

“OUR ENEMIES”

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Text—“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of the Father abideth forever.” 1 John 2:16, 17.

How specific is the language of the dear apostle of our Lord in his statement that this most powerful enemy of all of our new creature interests is not of the new life from our Father, but is of the world. Precious indeed to us are all of our new creature interests, all that has come to us of our Father. Every holy joy that we know because of the truth that we have received of God is to multiply, increase and abound. All His gifts are permanent and only increase in blessing. This is not true of anything that is of the world. It is a painted toy; beautiful when seen at a distance but having no intrinsic value. It may indeed bring a momentary pleasure, but it has no duration. How different are all those satisfying experiences when we do the will of our Father. Could the joy of a little gratification of the fallen qualities in our flesh compare with the enduring joys of doing our Father’s will? It is indeed agreeable to our flesh to deceive ourselves into thinking that we are superior to others and that a great gulf exists between them and us. But can this pleasure compare with the joy of doing the Father’s will in speaking the timely word of comfort to a heart, hungry and longing for the truth? Can it compare with the still greater joy of revealing the love of God in acts of mercy and tenderness toward those to whom the gifts of the Lord properly belong?

In a Bible class which a brother was conducting the question of a specific definition of pride arose. Various suggestions were made, but none entirely satisfactory. Finally the brother leading the meetings turned to a blackboard on the wall and laconically wrote: “I.”

Great big “I”; little “u”. this expresses the idea of pride perfectly. The comment of our text in our I.B.S.A. Bible is: “Exultation over those in humbler walks of life.” It is not pride to appreciate abilities and attainments possessed by us. It is not pride to be aware of our possession of powers that others do not have. It is the exultation over others that constitutes pride. The accident of birth; the present unequal distribution of the things of this present life, put some in possession, and others in dispossession not always on the basis of merit, but often by merest accident of circumstances. This fact gives room for an assumed importance on the part of some over others not so fortunate. To some this is a great source of pleasure. They take great delight in recounting their advantages over others not so fortunate.

The rich, fertile valleys of the plains where dwelt the people of Sodom and Gomorrah

were far superior to the barren uplands surrounding. The rich vine-dressers of the plains took great delight in laughing at the poor ignorant shepherds of the mountain country, making sport of their simple speech and habits. It was a great satisfaction to them to mimic their boorish ways and ignorance of refined custom. But how shallow was such pleasure. The seeming ignorant shepherd was the intellectual superior of the rich land owner a dozen times. Ignorant indeed of the tricks of finance and of the ways of polite custom, polished to hide corruption in the heart, the pure-hearted and lofty-minded shepherd possessed astronomical knowledge that the patrician never dreamed could be known. Is it not plain that the pride of the people of Sodom was greatly to their disadvantage? Pride is always a disadvantage. It is our heavenly Father's purpose to make this fact so evident that eventually no creature in heaven or on earth will ever permit motives of pride to actuate him. This will be one of the lessons perfectly learned before the establishment of everlasting righteousness.

We began by taking the position that pride is our enemy; that it has been always an enemy to every creature who ever permitted it to find a place in his heart. Now let us see if this can be unequivocally proven. The first record that we have of pride in the heart of any of God's creatures was in Lucifer, "Sun of the Morning." This was one of God's most beautiful cherubim. "Lifted up because of his beauty." (Ezekiel 28:17.)

The words "lifted up" would seem to have the thought of exaltation in heart, in his own estimation, above others. This led him to an untrue estimation of himself. Nor has this been altogether to his advantage. The office of the cherubim in some sense relates to covering, it would appear. (Ezekiel 28:14) "Thou art the anointed cherub which *covereth* and I have set thee so." While we might not surely know just what this office represents, we do know that the function of covering plays a most important part in our organism. The hair of our heads for a covering, so especially abundant in woman, represents a most important office, shielding, protecting. The most important organs of the body are covered and protected so they may perform their designed function. The membranes, the seat of the life of the body, are the coverings of the organs that they enclose. When we place a seed in the ground we are very careful to cover it with the warm, moist earth that the principle of life may find its normal environment and spring forth into complete development. The roof over our house is a covering as is the wing of the mother-bird over her little ones. We read, "He will cover thee with His feathers, and under His wing shalt thou trust."

