing and trial of persons, followed by the determination of who is righteous and unrighteous, and then the final reward or sentencing of each. As we observe the Lord's work in our passage, it is interesting to see that He tries, or tests, the righteous, but in His omniscience He hates the wicked, who is in love with violence and the end it brings. Even in the Revelation we see the wicked react to God's judgments, which should be a means for repentance, with deeper hatred for God. David under inspiration describes the standing of each before a righteous Lord, who defines and loves righteousness.

Our human nature will react negatively to the statement that the Lord hates the wicked, because we view the word hatred from the typical emotional state that it creates in our human souls. But hatred on the part of the holy and righteous God simply describes an absolute position of his nature. Since He is all righteous, unrighteousness and wickedness are diametrically opposed to his nature, and therefore His nature is in direct opposition to them, which logically is pure and righteous hatred, without any element of emotion.

At the same time, the righteous psalmist David, who began the psalm declaring his trust in the Lord, attained that righteousness not by works, but by the trust that brought God's righteousness upon him. Since that righteousness came from God Himself, He cannot be opposed to or hate it. And yet He still tries the righteous, so that the imputed righteousness may work itself out in the life and response of the tried, to refine and purify the trusting life through a deeper reliance upon and appreciation for the Lord of his righteousness. So even though tried, may we who put our trust in Him love that righteousness that He seeks to grow within us.

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