

**THE
BEATITUDES**

by

ROY LONEY

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FOREWORD

The great sermon on the mount has been called the inaugural address of heaven's great king. And we should so regard it, because in its entirety it reveals all the divine principles that are binding on the children of the kingdom.

A Dr. Case conducts a syndicated column that appears in many newspapers. He is a psychiatrist – one who deals with mental diseases. Sometime ago a man wrote to him asking him to enumerate the kind of scientific books dealing with personal problems that might help him. The Dr. replied that the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of Matthew, which contain the sermon on the mount, contain more information dealing with human problems than all the books in the world on that subject: And we believe that to be true. The creator of man knows man's innermost needs and has proscribed for those needs.

It will take only 15 minutes to read those chapters and they will give you wisdom that is priceless in attaining to personal happiness in this life. The Beatitudes revealed in the 5th chapter, that begins this great sermon, can bless your life beyond expression if you will accept and obey them.

For several years it has been my desire to write a series of lessons dealing with those beatitudes. Lately while my wife is recovering from a serious accident, I have taken the time to write these lessons. It has been quite a labor, but a labor of love, and many times I have felt exhilarated greatly while writing them, and have been benefited spiritually thereby. I send them out with the deep prayer in my heart that you may read them with a humble and consecrated heart that you might drink at the Fount of eternal truth, and be made wise in spiritual things and thus increase your happiness now and be assured of eternal happiness in the world to come.

– The Author

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” Matthew 5:3. Thus Jesus began the great sermon on the mount — the greatest sermon ever preached — a sermon full of love, wisdom and goodness. And how wisely did he begin that sermon! He pronounced a blessing on a class so small, and yet so rich even in this world — a blessing to those who were poor. That poverty was not material, it was something that glowed with the beauty of heaven.

One of earth's greatest curses has been the extreme poverty of millions of its inhabitants. It has been estimated that over one-half of the people of the world are ill-clad, ill-housed and ill-fed. In many countries poverty is appalling! A few years ago a famed Kansas Editor with his wife made a trip to China; but he did not finish the trip. After a few days he actually became sick at the sight of poverty so terrible as to be almost unbelievable. Maybe conditions have improved somewhat since then, but it is well known that millions still live a hand to mouth existence, and they experience the pangs of hunger all the time.

In India the poverty of many of its millions is so great that the heart of affluent Americans is sickened inexpressibly. That condition has prevailed many thousands of years and will so continue till the end of time. There are those who say that poverty can be eliminated; but we remember the words of Jesus: “For ye have the poor always with you,” Matthew 26:11; and in Deut. 15:11 it is stated “For the poor shall never cease out of the land, therefore I command thee, say, Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to the needy, in thy land.” Such enduring poverty is not the will of God: He only predicted what he knew would be earth's situation. In many cases this poverty is brought about by the evil deeds of those in governmental power. The statement is true: “Man's inhumanity to man has

made countless thousands mourn.”

There is one impressive case of extreme poverty recorded in the New Testament and that is of the beggar Lazarus. He had no food, and only tattered garments to cover his shivering flesh. Laid at the rich man's gate, he asked, not for a share of the vivands from the rich man's table. Piteously he asked only for the garbage that remained of a bounteous repast. Ignored by the proud rich man, he died forsaken and alone. But he was not forsaken by his God, for we next see him eternally at rest in the Paradise of God.

Jesus emphasized the eternal advantage of our helping the poor now. At the day of Judgment, some will hear him say “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” And the reason for their being so richly blest was because they had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and ministered to those in need. And he gave us the greatest incentive for such deeds of kindness and love: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” And we remember Proverbs 19:17 where the wise man declares that if we do good to the poor we “lend unto the Lord.” That is a high incentive and should lead us to show compassion toward those in need.

But there is a poverty that we will gladly promote; and that is the poverty of which Jesus spoke in the words of our text. The poor, not in purse, but the poor in spirit: and in that there is a world of difference. The poor in spirit are those who realize their dependence on God. They realize that no matter how much they may have in material things, nor of their personal advancement in life, yet they are weak and in need of God's help. Such a man was Abraham Lincoln. Starting as a poverty stricken youth he reached the presidency; but there he found his greatest need of God; and he has said, “There are times when I am made to feel that I have no place to go except on my knees to the Lord.” The Hitlers and men like the late Kaiser and such, reached the height of fame and yet they died in disgrace and mourned and loved by no one. The reason? They left God out of their lives, and he who fills the universe, found only an empty and barren heart

in their breasts! How poor they were! Eph. 2: 12 describes them: *"That at that time ye were without Christ being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers of the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."* What a pitiful condition, when they could have been rich in faith and heirs of the promises! They could see nothing beyond the dark valley of death. Like the infidel Hobbs as he lay dying, "I am taking a fearful leap into the dark."

WHY WE NEED GOD

First, we need God because he created us and therefore he knows all about us, physically, morally and spiritually. It was said of Jesus, "He needed not that any should testify of man, because he knew all men." Being the author of man's being and the creator of his body there is nothing that he does not know of our needs. We know nothing of ourselves as compared with his knowledge of us. As Paul said, "For in Him we live and move and have our being" — Acts 17:28. When we are afflicted or sick we go to a doctor who, because of his superior education with reference to our bodies, can prescribe for our needs. It is affirmed that God knows our hearts — Acts 1:24 and therefore we should pray "Search me O God and know my heart and know my thoughts; and see if there may be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." — Psalms 139:23,24.

Second, we need God because of our limited knowledge. Man today is better educated than at any time in the world's history. Facilities for education are almost unlimited: that is especially true here in America. I live just ½ block from the north edge of Kansas University; and there are 18,000 students up on the hill. Several times I have watched the Commencement exercises in the Memorial Stadium. Of the 3,000 graduates, I dare say that only a small percentage could quote the Lord's prayer. Their learning has not revealed to them the essentials of moral and spiritual living; and what is more not a one of them, nor their teachers can justly claim their knowledge is perfect. They still have much to learn.