"Cover my defenseless head,
With the shadow of Thy wing."

With only this one passage of scripture, suggesting the possible office of the covering cherub, we catch a glimpse of the possibilities of joyful service to his fellow-creatures, that was open to this exalted being had he not lifted up his heart by pride to the assumption of an office to which he was not invited by the heavenly Father. The

heavenly Father had no reason to request his assistance in governing mankind. He was thoroughly competent to perform this office Himself, for in Him inheres all authority. But the Father had appointed him a service, which if joyfully and faithfully rendered, would have brought him the eternal gratitude of all of God's creatures, receiving blessing at his hand. But what joy it would have brought him to have remained obedient. What a never-ending fountain of blessing would the memory of faithful obedience have been to him. What blessing to many of God's creatures. But he opened his heart to pride, and from that moment his downfall began. How evident is the forecast of the scriptures, "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18.) Ezekiel 28:17 states "Thine heart was *lifted up*." To really take an advanced position would be thoroughly commendable. All should have the laudable ambition to advance from lesser to greater attainment, but all sudden rise to power and position without a legitimate right thereto is generally the result of pride in the heart and in no degree the result of attainment. The result of this unwise course is clearly stated in the words: "Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Have not all mankind, to the degree that they have followed a similar course, experienced great loss in so doing? "Professing themselves to be wise their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:22)

Must not all creation ultimately learn that only the wisdom that inheres in the Father is wisdom. All else is costly expediency—always disadvantageous.

How different in every experience was the course of the faithful loyal logos. "Who being in God's form did not meditate usurpation to be equal with God." At no time was his heart "lifted up." He found no greater aspiration than to be loyal to the Father's will. Proper ambition is essential to every creature. To be devoid of a purpose is to be devoid of energy. The very essence of joy is the motive and purpose that gives life its impulse. It was the joy of the son to be in obedience to the Father—"I was daily His delight." Does not every son of God realize this same delight in doing the Father's will? As the Father found him obedient and faithful in the work of creation He extended his privileges, finally opening before him the pathway to a higher nature. While it is true that this pathway lay down through the dark valley of the shadow of death, yet it led upward to the heights of joy such as only beings of a higher order can know.

But let us very particularly observe: Not once in all that son's experience was pride a factor in the attainment of exaltation. There are those who think that the person without some measure of pride is at a great disadvantage. The course of the Father's son is a living witness to the fact that this view is a misapprehension. Pride is only and always a loss—disadvantage. It leads to weakness and never to power. It defeats the very object that it desires to attain. It is always and only an enemy. It is the Father's purpose to have all of His creatures realize ultimately that so awful are the results of even for a moment to give the heart over to pride that none will ever, in all of the eternal ages to come, even consider such a course. Yet now so universal is this spirit of exaltation over others that

such assumed to be inferiors that it is the very keynote of human ambition. What government on earth but was organized out of the very impulse and motive of pride. Even the republican governments take a positive pride in the assertion "WE THE PEOPLE." It is back of all man-created religions and religious systems. It lies at the foundation of all educational systems. The very warp and woof of the social fabric is formed of it, including the home. It lies behind the surgeon's knife, the sculptor's chisel and the artist's pen. Alike the artist and the artisan find in pride their most powerful inspiration. Do we wonder that Greece and Rome found little in the religion of Jesus to interest them? What a rebuke were his counsels and what a contrast. "He that is greatest among you let him be the servant of all."

The lofty dignity of our heavenly Father is so supervising the affairs of men that they are not wholly hindered in their proud course; neither in government, finance, religion, medicine practice, science, or any department of their plans. Men are given every opportunity to accomplish all that they proudly assert that they will do. He will not establish his kingdom by a conquest against the kingdoms of this world. After men by their arrogance, pride and self-assertion shall have failed; having done their utmost and having made acknowledgement of failure THEN shall the Most High set up His kingdom which shall never end. Great indeed will be the contrast when the kingdom of Christ will reveal what blessed results will follow when every man is given his true estimate and none are lifted into advantage and prominence undeservedly. That there is a right standard of honor and of exaltation is evident, both from the Father's promises and from His promotions. Of the son it is written: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and hath given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess." (Philippians 2:9, 10.)

