

77. Beware of Sinful Anger!

Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the Judgment. *Matt. 5, 22.*

Sinful anger in the heart is just as punishable before God as outright murder before men. Therefore beware of sinful anger!

We say "sinful" anger; for there is an anger which is not sinful. There is a cause for anger when it is directed against sin. Moses was angry when he found the children of Israel worshipping the golden calf, and so angry was he that he smote the two tables of stone against the rocks, reducing the tables to fragments. Jesus was angry when in the Temple He found the venders and moneychangers who had turned the house of prayer into a den of thieves. Christ looked upon such conduct of the Jews with indignation. Anger filled His breast, and woes rolled over His lips against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But there is an anger which is sinful, and such is the anger of which Jesus says: "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the Judgment." There is always danger in anger, even when it is right and just. If nourished and persisted in, it easily leads to rash words, which would better not have been spoken, and to deeds for which we afterwards feel sorry.

Be slow to wrath. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Banish from your heart those thoughts of hatred which come to you. Let them disappear with the setting sun. Control yourself. Let not your anger get away with you. We may have all the cause in the world to get angry, but if we are the children of our heavenly Father, we shall receive power from on high to control ourselves, to subdue our passions, and not to forget ourselves and say and do things which should not be said and done because they are sinful. Sinful anger, which is the opposite of love, has none but evil wishes for the person against whom it is directed. When, by the grace of God, we realize that this commandment utterly condemns us, let us take our refuge to the boundless love of Him who has died for us and atoned for all our sins.

Prayer.

O Lord, my faithful God and Father, hear my prayer that I may be and remain Thy child and temple now and forever. Let me not fall into error and vices, which war against my conscience. Keep my heart from sinful anger and hatred. Preserve me from blood-guilt and from all ills. Amen.

Jesus, my Savior, let me be
More perfectly conformed to Thee;
Implant each grace, each sin dethrone
And form my temper like Thine own.

Let the envenomed heart and tongue,
The hand outstretched to do me wrong,
Excite no feelings in my breast
But such as Jesus once expressed.

To others let me always give
What I from others would receive;
Good deeds for evil ones return,
Nor, when provoked, with anger burn.

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