Especially regarding God and eternity. They would do well to read David's 139 Psalm in which the Psalmist declared, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." What David said then is still true today. Man's intellectual capacity is extremely limited compared to that of the Lord; and we can cry in deep humility with Jeremiah 10:23, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Compared with the knowledge of God, man is so pitifully ignorant. Real wisdom of the essentials of life can come only through God's revelation where it is to be found, therefore I hate every false way" — Psalms 119:104.

Third, we need God because we must face God at the Judgment. 1 Cor. 5:10 states, "For we must all appear before the judgment bar of God that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he has done, whether it be good or bad." The most solemn fact facing man is the fact of death. "It is appointed unto man once to die, after this the judgment" — Hebrews 9:27. Man's life is extremely limited compared to vast measure of time. God is declared to be from "everlasting to everlasting," but man's little life averages "threescore and ten." In reading the evening paper I read the column of obituaries, and not one of the numerous persons who recently passed away had lived more than 80 years. That is only a tick of the clock as measured by the eternity of time. And that is something you must face. Very, very few reach the century mark and then they are senile and practically helpless. Yes, death is the most terrifying fact that faces man, and the most terrifying fact about death is that it is so permanent.

Soon the evening shadows falling close the day of mortal life
Soon the hand of death appealing calls thee from this weary strife
O how fatal 'tis to linger; are you ready, ready now
Ready should death's icy finger lay its chill upon thy brow.

THE PROMISE

"For theirs is the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God consists not only of all the people of God, but of God

himself. A beautiful thought! That kingdom is something that will never perish. It is eternal. Furthermore, it will contain all the wealth of heaven. Jesus made this divine promise, "*He that overcometh shall inherit all things.*" God will divide his riches with all the saints in that land that knows no night and no sorrow. It is beyond the power of any mortal to express the beauties of that heavenly kingdom! It never fades.

Paul teaches us that Jesus gave up the wealth of heaven for the poverty of the earth, that we might exchange the poverty of earth for the wealth of heaven — 2 Cor. 8:9. A wonderful change for man, and little he deserves it! A few short years of service here is rewarded with an eternity of riches. God does not do things by halves. It is all or none because there is no limit to his love for mankind. I love that beautiful song —

Sing to me of heaven, sing that song of peace
From the toils that bind me, it will bring release,
Burdens will be lifted that are pressing so,
Showers of great blessings oe'r my heart will flow.

This kingdom has been in preparation for man's habitation from the foundation of the world, and when we receive it, it will have been perfected through out all the ages of the past, and in it will be found all that can bring happiness for the unceasing ages of eternity.

THE MOURNERS

“Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted” Matthew 5:4. On a trip that covered only some 30 miles we passed three cemeteries. I do not know the number of dead sleeping quietly on the bosom of Mother earth; but we are sure that every grave was salted with the tears of loved ones who laid their relations to rest under the sod. Of all the 60 billions of people who have lived since Adam was created in Eden, every one has known the meaning of sorrow. Sorrow has been a frequent companion of all of earth’s billions, and their weepings have been as constant as the moaning of the ocean on a rocky shore. Man’s happy hours in the sunlight of life has always been tempered by the shadows of grief. Jesus shared the grief of his beloved friends when he wept with Martha and Mary at the grave of Lazarus. He wept over Jerusalem, because he knew of the sufferings and the agonies of the thousands dwelling therein. He was spoken of in prophecy as “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” Isaiah 53:3. It was the sorrow in his heart regarding ruined humanity that brought him from the heavenly realms to this sin-cursed earth.

Paul speaks of godly sorrow (1 Cor. 7:10) and the word godly is a descriptive term, and is distinguished from a sorrow that is not godly. This brings us to a definition of what is meant in the words of our text. There is many a sorrow that has no connection with God or a pure life. Many weep because their personal ambitions are unrealized. They have not obtained the satisfaction of a sinless life. Alexander, the great, wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Many weep because some circumstance prevents their attendance at a place of ungodly pleasure. I distinctly remember seeing a drunk man weep. It only aroused my pity, but not my sympathy. Jesus has no real sympathy for those who weep over the lack of sinful pleasures. He did not promise to

alleviate such sorrow. It is only *godly* sorrow that brings the divine promise of comfort. He who never sorrows over his own sins has missed life's greatest moments.

There is no passage of scripture that has touched me more deeply than the case of Peter. He had boasted that even though all men would forsake Christ "Yet never will I deny thee." It was then that Christ predicted Peter's denial; and so when the Lord was arrested, Peter like the other disciples "forsook him and fled." But at Jesus's trial, when they heard the crowing of the cock, the Master turned and gave Peter just one look, and that one look broke the heart of that boastful man. Impressively it is stated "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord which said unto him, before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice." "And he went out and wept bitterly." It is the tears of penitence that water the garden of the heart and produce the fruits of godliness.

When David had sinned so grievously he was rebuked for taking another man's wife through indirect murder. The rebuke of the heaven-sent prophet, Nathan, caused David to be properly penitent, and in a most impressive prayer as recorded in Psalms 51. "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones that thou hast broken may rejoice". Hide thy face from my sin, and blot out my transgressions. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me..... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise". Verses 7,8,9,10 and 17. He who has never wept over his own imperfections, has a barren and unproductive garden. Only the tears of penitence will produce the flowers of joy and happiness. *It never fails.*

But we are not to weep just over our own sins but the sins of others. It is impressive to remember how Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Standing on the Mt. Of Olives, he looked down into the "city of the great king". The city where dozens of kings had ruled some in moral splendor and others in wickedness and disgrace. Jesus saw that beautiful city its white buildings gleaming in the golden glory of a setting sun;

but it was a city that was steeped in sin, and polluted with the blood of hundreds of the Lord's servants; and Jesus knew that in a few hours the hounds of hell would be baying for his own blood. Here his cry "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." Here his voice must have broke as he sobbed his broken cry, "but ye would not." He loved the city and had sought to save its inhabitants from the terrible doom that awaited them. Yet knowing of the terrible agonies they would inflict upon him, he could but weep over their apostacies in heart and life.