Let it be carefully noted that our Lord is given this exaltation at the hands of the Father. It was not necessary for him to aspire to that which was never given him. All who know our heavenly Father know that no good thing will He withhold from them which walk uprightly. Pride never did and never can gain an advantage. Pride is always a disadvantage. Must not the time come when this is plain as daylight to every creature in all of God's universe? It is needless to aspire. From the hand of divine goodness and fatherly care every blessing that is best, is sure to come. All that the human heart can ever desire will come to mankind in the completed and perfected condition that the earth restored will bring. Nothing will be wanting; nothing left out. Could the Church but catch a glimpse of the glory to be revealed it would give such an incentive to faithfulness as to assure overcoming. But it has pleased the Father to test each member of his body by calling them out of the world at a time when the supply of blessings are comparatively meager and when the glorious things to come are as yet grasped only through the exceeding great and precious promises. It is because of this that the disposition to aspire is peculiarly susceptible to the wakened ones since it offers a delusive present reward. The heart awakened has a hunger peculiar to its new longings. Unless one is thoroughly

in earnest there is great danger that the heart shall be moved from its moorings and one become ensnared in the alluring prospect presented by the Adversary. On this point we have the beautifully expressed counsel of Studies Vol. 1, Page 193: “The few good things possessed even under the present reign of evil and death so captivate the human nature that we need special help from God to keep our eye and purpose fixed on the spiritual promises.”

But is it not evident who will be thus ensnared? Just as surely as we become self-centered, just so surely will we become “lifted up.” As long as we are little in our own eyes we are not in this danger, but as surely as we become some great one and as surely as we come to despise others, just so surely are we in grave danger of opening our heart to pride and self-sufficiency. Pride is most positively the enemy of the new creation. It is in no sense a part of the new creature, but it is nevertheless the enemy of the new creature. To entertain it even for a moment is to greatly endanger the new creature’s interests. It subjects us to just the danger we would risk did we take an enemy into our secret counsels. And what a terrible enemy pride becomes when it enters the heart of a new creature in Christ Jesus. Begotten from above to newness of life such have the superior mind of the loftier spiritual estate. These have developed to some degree in righteousness having sacrificed as typed in the great copper altar and washed as pictured in the great copper laver. Their outward life, purified by the truth, makes such specially susceptible to pride. Because of their outward righteousness and because of the works that they have, by divine grace, been permitted to accomplish, should the heart at this stage diverge from the holy divine will, it would be sure to find an anchorage in pride, self-sufficiency, arrogance. It was the divergence of just such a class in the early church that developed the great apostasy, the mystery of iniquity foretold by the prophets and by the apostle. In Isaiah 28:1 we read: “Woe to the crown of pride to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine.” In verse 3 we are told: “And the crown of pride. the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot.”

Can we hope that any becoming intoxicated with the spirit of self-sufficiency can develop the character prepared for the kingdom? O dear brother, sister, shall we not waken to a full realization of what it would mean to us were we to be thus ensnared? We may feel safe and strong, but let us never forget that entrenched in our flesh is a mortal enemy. Pride interwoven with every fabric of our humanity, which forms the basis of our new creature life. It is only as we keep this wide distinction defined, and separated between our downward inclinations in the flesh and the pure holy desires of the spirit that we are safe.

There is but one safeguard. “Walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh.” Let us, dear brothers and sisters, day by day, so earnestly, so faithfully, so zealously live this holy life of the spirit, the new creature life, that it may completely

absorb all of our energies. The city of the plains destroyed by fire from heaven, a type of the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked, is thus described in Ezekiel 16:49: "Behold this is the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness was in her, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Are we not in danger of making doctrinal faithfulness the only thing we carefully guard, when as a matter of fact our greatest danger is that we should fail to keep the heart with all diligence since out of it are the issues of life? The heart is the will. Only as the impulses of the new mind prompts us to loving service can we hope to safeguard our interests as new creatures.

