

# THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

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Author of "Behold the Man!"  
*The Armor of Righteousness, Valiant in Fight,*  
*The Seven Epistles of Christ, The Perfect Prayer,*  
*Secrets of a Happy Marriage, and others.*

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## A Prefatory Note

All who have sat under the preaching of the author through his lifetime of ministry will recall each occasion as a season of spiritual illumination. His pulpit presentations explore the profound implications of Bible truths without losing their practical applications to daily living. His diligence in study and preparation always marshaled such an array of supplementary reference and comment that it made advisable the division of his themes into several sermon series, of which this compilation is typical. The cumulative impact of these homiletic expositions on his large congregations was most salutary. The church was edified, and many hearts burned with new zeal and devotion as he opened to them the Scriptures.

The wonderfully stimulating themes presented here are an extension of Elder Bunch's sermons on the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount. His skillful use of various modern versions often catches facets of truth not immediately perceived by the casual reader of our common version. As a pattern for daily living and a formula for happy Christian witnessing, these chapters afford inspiring counsel and instruction that will make the volume one for frequent contemplation and rereading.

H. M. TIPPETT

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## Radiant Christians

*"They shall be radiant" (Jer. 31:12, R.S.V.).*

THE CONTENTS of this book are based upon the Beatitudes of Jesus with which He introduced the Sermon on the Mount, the greatest sermon ever preached. Jesus here describes the way, or road, that leads to happiness and to heaven, the kind of persons we must be who would travel over it, and the steps that must be taken in the order given if we would reach our destination.

In the New Testament Scriptures the gospel is spoken of as "the way," "the way of God," "the way of the Lord," "the way of righteousness," "the way of salvation," "the way of peace," "the living way," and "the right way." And since the Christian religion is not a mere system of doctrines or code of conduct, but is an experience with a Person who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," there is no other road to happiness than through Him who

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is the source and the very incarnation of joy and happiness.

In Isaiah 35:8-10, this way or road is called "an highway" which "shall be called The way of holiness," and it is stated that "the unclean shall not pass over it;" "but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." "A stainless high-road shall appear, its name 'The Sacred Way'; no soul unclean shall tread it, no impious foot shall stray over it," is the rendering in the James Moffatt translation.

Only the clean, pure, holy, and upright can travel this road. It is called a "highway" because it is elevated and lifted up above the many low ways of the world on which sinners are traveling to their eternal ruin. It is a way of high standards and self-discipline. Its travelers are "few" in comparison with the "many" on the broad, easy, and liberal way that ends in destruction, but the few are radiantly happy.

This is the same highway recommended by John the Baptist in fulfillment of the prophetic forecast in Isaiah 40:3, 4: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked

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shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." How beautifully the gospel message or highway of holiness here described is illustrated in the building of our modern turnpikes and superhighways. And we should not forget that the message that prepared the way for the first advent of Christ was typical of the one that prepares a people for His second coming to establish the kingdom of glory.

This narrow and restricted road to eternal life is a lighted way in comparison with the roads of sadness, gloom, and darkness traveled by the wicked. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Prov. 4:18, 19). Only enlightened, illuminated, and radiant Christians can travel this brilliantly lighted highway of holiness and happiness, whose destination is Paradise, with its indescribable joys.

One's countenance is an important index to his character, revealing what is on the inside. "Be sure your sin will find you out," is a declaration of Scripture. "Be sure your sin will tell on you," would be a proper translation. Sin cannot keep its secret. In time it reveals its presence in the character. This revelation is made in several ways, but chiefly through the countenance, for we read in Isaiah 3:9, "The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom," or as did



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the Sodomites, who were so vile and corrupt in character that it was revealed in their facial expressions. Criminals and the baser element in society have their characters visibly stamped on their countenances which witness against them. Hardness, boldness, sadness, and impurity are visible to any discerning person, and especially to those with holy characters.

Not only the character but often the ignorance or intelligence of a person is judged by his countenance. In Ecclesiastes 8:1 we read that "a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed." "Man's wisdom lights his face up, it transfigures even a rough countenance," is the James Moffatt translation. In other words, it makes him radiant.

Genuine Christians can always be recognized by their countenances, which are radiant with joy and peace and happiness, in contrast with the distressed and unhappy facial expressions of the great majority of people. The Scriptures thus describe them: "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Ps. 34:4, 5). "Look to him, and you shall beam with joy," is the rendering in verse 5 by James Moffatt, and "Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed," is the translation in the Revised Standard Version. They have been di-

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vinely delivered from all fears, shame, guilt, and condemnation, and their countenances are radiant with peace and joy.

Again we read: "They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord" (Jer. 31:12, R.S.V.). The results of this radiant experience are thus expressed in Isaiah 60:1-3: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." In the Revised Standard Version, verse five reads: "Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice." Is it any wonder that when this prophecy shall be fulfilled, great multitudes of believers, including kings and other leaders of nations, will identify themselves with God's commandment-keeping people?

A New Testament writer said to Christians of his day, "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions" (Heb. 10:32). "Enlightened" instead of "illuminated" is used in many of the modern versions. Radiant and enlightened Christians have always stirred up the wrath of the enemy to persecution, for we are told in 2 Timothy

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3:12, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The enemy of our souls is not concerned about professed Christians until they obtain a spiritual experience that gives them beautiful characters revealed by happy and illuminated countenances, a witness he cannot counteract. He can only attempt to nullify their influence. Those whose unhappy expressions betray their Christian profession are really the allies of Satan.

The apostle Paul thus describes the experiences of radiant Christians: "And all of us, with unveiled faces, reflecting like bright mirrors the glory of the Lord, are being transformed unto the same likeness, from one degree of radiant holiness to another, even as derived from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18, Weymouth, 3d ed.). "We are transfigured by the Spirit of the Lord in ever-increasing splendor into his own image," is the Phillips translation. While some of this radiance is visible at the present time in genuine Christians, we can hardly imagine how bright and radiant will be the countenances of those who will finally be like Him who is the fountain of all joy and the source of all light and glory. The un-fallen inhabitants of the universe will marvel because of the wonderful transformation wrought by the gospel when Christ "shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. 1:10).

The perfect and beautiful character of Christ

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could not develop a sad and troubled countenance. His face was radiant with joy and peace and happiness. "For God who said, 'Out of darkness let light shine,' is He who has shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory, which is radiant on the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6, Weymouth). Is it any wonder that Christ is divinely called "the Sun of righteousness" and "the light of the world"? And only radiant Christians can make true the statement of Jesus, "Ye are the light of the world."

During His earthly sojourn in the likeness of men, much of Christ's glory was veiled and His radiance obscured. Otherwise man could not have endured His presence and glory. On two different occasions He permitted His glory to flash through the veil of His humanity. One was on the Mount of Transfiguration when "his face did shine as the sun" and His raiment was "white as the light." The other was in connection with His arrest in the Garden, His shining countenance caused Judas and the mob to fall prostrate to the ground.

We are told that when Christ returns in power and great glory the wicked cannot look upon His face and live, but will cry out for the rocks and mountains to hide them "from the face" as well as "from the wrath of the Lamb." They will all be destroyed "with the brightness of his coming." Only radiant Christians can look upon His brilliantly il-

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luminated face and live. The joyful greetings they give their returning Lord are pictured in Isaiah 25: 8, 9.

We are told that when Moses came down from the presence of God in the mount, "the skin of his face shone" so that the Israelites "were afraid to come nigh him," and he had to "put a vail on his face" (Ex. 34:30, 33). One writer, speaking of this experience, says that Moses was "transformed and glorified" and that his face was "like the sun," so that "the radiant light in his countenance" was "exceeding painful to them [the people]," and they could not look upon it. The statement is then made: "So will it be when the saints of God are glorified just previous to the second appearing of our Lord. The wicked will retire and shrink away from the sight, for the glory in the countenances of the saints will pain them."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 355.

During the early rain of Pentecostal spiritual power the faces of the apostles and other Christians were radiantly illuminated with the glory of God, and this experience will be repeated during the latter rain when the earth will be lightened with the power and glory of God as described in Revelation 18:1. The afore-mentioned writer thus describes those illuminated: "Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over

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the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. . . . The rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 612. It is then that "more than one thousand will . . . be converted in one day," and Pentecost will be "repeated, and with greater power," and therefore with greater results.

Those who are preparing to translate this beautiful picture into a reality and be ready to meet their returning Lord must have a permanent experience in spiritual illumination. The counsel of Paul is to the point: "Never let your zeal flag; maintain the spiritual glow; serve the Lord; let your hope be a joy to you; be steadfast in trouble" (Rom. 12:11, 12, Moffatt). This is timely counsel, especially in this generation of wavering and unstable people. The radiance must not be permitted to fade out or grow dim.

The previously quoted writer again says: "By the life we live through the grace of Christ the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine

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begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun. They have Christ's joy."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 312.

In the light of these texts and statements how tragic it is that so many professed Christians deny their Lord and their profession of godliness by a sad and gloomy countenance and a pessimistic disposition. Because Jesus was declared to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," they erroneously conclude that He never smiled or exhibited a cheerful and happy countenance. Such reasoning is akin to blasphemy. If this had been true, little children would never have come to Him as they did, and He could not have been so magnetic as to "draw all men" to Him. Nor could He have been described as "the chiefest among ten thousand" and the One "altogether lovely." People are not attracted to, nor do they learn to love, melancholy people.

In the beautiful little book *Steps to Christ*, which has been such a blessing to multitudes of people, there is a chapter entitled "Rejoicing in the Lord," in which are the following statements:

"There are many who have an erroneous idea of the life and character of Christ. They think that He was devoid of warmth and sunniness, that He was stern, severe, and joyless. In many cases the whole

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religious experience is colored by these gloomy views.

"It is often said that Jesus wept, but that He was never known to smile. Our Saviour was indeed a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, for He opened His heart to all the woes of men. But though His life was self-denying and shadowed with pain and care, His spirit was not crushed. His countenance did not wear an expression of grief and repining, but ever one of peaceful serenity. His heart was a wellspring of life; and wherever He went, He carried rest and peace, joy and gladness.

"Our Saviour was deeply serious and intensely in earnest, but never gloomy or morose. . . . The religion of Jesus gives peace like a river. It does not quench the light of joy; it does not restrain cheerfulness, nor cloud the sunny, smiling face."—Pages 120, 121.

That this radiant spiritual experience will be a prelude to a brilliant splendor that will continue through all eternity is seen in Daniel 12:3: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Jesus doubtless had this scripture in mind when He said, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). Only those who have a radiant spiritual experience in this life will be able to fulfill this forecast.

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The happiness of those who travel the blessed or Beatitude way is not temporary or superficial, nor does it depend on outward circumstances and environments. It can smile through tears and disappointments, and is not disturbed by apparent failure or seeming defeat. "Happiness drawn from earthly sources is as changeable as varying circumstances can make it; but the peace of Christ is a constant and abiding peace. It does not depend upon any circumstances in life, on the amount of worldly goods or the number of earthly friends. Christ is the fountain of living water, and happiness drawn from Him can never fail."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 16.

In this book we are studying the Beatitude road to happiness. It could also be thought of as the spiritual ladder by which we climb to the highlands of holiness and happiness. The word *beatitude* means "blessed," or "happy," and both words are used in various translations. *Beatitude* may be defined as "the state of being happy, joyful, and peaceful, as the result of the full enjoyment of the divine favor: unalloyed prosperity and contentment in heart and life." What more could be desired? Someone has called the Beatitudes "the beautiful attitudes," and certainly the attitudes as well as the characters of all who travel this road will be beautiful.

Only those who are divinely blessed can be happy. They are indeed fortunate to receive such

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praise and honor from such a source. Happiness is the supreme desire of the human heart. Note the following appropriate comments: "Thus at the commencement of His inaugural address as King of the kingdom of divine grace Christ proclaims that the main objective of the kingdom is to restore the lost happiness of Eden to the hearts of men, and that those who choose to enter in by the 'strait' gate and the 'narrow' way (Matt. 7:13, 14) will find true happiness. They will find inward peace and joy, true and lasting satisfaction for heart and soul that come only when 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,' is present to keep their 'hearts and minds through Christ Jesus' (Phil. 4:7)." — *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 324.

Some believe that "blessed" is a better translation than "happy" because it is more basic and fundamental. Thomas Carlyle said, "There is in man a higher than love of happiness; he can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness!" And a note in the Weymouth New Testament says, "'Blessedness' is, of course, an infinitely higher and better thing than mere 'happiness.'" However, the two are inseparable and therefore both are correct and proper.

The ladder of Jacob's dream was symbolic of Christ, indicating that the only means by which the sinner can span the gulf of sin and reach heaven



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from this earth is through Him. In 2 Peter 1:4-13, we also have what has been called Peter's ladder. The apostle lists the eight steps in spiritual attainment by which we can "be established in the present truth" and make our "calling and election sure," and be assured of an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The Beatitude ladder, or road to spiritual blessedness, also has eight steps, which must be taken in the order in which they are given. The *Cambridge Bible* says, "The Beatitudes mark the Christian growth step by step," and Ellen G. White, in *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, says: "Throughout the Beatitudes there is an advancing line of Christian experience. Those who have felt their need of Christ, those who have mourned because of sin and have sat with Christ in the school of affliction, will learn meekness from the divine Teacher."—Pages 13, 14.