Too many preachers are more concerned over denouncing the sins of others that they lose sight of the fact that these same sinners are loved of God. If they are to be saved, then we must show the love that Jesus showed for his executioners when he cried, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." We must ever remember that the blood of Calvary was shed for the entire world. Paul instructs us, "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, that God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." 2 Tim. 2:25,26.

And then we have the obligation to "weep with them that weep"-Rom. 12:15. Our sympathies are so often lacking in real Christian compassion. The most impressive case of this kind is when Jesus went to Bethany at the call of the sisters of Lazarus. When the urgent call from those sisters came to Christ while he was in Galilee, he purposely tarried two days, and then knowing that Lazarus had passed from the land of the living, he calls his disciples to him and they start that sorrowful journey of some 60 miles to that grief stricken home. Jesus's meeting with Martha is something to ever be remembered. Martha's rebuke to Christ for not appearing sooner is natural. "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Jesus's reply was intended to be comforting. "Thy brother shall rise again."

Thinking he referred to the general resurrection, Martha replied "I know he shall arise in the resurrection at the last day" but Jesus uttered the wonderful words "I am the

resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Then going toward the grave, Jesus asked "Where have ye laid him?" and when he was informed as to the place, we have the short but beautiful statement, "Jesus wept." That verse has become famous because it is the shortest verse in the Bible; but is it? I think not. Truly it is one of the longest verses in the entire book of God. That is true for what it reveals. It shows divine love and infinite compassion. Jesus knew that in a few moments he would say the word, and the dead Lazarus would be presented alive to his weeping sisters, and the tears of sorrow would be turned into tears of wonderful joy! The world has never been the same since that time when the tears of divine compassion were mingled with the tears of humanity. No, the world can never again be the same.

We have in Christ a friend that "sticketh closer than a brother" who has said "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And so Peter admonishes us "Casting all your cares upon him for he careth for you"-1 Peter 5:7. He is the great burden bearer for all of mankind. When you weep in real sorrow then your sorrow becomes his as it was with him and Martha and Mary. It has been truly said, "Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal." and that brings us to the sacred promise.

THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED

We must remember that God is not slack concerning his promise-2 Peter 3:9. He keeps his word. Many years ago I stood by an open grave, my dear mother stood by my side, and we watched as the cold and silent body of my father was slowly lowered into the grave. I had feared that mother at that moment would break down into bitter weeping; instead she turned to me with a smile and said in the language of David, "He shall not return to us but we can go to him." *Blessed hope!* I then remembered the promise of David.

Just here I am reminded of David's statement "Weeping may endure for a night, of a sorrowful night the breaking dawn reveals to us the glories of a Father's love. He cares for

his children! Just here we remember the words of Paul in 1 Thess. 4: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not proceed them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Truly we live in the "Hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began"- Titus 1:2. Believing with all our hearts, joyfully and melodiously we sing--

There's a land that is fairer than day;
And by faith we may see it afar
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling place there.

THE MEEK

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"-
Matthew 5:5. The above verse most definitely sets forth a course of action that is most generally ignored by the average person. Meekness is defined as to be gentle, mild, humble minded, and Christ assumes that as a characteristic of himself "I am meek and lowly in heart"-Matthew 11:29. Meekness is a characteristic that pertains to ones attitude toward his fellow man, as well as toward God. Moses was spoken of as the meekest man on earth at that time-Numbers 13:3. Raised to great authority and prominence in Israel, he did not permit his position of authority to "go to his head" as some express it, but remained humble and obedient to the Lord and showed love for his people, the Israelites. Meekness is that temper of the soul that will endure injustice and even persecution without resentment. Christ showed a great degree of meekness when he was brought before his prejudiced and unfair accusers. He was as a lamb "dumb before his shearers." Even before Pilate he maintained a dignified silence that caused that proud and haughty Roman to marvel. There was no resistance on his part to their unproven and unprovable accusations; and even on the cross he prayed earnestly for his cruel and inhuman enemies -- "Forgive them for they know not what they do." Meekness is not to be taken as a willingness to endure an injustice without protest, but rather a disposition not to complain or murmur when life's trials are burdensome.

Meekness is not a weakness. It certainly does not mean we make no protest against evil of wickedness of any kind. While Jesus was the very personification of meekness yet at the same time he boldly and without fear condemned sin and wickedness in every form. His scorching condemnation of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Scribes as recorded in Matthew 23rd chapter is almost without a parallel in human

literature. He showed anger of a deep nature when he went into the temple and cast out the tables of the money changers, and drove out those traffickers.

He could and he did endure unspeakable suffering at the hands of his worst enemies because he knew it was his Father's will that he should thus endure the sufferings and the shame of the cross. His submission to the Lord was the most glorious characteristic of his life. Standing in the shadow of the awful cross, he humbly prayed "Not my will but thy will be done." When Peter attempted to defend his Lord with the sword, Jesus rebuked him saying "The cup which my heavenly Father hath given me to drink shall I not drink of it?" That shows that he willingly went to the cross, not of necessity, but by submission of the Father's will.

And now we are prepared for Hebrews 12: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Who for the joy set before him, endured the cross despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." This was his willing submission, and it harmonizes with what Jesus stated in John 8: 29, "He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." No wonder he could claim meekness! He had no desire except to please the Father even when that submission led to the cross of shame and suffering. He the Son of the Highest, he who had created the worlds and was the equal of his Father (Phil 2:6) yet he died a malefactor's death upon the accursed tree. This is truly the world's most wonderful story! What greater meekness, or submitting could have been shown? Truly "he the great example is and pattern for me."

But we must not forget the real definition of Meekness, which is gentleness. Jesus never took slander with indifference. When the Jews in vile words made unjust accusations against him, he used very strong language and spoke of them as children of the devil (John 8:4) and yet he wept over them and deplored their evident fate and later died for them. For all their slanders and evil words and deeds, he had only compassion when he contemplated their certain doom. May we follow his wonderful example, and thus emulate his gracious character.

