

"bless"

"do good"

"pray"

To "bless" means to invest with acts of love and mercy. To do good needs no explanation, so long as it is understood that it relates to standards of righteous performance and industry. It becomes a manner of life in treating others with equity and charity. "To pray" implies seeking for the other's life situation at the throne of God. These positive steps should be assumed by those who have the new nature in Christ. But being what we are (and we are not likely to be anything else) we often find the path described by the Lord a bit ideal and easily resort to other activity. Was the Psalmist guilty of this digression of practice?

Of course, when one has done what the Lord describes (and does not discontinue doing it), no more can be done for either friend or foe. When these steps are taken all avenues of approach or help have been utilized. Since nothing further may be added, if one is not reached by these means it is doubtful that he can or will be reached. When the Lord's disciples act like this, the result on the enemy will be one of the following:

-----he may be converted; it has happened, and will happen again, but it is not normal in the run of relationships;

-----greater amiability may exist and this happens with more frequency than the former, but the third possibility is most common;

-----The enemy will respond with greater dislike and contempt. Unable to comprehend love and spiritual interest, and unwilling to believe that they may be given without ulterior ends in view, he may react violently and energetically. Often one's acts of kindness succeed chiefly in arousing suspicion and the negative policies that follow.

In this sense, following Matthew 5:44 one may accidentally fulfill