The same writer says: "The Sermon on the Mount is heaven's benediction to the world, a voice from the throne of God. It was given to mankind to be to them the law of duty and the light of heaven, their hope and consolation in despondency. Here the Prince of preachers, the Master Teacher, utters the words that the Father gave Him to speak.

"The Beatitudes are Christ's greeting, not only to those who believe, but to the whole human fam-

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ily. He seems to have forgotten for a moment that He is in the world, not in heaven; and He uses the familiar salutation of the world of light. Blessings flow from His lips as the gushing forth of a long-sealed current of rich life. . . . Throughout all time the words that Christ spoke from the mount of Beatitudes will retain their power. Every sentence is a jewel from the treasure house of truth. The principles enunciated in this discourse are for all ages and for all classes of men."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 268-270.

These appropriate lessons should therefore be meaningful to those living in the present generation of stress and strain. May we appropriate them to our hearts and lives, and become radiantly happy Christians. The search for happiness is the greatest quest of the human family under the reign of sin. In this book we shall discuss the secrets of a life of peace, serenity, happiness, and tranquillity, such as is described in Isaiah 32:17, 18: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

## When Poverty Brings Wealth

*"For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

THE BEATITUDES constitute the prelude to, and the summary of, the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus enumerates in their order the steps on the road to happiness and the principles that control the administration of the kingdom of grace, and the qualifications for citizenship in the kingdom of glory. This incomparable sermon was preceded by a night of prayer and the setting apart by ordination of the twelve disciples as a kind of spiritual cabinet to help administer the affairs of His spiritual kingdom. The sermon was therefore in a sense an inaugural address. It was a world message as up to date and meaningful now as when it was delivered so long ago. Bernard Baruch said, "The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are still our best guides."

The first step in the highway of holiness and

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happiness was thus stated by Jesus in His opening sentence: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). This saying came to the disciples and the multitude as a shock, a surprise, a strange statement. To them it seemed a paradox, something that sounded contradictory. How could poverty-stricken people be blessed and happy? It just did not make sense. Also the statement was contrary to their expectations of the Messiah and their hopes of kingly glory and greatness.

On this important occasion they expected an announcement of the setting up of the Messianic kingdom, which would break the Roman yoke and rule the world. To them happiness under the present conditions seemed impossible. Ellen G. White says: "All hearts thrilled with the proud hope that Israel was soon to be honored before the nations as the chosen of the Lord, and Jerusalem exalted as the head of a universal kingdom."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 299. And again, "As something strange and new, these words fall upon the ears of the wondering multitude. Such teaching is contrary to all they have ever heard from priest or rabbi. They see in it nothing to flatter their pride or to feed their ambitious hopes."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 17. They were therefore keenly disappointed.

If Jesus had said, "Blessed are the poor," and omitted "in spirit," His statement might have been

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more eagerly received by His own and every succeeding generation, for in His later ministry Jesus severely condemned covetousness and greediness as the worst of sins. He had warned against "the deceitfulness of riches," declaring that "a rich man" cannot "enter into the kingdom of heaven" except by a miracle such as would make it possible for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. This was a strange teaching, for the popular concept was that the rich were especially favored of God. In great wonder the disciples asked, "Who then can be saved?" He answered, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19: 23-26).

Paul gave similar warning against the popular respect for wealth when he declared that "the love of money is the root of all evil," and that those who covet earthly riches "have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). The teaching of Jesus regarding the relative position of rich and poor was new, and it was accentuated by His disciples. The apostle James said, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5). John D. Rockefeller is responsible for the statement: "The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money." As far as true riches are concerned some of the wealthiest people in the

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world have little or no material possessions. To the persecuted, suffering, and poverty-stricken members of the church of Smyrna Jesus said, "I know thy . . . poverty, (but thou art rich)" (Rev. 2:9).

The blessing of Jesus was pronounced upon "the poor in spirit," and not upon the "poor spirited." There is a vast difference between the two classes. Poverty stricken though most of His hearers were, He pointed out that the true riches were within their group. There is no happiness promised to those with bad tempers and ill-natured dispositions, those who are touchy and sensitive and self-centered. The first beatitude is also contrary to the spirit expressed by David Hume when he said, "Nothing carries man through the world like a true, genuine, and natural impudence." The beatitude is contrary to the policy and spirit of the world.

The real meaning of our text is stated more clearly in other translations. "Blessed are those who feel poor in spirit," "Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need," "Blessed are they who sense spiritual poverty," and "Happy are the humble-minded," are the Moffatt, Goodspeed, Berkeley, and Phillips translations. The best rendering of all is found in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 299, 300: "Happy are they, He said, who recognize their spiritual poverty, and feel their need of redemption."

This meaning is recognized by almost all Bible students. Note the following statements by different



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authors of *The Pulpit Commentary*: "The first Beatitude is the sum and substance of the whole sermon. Poverty of spirit stands in contrast to self-sufficiency."

"Poverty of spirit comes first in the description of the blessed life. Lowliness is the beginning of holiness; we can make no real progress in spiritual life without it. Christ was lowly in heart. . . . He knows the secrets of happiness too well to attempt to shed joy in any other way than through those channels by which in the construction of things, God has appointed it to flow. To a large extent the Beatitudes are facets from the character of Christ Himself. He who enjoys all these blessings in his own person will be most like the great teacher who revealed them."

"The poor in spirit . . . are the people who are conscious of their own spiritual deficiency. They are the spiritually humble. Thus their disposition is the exact opposite of the pride of Phariseism. . . . Humility, a sense of emptiness and helplessness,—this is just the condition in which to receive Christ and His kingdom." "To have a deep sense of our own unworthiness before God is to know ourselves as we are: it is to recognize our lives as they have been. It is to perceive how far we have failed to be what we should have been. . . . The man in whose heart is true humility, who finds himself to be wrong with God, who sees how far he is from perfect rectitude, is the very man who will welcome Jesus Christ in all His gracious offices."

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What could be more pathetic than for a person to boast of his wisdom when he is ignorant, of his goodness when he is wicked, of his health when he is sick, and of his riches when he is poverty stricken? But how much more pathetic it is for a professed Christian to boast of his spiritual wealth and holiness when he is at the same time spiritually poverty stricken and bankrupt and does not know it. This was the condition of the Pharisees who felt spiritually whole and therefore in no need of the Great Physician and His healing remedy.

According to the message of Christ to the church of the Laodiceans, recorded in Revelation 3: 14-22, the same condition prevails in the modern church. He declared that the members were "neither cold nor hot" but "lukewarm" in their affections for both God and their fellow men, and that their condition spiritually was nauseating to Him. Of them He says: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." He then counsels them to come to Him for a complete remedy from the worst of all spiritual diseases—self-righteousness, which is a form of spiritual insanity. Nothing can be done for such a person. Without a change of attitude his condition is beyond remedy. Ellen G. White makes this clear: "There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and

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self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 154.

The same writer declared that there is more hope for the heathen than for lukewarm and self-righteous professed Christians, because it is easier to convince them of their condition and need. For this reason Jesus said to the Pharisees, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Why is this shocking statement true? Because these wicked persons know they are sinners in need of help. The two publicans, Matthew and Zacchaeus, and Mary Magdalene gladly accepted the gracious invitations of Christ which the Pharisees rejected.

William Carey, the great missionary to India, was a humble and godly man. He once said, "If God can use me, He can use anybody." He selected the epitaph for his own tombstone. After his name, and the dates 1761-1834, he quoted from a hymn of Isaac Watts: "A wretched, poor and helpless worm; on thy kind arm I fall." Such a recognition of spiritual poverty is requisite to all who would find a place in the heavenly kingdom.

The two classes are strikingly illustrated by the two worshipers in the Temple, the Pharisee and the publican. The former felt no spiritual need and therefore made no request for divine assistance. He received all that he asked for, which was nothing. He thanked God that he was everything he should be and that he had everything he needed. He was per-

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fectly satisfied with himself and his spiritual attainments. He enumerated his good works, in which he trusted for righteousness and salvation, and boasted that he was superior to all others, and especially to the publican, whom he hated.

On the other hand, the despised publican, recognizing his spiritual poverty, made but one request. In agony of spirit he cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and he instantly received everything he needed, through justification. He was made spiritually whole and was as free from all guilt and condemnation as though he had never sinned. He experienced the fulfillment of the promise in Romans 5:1: "And being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." An indescribable peace flooded his soul and produced a radiant happiness that comes to all who experience the imputed righteousness of Christ, which cancels all the sins of the past and cleanses "from all unrighteousness."

The publican took the first step on the Beatitude road to happiness and was assured of a place in the kingdom of heaven. Dante, in his book *Purgatorio*, declared that men must be purged of their sins in order to enter Paradise, and that before a person can reach any higher ground of spiritual attainment, the first sin to be conquered is pride. This is in harmony with the order of the Beatitudes, which represent growth and progress. Happiness does not come

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through obedience to man-made rules and exacting rites and ceremonies, nor upon strict submission to vows of "perpetual poverty." It does not come from without, but from within. It does not depend upon what we have nor upon what we do, but upon what we are in character.

The beatitude under consideration was not really a new teaching, but one which had been obscured. All of Christ's teachings were based on the scriptures of the Old Testament. He was well acquainted with the following texts: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 57:15; 66:2). "Contrite" is defined as "broken down in spirit with grief and penitence for sin; conscience-smitten; penitent."

The Scriptures contain many illustrations of the truthfulness of the first beatitude. After Job had silenced his companions in debate, for which he was proud of himself, he expressed a desire to debate with someone more his equal. Finally the Lord asked him to gird up the loins of his mind and answer some questions. He then asked Job eighty-four questions, chiefly in regard to the secrets of nature, and

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he was unable to answer any of them. "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 40:3-5; 42:5, 6). The record is that "the Lord also accepted Job. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. . . . So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:9, 10-12). Everything changed when Job got a vision of himself through a vision of God and recognized his own spiritual poverty and need.

When Isaiah got a vision of God upon His throne with His glory filling the temple, he received a new view of himself and his spiritual needs. He cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). Because of his humble and contrite attitude his sins were purged and his iniquity taken away. Then when the Lord needed a messenger to go on a mission, Isaiah said, "Here am I; send me" (verse 8). He was now qualified for service because he had recognized his spiritual poverty.

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A vision of Christ caused Paul to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). He answered his own question by saying, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (verse 25). Because he declared himself to be the "chief" of sinners and "the least of all saints," he became the chief of saints and the greatest of the apostles. To the penitent woman whom the Pharisees declared to be guilty of death because she had been taken in adultery, Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more," and she became one of the most beautiful characters of New Testament history.

Only those who have a deep sense of their spiritual destitution, who feel that they possess nothing good and are therefore helpless in themselves, are assured of a place in the kingdoms of grace and glory. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17). Selfishness must be renounced in all who would become new creatures in Christ Jesus, with the hope of this new inheritance and the love of Christ dominating their characters and conduct.

The gospel makes no appeal to the spiritually proud who boast of their spiritual attainments, but only to those who are lowly and contrite in heart. The cleansing fountain for sin and uncleanness is opened only to "the poor in spirit." The proud in

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spirit seek to earn righteousness by their own efforts, and are therefore helpless until convinced of their own sinfulness and deprived of all feelings of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness. All things are available to those who recognize their spiritual needs. "The tears of the penitent are only the raindrops that precede the sunshine of holiness."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300.

This is beautifully stated in the following: "One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. It makes apparent the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips. The sinner's acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God, are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 29.

"The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you.

"No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The

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soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ.

"The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the Word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image."—*Ibid.*, pp. 64, 65.

Surely the evidence is conclusive that the very first step on the road to holiness, perfection, and happiness, which leads us into the kingdom of grace and glory, is set forth in the first of the eight beatitudes with which Jesus introduced the Sermon on the Mount. It was such a vision and experience that prepared the early church for the refreshing showers of the early rain of Pentecostal power. The same vision and experience will bring the latter rain of spiritual refreshing by which the gospel message will be proclaimed to all the world and the work be "cut . . . short in righteousness."

## The Happy Mourners

*"For they shall be comforted."*

THE SECOND step on the Beatitude road of spiritual growth, leading to happiness and heaven, is set forth in the statement of Jesus, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Here is another paradox, or seeming contradiction, that surprised the multitude, for mourners have never been considered happy. In fact, we pity and sympathize with those who weep and mourn rather than envy and congratulate them. It is not the custom to consider them a privileged class.

What did Jesus mean by this strange statement? Does this promise of comfort include all mourners? Is happiness the reward of all who experience grief and sorrow? By no means, for there is a sorrow that knows no comfort, and there are tears which are never wiped away in consolation. The bitter grief of the finally lost is comfortless. Those who reject and



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grieve away the great Comforter can never be consoled. Their "weeping and gnashing of teeth" over their bitter disappointment will be a comfortless sorrow. The apostle Paul declared that "the sorrow of the world worketh death," and there can be no happiness in the eternal death of the impenitent, even on the part of the redeemed and unfallen beings.