Our attitude can be best expressed by the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 2:24-26; and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

Instead of looking up at the depraved sinner as nothing but fuel for hell, we must look upon them as those for whom Christ died. And our rebukes and instructions are to be with meekness, meaning that they are to be without rancor or bitterness. I am many times made to feel that we fail to win the lost simply because we do not rebuke in meekness and love. Chastisement is not a sin, because Christ said "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten" Rev. 3:19. Now we wish to refer to 1 Peter 4:14, 15 "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you; but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ suffering that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief or as an evildoer or as a busybody in other men's matters. Ye if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed but glorify God on this behalf." At all times we are to show the wisdom of meekness and the meekness of wisdom.

But what of the promised reward? "For they shall inherit the earth." Inherit the earth!! Does that mean that we are to be owners of the earth? Are we to be that rich? Jesus was not talking about a material inheritance; but of the contentment and joys that shall be ours if we are of a meek and humble spirit. The covetous, grasping miser does not own his gold. The gold owns him. He is motivated entirely by the thought of possessing material things and such thoughts only. There can be no happiness for such a man even though he may possess millions of dollars. A man possessing the spirit of making gold his god! How unfortunate! An intelligent man

interested only in that which is material! I am reminded just here of Solomon's statement, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven. Solomon himself had riches in abundance, but without meekness or submission to God, he found no pleasure in his vast possessions; and that has been true of all other men through the past ages. It will take something more than mere wealth to bring happiness to a heart that is void of God's love.

We are hereby reminded of Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 6:8 "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." There can be no real happiness in a life that is devoid of love for God. But the meek who are submissive to God's will find a life that is filled with joy and peace. They truly are the ones that possess the earth, for the humble, meek life they live gives them peace of mind and contentment they would not know otherwise. Some have defined this promise to mean "Oh to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah's kingdom." And that is a good definition. We are in the kingdom now Col. 1:13. But we live in the world-earth, and our life of meekness and submission is filled with joy and peace of contentment. What else is worth striving for?

When Jesus in Matthew 11:28,29 made mention of being "meek and lowly in heart" and then invited the weary and heavy laden to come to him with the promise that they would find rest unto their souls; this is the same as the promise to the meek. There are always rewards to the submissive ones. And this reminds us of Proverbs 10:22 "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich and he addeth no sorrow to it." Truly obedience to the Lord's law is a profitable occupation! God never forgets his servants, and their reward is great.

And another thought is this: The proud, the ambitious and the haughty, those who are forever reaching out for fame, power or money are never happy. As proof of this statement we only need to refer to the cases of the Hitlers, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and a host of lesser ambitious, grasping and cruel men who thrust aside the meeker and less ambitious men who crave only the quiet life of one who lives for the happiness and well being of others. Those are truly those who inherit the earth, for the enjoyment of others. The disappointments and unrealized ambitions and ungodly desires have only brought them down to the grave in shame and disgrace. The persons who live for God, seeking only to be submissive to his will enjoy a happiness that the famous and ambitious can never enjoy. And the rich like the fabled King Midas, who wishes his touch would turn everything into gold, he lost the dearest objects of his heart. The social climbers always seeking for the room at the top of the social ladder must climb over the backs of others even if they destroy those nearer the top and the terrible force of the turbulent seas is as nothing compared with the power of God contained in the gospel. Towering over the filth and wreckage of sin stands the eternal, imperishable Cross of Calvary, and that cross ever beckons the weary, unhappy soul of man to a higher and happier life.

THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY

“Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled” Matthew 5:6.

There are many kinds of hunger in the world. So many hunger for wealth, others of social prominence or political exaltation. No matter how great may be their hunger, not all of them by any means can obtain fulfillment. The number disappointed far outnumbers those who obtain that for which they are successful in their attainments.

To hunger means to desire something one does not yet have. It is claimed that one half of the world is perpetually hungry because of the poverty of the nations among whom they live. Here in America very few have ever known the meaning of real hunger because of the abundance of material things. Just recently I talked with a sister in the church who was born and raised in a foreign country and briefly she told me of how sometime she would have to go out on the street to beg for food, because her parents could not supply their material needs. All such are to be pitied. A very unusual case of intense hunger is recorded in 2 Kings 6th Chapter. When the Syrian King besieged Samaria. All food supplies were cut off and when all the food in the city was exhausted, the people were in a terrible state. It is related that two women made a bargain that they would in turn kill their own little boys and eat them. Only one was eaten but the other one mercifully was saved. But this case reveals not only unusual hunger but greatly lowered morality. In 2 Cor., 11 Chapter, Paul tells us how that often he was hungered because of the evils he had to endure in connection with his public work for Christ. In the great seige of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year of 70 A.D. it was estimated that many thousands of Jews died of starvation. Many hundreds of such cases are recorded in the history of the past. Most vivid to us is the ghastly story of the thousands of Jews who perished of

starvation in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II.

When properly distributed, there is plenty of food for the entire world. Temporary conditions such as drought may temporarily bring great distress to a portion of mankind. Americans can well remember with gratitude the story of the efforts of Herbert Hoover to feed the starving people of Belgium during the war.

When God created the man and woman, he placed them in the beautiful garden of Eden where food in abundant supply was to be found. All of the food that grew therein was permissible for man to eat except that which grew upon the tree of knowledge. That fruit was not poisonous to the body, but God was putting man to a test to see if man would obey him. The sad story is that the woman, Eve, being tempted of the devil eagerly ate of the forbidden fruit, not because of hunger, but the desire to be wise; and she prevailed upon the man to eat with her, which he so foolishly did, with the result that they lost their beautiful home in Eden, and thenceforth man would need earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return"-Gen. 3:17-19.