Toward the close of the civil war, a regiment of soldiers who had completed their term of three years' enlistment were returning from the front to be mustered out of service. Their hearts were overflowing with joy at the thought that they were soon to join their loved ones at home, they had not seen their faces for three long and weary years. All about them their comrades in battle had fallen on the field, but amid all the dangers they survived. Their hearts were exultant at the thought, and their vigilance was measurably relaxed. Of this the enemy was observant as they pressed eagerly ahead failing to remain within the lines of safety and the protection of the main body of the army. After they had gotten sufficiently beyond the lines of defense, the enemy came down upon them suddenly, taking them captive to languish as prisoners of war. These never reached the home to which they had come so near. What a sad fact to contemplate. Is it not exactly descriptive of some of the Lord's dear people? The insidious enemy, pride, is entrapping some who are almost home. They have run well for many years and now in very sight of the goal of attainment, they are getting beyond the lines of safety and protection.

Shall we not in full realization of this keep our hearts so abounding, so overflowing with the love divine that there will be no possibility that our enemy, pride, will find any unguarded place? Abundance of idleness is the downfall of many a new creature. Activity, ceaseless employment of every power, will prove a sure protection.

But what then is the attainment, the character element that directly offsets pride and its assumption? It is undoubtedly the possession of actual value or merit. As pride is based upon a lie, humility is based upon the truth. We do not need to deny that we possess character attainment or ability in order to be humble. So little is real humility understood that many seem to think that we must lie concerning our abilities or attainments in order to possess humility. There is indeed such false humility, but is it not an outward form employed to cloak pride in the heart? No true child of God should be deceived by such perversion. Honesty, truthfulness is violated by such a procedure, for it is self-evident that anything based on a lie is not God-like. Our Lord and the apostles never falsified concerning their attainments and abilities in order to appear *very* humble. The fact that true humility is often associated with adversity has led to an incorrect conclusion concerning the nature of humility. One need only contrast the relative experiences of

pride and humility to discover why the humble sometimes are called upon to endure adversity. It is absolutely impossible for a proud heart to endure adversity. Since, as we have seen, pride is based on a false value, the least measure of adversity reveals the nature of the foundation and all of the assumptions of pride come to naught.

The proud heart builds his house upon the sand. “And the rains descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.” (Matthew 7:27) But the humble only prove their strength by adversity. “And the rains descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was builded upon the rock.” (Matthew 7:25.)

The Lord may prove a humble character by dealing with him as he was pleased to deal with His son. Had the grandeur, loftiness, dignity of our Lord’s character been merely assumed he never could have stood the test of the experiences that followed Gethsemane. The ignominy, shame, humiliation represented in the spitting upon, buffeting, mock-trial, only reveal the grandeur of his character. Contrast the adversities of the proud of earth.

“Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers.
But error, wounded, writhes in pain;
And dies amid her worshippers.”

How could anything *assumed* endure such a test? You hold in your hand two bright coins. One is solid gold and the other gilded alloy, of very common metal. The alloy is the brighter of the two. Subject them to acid test. How quickly you make evident which has the assumed value and which the gold. Only the humble can endure adversity. This is why it pleased the Father to “Put him to shame;” to permit so great a degree of adversity as to lead men to “esteem him smitten of God, and afflicted,” as though he had sinned. Only one whose character was not assumed but genuine could endure such adversity. He could be even “numbered with the transgressors” and prove his worthiness of exaltation.

Some of us know a beloved brother whose genuineness of character has stood the test of half a century. We have seen him stand unmoved: “Amid the scorn of those who little know and love the Lord.”

Shaft after shaft of bitterest invective; foulest accusation such as only depravity could frame has ceaselessly poured against him with such merciless persistence, and at times such overwhelming power, as though it must devour him with its burning tongue of flame. Does not the fact that he has endured and continues to endure through weeks and months and years demonstrate to angels and to men that no character structure built on lies could so endure? Only the rock of eternal truth can stand such a test.

What then is humility? It is a character built on truth and righteousness. It needs no trumpet call to sound its worth. It can afford to be obscure and despised and even rejected for a time. It can be even trampled upon and its rights violated. It can be proclaimed as vile, and worthless—the filth and the off-scouring of the earth. But when God's due time shall come He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light and thy judgment as the noonday. (Psalms 37:6.)

Brother Herr closed his talk with the poem entitled THE SERVANT'S PATH IN A DAY OF REJECTION—verses 1, 3, 4, 6
—Poems of Dawn, 148.