The sorrow and mourning of the lost is graphically described in the following scriptures: "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isa. 13:6-9).

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. . . . And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord" (Zeph. 1:14-17).

We read, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto

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the wicked," and where there is no peace there can be no happiness. The jails and penitentiaries are filled with men and women whose sorrow knows no comfort. The mourning of King Saul over the loss of the kingdom brought him neither comfort nor restoration to the throne of Israel. He died a very unhappy man, a suicide. Judas mourned over the terrible sin of betraying his Master and best Friend, and although his remorse was great, it brought no comfort, but drove him to destroy himself. There was no divine blessing for his mourning.

There is another class who cannot be comforted or made happy, because they are by nature pessimistic and gloomy. They are filled with anxiety and worry and fear over almost everything. This class is described as "always fearing, and borrowing trouble" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 121). "Their minds are continually dwelling upon something disagreeable, which they fear may come; or some difficulty may really exist, which, though small, blinds their eyes to the many things that demand gratitude."—*Ibid.*, p. 122. Of this class Clovis G. Chappell says: "There are those who are veritable gluttons for wretchedness. They search for despair as bees search for honey. They are never so happy as when they feel that they have a perfect right to be miserable. They are never so miserable as when they feel duty bound to be happy."—*The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 25.

What kind of mourners will be blessed and com-

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forted and made happy? Here is the answer: "For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" (Isa. 51:3). Again we read: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified" (Isa. 61:1-3).

These precious promises are restricted to those that mourn in Zion; in other words, the church, those who are "trees of righteousness" and "the planting of the Lord." They are the children of God, the saints of the Most High. They can fully accept and appropriate the wonderful promise of Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." They can know the truthfulness of the statement in James 1:2-4: "My breth-

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ren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Such comfort and happiness cannot be understood by the ungodly.

The kind of mourning Jesus refers to in the second beatitude is evident in the light of the one which precedes and those which follow, for they are all closely connected as are the links in a chain. While this world is filled with sorrows of all kinds, and "the God of all comfort" is ready to help all who need Him and seek His consolation, the blessing pronounced by Jesus in the beatitude under consideration is for those only who recognize their spiritual poverty and in repentance mourn over their sins as did the publican in the Temple, who was instantly justified and comforted and made happy.

That this is the mourning to which Jesus had reference is evident, and it is the consensus of all Bible students. The *Cambridge Bible* says, "Those who mourn for sin are primarily intended. It is sadness for sin." The mourning here brought to view is true heart sorrow for sin. The word "comforted" comes from the same root word as does "fortified," and could therefore be translated "made strong," for those who experience true contrition become "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Spiritual strength is the result of deliverance from guilt.

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The meaning of the beatitude is also made clear in other scriptures: "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Ps. 34: 17-19).

Paul describes this kind of mourning: "Now I rejoice, not in your grief, but because the grief led to repentance; for you sorrowed with a godly sorrow, which prevented you from receiving injury from us in any respect. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, a repentance not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world finally produces death" (2 Cor. 7:9, 10, Weymouth). The apostle then gives the happy results of godly sorrow and mourning over sin: "For mark the effects of this very thing—your having sorrowed with a godly sorrow—what earnestness it has called forth in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing affection, what jealousy, what meting out of justice! You have completely wiped away reproach from yourselves in the matter." "I rejoice that I have absolute confidence in you" (verses 11, 16).

J. B. Phillips gives the following translation of verses 11 and 16: "The sorrow which God uses means a change of heart and leads to salvation—it is

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the world's sorrow that is such a deadly thing." "I am profoundly glad to have my confidence in you so fully proved." There is nothing that so fully restores lost confidence in an individual as the sorrow that leads to repentance and confession and a change of character and conduct. This is what completely changed the situation among the disciples during the ten days in the upper room, and qualified them to receive the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal power. There is, of course, no need of comfort where there is no grief, and the comfort of pardon and cleansing is the result of the sorrow that leads to repentance of the sins which have grieved God and which "crucify . . . the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Another splendid commentary on the second beatitude is James 4:8-10, which is especially clear in the J. B. Phillips translation: "Come close to God and he will come close to you. Realize that you have sinned, and get your hands clean again. Realize that you have been disloyal, and get your hearts made true once more. As you come close to God you should be deeply sorry, you should be grieved, you should even be in tears. Your laughter will have to become mourning, your high spirits will have to become heartfelt dejection. You will have to feel very small in the sight of God before he will set you on your feet once more."

The apostle John states the same truth in other



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terms: "If we refuse to admit that we are sinners, then we live in a world of illusion and truth becomes a stranger to us. But if we freely admit that we have sinned, we find God utterly reliable and straightforward—he forgives our sins and makes us thoroughly clean from all that is evil. For if we take up the attitude, 'we have not sinned,' we flatly deny God's diagnosis of our condition and cut ourselves off from what he has to say to us" (1 John 1:8-10, Phillips).

If we cease to be dissatisfied with our spiritual state, it is because we have become insensitive to the prickings of the sword of the Spirit and are in a dangerous condition. Paul had the proper attitude when he wrote: "My own behaviour baffles me. For I find myself not doing what I really want to do but doing what I really loathe." "It is an agonizing situation, and who on earth can set me free from the clutches of my own sinful nature? I thank God there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:15, 24, 25, Phillips).

When Simon Peter, as the result of the miracle of the netful of fish, fell at the feet of Jesus and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," he was assured that "from henceforth" he would "catch men." His heart sorrow over his sinful state was demonstrated on this occasion, and again more fully when he "wept bitterly" over his thrice-repeated denial of his Lord during His trial in the palace of the high priest. The miracle of the draught

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of fish was typical of the ingathering of three thousand souls in the gospel net as the result of his sermon on the day of Pentecost.

Sorrow and mourning over sin will play an important part in the preparation of God's remnant people for a repetition of Pentecost and the finishing of the gospel work in the final great harvest of souls. According to Ezekiel 9:1-6 only those who are sighing and crying over their own sins and the sins of others will receive the seal, or mark, of God's approval and be admitted into the kingdom of glory. This also is the preparation for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit "upon all flesh" in the early and latter rains, when "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered" and "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" will be gathered into the kingdom of heaven at the return of Christ (Joel 2:28, 32; Rev. 7:9).

The mourning over sin mentioned in the second beatitude naturally follows recognition and acknowledgment of spiritual poverty. A blessing is pronounced upon the person who is conscious of his shortcomings, who senses his need and knows that he is helpless in himself to change the situation. He therefore grieves over his lack of spiritual maturity and turns to the only source of help available, to the One who is "a very present help in trouble," and who says to every needy soul: "Come unto me, all

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ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Unless it leads to godly sorrow and deep repentance a knowledge of our spiritual destitution is of no value. The tragedy of the situation must produce a broken and contrite heart, a hatred of sin, and an abhorrence of self. Genuine heart sorrow is so often lacking, the repentance shallow, and the confession cold and formal. There is not the shame and sense of dishonor and tears that should characterize a real vision of soul poverty. Only "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation." Only those who have this experience will receive the comfort, consolation, and happiness promised by our Lord.

## Happiness Through Meekness

*"For they shall inherit the earth."*

**B**LESSED ARE the meek: for they shall inherit the earth," is the third step on the road to the realm of spiritual blessedness given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Meekness is defined as gentleness of disposition, mildness, modesty, humbleness, peaceableness, forbearance, and submission. Here are the readings of that text in other translations: "Blessed be mild men" (Wycliffe), "Blessed are the gentle" (Berkeley), "Blessed are the humble" (Moffatt), "Blessed are the humble-minded" (Goodspeed), and "Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them" (Phillips).

This beatitude is really an invitation to be like Jesus, who is the very embodiment of meekness, humility, and contrition, and who says to every human being in this world of pride and selfishness:

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"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28, 29). His gracious invitation is based on His humility, because proud and arrogant persons are always unapproachable. No one hesitates to approach the meek and lowly.

Christ was born in human flesh and took our nature so that He could be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" and be "in all points tempted like as we are." He is therefore very kind, gentle, merciful, sympathetic, and long-suffering in His dealings with the human family. In fact, He is so approachable that even the worst of sinners can "come boldly unto the throne of grace" to "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." It was His incarnation and life on earth as "the Son of man" that qualified Him to be our mediator and high priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

In his letter to the Corinthian church, Paul speaks of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1), and to the Philippians he said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5), or, "Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had" (Goodspeed). The apostle then describes the humble mind, attitude, and spirit of Jesus: "Let the very spirit which was in Christ Jesus be in you also. From the beginning He had the

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nature of God. Yet He did not regard equality with God as something at which He should grasp. Nay He stripped Himself of His glory, and took on Him the nature of a bondservant by becoming a man like other men. And being recognized as truly human, He humbled Himself and even stooped to die; yes, to die on a cross. It is in consequence of this that God has also so highly exalted Him, and has conferred on Him the Name which is supreme above every other, in order that in the Name of JESUS every knee should bow, of beings in Heaven, of those on the earth, and of those in the underworld, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 5-11, Weymouth). Here is the supreme exhibition of meekness and humility in the history of the universe, as well as the greatest reward for such a spirit and attitude.

We are assured that when our Lord returns to gather His saints "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Therefore all who reveal the humble and contrite spirit of Christ are highly esteemed in heaven. After naming seventeen of "the works of the flesh," Paul points in contrast to the beautiful fruits "of the Spirit," which were so wonderfully exemplified in the life and character of Christ: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:19-23).

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The apostle James describes in these words the contrast between the character harvest of the sinful nature and that of the Spirit: "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:14-18).

The apostle Peter counseled all Christians, "Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:5, 6). There is a saying that "the way up is down," which is scriptural. Jesus said, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11). The greatest exhibitions of the truthfulness of this statement are found in the spirit and experiences of Lucifer and Michael, Satan and Christ. We are told that "the meek" shall be exalted to "inherit the earth" in its Edenic beauty and celestial glory. The earth, which the nations have fought to possess and control, will eventually come to the meek as an inheritance.

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The beatitude under consideration presents a principle that is basic and fundamental and is as enduring and unchangeable as is the character of its Author. Meekness is one of the most important marks that distinguish the citizens of the kingdom of heaven from the subjects of the prince of this world. The promised reward to the meek is one of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the Word of God. It is the great "recompence of reward" that awaits "the saints of the most High."

That the first three beatitudes were given in their proper order is evident. The person who recognizes his spiritual poverty and mourns over it is made meek and humble by the experience. In fact, it is the only road to humility. Only those who get a vision of Christ can realize their own spiritual condition and need and thereby become meek and lowly in heart and find rest for their souls. They also become restful and peaceful to those with whom they come in contact. A boy who was asked, "Who are the meek?" replied, "Those who give soft answers to rough questions."

In the third beatitude Jesus again stated an old truth in virtually the language of Old Testament scriptures: "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way"; "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace"; "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever";

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"Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off"; "For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation" (Ps. 25:9; 37: 11, 29; 138:6; 149:4). In Proverbs 3:34 we are told that "he giveth grace unto the lowly," and grace is unmerited favor. "To the humble he shows favor" (R.S.V.). The meek alone enjoy the grace, or favor, of the Eternal.

The same truth is also given in the negative in the following scriptures. "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." "An high look, and a proud heart, . . . is sin." "He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife." "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." (Prov. 16:5, 18, 19; 21:4; 28:25; Isa. 5:21.) Of the seven things the Lord says are "an abomination unto him," "a proud look" is placed at the head of the list (Prov. 6:16-19).

Like "proud flesh," proud people are touchy and sensitive, easily hurt and offended. Feelings of superiority naturally stir up strife among men and nations. Pride is so natural to human nature that some people are even proud of their humility. The terrible results of pride and selfishness are summed up by the apostle Paul in the following statement: "But of

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this be assured: in the last days grievous times will set in. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, profane. They will be disobedient to parents, thankless, irreligious, destitute of natural affection, unforgiving, slanderers. They will have no self-control, but will be brutal, opposed to goodness, treacherous, headstrong, self-important. They will love pleasure instead of loving God, and will keep up a make-believe of piety and yet live in defiance of its power. Turn away from people of this sort" (2 Tim. 3:1-5, Weymouth). The nineteen sins here enumerated begin with "lovers of self," or selfishness, which is the root of all evil. Any observing person knows that this is an accurate picture of the modern generation.

Jesus made it clear that humility is the price of, and chief qualification for, discipleship: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). He also declared that the person who was not willing to do this was not worthy of Him and could not be His disciple. How could He permit the proud to become members of the heavenly family and enter heaven, since Lucifer was banished from association with heavenly beings when his "heart was lifted up" because of his beauty, wisdom, and brightness.