The world with its grains, fruits and meats of all kinds supports at the present a population of over 3 billion. Whether the population explosion will bring starvation to teeming millions we cannot say; but in that fair land of eternal joys we learn that food in abundance will be provided by an all-loving Father. Upon the Tree of Life grows all manner of fruit and that the leaves thereof are "for the healing of the nations" Rev. 22:1,2. But we are not to understand that this is physical food, for man will not be a physical being in heaven. We shall be changed in the resurrection and the mortal shall have put on immortality. But the statement is to the effect that God takes care of his own- Rev. 7:16 and Isaiah 49:10. A wonderful promise and confirm the fact that the divine Father is ever mindful of his own.

SPIRITUAL HUNGER

Most of what we have thus far said pertains to the food and hunger of the body. We must not forget that Jesus emphatically stated "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" Matthew 4:4. Jesus's statement is reproduced by Moses contained in Deut. 8:3:3 "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with mana, which thou knewst not, neither did thy fathers know that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

Man is not just an intelligent animal; he is a dual being, composed of body, soul and spirit. 1 Thess. 5:23 speaks of the duality of man by mentioning body, soul and spirit. The soul is the life that exists when body and soul are united. Consider James 2:26. The spirit is that which came from God to inhabit the body the Lord had created. Zech. 12:1 states that God formed the spirit of man within him. That spirit came from God and at death returns to God. Eccl. 12:7. This spirit is that "breath of life" breathed into man's nostrils at creation-Gen. 2:7. And that soul has need of food just the same as does the body. 1 Peter 2:2 states that as new born babes (spiritually) we are to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow there." This harmonizes beautifully with the words of our text "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord..." The spirit needs food the same as does the body but of a far different kind. Hebrews 5:12-14. Both milk and meat - a balanced diet. God knows man's needs and so he has provided for those needs. From babe to mature manhood there is food for the soul that is the very nectar of heaven. David said "Thy word is very pure therefore thy servant loveth it" Psalms 119:140. That food will pass all the tests of the pure food and drug act, and the greatest pity is that so few there are that will find pleasure in partaking of that heavenly mana.

It teaches us of God the Father, of the Son the divine

Saviour and Redeemer. It teaches man of his origin, present duties and of his eternal destiny. We should read it to be wise, practice it to be safe and reverence it as the most sacred revelation God has given to man. Paul teaches us of its worth in the following words "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God should be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" 2 Timothy 3:16,17. *Perfect!* A wonderful word, but how few there are who aspire to that blessed condition! That is what Jesus meant when he spoke of those who hungered and thirsted for righteousness. It has been said that perfection does not dwell in houses of clay; but there certainly can be and should be a desire to raise one's standard of morality and spirituality. Paul declares that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" Rom. 3:23, and the chief reason is that people simply have no real hunger for a life of real righteousness. The world of mankind will be improved only when professed Christians, through real hunger for true righteousness, strive to improve themselves morally and spiritually.

We must note that the promise of being filled is not to everyone who realizes their imperfections, but to those who have a strong and deep desire to live for the higher and nobler things of God. Hunger simply means desire, and there cannot be improvement without that desire. A table laden with nourishing food will not ease your hunger unless you desire the food before you. You must eat of it! Realizing your shortcomings is not sufficient; you must desire improvement before improvement can be accomplished. It has often been said that God helps those who help themselves, and God can improve your life-making it purer and holier, only with your cooperation. God made man a free moral agent and he respects man's ability to choose between what is right and what is wrong, but he also makes it plain that man must abide by the consequences of his choice. Long ago God said to man, "Behold I set before thee the way of life and the way of death" Jeremiah 21:8. What you will be spiritually or morally is up to you. If you desire to raise your life to a

higher plane of relationship with God, then that help will be given, but first the desire must be there.

It seems pitiful and most regrettable that thousands of professed Christians are content to drift along living such an imperfect life that they make no mark spiritually on the world of mankind. I wonder why we often sing "Lord, plant my feet on higher ground" and we make no personal effort whatever to live a higher life. Why don't you let God make of you a glorious Christian instead of a luke-warm do-nothing person? A person is to be pitied if they are content to be a little clof-hopper as a Christian. Where is your ambition? It has been said that a contented man has no future. He will go no further than where he is presently spiritually is today. No hunger for progress or advancement. What a pity!

The apostle Paul after 35 years or more of sacrifice and consecrated devotion, expressed himself thus "Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to the things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" Phil. 3:113,1. Beaten, whipped, starved, imprisoned and hated he had not thought of turning back nor of going into retirement. Thank God he was still pressing onward! I would that we had ten thousand like him. If all the present members of the church had Paul's zeal and sacrificing spirit we could and would take the world for Christ. Remember, there is no retirement age for Christians. Theirs is a life time enlistment; and we are never to think that we have reached the portals of perfection. There should be in our hearts a deep hunger for more righteousness till we can stand perfected in Christ. How wonderful if we could say with David, "As the hart (deer) panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after thee, O God" "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Psalms 42:1,2.

Jesus Christ was and is the most wonderful person of all time. Can we not understand that to be like him in our talk, or lives and in our aspirations? The desire to be like him will place the stamp of true greatness upon you. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

THE PROMISE FULFILLED

“For they shall be filled”—that is the Saviour’s promise. Food in abundance—a never failing supply. The Mana of Heaven is inexhaustable. No bare cupboards—nor empty stomachs. “And they shall hunger no more” says our blessed Lord—Rev. 7:16. Are not the above promises enticing? The food of heaven will need no cooking, but the table of the Lord will ever be laden with all the food from the Father’s never failing larder, and we shall hear the Saviour saying “*Come and dine.*”

