

(2.3) Good and Peaceable Persons

Keep yourself in peace and this will enable you to bring peace to others and in fact being such a person puts you in a position to do more good than even those who are most learned. A person of great passion can turn good to evil while believing he is doing something good but the virtuous and peaceable person directs all things toward the good and does not hold others in suspicion. The anxious and dissatisfied person is aroused to unwarranted suspicions; he cannot find his own peace and eventually disturbs others. He speaks impulsively forgetting that *he who spares his words is truly wise*¹ and he often leaves things unfinished that would be personally beneficial if completed. Quick to point out what others should be doing, he neglects personal responsibilities. The lesson we learn from this is to be diligent in our own responsibilities before we point out the shortcomings of others.

We are often quick to excuse our own actions but are hesitant in accepting the explanations given by others. It would be wiser to reprimand ourselves and excuse our brothers and sisters. When we act *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love*² we will find that others readily accept us and our shortcomings. If you are unable to act this way then you lack sufficient goodwill and humility towards others; learn to be more critical of yourself rather than of others. It is obvious that we prefer to associate with good and gentle people, especially ones who tend to agree with our way of doing things, however dealing with the difficult, obstinate, undisciplined persons who may contradict us at times requires special graces and is both manly and commendable. *When the LORD is pleased with someone's ways, he makes even enemies be at peace with them.*³

There are some persons who live at peace with themselves and convey this peace to others; there are others who have no peace within themselves, and spread their disquiet among others as well. There are also some who not only have peace but concern themselves about how to bring peace to others; they are fulfilled with the fruits of the Spirit, namely, *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness.*⁴ *If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.*⁵

It is wisdom to realize that peace comes not from the absence of adversity but from humble endurance. The person who can quietly accept the sufferings encountered in life will have the greatest peace and such a person conquers himself and worldly values, and is a friend of Christ and an inheritor of heaven.

This article is based on Book 2, Chapter 3 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal (layperson's) reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. (rfm)

<http://melkplace.com>

¹ Proverbs 17: 27a

² Ephesians 4:2

³ Proverbs 16:7

⁴ Galations 4:23

⁵ Romans 12:18