The godly principle set forth in this beatitude is contrary to the spirit of the world, which blesses the bold and strong, the clever and talented, the wealthy



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and aggressive. Aristotle expressed the philosophy of the world when he said that meekness is "a mean inclining to defeat" and that "it is a slavish thing for a man to take insult calmly." This is entirely contrary to the spirit of Jesus described in 1 Peter 2:19-25. Meekness has never been considered a virtue by most of the world's great scholars and philosophers, rulers and conquerors. "Might is right," is the ruling principle with them and they have ever championed "the survival of the fittest," the wisest and strongest, rather than the meek.

Jesus expressed the spirit of genuine Christianity when He said to His disciples: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45). The words "minister" and "servant" in those days were terms used to describe bond-servants and slaves.

During His earthly visit the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" became the Servant of servants in order that we might become "the sons of God" and heirs of the kingdom of glory. His meekness was beautifully demonstrated in the upper room

## HAPPINESS THROUGH MEEKNESS

when He performed the duties of a servant in washing the feet of the disciples, who were too proud to perform the customary act of courtesy and respect. Of this event Dr. E. Stanley Jones wrote: "He was so conscious of his greatness that he dared to be humble. Into the Cup has gone this majesty of soul linked with lowly service. And we, who dare not be humble lest we show our real smallness, drink of the life of him who was so great that he dared to stoop, and begin to learn what kingliness really is—the power to bend and serve."—*Christ at the Round Table*, p. 229.

But let it be clearly understood that meekness is not synonymous with timidity, fear, weakness, or cowardice. The truly meek are the truly brave and strong. Moses is described in Scripture as being the meekest man on earth, yet no one can question his courage in the face of great danger in his dealings with Pharaoh and the rebellious Israelites. He was one of the greatest statesmen and administrators of all time, and should be numbered among the bravest of the brave. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were meek and humble men, yet they stood for principle in defying the decree of the king of Babylon, and were willing to suffer a terrible death in the fiery furnace rather than be disloyal to their God. Daniel is noted for both his humility and his courage, and rather than be unfaithful to God he was willing to be cast into the den of savage and hungry lions, from which he was miraculously delivered.

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Abraham Lincoln was a very humble man. He said: "I know there is a God and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming and I know His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me, and I believe He has, I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything."—Quoted in HUGH MARTIN, *The Beatitudes*, p. 42. Someone said that Lincoln "was too big to take offense at what did not affect his high principles." His favorite poem was, "O Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?"

Sir Isaac Newton was one of the greatest of scholars, but also among the humblest of men. He said: "I must confess to a feeling of profound humility in the presence of a universe which transcends us at almost every point. I feel like a child who while playing by the seashore has found a few bright colored shells and a few pebbles while the whole vast ocean of truth stretches out almost untouched and unruffled before my eager fingers."

The secret of true meekness is set forth in the following quotation from the magazine *God's Business*, February, 1935: "No man can be divinely meek unless within himself he knows that every act harmonizes with God's law. He can thus meet every obstacle. . . . The weakling becomes very much incensed over little things. . . . A man of that kind never can be meek because he is so easily stirred up. He has not the character to be meek. He

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who knows he is one with God does not permit such trivialities to bother him. . . . One who is living at perfect peace with himself, who has the mastery of his own emotions and the control of his affairs and circumstances, can afford to be meek. . . . The tongue of slander will not hurt him, because he knows that in the end all falsities must return to nothingness from whence they came; that they have no reality, therefore they cannot hurt him."

In defining meekness *The Pulpit Commentary* says: "It implies strength of purpose, holy courage, sustained perseverance in self-control. It will win where violence fails. It brings inner joy and peace—a restfulness and sweetness to life. It is always strong—it takes strength to bear insult and affronts patiently. Jesus was never stronger than when 'He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.'"

Jesus is symbolized in the Scriptures as both a lamb and a lion. The lamb is the meekest and most innocent of all creatures, and the lion is the king of beasts and monarch of the forest, a symbol of boldness and courage. The character of Jesus was a combination of both meekness and courage. Witness Him in the cleansing of the Temple. With His eyes blazing with righteous indignation He drove the priests from the sanctuary, together with the sacrificial animals. Upsetting the tables of the money-changers, He cried, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

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No one can read the scathing rebukes of unsparing severity against the Jewish leaders recorded in Matthew 23 without concluding that Christ was not only "the Lamb of God" but also "the Lion of the tribe of Juda." Nor can we follow Him through Gethsemane and the six mock trials before Annas, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, and Pilate again, and then to the cross of Calvary, without concluding that Jesus was the bravest of the brave as well as the meekest of the meek.

Dr. E. Stanley Jones thus describes the combined meekness and courage of Jesus: "Nor can we question that the philosopher was right when he said that no man is strong unless he bears within his character antitheses strongly marked, so that a man is weak who is only passive, and weak when he is only militant; that he is strong only as he is passively militant and militantly passive, and Christ was both. I love the Christ of the blazing eye and the blessing hand, tender, terrible Prophet pronouncing woes over the city and then weeping over it. I love the Christ that let the storm of his redeeming fury loose upon a nation and then let the returning storm beat upon himself on the cross to complete the redemption. I drink of the life of the Christ that loved enough to hate the evil that destroys those whom he loves—I drink of it and am strong."—*Christ at the Round Table*, p. 228.

## Happiness Through Hunger

*"For they shall be filled."*

**B**LESSED ARE they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," and who eagerly press onward in the highway of happiness, for they have the assurance that "they shall be filled." Symbolized by physical hunger and thirst, this longing for righteousness is the natural result of the spiritual experience of the first three beatitudes.

The vision of our spiritual leanness and soul poverty brings heart sorrow for sin and produces meekness and humility, and realizing that our own righteousness is as worthless as "filthy rags," we long to be clothed with the beautiful robe of the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ, which is freely granted to all who ask in faith.

"This soul-hunger for righteousness is God's gift to the meek," says the *Cambridge Bible*. Dr. A. T. Robertson, in *Word Pictures in the New Testa-*



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*ment*, says: "It is passionate hunger and thirst for goodness, for holiness." Righteousness, goodness, holiness, and uprightness are synonymous terms and are therefore used in different translations of our text.

The first three steps on this highway of holiness produce a good spiritual appetite, which is essential to happiness and satisfaction, just as physical hunger is essential to the enjoyment of a meal. "For they shall be filled" is more correctly rendered "for they shall be satisfied," "fully satisfied," and "completely satisfied" as given in the Berkeley, Phillips, and Weymouth translations. The purpose of a good meal is not merely to fill the stomach with food; it is rather to satisfy the appetite and the demands of the body with the needed food elements. Soul hunger and thirst for the bread and water of life should bring still greater happiness and satisfaction.

Jesus declared that He is the bread that satisfies, "the living bread which came down from heaven," and that "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." He said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). He also says to every spiritually hungry soul: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). In this picture Christ is both the Host and the Guest, and His partaking of food together with the

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penitent indicates complete reconciliation. His earnest appeal to all is, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [the necessities of life] shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). There can be no happiness without righteousness, and therefore hungering and thirsting and seeking for it should be the all-absorbing passion of the soul. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17).

Spiritual needs can be satisfied only in those who hunger and thirst for that which alone can meet the demands of the soul. All others are excluded from the promised happiness and satisfaction. Only those who have experienced intense hunger and thirst can fully appreciate this illustration—men and women who have faced possible death in a desert or in an internment camp of the enemy in time of war. Physical hunger and thirst are the master passions of human nature, and until they are satisfied there can be no happiness or satisfaction.

There can be little or no satisfaction in eating and drinking unless a person is hungry and thirsty. While we can do some things to stimulate the appetite, it must exist before there can be any sense of gratification. The person who is already satisfied with food can find no pleasure in eating. A hearty appetite is therefore a great blessing, and means much to health and happiness. The same is true spirit-

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ually. Hunger and thirst for spiritual food is basic and fundamental to spiritual growth as we travel the road to holiness and happiness.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things" is a statement recorded in Luke 1:53, and is akin to one found in Psalm 34:10: "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Notice that it is only "the hungry" who are filled with good things to their satisfaction. This is beautifully expressed by Bernard of Clairvaux in his lovely prayer hymn:

From the best bliss that earth imparts  
We turn unfilled to thee again.

We taste thee, O thou living Bread,  
And long to feast upon thee still;  
We drink of thee, the Fountain-head,  
And thirst, our souls from thee to fill.

A good appetite is the principal evidence of life and normal health and growth in all living things. A living tree hungers and thirsts continually because it is alive and growing, and when it dies its appetite dies with it. It has been said that an ordinary birch tree drinks as much as sixty-five gallons of water a day, an oak as much as one hundred gallons, and a mighty sequoia several hundred gallons. These trees send their roots out into the earth in all directions to obtain water and the food elements so essential to life and growth, and then lift them up into every

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limb and twig and leaf through a marvelous circulatory system.

Those who are ill and those facing death have no appetite, for disease and fear create an aversion to food. Likewise the spiritually sick and dying do not crave the bread and water of life, and they are to be pitied. They find no comfort or satisfaction in a spiritual atmosphere. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and lacking the Spirit's guidance in their lives they have no relish for religious services. Sacred music and deeply spiritual sermons make only a momentary appeal, and too often no response in their hearts and minds.

On the other hand, a healthy person craves food and drink, and has an appetite that makes food so satisfying that life is worth living. This is the chief sign of a normal and healthy body. A baby has almost a constant appetite day and night because it is growing so rapidly, and even from birth knows how to make its cravings as well as its happiness and satisfaction known. The same is true intellectually. Only those who hunger and thirst for knowledge obtain it, and experience continuous mental growth and development. To this class we owe a great deal as far as progress is concerned. Without them this would be a drab and uninteresting world in which to live. And progress in wisdom and knowledge should continue to increase in a person as long as physical life exists. It is a tragedy that so many fos-

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silize intellectually long before they die physically, all because they lose their desire for wisdom and knowledge.

But our text refers to hunger and thirst for spiritual things, without which we cannot be normal and growing Christians. How refreshing are the glow and enthusiasm of those who are enjoying their "first love" in Christian experience. They have an avid appetite for the things of God and learn more of the truths of the Scriptures in a short time than others do in a decade, or even in a lifetime. It is a pleasure to preach to those who are eager for spiritual nourishment. These never miss a religious service except in an emergency, and they never neglect an opportunity to learn more about the Word of God. Their highest pleasure is in meeting their regular appointments with their Lord.

Such persons say with the psalmist: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God," and, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (Ps. 42:1; 63:1). The illustration is that of a person suffering the terrible thirst of one lost in a desert.

How sad it is that so many in the modern Christian world are subnormal in spiritual things, and are therefore weak and anemic, suffering from spiritual malnutrition. Their apathy toward spiritual needs

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indicates that they are still babes who are making little or no progress in growth to the full stature of men and women in Christ. It takes so little to satisfy them. Their cups are soon filled and they are kept alive only because they are spoon- and bottle-fed from the pulpit. They do not have enough energy to they are given the "strong meat" of the Word, befed with the "milk of the word," and complain if they are given the "strong meat" of the word, because thought and study are required if it is to be assimilated and digested.

Declaring that when Christ ascended He "gave gifts unto men," the apostle Paul shows how these gifts are differentiated and appropriated: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:11-15).

The self-righteous and spiritually proud do not hunger and thirst for righteousness and spiritual

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food because they feel satisfied and well fed and have no appetite for more. That was the general condition of the Jews in the time of Christ and He could do but little for them. He said that because the Pharisees were depending upon their own works for righteousness and salvation they could "in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Christ declared that the same condition would prevail in the church in the last days; that professed Christians would be lukewarm in their affections and would boast that they were "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," when at the same time they would be spiritually "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" and would not know it. He advises them to come to Him for the gold of truth, faith, and love, the white raiment of His righteousness, and the spiritual anointing of the heavenly eyesalve to give them spiritual vision to see themselves as He sees them. (See Rev. 3:13-18.)

This is emphasized in the following question and answer: "What is it that constitutes the wretchedness, the nakedness, of those who feel rich and increased with goods? *It is the want of the righteousness of Christ.* In their own righteousness they are represented as clothed with filthy rags, and yet in this condition they flatter themselves that they are clothed upon with Christ's righteousness. Could deception be greater?"—ELLEN G. WHITE, quoted in *Christ Our Righteousness*, p. 90.

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The same writer says: "In the days of Christ the religious leaders of the people felt that they were rich in spiritual treasure. . . . Jesus had presented the cup of blessing to those who felt that they were 'rich, and increased with goods' (Rev. 3:17), and had need of nothing, and they had turned with scorn from the gracious gift. He who feels whole, who thinks that he is reasonably good, and is contented with his condition, does not seek to become a partaker of the grace and righteousness of Christ. Pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. There is no room for Jesus in the heart of such a person. Those who are rich and honorable in their own eyes do not ask in faith, and receive the blessing of God. They feel that they are full, and therefore they go away empty."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 6, 7.

Only those who are convinced of their spiritual poverty and mourn over it until they are meek and humble will hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ until they are filled and clothed and satisfied. They will take heed to the appeal of Christ: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18).

Righteousness is the sinner's greatest need be-

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cause it expresses the nature of God's moral law, which is a transcript of His character, and may be ours by faith in Christ, who is declared to be "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Paul stated that Christ "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). It is interesting to know that the words "righteous," "righteously," and "righteousness" are used in the Scriptures about six hundred times.

The imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ is the wedding garment that prepares the church to meet the Bridegroom and to take part in the marriage and marriage banquet of Christ when the redeemed of earth reach the celestial city. This great celebration and the wedding festivities are pictured in Revelation 19:1-9. The redeemed cry out with a united voice: "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." To that wedding and banquet all are invited, but only those are chosen who have on the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness (Matt. 22:1-14).

The following appeals are to those who hunger

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and thirst for righteousness: "Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings." "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Isa. 51:1, 7, 11; 52:1).

Let us notice Paul's description of the beautiful relationship between Christ and His church in view of their final and eternal union at His second advent: "Married men, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up to death for her; in order to make her holy, cleansing her with the baptismal water by the word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious bride, without spot or wrinkle or any other defect, but to be holy and unblemished" (Eph. 5:25-27, Weymouth).

This subject is beautifully summed up in that remarkable little commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*,



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pages 8, 18: "All who have a sense of their deep soul poverty, who feel that they have nothing good in themselves, may find righteousness and strength by looking unto Jesus. . . . He bids you exchange your poverty for the riches of His grace." "Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and 'God is love.' 1 John 4:16. It is conformity to the law of God, for 'all Thy commandments are righteousness' (Ps. 119:172), and 'love is the fulfilling of the law' (Rom. 13:10). Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him. Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it." "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be completely satisfied" (Matt. 5:6, Weymouth).

## Happiness for the Merciful

*"For they shall receive compassion" (Weymouth).*

THE FIFTH step on the Beatitude road to holiness and happiness is: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7). "Blessed are the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion," and, "Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them!" are the Weymouth and Phillips translations. To be merciful is to be tender, kind, compassionate, and benign.

Bruce called this "a self-acting law of the moral world." In fact, all the Beatitudes are statements of fundamental truths and basic principles of Christian conduct, but of all of them, this fifth one is considered the most heart searching. It was again stated by Jesus in the golden rule: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12). Note that it embraces "the law and

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the prophets," an expression then used to describe the entire Scriptures. The wise man declared that to "fear God, and keep his commandments" is "the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). Like the law of God, the golden rule is therefore "exceeding broad." It is the greatest of all codes of ethics and the basic principle of true courtesy and Christian culture. Christianity is the golden rule in action.

Being merciful is possible only to those who have known the experience of the first four beatitudes. They are merciful and compassionate in their dealings with others because they have recognized their own spiritual poverty and mourned over it until they have become meek and lowly, and sensing their spiritual nakedness, have craved the righteousness of Christ until they enjoy the satisfaction of being clothed with His beautiful robe of character.

Those only who have received the grace, or unmerited favor, of God, against whom they have so grievously sinned, can show mercy and compassion toward those who have offended and wronged them. The more we fail to recognize the love and mercy of God in His dealings with us, the more blind we are to our own spiritual condition and needs and the more unmerciful and intolerant we are in dealing with others. God's appeal to us, as recorded by Paul, reads: "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

## HAPPINESS FOR THE MERCIFUL

The Pharisees were unkind and unmerciful, and on several occasions Jesus severely condemned the spirit of Pharisaism. As if in explanation of the fifth beatitude, Jesus said in the same sermon: "'Judge not, that you may not be judged; for your own judgement will be dealt—and your own measure meted—to yourselves. And why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye, and not notice the beam which is in your own eye? Or how say to your brother, 'Allow me to take the splinter out of your eye,' while the beam is in your own eye? Hypocrite, first take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to remove the splinter from your brother's eye'" (Matt. 7:1-5, Weymouth).

Such persons are destitute of love, mercy, and sympathy because they are proud in spirit and self-righteous, and look with disdain on the weaknesses of others. Deeming themselves to be perfect, they go about as with a microscope looking for faults in their fellow men. They major on the minor sins of others and overlook their own major weaknesses. Commenting on this text, Ellen G. White wrote: "A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies. The Pharisees were of this class. . . . Their own at-

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tainments became the standard by which they judged others. Putting on the robes of self-dignity, they mounted the judgment seat, to criticize and condemn. . . . Thus those who condemn or criticize others, proclaim themselves guilty, for they do the same things. In condemning others, they are passing sentence upon themselves, and God declared that this sentence is just. He accepts their own verdict against themselves."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 123, 124. The faults readily seen in the lives of others are evident because finite men are familiar with them in their own lives.

Pharisaism is not dead. It was not confined to the days when Jesus was on earth. We too need deliverance from its blighting curse. "The principles cherished by the Pharisees are such as are characteristic of humanity in all ages. The spirit of Pharisaism is the spirit of human nature."—*Ibid.*, p. 79.

The beatitude and the related texts under consideration set forth the eternal and self-acting law of recompense and retribution. What we give to others comes back to us in full measure and often with compound interest. Jesus told impetuous Peter that "all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword"; and through the revelator He said, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" (Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10). How accurately this has been fulfilled in the history of men

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and nations. The truthfulness of the statement that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," whether it be in good or evil deeds, had been abundantly demonstrated.

The law of reciprocity was again stated by Paul and recorded in Romans 2:1-4: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

It is the goodness and forbearance and longsuffering of God, rather than the fear of punishment, that leads to genuine repentance and results in mercy and compassion toward those who have wronged us. The following deserves thoughtful consideration: "Whoever presumes to judge the motives of others is again usurping the prerogative of the Son of God. These would-be judges and critics are placing themselves on the side of antichrist. . . . The sin that leads to the most unhappy results is the cold, critical, unforgiving spirit that characterizes Pharisaism. When the religious experience is devoid of love, Jesus is not



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there; the sunshine of His presence is not there. No busy activity or Christless zeal can supply the lack. . . . He who is guilty of wrong is the first to suspect wrong. By condemning another he is trying to conceal or excuse the evil of his own heart." "Evil imparted also returns again. Every one who has been free to condemn or discourage, will in his own experience be brought over the ground where he has caused others to pass; he will feel that they have suffered because of his want of sympathy and tenderness."—*Ibid.*, pp. 125, 126, 136. These are basic principles which condemn the spirit and inconsistencies of all religious extremists and fanatics, and which are so characteristic of Pharisaism.

The fifth beatitude is again enlarged upon in Luke 6:35-38: "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." He who would see beauty must look for the beautiful.

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Our beatitude should remind us of our own unjust criticisms, our hasty judgments, our hardness of heart, our lack of sympathy and tenderness in the presence of pain, sorrow, and heartache. All who fully realize the import of the statement of Jesus will cry out with the repentant publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and with him experience immediate pardon and happiness.

Being merciful centers in the spirit of forgiveness, which is preceded by repentance and confession. The petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," is the only one of the seven that Jesus repeated and enlarged upon. Emphasizing its importance, He said: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14, 15). The mercy and forgiveness of God in His dealings with us is measured by our attitude toward those who have wronged us. This is the condition on which we ask for pardon. We really ask Him to treat us as we treat others. The person with an unforgiving spirit therefore cuts off the only channel by which he can receive pardon from God.

Jesus gave further emphasis to the spirit of mercy in the parable of the unmerciful servant recorded in Matthew 18:23-35. A certain king called his servants to a financial accounting and

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found one who owed him ten thousand talents and demanded payment with the threat of terrible judgments if he failed to pay. The penitence of the servant and the promise of payment touched the heart of the king, and "moved with compassion," he forgave him the entire debt of ten thousand talents, a sum that today would be in the millions of dollars. But this servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred pence—less than twenty dollars—and "took him by the throat" and demanded payment. The plea for mercy and the promise of restitution were in vain. When the king learned of the conduct of this unmerciful servant he was angry and called him back and canceled his pardon and "delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." Jesus concluded the parable with the statement: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Thus the door of mercy is closed in the faces of those who refuse to show mercy. David said of the Lord: "With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful" (Ps. 18: 25).

One of the chief contributing factors to an unmerciful spirit is prejudice, which all human beings possess by nature. Charles Lamb once said of himself: "I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices, made up of likings and dislikings." Prejudice is an

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abbreviated form of prejudgment. It is defined as "an opinion formed before the facts are known." It is the rendering of a decision and the passing of a sentence before the evidence is all in, which would disqualify any judge.

Charles Spurgeon said that as far as seeing and hearing about the faults of others is concerned, we all need at least one blind eye and one deaf ear. This is in accord with the words recorded in Isaiah 42:19, 20: "Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not."

In a Messianic prediction we read: "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isa. 11:2-4).

Ralph Waldo Emerson stated a great truth when he said, "What you are stands over you the while and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary." It is always easier to listen to a person who lives what he preaches. Edwin Markham de-

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scribed in verse the attitude of a genuine Christian toward an enemy:

He drew a circle that shut me out—  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in!

—Edwin Markham

In his personal relationships a merciful Christian will refuse to believe a report that reflects on the character of another until it has been proved true beyond a reasonable doubt, and then, recognizing his own failings, he in love and mercy will refuse to repeat it to others. He will chart his life by the golden rule, which is Christianity in practice. Too many are like the supercritic who, when someone pointed to the setting sun and said, "What a brilliant and beautiful sun!" replied, "Yes, but what a pity that it is so marred with sunspots." Looking only for spots and blemishes in the lives of others will spoil the vision of the most beautiful character.

The application of the beatitude is also illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan showed love and compassion to a member of the race that cherished bitter enmity against his own race. This parable also emphasizes the fact that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." The Samaritan invested a little time, effort, oil, wine, and money. Because his heart was in the gifts and service, what a reward is his.

## HAPPINESS FOR THE MERCIFUL

Of course, our Lord is the great Example as far as mercy is concerned. We are told that the Lord "delighteth in mercy," and is "very pitiful, and of tender mercy." We are told that Christ is "a merciful and faithful high priest." He showed compassion to the worst of sinners, but only after they had shown sorrow and genuine repentance for sin and a willingness to make restitution when it was due. Zacchaeus promised full restitution to atone for all his fraudulent business dealings as a publican, and it doubtless left him a poor but happy man. Mary Magdalene was pardoned and cleansed and became one of the most beautiful characters revealed in Holy Writ, with a love for Christ that was unexcelled. When, after being taken in adultery, she was brought, repentant, to Christ, He said: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Mercy recognizes imperfections, but love overshadows the limitations in the penitent one.

We are told that Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity. He abhors sin, but loves the sinner, including the fallen Lucifer. We must learn to make the same distinction between the sin and the person who commits the sin. Then we can put into practice the fifth beatitude and fulfill the divine requirements set forth in Micah 6:8: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

## Happiness Through Purity

*"For they shall see God."*

THE SIXTH step on the road to the highlands of holiness and happiness is, "Blessed [or "happy"] are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The heart must be pure because it is the seat of the affections and the center and fountain of life, out of which flows the stream of words and actions. Upon its condition is determined the character and conduct.

The wise man said: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4: 23). "For from it flow the springs of life" is the reading in the Revised Standard Version, and "Above all that you guard, watch over your heart," is another translation. Of all that needs guarding and protecting, the heart occupies the first place, because from it flow all Christian virtues and desirable traits of character.

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The heart as here used includes the intellect, the conscience, and the motives. Purity of heart cannot be accomplished by the cleansing of "the outside of the cup," in outward rites and ceremonies, on which the Pharisees placed such emphasis and for which Christ so severely rebuked them, because at the same time He said they were "full of extortion and excess." He told them that if they would "cleanse first that which is within," the outside would "be clean also." When the heart is right the conduct will be right.

In this beatitude, as in all of them, Jesus was not enunciating a new truth, but one found all through the scriptures of the Old Testament. The psalmist asked the question, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" and then answered, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart" (Ps. 15:1, 2). Upright walking, righteous conduct, and truthful thinking and speaking are the results of a clean mind and pure heart. We all need to pray earnestly with David: "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51: 6, 7, 10).

Here is another beautiful text: "He that loveth

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pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend" (Prov. 22:11). That is to say that pure speech and conduct court royal favor. The James Moffatt translation reads, "The Eternal loves a pure heart." We too should cultivate an increasing love for clean minds and pure hearts, remembering the divine promise of a "great recompense of reward."

But let us never forget that a pure heart is the result of creative power. Only "a new creature" who has experienced a "new birth" is promised a "new heart" and therefore a pure heart. The promise is, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh" (Eze. 36:26). With our "vile body" and "sinful flesh" we are utterly helpless and hopeless in our own strength, and should earnestly pray that God will create in us a clean and pure heart.

This change is beautifully stated in the following quotation: "The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only

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by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

Purity is defined as, "Freedom from foreign admixture or deleterious matter; cleanness; freedom from foulness or dirt. Freedom from guilt or the defilement of sin; innocence; chastity. Freedom from any sinister or improper motives or views." This can be accomplished only by the power of the gospel, which translates the following divine promise into a reality: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

The heart and mind as used in the Scriptures are inseparable. Of man in general we read, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). The apostle Paul said, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7), and then with a tone of authority and finality he gives the secret of such a wonderful experience: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (verse 8).