THE MERCIFUL

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” Matthew 5:7. Bible students are often inclined to associate the word mercy with the word compassion, and that is true in some cases, but not all. Being merciful implies forgiveness for a wrong done to us personally; and that is the sense in which Jesus used the word in the verse quoted above. The definite meaning of the word mercy is forgiveness. It could be forgiveness of a debt or of a wrong done to us. This is illustrated by the parable of the unmerciful servant, Matt. 18:23-35. The Lord was forgiving but the servant was not. I could have pity or compassion on one who has met with misfortune, because I am touched with their sorrow but mercy cannot be shown except in the case where forgiveness is needed. Hundreds of passages in the Bible speak of God’s mercy which “endureth forever” and can be extended to any of mankind. But I cannot expect to receive God’s mercy unless I also show mercy to my fellowmen. Jesus said in Matt. 6:14, “For if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.” God’s mercy is not extended to those who will not show mercy to others. The promise of receiving mercy is based on our showing mercy to those who have either offended us or those who are indebted to us. That is the condition of receiving mercy. An unforgiving heart is an abomination in the sight of God because it is so contrary to God’s own attitude. A forgiving heart is a replica of God’s own heart because God’s willing forgiveness is man’s only hope of the future. There is no sin, no matter how repulsive nor oft repeated that cannot obtain God’s forgiveness. “Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,” is the unchangeable decision of God. And “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins.” A soul may be as filthy as hell can make it yet God’s mercy can and will cleanse it to snow white purity. That is the great fact of God’s forgiveness produced by his infinite mercy. How wonderful is the mercy of God. David sinned most grievously, and that sin was so

inexcusable considering all that God had done for him, and yet when David showed real contrition of heart the mercy of God cleansed and purified his soul from all dross. David feeling the burden of guilt cried, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise" Psalms 51:17. The unforgiving heart is just the opposite of God's heart. And unforgiveness is simply malice. When one holds malice in their heart, they injure themselves more than any other. To speak the word of forgiveness is to cleanse the heart of all bitterness and the one who forgives is blest far more than the one forgiven.

Eph. 4:31,32 reads "Let all bitterness, and wrath and anger, and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." Beautiful words are they not? What a fine world this would be if every individual would practice those commands. The one who refuses forgiveness only adds to the sins of the other. It is sin compounded-increased and made ugly in the sight of God.

1 Cor. 14:20 reads "Brethern, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children." That is divine law, and God commanded it because he wishes us to be like him. It is the influence of hell that breeds malice and its reward is the reward of sin.

Some few years ago I saw a little boy and girl playing in a pile of loose dirt. They had their toy buckets and shovels and for a hour or so they played happily. Finally a cloud came over their sky and the little girl became so angry that she went home in a towering rage. I felt bad to see the picture of childish playfulness so mared by anger and ill-will; but lo, and behold in a half hour or so I saw the little girl returning; one hand was behind her, and when she reached the boy she held out her hand which contained a cookie, and she said "Don't you want a cookie, Johnnie?" The cookie was accepted and the play resumed, and the rest of the morning was spent pleasantly and happily. I almost cried. It was so beautiful! If that incident had happened to some of us older ones, we would be feuding yet! What fools we mortals be! Which was

the best way-feuding or forgetfulness? You answer before God!

An elderly couple felt they had been wronged by a brother in a financial deal. After some discussion he asked forgiveness. The sister said, "I will forgive, but I cannot forget." But God's forgiveness includes forgetfulness, God states, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. 8:12. How very different from man! That is why earth is so far from heaven. The dense cloud of mens' malice obscures the sun of God's infinite love.

Jesus is called our example, and when it came to the drama of Calvary. Those men of evil and hatred took the blameless and sinless Son of God and nailed his hands and feet to the cross. It would indeed be hard to describe the agonies and pain of such an act. There was no cry of anger, resentment or of hatred that fell from the Saviour's lips; but his heart felt godly cry was "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." His enemies had heaped upon him all the insults and indignities that the evil mind of Satan could invent, and Jesus knew the fullest extent of their wickedness; and divine forgiveness and infinite mercy bloomed in its glorious beauty. No wonder the apostle exclaimed "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we might be called the sons of God," 1 John 3:1. No wonder John 3:16 is called the golden text of the Bible" God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life"! Someone has written . . .

Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the sky of parchment made
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man on earth a scribe by trade
To write the love of God above
would drain the ocean dry,
Nor the scroll contain the whole
That stretched from sky to sky.

Another example of spiritual mercy and forgiveness is the

case of Stephen recorded in Acts 7th Chapter. Boldly and lovingly he had preached to his enemies the story of God's love that culminated in the death of Christ upon Calvary's tree. When Stephen reproached them for their past sins in persecuting the prophets of God. Angered beyond expression they drug him from the city and stoned him to death. Dying, his humble prayer was "Lord, Jesus receive my spirit" Acts 7:59. Divine forgiveness was in his heart, and he held no malice for his murderers. A beautiful example! That is being merciful like unto God. If one expresses a sincere regret for any sin against God, the Lord's mercy is abundant to their salvation.

Another thought is this: In Psalms 103:10 David makes this statement "He hath not dealt with us after our sin, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." How true that is. A sin can be committed that in man's sight deserves the severest punishment, but just a few words of penitence on the part of the guilty one brings immediate and full forgiveness from God. There is no parole. It is forgiveness full and complete. A few years of spiritual service is rewarded with an eternity of joy and peace. Who can deserve such a reward? A thousand years of sacrifice could not really earn 10 years of perfect bliss in heaven. It is as if an employer should tell one of his employees "If you will come and labor for me just tomorrow, I will present you with a home in this city that is the equal of any residence in town: I will supply you with the best of food and clothing for the remainder of your lifetime. You will want for nothing as long as you live." I dare say that no one has ever received such an offer in all the years of the past. Twenty five or thirty years of continuous service merits a retirement annuity, which is considerably less than the former wages. Such a condition is unthought of among all employers, and yet the God of heaven offers us eternal, everlasting bliss in that home of fadeless joys! Who can comprehend the infinite goodness of our heavenly Father? Truly he deserves the very best we can give.

I am so often shocked at the attitude of so many even those in the church because they act as if they had earned heaven and all its riches. What a horrible attitude! Please

think of the word ETERNITY. It means everlasting and the eternal joy of heaven will be given to you, because God in his infinite love and mercy decreed that they should be yours. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that we through his poverty might be rich" 2 Cor. 8:9.

