

The King's Highway.

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness.

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness—Isa. 35-8.

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“Love Your Enemies.”

Charles S. Fairbairn

“Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. V. 44-48, R. V.)

First of all this implies that we have enemies; it cannot be avoided. “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” Not only so, but everyone of us is such a bundle of human faults and frailties that we are sure to be a trial to someone else and others will be trials to us. The devil will take advantage of such occasions, and, if he can, he will sow the seeds of discord and disunity.

The cause of all enmity, on the human side, is the carnal mind. “The carnal mind is enmity, etc.” The fruits of the carnal mind reveal hatefulness and hostility; some of these fruits are hatred, variance (the being at loggerheads, as we commonly say); emulations, wrath, strife between persons), seditions (in the state) heresies (in the church, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”) annoyings, murders. Any or all of these may be back of enmity.

How will a person, who is not right with God, act, feel, moved to act or be tempted to act, when he discovers that he has an enemy? Or when someone is a trial to him?

He will secretly hate, feel wrathful and edge-wise in general toward that person. Outwardly, he will backbite, slander, abuse, avoid, and in many ways show his spleen; his every word concerning the offending person will reveal the pure essence of bitterness and contempt.

Now, our God is a very peculiar God. Whereas, we have various ways of classifying men, and numerous classes into which we divide them, God always divides into two classes only, the holy and the unholy, albeit either or both of these classes may be variously named as designated.

In Ephesians IV. 29, God says: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying, that it may give grace to them that hear.” Corrupt, according to Webster, means unsound, unclean, defiled, depraved, tainted, impure, unholy. Incorrupt, its antonym, means sound, clean, undefiled, untainted, pure, holy. God divides speech, as He does men, into two classes—(1) Corrupt speech, and (2) speech “good to the use of edifyin that it may minister grace to the hearers.” These in God’s mind are opposite the one to the other; so that speech that will edify or minister grace to the hearers must be sound, clean, untainted, pure, holy, free from anything unlike God; and God is love; while corrupt speech is tainted, impure, unholy, unclean, anything, or everything, being in it which is not like God. So God says, “Let no unsound, unclean, defiled, depraved, tainted, impure, unholy, unloving words proceed out of your mouth, but rather speech which is sound, clean, undefiled, untainted, pure, holy, born of love, that it may edify, may minister grace to the hearers.”

We have been convinced that if we have no more grace (and perhaps less), for telling something to you, you will have no more (and perhaps less) grace for hearing it. If you have no more grace for having heard it, then we have no more grace for having told it. Surely such speech is strictly forbidden by Ephesians IV. 29. How much of gossiping, evil-speaking, tale-bearing, back-biting, behind-back-criticizing of brethren would cease were this command obeyed? We believe it would all stop.

If out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” corrupt speech, however defined, can only proceed out of the abundance of a corrupt heart. Accordingly such miserable speech never proceeds from a truly sanctified heart. Is this not in line with the old Methodist teachings against evil-speaking?

Yet on the other hand, there may be rare occasions when we are wrong, very wrong. Here, for instance, is a person who is wrong, very wrong. Although we know he is wrong, yet since the rehearsing of his wickedness is far from edifying either to speaker or listener we refrain from conversing about the matter; and we do so gladly. But we become aware of the fact that this wicked person is taking an innocent person, who is not acquainted with his wickedness, at a disadvantage. At once,

reveal what we know and are justified in doing. Yet even here we must guard closely lest the enemy take advantage and we in order to defend the innocent, we gladly tell too much, or go too far and by so doing grieve the Blessed Spirit of God.

Our God is peculiar. Yea, He is blessedly peculiar. While man will hate a hater and take vengeance on an enemy, God “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust.” What holy, impartial benevolence! Out of what depths of mercy and love must such benevolence rise! And brother, in order to be His children we must share His spirit. “Be ye therefore perfect since your heavenly Father is perfect.” “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

If we act otherwise, or feel otherwise, i. e., do not love foe, as well as friend, in quality if not in degree, but greet friends only salute our brethren only, love only them that love us, do we not, even as the publicans? “But I say unto you, in order that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, AND PRAY FOR THEM that persecute you.” Says Dr. Adam Clark, speaking to this point as he comments on 2 Peter I. 5-7, “Narrow, selfish people, and people of a party who scarcely have any hope of the salvation of those who do not believe as they believe and who do not follow with them have scarcely any religion, though in their own apprehension none is so truly orthodox or religious as themselves.”

“Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.” This word is qualified in no way. It is the express command of Jesus. It comes to us with all the authority of the best preacher in the world—Jesus, and of the greatest sermon—the sermon on the Mount, back of it. Yea, it comes from the Son of God, the God of love, Himself.

“Love your enemies”—naturally it cannot be done but Sovereign Grace can work a heart-miracle and then it can be done. Love, divine love, will be planted in the soul. To love requires that this miracle be wrought. “Pray for them that persecute you”—to do this requires the exercise of your power of volition, the putting forth of an effort on your part. Grace will work the miracle and you will love; but you will have to work out yourself and “pray for them that persecute you.”