Jesus emphasized the defiling power of unclean thoughts and impure hearts when He said: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath com-



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mitted adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. 5:28, 29). Therefore adultery can be committed in the imagination, and always is before it is committed in the flesh. In fact, licentiousness in the mind and heart is the most common form of fornication.

"Thought is the soul of the act," declared Robert Browning. Emerson said, "Thought is the seat of action; the ancestor of every action is thought." The well-known adage puts it this way:

Sow a Thought, and you reap an Act;  
Sow an Act, and you reap a Habit;  
Sow a Habit, and you reap a Character;  
Sow a Character, and you reap a Destiny.

Jesus made it clear that the heart is the source of all evil: "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:20-23). The first four of the seventeen "works of the flesh" enumerated in Galatians 5:19-21 have to do with impurity.

We live in a very licentious age, comparable to the days of Noah, when "God saw that the wickedness

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of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). "Not only the imagination, but also the purposes and desires," is the marginal reading. Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26). Other texts make it clear that "the days of the Son of man" refer to the second rather than the first advent.

Billy Graham said: "Our newspapers are filled with stories of immorality in various parts of the nation: the stories of sex orgies in an Eastern city where married couples exchanged wives and husbands for an evening . . . a story out of California, where teen-agers ganged up and forced women to submit to their perversions . . . a story is told of a non-virgin club in a high school in a southern city—in order to be a member, virginity had to be violated . . . we are told by sociological statisticians that the majority of men and women have had affairs before marriage . . . we are also told that one out of every four wives in this country is unfaithful to her husband, and that more than half of the husbands of America are unfaithful to their wives."—*The Secret of Happiness*, p. 77.

The very purpose of the gospel is to cleanse and purify the fountain of the heart so that the stream of thoughts and words and acts will become pure. God's appeal to each of us is, "Be ye holy; for I am

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holy" (1 Peter 1:16). After asking the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" the psalmist answered, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Ps. 24:3-5).

Purity is an attribute, a natural fruitage, of Christianity, which sets it apart from all other religions. "Purity is a distinguishing virtue of Christianity. It finds no place even in the teachings of Socrates, or in the system of Aristotle," says the *Cambridge Bible*. Many of the wisest and greatest of the ancient pagan philosophers were impure in their habits and practices. Righteousness is defined as "purity of heart and rectitude of life; conformity of heart and life to divine law."

"Keep thyself pure" was the counsel of Paul to young Timothy, and it is recorded for the benefit of all. One writer declared that the secret of Enoch's godly life was that he trained his mind to love purity, and if that was an essential qualification for translation then, it is also necessary for those who await translation at the return of Christ.

In 1 John 3:2, 3 we are told that "the sons of God" will be like Jesus "when he shall appear" and "shall see him as he is," and that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is

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pure." Therefore those who are looking and preparing for His return should be the purest and most godly of all people. They should have a clear vision of the mysteries of divine grace and love and holiness which will be hidden from others, for they have been cleansed in the "fountain opened to the house of David . . . for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

In the Bible the inmost feelings and motives are spoken of as the heart and the reins (Ps. 7:9), which guide and control the life and conduct. We will be divinely judged not so much by our words and actions as by the motives that produce them. This is the reason why we are told not to judge others. We do not know the mind and heart of another and cannot judge justly. All who are guided by pure motives will have consciences "void of offence toward God, and toward man." Here is a beautiful description of one who reaches the standard of the sixth beatitude: "In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 24, 25. The seal of God's approval can never be placed upon the impure man or woman.

Purity of heart must include other organs of the body. Peter spoke of those "having eyes full of adultery" who "cannot cease from sin" and are "unstable souls" with "covetous practices" (2 Peter 2:14).

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The patriarch Job said, "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1). Every man should make such a covenant, or pledge, with his eyes, that he will not think evil thoughts when he looks at a maid.

Purity and impurity are revealed by the words, and therefore we all need to earnestly pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth" (Ps. 141:3). Smutty jokes and shady stories never come from the lips of the pure in heart. These are unmistakable evidence of an ungodly character. Purity also includes the hands, for we are told that only those who have "clean hands, and a pure heart" will be saved. It is also stated that the righteous have "clean hands" and therefore in prayer lift up "holy hands" to God (1 Tim. 2:8).

Purity also bears witness through the dress of Christians. Paul wrote: "So then I would have the men everywhere pray, lifting to God holy hands which are unstained with anger or strife; and I would have the women dress becomingly, with modesty and self-control, not with plaited hair or gold or pearls or costly clothes, but—as befits women making a claim to godliness—with the ornament of good works" (1 Tim. 2:8-10, Weymouth). In a chapter on the words of Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart," Billy Graham wrote: "If you women purposely dress to entice man to sin, then you are guilty whether the act is committed or not. . . . Dress to

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please Christ—in all modesty and good taste. You can be smart, trim and in the latest fashion without having the 'Hollywood look' that has become a damnation to this country."—*The Secret of Happiness*, p. 81.

Purity also must control our reading habits. Much of modern literature is indecent and breeds impure thoughts, leading to immorality. There is a great outcry against the filthy literature cluttering our newsstands, but thus far it has accomplished but little or nothing in the protection of our youth. And the same objections can be registered against much that is heard over the radio and seen on the television and theater screens. Christians must learn to shut their eyes from seeing evil if they would be pure in mind and heart, for we become like what we adore.

What a glorious reward awaits "the pure in heart." The promise is that "they shall see God." When is this promise to be fulfilled? First in this life through the eye of faith, and "face to face" in the world to come. Dr. A. T. Robertson says in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, pages 41, 42: "The Beatific Vision is only possible here on earth to those with pure hearts. No other can see the King now. Sin befores and beclouds the heart so that one cannot see God."

In Hebrews 12:14 we read, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Impurity of thought defiles our souls,

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dulls our moral sensibilities, and dims our spiritual vision so that we cannot discern truth. Impurity silences the "still small voice" of the Holy Spirit so that He cannot guide us into all truth. Impurity of thought and speech must be shunned if we would clearly discern God and spiritual truths. The crowning sin of selfishness will prevent anyone from seeing God and walking in the light of His truth. Only the meek and humble and unselfish can see God as "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

While sin dims our vision of God, a revelation of God reveals to us our sins, and leads to repentance, confession, pardon, and holiness. Paul declares that a clear vision of Christ reflects "like bright mirrors the glory of the Lord," so that we are "being transformed into the same likeness, from one degree of radiant holiness to another," through the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18, Weymouth).

After Job was humbled by a vision of God that revealed his weaknesses, he said to the Lord: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5, 6). When Isaiah got a vision of God he said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). This vision resulted in cleansing from

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sin and preparation for service, and when the Lord asked where He could find a man to act as His messenger, Isaiah answered, "Here am I; send me" (verse 8).

The great need of the church today is an anointing with the heavenly eyesalve mentioned in Revelation 3:18, so that we can not only see "him who is invisible" but also see ourselves as He sees us. Someday the pure in heart will experience the fulfillment of the promise in Isaiah 33:17: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty," or, "in all his splendour" (Moffatt). "The pure in heart live as in the visible presence of God during the time He apportions them in this world. And they will also see Him face to face in the future, immortal state, as did Adam when he walked and talked with God in Eden. 'Now we see through a glass darkly: but then face to face.'"—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 27.

In Revelation 14:1-5 we are told that those who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion in the kingdom of glory have the "Father's name written in their foreheads." That name stands for character, and they are therefore declared to be "as pure as virgins" (Weymouth), and "in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." With them "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible," as well as "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," is "in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:4).

## The Happy Peacemakers

*"For they shall be called the children of God."*

BLESSED ARE the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God," is the seventh step on the spiritual highway to peace and happiness. "Happy are those who make peace, for they will be known as sons of God!" is the Phillips translation. The road to holiness is a path of continually increasing joy and peace. It is an ever-expanding spiritual experience that makes the path of the just "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

It is of interest to note that this is the first of the eight beatitudes in which Jesus pronounced a blessing upon human works. The previous six are blessings promised to those who take these successive steps in character development. Now they are qualified to become witnesses for their Lord. As citizens of the heavenly kingdom they are entrusted

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with power to win others. They become peacemakers, revealing to their fellow men the only way to peace and happiness. It has ever been difficult for Christians to learn to put first things first and keep human works in their proper place as the fruitage rather than the means of love and faith, righteousness and salvation.

How contrary are the beatitudes of Jesus to the spirit of the world, which bestows honors on the makers of war and gives glory to military heroes. In fact, human history is composed largely of biographies and eulogies of generals of armies and conquerors of nations, to whose memory monuments have been erected and dedicated. How many sincere pacifists have been looked upon as weaklings, cowards, and even traitors to their country!

This is not strange in the light of the fact that Satan is the god and prince of this world and is the chief instigator and promoter of war and strife. He is the great war lord and troublemaker of this sinful world. His religion is divinely designated "Babylon the great," and Babylon means "confusion." His rebellion against the government of God broke the peace and harmony of the universe. We read: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the



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Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:7-9). The peacebreakers were all expelled from heaven, and only to peacemakers is the promise, "They shall be called the children of God."

The defeat of the devil and his angels and their expulsion from heaven did not end the conflict but only transferred it to this earth, which has been the battlefield ever since. As the result of Christ's Calvary victory the unfallen beings put on a celebration in which they said: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:12).

This warfare with the saints of God is graphically described in Ephesians 6:10-18, which also gives the secret of victory. "Put on the complete armour of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the Devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world—the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground on the day of battle, and, having fought to the end, remain victors on the

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field" (Weymouth). Then is described in detail the various parts of the armor—the armor of righteousness.

Satan is public enemy No. 1, and all his followers are peacebreakers and troublemakers, and therefore strangers to peace and happiness. We read: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace" (Isa. 57:20, 21; 59:8). The world is a vast battlefield filled with strife and turbulence, jealousy and resentment, rebellion and selfishness. In the heart of every sinner wages a continuous civil war that knows no armistice.

Of the seventeen "works of the flesh" enumerated in Galatians 5:19-21, "hatred," "variance," "wrath," and "strife" are four. In James 4:1 the question is asked, "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" and the answer is, "Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" Strife and peacebreaking issue out of sinful human nature. It is not at all strange therefore that this earth under the curse of sin has been a great battlefield. It has been estimated that during the six thousand years of earth's history there have been less than three hundred years of peace. What else

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could be expected when the prince of darkness is in control and the majority who know no peace are his subjects?

No person can be an effectual peacemaker unless he himself is at peace with God and knows peace in his own heart. Dante said that peace is the result of living in harmony with the will of God, and that the causes of all wars between nations and quarrels among individuals are selfishness, greed, fear, and pride. In his book *The History of Mr. Polly* H. G. Wells said of one of his characters, "He is not so much a human being as a civil war," and that can be said of many in this world, some of whom occupy high positions in the affairs of nations.

Jesus is divinely called "The Prince of Peace." He is the great Mediator and Peacemaker, and without Him there can be no peace worthy of the name. He "knew no sin" and was therefore a stranger to strife. He was always calm and serene, was never agitated or irritated. He was the very majesty of calmness, and the supreme Peacemaker of mankind. He invited all men to come to Him and find peace and rest and tranquillity, because He is "meek and lowly in heart" and the great Comforter of the human family. He was welcomed to this world by the angel chorus who sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." That the bringing of peace to men was the purpose of His atoning death is made clear in the statement that He

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"made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20).

Speaking of the barriers between races, as represented by the continual conflicts between Jews and Gentiles, Paul said of Christ, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph. 2:14). Only through Him can the seemingly impassable barricades between individuals, nations, and races be eliminated. Wherever he rules there is peace and unity. We are told, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:7). The more fully He governs, the more wonderful the peace. This is true in the individual, the home, the church, the nation, and the world.

The chief qualification for peacemaking is set forth in Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Persistently strive for peace with all men, and for that growth in holiness apart from which no man will see the Lord" is the Weymouth translation. Peace and holiness are inseparable, and we cannot have one without the other. The psalmist said, "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Ps. 34:14). In these texts we are told that peace must not only be diligently sought but also pursued, and that it is available only to those who "depart from evil" and are holy.

The apostle Paul again states the same truth:

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"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19). He also says, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). "So far as it depends on you," is the Weymouth translation, indicating that even though the Christian may exhaust every resource and go the second mile in efforts of reconciliation, he may fail if the other party is a sinner and a stranger to peace; for "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:21).

Genuine peace is the fruitage of holiness and righteousness, and is impossible on any other basis. In Hebrews 12:11 we read of "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," and in Galatians 5:22, 23, "peace" is named as one of the nine beautiful fruits of the Spirit, of which the first is "love." The apostle James declares that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace," and Paul wrote, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Only those with this experience can be successful peacemakers.

Provision has been made to give us the needed intelligence to detect the wiles of Satan as well as heavenly wisdom to choose the paths of peace. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there

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is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:14-18). "And peace, for those who strive for peace, is the seed of which the harvest is righteousness," is the translation of the eighteenth verse by Dr. Weymouth.