Do not, I plead, carry about in your heart malice and ill-will because someone has offended you. You will make yourself and the offending party happy by forgiveness. To carry malice is to sour your life, lessen your joys and offend the God who loves you. God's mercy toward you is unlimited. Why can you not be more like unto your Lord? Life is too short and time too precious to spend it in hatred or ill-will. Remember, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."

THE PURE IN HEART

Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God"-Matthew 5:8. I think there is no verse in the Bible that ever affected me more than the short statement quoted above. A pure heart, how precious it is! And also how rare.

The word heart is used in the scripture as the seat of life and strength, hence it means the mind, the seat of affections. One's entire emotional nature. Most of the time it does not refer to the physical organ, the blood pump in our breast, for man has two distinct hearts. The wise man Solomon gave this stern admonition "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life"-Proverbs 4:23; and the importance of that admonition is indicated by the Saviour's statement in Matthew 12:35 "A good man out of the treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things." And this so clearly indicates that the condition of a man's heart is decided by himself. His heart is either evil or good according to his desires. This harmonizes with Solomon's statement "*For as he thinketh in his heart so he is*" Proverbs 23:5. The wickedness of the people in Noah's day is indicated by the historic statement "And God saw that the wickedness of man in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"- Genesis 6:5. When the heart is polluted then so is the life; and we remember that Jesus said "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murderers, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" Matt. 15:19. How important then that we guard our hearts, because all evil actions originate in our hearts.

In recent years I've read a great deal about pollution. Our rivers, lakes and even the ocean is polluted, and it will take heroic measures to clean them; but a polluted mind that could have been as beautiful as a vase of the loveliest flowers, becomes a vile cesspool of corruption. What a pity! We are

reminded of James's strong admonition "Cleanse your hands ye sinners and purify your hearts ye double minded" James 4:8. Yes the polluted heart can be cleansed by the help of a sin-forgiving Saviour.

When David had so grievously sinned, he prayed to the Lord, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" Psalms 51:10. That verse shows that a polluted, corrupted heart can be cleansed and made acceptable to God. As Naaman found cleansing from the foul disease of leprosy in the waters of Jordan, even so can we cleanse our hearts from its filthiness in the blood of Christ. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins according to the riches of his grace"-Eph. 1:7.

And this reminds us that the heart is the area of our lives where Satan tempts us. He plants evil thoughts in our minds, that lead to temptation. No one can escape the evil suggestions of Satan, and that leads many to say "I fall into temptation because I just can't keep evil thoughts out of my mind." Someone answered that by saying "I can't prevent the birds from flying over my head, but I can prevent them from making their nests in my hair." Which is the same as saying we can forbid evil thoughts from abiding in our hearts. Which is so true. Even Jesus was tempted "In all points just as we are and yet he resisted every effort of Satan, and Paul informs us that Christ is now able to succor-help, those who are tempted, through his power we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need" Hebrews 4:15. Do not say or believe that Satan is stronger than Christ. He is not. If Satan conquers you it is because you were too weak to resist Satan's wiles. Jesus promises you strength in the time of weakness so that we can say with Paul "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"-Phil. 4:13. And as Paul conquered, so can you if you will seek the help the Saviour can give you. His love and grace never fails.

How greatly we need to understand that strength and manliness comes from a clean heart. Starting out in search of the Holy Grail (the cup Christ drank from the night he was betrayed) the Knight, Sir Galahad was informed of the

dangers, the difficulties and trials he would have to endure in his search; and he replied, "*My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure.*" A pure heart and a clean conscience will make a giant of any man. Cowards are born of sin and uncleanness, and this brings us to the question of how can we keep our hearts pure. The answer is self evident - we must think pure thoughts. Phil. 4:8 teaches us "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, if there be any praise think on these things." Isn't that plain? As long as our minds are filled with the above thoughts, there can be no room for impurities and indecencies. This makes for a strong man. To be pure, true, honest, of good report and such like things require that we keep those things constantly in our minds. Someone has said----

Sow a thought, reap an action.

Sow an action and reap a habit.

Sow a habit and reap a character.

Sow a character and reap a destiny.

Nothing is more true than the above, and the sooner we learn that the stronger and happier we will be. There is no real happiness to be found in filth and corruption. I have known those who are fastidious in body and dress but their minds were filled with all the corruptions of sin. What a spectacle! Isn't a clean, christian life a thousand times preferable to a life of debauchery? All the past experiences of thousands of years show most plainly that cleanliness, decency, and nobility are but the stepping stones to happiness and contentment. I have just finished reading the life of Alexander, the Great, who at the early age of 33 drank himself into a state of imbecility. Truly the "wages of sin is death."

THE REWARD

Christ asks nothing of a man without offering him rewards far greater than the service performed. That is especially true

in this case. *"For they shall see God."* What an exalted privilege! To see the great God of Heaven - the creator of the unnumbered stars, suns and planets of our material universe. Don't we remember that one time Moses, while alone with God, asked that God might show his face; but was reminded that "No man can see my face and live." If the brightness of the sun is too great for the endurance of the human eye, how much more the brightness of the glory of God? It is far beyond human conception. The writer has seen seven of our presidents, but they were but men like unto myself; but we know that the personal presence of God is so far beyond human conception as to be indescribable. The Bible states "No man has seen God at anytime"-John 1:18, for the simple reason that human eyes cannot endure the glory of God's presence. Moses was honored by being shown God back, Exodus 33:19-23.

Doubtless many of you have wondered just what God looks like. I know that God is a personal being, for man was made in the image of God; and numerous times reference is made of God's face, his eyes, ears and hands. But to see the actual presence of the great eternal God, who is from everlasting to everlasting will be wonderful-Psalms 90:2.

In the morning of the resurrection our bodies that now are mortal will be changed into that which is immortal and the weakness of our human eyes will no longer exist, and we, O glorious day, will be able to look into the face of our heavenly Father, "They shall see God."

Face to face shall I behold him
Far beyond the starry skies
Face to face in all its glory
I shall see him bye and bye.