The gospel prophet wrote: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea"; also, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 48:18; 26:3). The psalmist said, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Ps. 119:165). How wonderful are these divine promises of not only "great peace" but also "perfect peace." For what more could we ask?

Here is a timely comment on the beatitude under consideration: "There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven

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and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 27.

Is it any wonder therefore that peacemakers are divinely blessed and declared to be the "sons of God" and members of the heavenly family, with Jesus, the "Prince of Peace," as their Elder Brother? They are like Him in character, and Christlikeness is the supreme qualification for peacemaking. To them is the promise, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). Being a peacemaker is a happy and satisfactory mission, requiring tact, wisdom, courage, and love. Those who are by nature kind, gentle, peaceful, and affectionate are always happy, and are therefore qualified to reveal the experience to others.

Peace was the great legacy Jesus left with His disciples when He ascended to heaven to begin His work as our high priest and mediator. He said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 14:27; 16:33). Personal peace is the paramount qualification for peacemaking.

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But the genuine Christian is not merely a peaceable man. He does not accept peace at any price. He refuses to compromise with wrongdoing or sacrifice principle and say, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." He stands firmly and even contends for what is right regardless of the immediate consequences. Ellen G. White describes the kind of Christians needed, especially in this generation: "The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."—*Education*, p. 57.

Peacemaking is a delicate and difficult task. It is difficult enough to preserve the existing peace, but harder still to bring it to those who have never known it by experience. Peace cannot be manufactured or enforced by human inventions and power. Man-made peace plans through conferences, pacts, or leagues cannot bring lasting peace. True peace is a heart experience that comes from a complete surrender to the Prince of Peace. Only through such an experience can the evil passions that cause dissension be subdued.

Only those who have taken the previous beatitude steps can know genuine peace and become effective peacemakers. They have been humbled by a

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recognition of, and mourning over, their own weaknesses, and by the process have become righteous, merciful, and pure in heart. Experiencing peace in their own hearts, they can bring it to others. They have developed the beautiful fruit of the Spirit—"Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," or "self-control." Such fragrant lives and beautiful characters reveal that they are "the children of God."

Such an experience raises us up to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" and translates us "into the kingdom of his dear Son," so that we are "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." For such persons the happiness of heaven and eternal life have already begun. The longer we know this experience and the more intimate our acquaintance and fellowship with Christ, the greater will be our happiness. All that we can comprehend and appropriate of the love and joys of heaven we may enjoy in this life.

Note the following: "By the life we live through the grace of Christ the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun. They have

### THE HAPPY PEACEMAKERS

Christ's joy, the joy of being a blessing to humanity."  
—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 312.

"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."  
"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 30:15; 32:17, 18). Only such are qualified to be peacemakers under the supervision of "The Prince of Peace."



## Happiness in Persecution

*"For their's is the kingdom of heaven."*

BLESSED ARE they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:10-12). "Happy are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs! . . . Be glad then, yes, tremendously glad—for your reward in Heaven is magnificent," is the Phillips translation.

The character development of the first seven beatitudes arouses the enemy of all righteousness and he begins to persecute. He is especially incensed when those traveling the road to holiness and happiness reach the blessed state of righteousness and purity

## HAPPINESS IN PERSECUTION

of heart through a vision of God, and especially when they become peacemakers and bring others to the same spiritual state they themselves enjoy.

The prince of strife becomes furiously angry with these ambassadors of peace, and he makes war on them. His fiercest anger and most relentless persecutions will be against God's remnant people, as is predicted in Revelation 12:17: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." In Revelation 7:14 we are told that these last-day saints come to the kingdom "out of great tribulation," with their character robes "washed" and made "white in the blood of the Lamb."

In this last beatitude Jesus describes the reception given those who have developed the Christlike characters set forth in the previous beatitudes. The attitude of the world to the pious and godly is amazing, for we would naturally think that such a person would be accepted and welcomed by all men. But Jesus made it clear that genuine Christians can expect antagonism and persecution at the hands of sinners.

This is perhaps the most paradoxical of all the beatitudes, and Matthew Henry said that Jesus repeated it because it sounded so incredible. It seems strange that the best people in all the world should be thus treated, when they should be the most loved

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and respected and honored. The enemy of all righteousness persecutes the saints of God because they have renounced all allegiance to him and have become citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore "foreigners" and "strangers and pilgrims" in the earth.

Jesus said to His disciples: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). In Acts 14:22 we are told that it is "through much tribulation" that we "enter into the kingdom of God," and Paul declared that Christians must "suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29). He also said, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). The language indicates that there will be no exception to this rule. Jesus said that this treatment may be expected because "the servant is not greater than his lord" and therefore "if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

Holiness has never been popular in this world. Those who are "born after the flesh" have always persecuted those who are "born after the Spirit" (Gal. 4:29). The world has always loved its own and hated those who have experienced the new birth and transferred their citizenship to the heavenly kingdom. Sinners cannot endure the rebuke of godly

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characters. It irritates and angers them. Persecution is manifested in many different forms besides physical torment, including unkind looks, unfair insinuations, unjust misrepresentations, cruel taunts, and coldhearted insults. Hatred, reproaches, gossip, and separation from the society of our fellow men as if unworthy of their fellowship—these bruise and cut deep and are forms of persecution.

A righteous person is naturally peculiar and abnormal in the eyes of a sinner. It is therefore difficult for him to understand a saint. The character of a Christian is a constant rebuke to the ungodly. The complete transformation wrought by conversion is so revolutionary and contradictory to the sinner's way of life that it stirs up his enmity and anger, leading to persecution.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace because He loves righteousness and hates every selfish, evil way. On the other hand, Satan loves iniquity and is controlled by the spirit of intolerance toward all who have a love for truth and righteousness. His followers are dominated by the same spirit of resentment against all goodness and truth. This is the spirit that crucified Christ and persecutes all who travel the highway of holiness.

In the light of these texts and statements we naturally wonder why there is so little opposition and persecution now, especially in this country. There can be but one conclusion—it is because of

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the lack of vital godliness among professed Christians at the present time. There was much persecution in apostolic times and later. The following quotation gives a logical answer: "Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard, and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 48.

The low spiritual state of the church today is graphically described by Christ in Revelation 3: 14-17. Satan, from his point of view, would be unwise to start persecution against those who are spiritually "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" and do not realize it, because this would bring a spiritual awakening and defeat his purposes. If a great spiritual revival and reformation should arise in the church, persecution would begin. There is nothing Satan hates and dreads more than a

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revival among God's people, and he certainly will do nothing to help start such an awakening. It is a well-known fact that the church has always been at its best spiritually in times of persecution, and at its worst in times of peace and prosperity, and the enemy is not ignorant of this historical reality.

But in order for persecution to bring a spiritual blessing and result in happiness, it must be "for righteousness' sake," or "in the cause of righteousness." Godliness always stirs up the enmity and wrath of the enemy of all righteousness. Of course, much that is called persecution is not persecution at all, but is rather the natural result of a wrong course of conduct. "Posing as persecuted is a favourite stunt," declared A. T. Robertson of this class. There are those who are so anxious to be martyrs that they deliberately bring opposition and trouble upon themselves in order to boast of being persecuted. The fact is that it is not their goodness that others resent, but rather their lack of it. All sensible people resent fanaticism and the lack of common sense, good judgment, and discretion. Only those are blessed against whom "all manner of evil" is spoken falsely, and for Christ's sake. There is no promised blessing if the reports are true and the accusation is based on facts, for in that case the reproach is just, and it is not persecution.

Jesus has ever been "a stumblingstone and rock of offence" (Rom. 9:33). He has been rejected by

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the majority because of "the offence of the cross." He is the world's great disturber, and His gospel divides society and even families. This is what He meant when He said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:34-38). These predictions have been fulfilled wherever the gospel has been proclaimed.

Unable to comprehend the peace and joy that Heaven bestows, the lovers of his world are disturbed by the presence of those who are immune to sinful enticements and temporary pleasures. Jesus sought to make this clear to His disciples in the words, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own" (John 15:18, 19). If Jesus should visit the world today He certainly would be no more popular than during His first advent. He probably would not be crucified, but He would be unwelcome, even by most professed Christians.

Jesus did not say that those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are to be pitied and given our

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sympathy, but rather that they should receive our commendations and congratulations. Like the apostles when under threat of death, they should feel honored for the privilege of suffering for Christ's sake. We read of the apostles, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Even though they had been threatened with persecution and commanded not to "speak in the name of Jesus," the record is that "daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:40-42).

The apostles knew the meaning of the eighth beatitude by experience, and instead of complaining and indulging in self-pity, they rejoiced and considered persecution a privilege and a special honor bestowed upon them. To them it gave evidence of their heavenly citizenship. They rejoiced because they knew that all the experiences of life work together for good to those who are the called according to His eternal purpose (Rom. 8:28). "All things" is so inclusive that no experience of life is omitted, regardless of its nature.

The reason for a celebration over unpleasant experiences is again made clear in James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire,

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wanting nothing." Surely that which produces patience and perfection is cause for rejoicing." We are told that the persecuted remnant who await translation have "the patience of the saints" and "the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). To those who show the proper attitude when persecuted for righteousness' sake, the experience redounds to God's glory, their own good, and the defeat of the enemy.

Another reason for rejoicing is that persecution for righteousness' sake places a person in the very best of company, among the nobility of the prophets and martyrs, for Jesus said, "For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." In all ages the prophets, or the "holy men of God," have received the brunt of Satan's attacks. The records of history reveal that the prophets and sages and saints have been rejected and many have suffered martyrdom. This world will not bear rebuke, the greatest of which comes through a godly life. Although traditions vary, many believe that of all the apostles only John was spared a martyr's grave, but he knew bitter persecution and was banished to Patmos to live among criminals.

According to Bible prophecy the church of Christ will close her earthly career and mission in a brief but dreadful period of persecution. It would be impossible to describe the experiences of God's remnant people when the glory and power of the latter rain in a repetition of Pentecost and the

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persecutions divinely predicted are blended. Only those who have developed radiantly beautiful characters and have learned to keep optimistic and happy through the smaller trials of life will then be able to endure. The promise is: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:10, 11).

How comforting are the promises of Jesus: "'Blessed are you when they have insulted and persecuted you, and have said every cruel thing about you falsely for my sake. Be joyful and triumphant, because your reward is great in the Heavens; for so were the Prophets before you persecuted.'" "'Blessed are you when men shall hate you and exclude you from their society and insult you, and spurn your very name as an evil thing, for the Son of Man's sake. Be glad at such a time, and dance for joy; for your reward is great in Heaven; for that is just the way their forefathers behaved to the Prophets!'" (Matt. 5:11, 12; Luke 6:22, 23, Weymouth).

Will this be your attitude when the predicted persecution comes? Will you be able to put on the suggested celebration? Are you fortified by His promises, and are you walking confidently in "the path of the just"? If so, He will hold you fast, and you can say with Paul: "Who shall separate us from the



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love of Christ? Shall the tribulations of this world, or distress over adverse conditions, or persecution by our enemies, or the expectation of famine, or the prospect of nakedness, or the peril of temptations, or the sword of the destroyer? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death with its haunting fears, nor life with its many cares, nor evil angels seeking to deceive us, nor wicked principalities arrayed against us, nor powers of darkness under satanic leadership, nor things present with their pressing claims, nor things to come with their dark shadows and unknown trials, nor height of joy, nor depth of sorrow, nor any other creature, influence, or circumstances, shall be able, for a single moment, to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35, 37-39, paraphrased).

## The Fruitage of Happiness

*"Ye are the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."*

YE ARE the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 13-16).

Jesus here describes the fruitage in the lives of those who have taken the beatitude steps in character development. They become "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." They are a rich blessing to the human family in a saving, preserving, flavoring, and light-bearing capacity. Through

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their influence men and women are saved and made radiant with the glory of God so that the gospel work is finished in a blaze of glory.

Those who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world have become such through the experience of recognizing and mourning over their spiritual poverty. This experience has made them meek and merciful, righteous and pure in heart, with a vision of God. Then as ambassadors of peace they bring upon themselves the wrath of the enemy in relentless persecution, the cleansing fires of which burn out all the remaining dross from their characters, so that the pure gold reflects the light and glory of God.

It is considered a great compliment for a person to be called "the salt of the earth," and Jesus thus commends those who have become a saving, preserving, and flavoring element in the world. Christian character is the only saving substance in this world of sin. Without Christianity society would quickly decay and disintegrate. In every community Christians are the characters of outstanding worth. Even non-Christians choose to dwell in the section of the city flavored by a Christian environment, and countries untouched by the gospel are the most uncivilized and uninviting. The most savage and degraded peoples are transformed by the power of the gospel.

The presence of salt in food cannot be ignored,

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whether it is relished or not. Its characteristic savor is so well known that it is never necessary for the hostess to announce to her guests that salt has been added to or withheld from the food. Likewise the presence and influence of a genuine Christian cannot be ignored, and the same is true of a flavorless hypocrite whose religious experience is a mere profession, a "form of godliness" without its vitalizing power. Every person exerts an influence for good or evil, one that attracts or offends, pleases or repels. The presence of Jesus was welcomed by one class and resented by the other.

But in order to accomplish its mission, salt must be imparted to the food. It must be mingled with, and become an integral part of, that to which it is added. It must penetrate and infuse in order to flavor and preserve. Thus in order to manifest His saving power, the life and character of Christ must through impartation be reproduced in His followers. Men are not saved in mass, but as individuals. The savor of salt is used to represent the vital power of the gospel in the transformation of character through the indwelling of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

It was doubtless for this reason that in the typical services salt was added to the sacrifices. (See Lev. 2:13; Eze. 43:24; Mark 9:49.) Without salt the offering was unacceptable. "In the ritual service, salt was added to every sacrifice. This, like the of-

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fering of incense, signified that only the righteousness of Christ could make the service acceptable to God. Referring to this practice, Jesus said, 'Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' 'Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.' All who would present themselves 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God' (Rom. 12:1), must receive the saving salt, the righteousness of our Saviour. Then they become 'the salt of the earth,' restraining evil among men, as salt preserves from corruption."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 439.

Salt is an antiseptic and a disinfectant with preserving power and is the symbol of purity. It is therefore a fitting symbol of the gospel, which counteracts the corrupting and disintegrating influences of sin. If we would exert a saving influence in the world we must know by a daily experience the imparted righteousness of Christ, which is the secret of peace with both God and man.

Our influence over others depends upon our own love and devotion to the Master. We cannot give what we do not ourselves possess. This was the secret of power in the early church. They said, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (2 Cor. 5:14; 1 John 1:3). The Holy Spirit can witness through us only as we surrender ourselves to become channels of light and a savor unto life. We cannot use the Holy Spirit, but He must

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have full control of our lives. In this experience "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost," and this love will flow out to bless all with whom we come in contact. This love, cherished in our hearts, will subdue every evil tendency and make us the salt of the earth.

Salt is the most important of all flavorings because it is the only one that is absolutely necessary. It has no imitation or substitute. Nothing can take its place. It is the ingredient without which any meal would be insipid and tasteless. So without Christ and His gospel message of salvation this would be a cheerless and loveless world. It is Christianity that seasons and flavors life and makes it endurable, and for it there is no substitute.

The statement, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another," is meaningful in the light of the fact that in ancient times salt was the sign of sacred covenant obligations. "To eat salt together was to make peace, and enter into a covenant with each other. Hence the connection here between the disciples having salt in themselves and being at peace one with another."—*Cambridge Bible*.

The apostle Paul wrote: "Let your language be always seasoned with the salt of grace, so that you may know how to give every man a fitting answer" (Col. 4:6, Weymouth). Being acquainted with the classics of his day, the apostle knew that the expres-

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sion "the salt of speech" was used as a metaphor in the sense of wit and pleasantry. Plutarch wrote of "the salt of speech" as the humor which flavors conversation, and Seneca spoke of "poisoned salt" as descriptive of vulgar and malicious jesting. Much of the wit and humor with which the pagans seasoned their speech was of a very low variety, and the same is true in our day. It is poisoning much of modern conversation.

For this reason Paul gave counsel that is as up to date now as when it was written: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this we know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of . . . God" (Eph. 4:29; 5:3-5). Such is the fearful end of the users of "poisoned salt" in human communications. Wit and humor of the proper kind and in the proper place are not wrong in the flavoring of conversation, but that which is "not convenient" or becoming to a Christian is condemned.

Salt is also one of the most important of all preservatives, and is the enemy of decay and fermenta-

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tion. Doubtless for this reason Elisha used salt in performing the miracle of healing the contaminated waters of the spring in Jericho (2 Kings 2:19-22). In this sense also the righteous are "the salt of the earth." Although they do not realize it, the wicked owe their continued existence to the presence of the righteous in the world. The Lord assured Abraham that He would not destroy the wicked city of Sodom and its inhabitants if there were even ten righteous persons in it. When Lot was about to flee to Zoar, the angel said to him, "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither" (Gen. 19:22). The Lord could not destroy the city and its corrupt inhabitants until His people were removed to safety. Likewise He will not destroy the earth and its inhabitants in the day of His final wrath until the righteous are safe. Someone has said that saintly character is the supreme safeguard of the world. If the ungodly were aware of this fact they would show a different attitude toward Christians.

But Jesus said that salt sometimes loses its flavor and becomes worthless. Luke wrote: "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out" (Luke 14:34, 35). When it loses its quality and becomes tasteless and insipid, salt not only is "good for nothing" but is a positive injury to the soil. In these days when salt

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is taken chiefly from the mines and refined and processed by modern methods, it is hard for some to comprehend these statements. In Bible times salt was mostly taken from swamps along the coasts and from the Dead Sea and was mixed with many impurities. When the salt was exposed to the soil and rain and sun, the saltiness was greatly diminished, and sometimes it even disappeared.

Dr. A. T. Robertson says: "It is common in Syria and Palestine to see salt scattered in piles on the ground because it has lost its flavour, . . . the most worthless thing imaginable."—*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 42. William M. Thomson, in his three-volume work, *The Land and the Book*, said: "It is a well-known fact that the salt of this country [Palestine] when in contact with the ground, or exposed to the rain and sun, does become insipid and useless. From the manner in which it is gathered, much earth and other impurities are necessarily collected with it. Not a little of it is so impure that it cannot be used at all: and such salt soon effloresces and turns to dust—not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown. . . . No man will allow it to be thrown onto his field, and the only place for it is in the street; and there it is cast, to be trodden under foot of men."

The same is true of professed Christians when

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the flavor of Christianity has been lost out of their lives. Being Christians in name only, they are not only "good for nothing" but are a positive detriment to the cause of Christ. Their influence for good is nullified, and in fact they do more harm than unbelievers.

The following is an appropriate climax to this phase of our subject: "But salt can lose its savor and become insipid. Like flavorless seasoning, insipid Christians are neutral, colorless, negative. They straddle controversial issues for the sake of temporary peace—an uncourageous peace that refuses to face realities. Like chameleons, they take on the color of circumstances around them. They are opportunists, watching the weather vane to see which way the wind blows. Their pronouncements on vital issues are pastel preachments of platitude which convert no sinner and comfort no saint. They are satisfied to hear the clanking of ecclesiastical machinery if they can but close their ears to prophetic voices demanding resolute action."—HARRY M. TIPPETT, *My Lord and I*, p. 404.

### The Light of the World

Those who obtain the happy beatitude experience become not only "the salt of the earth" but also "the light of the world." They not only exert an influence that flavors and preserves but they also produce good works that can be seen. They have be-



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come radiant Christians who attract others to the Source of light and truth. To be called "the light of the world" is just as complimentary as to be called "the salt of the earth." Jesus said of Himself, "I am the light of the world," and in Malachi 4:2 He is declared to be "the Sun of righteousness." He is therefore "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

As the sun is the source of all light for the physical world, so Christ is the source of all light for the spiritual and intellectual worlds. This is well stated in the book *Education*, pages 13, 14: "We can trace the line of the world's teachers as far back as human records extend; but the Light was before them. As the moon and the stars of our solar system shine by the reflected light of the sun, so, as far as their teaching is true, do the world's great thinkers reflect the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Every gleam of thought, every flash of the intellect, is from the Light of the world."

Of Christ we read, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." He is the only light that can illumine this dark world under the curse of sin. Only through His abiding presence in the heart can Christians become radiant light bearers for Him. In Revelation 12:1 the church of Christ is appropriately symbolized by "a woman clothed with the sun," representing the beautiful robe of His righteousness, and standing on the moon, which according to Psalm

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89:36, 37 represents a permanent foundation. As the moon shines because of the reflected light of the sun, it fittingly symbolizes the Scriptures, or the writings of "the apostles and prophets," with Jesus Christ as "the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). Thus the church becomes "the light of the world."

The chief purpose of light is to scatter darkness, and this can be done by no other means. All other means of driving darkness out of a room are in vain, but light does it instantly. On a certain tombstone is the inscription: "There is not enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of one small candle." Light also produces warmth. Jesus said of John the Baptist, "He was a burning and a shining light." As the result of the enlightenment Jesus gave the two men on their way to Emmaus, they said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). The light of a radiant Christian shines with a brilliance that not only enlightens but also warms the hearts of those with whom he comes in contact.

Some of the qualifications for light bearing are beautifully set forth in Philippians 2:15, 16: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." Such persons are declared to be "the epistle of Christ,"

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which is "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," and are thus "known and read of all men" (2 Cor. 3:2, 3). "Thy word is a lamp," and "the law is light," are declarations of Scripture, and Christians are lamps and light bearers whose mission is to enlighten the world by holding forth the torch of truth. Radiantly happy, they are naturally eager to share their experience by passing on the light to those who dwell in darkness.

In His letter to the church of Ephesus, Christ warned that the loss of love dims the light of truth, and He threatened to remove the candlestick, or the privilege of light bearing, unless they repented and returned to the height of their first-love experience (Rev. 2:1-5). Jesus declared that the first and greatest commandment in the law of God is to love Him with all the affections of the heart, all the reasoning of the intellect, all the powers of the devotional life, and all the strength of the physical being, and that "the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and that on these two commandments, or tables of the Decalogue, "hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:36-40). Only such obedience can put into practice the golden rule, which is declared to be "the law and the prophets," or all of divine revelation (Matt. 7:12).

The apostle Paul wrote: "Owe nothing to any

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one except mutual love; for he who loves his fellow man has satisfied the demands of Law." "Love avoids doing any wrong to one's fellow man, and is therefore complete obedience to Law" (Rom. 13:8, 10, Weymouth). The loss of love is therefore a tragedy, for it removes the privilege of being a light bearer for Christ. How true it is that the strongest argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity is a lovable and loving Christian. God values most of all the service of love, and when this is lacking, the mere form of religion is an offense to Him. Someone has said that "God's love is so great that it takes a universe to hold it and an eternity to unfold it."

In order to show that a genuine Christian cannot hide his light or smother his influence, Jesus gave some striking illustrations. First, He compared the Christian to the sun, the source of light for the physical world, whose light and heat penetrate everywhere, scattering the darkness, and reviving all nature with almost creative power. He then likened the Christian church to "a city that is set on an hill" and therefore "cannot be hid." Chiefly for defensive purposes cities and villages were then built on the tops of hills and even mountains, and doubtless several of these could be seen from the place where Jesus was speaking on what is known as the Mount of the Beatitudes. He may have had special reference to Jerusalem, used throughout the Scriptures as the symbol of the church.

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Jesus then used the illustration of the "candle," or "lamp," which was placed on a pedestal or lampstand and gave light to all that were in the house, because most of the homes then had but one room. These lamps were clay or metal bowls filled with oil, in which wicks were placed with the lighted end projecting over the edge. The seven-branched candlestick was really seven lamps fed by oil. The ten virgins in the parable had lamps, and we are told that "the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps," that is, an extra supply in a separate vessel. Lamps, declared Jesus, were never "put under a bushel," which was a dry measure holding less than a peck and a half, the ordinary measure for domestic purposes. In many of these single-room cottages there was a projecting stone in the wall on which the lamp was placed; so a small light met the needs of the whole family.

The admonition is then given, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," or, "in order that they may see your holy lives" (Weymouth). Jesus did not tell His hearers to strive to make their light shine but to "let" it shine. It is natural for light to shine without any human effort. When Christ rules the heart, the light of His presence cannot be concealed. Those who do not shine give evidence that they lack the vital power wrought by conversion. Of course, if they are not connected

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with the great Source of all light they have no light to share and cannot shine. As in the case of electric lights, there can be no light when the connection with the powerhouse is cut off or broken.

The shining before men is not in order to call attention to themselves, but rather, the divinely produced "good works" or "holy lives," the fruitage of godly character, make it possible to glorify the Father in heaven. Christ here places "good works" last, where they belong, as the *results* rather than the *means* of the spiritual experience and character development described by the beatitudes that precede the Lord's statement on light bearing.

Christian character is not something we can put on as a garment. It cannot be shaped from without, but radiates from within the heart. The principles of righteousness as set forth in the law, which is a transcript of the character of the Lawgiver, must be enshrined in the heart if we would walk in the path of the just, which shines with ever-increasing brilliance until we reach the perfect day, and if we expect to be successful in leading others to travel on the highway of holiness and happiness. Mere profession and the theory of religion are not sufficient. Light is best conveyed to others through lives that are sincere, holy, consistent, humble, kind, loving, gentle, and therefore Christlike.

This is well stated in the words of Ellen G. White: "You must *be* good before you can *do* good.

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You cannot exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rosebush to yield its fragrant bloom or the vine its purple clusters."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 128. The same author says: "God calls for workers. Personal activity is needed. But conversion comes first; seeking for the salvation of others, next."—*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 10, 1903.

The first essentials therefore to successful light bearing are conversion, a Christlike character, the spiritual experience represented by the eight beatitudes. Our daily prayer should be that of the psalmist: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Ps. 51:12, 13). We know that when the heart is right, the thoughts and words and acts and characters will all be right. Then we will be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."