What a gracious privilege! The pleasures of sin and the enticements of evil are as nothing compared with the honor of beholding God in his glory. Do we not have the highest incentive to keep our hearts pure? *"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."*

THE PEACEMAKERS

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God”- Matthew 5:9. From the very beginning of recorded history there have been wars and rumors of wars. The slaying of Abel by his brother Cain was the first of thousands of conflicts between individuals and then when nations developed the strife expanded till thousands of soldiers struggled for mastery. The main facts of history record the many battles between warring nations. There has been and is strife not only between nations, but between individuals-families and communities. And the strife has involved thousands in churches, for religious strife has been as bitter and terrible as of that between nations. In our own times war on a worldwide scale has affected all of the globe, and we have no assurance that the future holds anything better. We talk of the almost certainty of World War III; and if it comes with the great increase of destructive missiles the results will be terrible beyond description. Truly there is a great need of peacemakers. The League of Nations as a war preventive proved truly ineffective, and the United Nations, that was organized with such hopefulness has not stopped wars, and each year it becomes more impotent. What faces us?

During World War I Henry Ford, a pacifist, joined other notable men in an effort to stop the great conflict. Their combined efforts proved as helpless as a cardboard in a Kansas blizzard. The best minds from the most advanced nations have struggled unsuccessfully with the problems of war and peace, but still the manufacture of weapons of war continues unabated. Must there always be war? Did not God predict that the time would come when nations would beat their swords into plowshares? Will that time ever come? At the present it seems a forlorn hope; but there is and has been for centuries a plan or plans for the elimination of wars.

Two thousand years ago angels appeared to some startled shepherds out on the Judean hills bringing a message of hope for all of mankind—"Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people, for unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The angelic host filled the heavens, all singing in beautiful melody "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward men. Peace is promised not by men, but by angels. In prophecy this Babe of Bethlehem was called the "*Prince of Peace*" Isaiah 9:6. The apostle Paul speaks thus of him "For he is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14) and has broken down the wall between Jew and Gentile, and both Jew and Gentile were to be made one in Christ, thus Christ began his work of Peace.

PEACE WITH GOD

A soul in sin is estranged from God. "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your sins have separated between you and your God, and your iniquities have hid his face that he will not hear"-Isaiah 59:2,3. God does not associate with the children of Satan, and those children can never find happiness with such a father. He has nothing to offer them that produces real happiness; for his pleasures are "Like poppies 'round us spread; we grasp them once and the flower is dead.." Or like a snowflake on the river, one moment it is white and then is lost forever." And when the hour of death approaches there is no vision of the future that can or will bring happiness to a dying soul. Even in this life those who serve Satan rather than God are not truly happy. The pleasures of sin are like the apples of Sodom that "turn to ashes in one's mouth." It is as true now as when God uttered it 3,000 years ago. 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." Isaiah 57:20,21.

But when the sinful heart of man is turned to God and when it receives the assurance of God's pardoning grace then it can say with Paul "And the peace of God which *passeth all*

understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." Just here I am reminded of the Lord's complaint to Israel "O that thou hadst harkened unto my commandments, then hadst thy peace been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea"-Isaiah 48:18. And this is why the Christian ministry is such a happy experience. There is no joy compared to the joy of bringing a sinful, penitent soul in humble submission to the feet of a sin-forgiving Saviour. To be a peacemaker between God and an estranged soul is life's greatest work.

PEACE BETWEEN MEN

There is nothing more unpleasant than to be at "outs" with others. The greater history of man is a history of human disagreements. If one could truly say I have no enemies nor do I know of anyone that is antagonistic toward me, is something worthwhile. Paul admonishes us "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peacefully with all men"-Rom. 12:18. The sad fact is that it is not always possible because of the deliberate perversity of others who are antagonistic toward you. Sometimes an entire community is thrown into an unhappy commotion because of a disagreement between two parties-it spreads and spreads. To be able to act as a "go-between" between estranged parties is a great privilege. To plant the rose of peace and love where the briars and thorns of ill-will grew, is something which the divine Father will take notice.

There are those who perpetually carry a chip on their shoulders, and are never happy except when they can start a fuss. Poor souls! I often think of the battle between Abner and Joab-Joab for David and Abner for the sons of Saul. A fierce battle took place and many were slain then Abner called to Joab "Shall the sword devour forever?" and that ended the battle and the bloody strife.

PEACE IN THE CHURCH

The domain of Christ, the prince of peace, is supposed to be the garden of peace, but most regretably in many places there is bitter strife, contention and division among the

professed people of the Lord. The apostle James once asked "From whence come wars and fightings among you. Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? James 4:1. Strife between the professed members of the body of Christ is one of the most regrettable conditions that prevail today. There are over 250 different groups-organized churches, in the world today; and each of them have their distinctive doctrines and practices, who have built up a wall between the thousands in the religious world. There was division in Paul's days (1 Cor. 3:1-3). And Paul condemned all such divisions. In that case they were not divided over what God had said, but over what man had said. We are not divided over what is in the Bible, but over what is not in the Bible; and it is worthy of note that the Lord has always condemned divisions among his professed people. Of the six things which the Lord hates, "sowing discord among brethren is one of them"-Jeremiah 6:16. To seek to make peace between the warring faction is a worthy work, but that work must be to bring unity within the framework of God's revelation. Unity is not even desirable if it requires a compromise of the truths of God's word. Many have foolishly believed that if certain parts of the law of God could be eliminated, then unity and peace would ensue. This brings us to Jeremiah 6:14 which refers to unscriptural efforts toward peace on the part of compromisers "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people saying, Peace, Peace when there is no peace." There can be no real peace unless that peace is accomplished by full obedience to God's word. Ezekiel 13:10-12, we find this "because, even because they have seduced my people saying, Peace when there was no peace; and one built up a wall and daubed it with untempered mortar. Say unto them which daub with untempered mortar that it shall fall; there shall be an overflowing shower, and ye, O great hail stones shall fall and a stormy wind shall rend it." The above verse makes it undeniably plain that the Lord does not approve of all peace efforts. All such efforts must be in harmony with God's revealed will; for there can be no unity when the Bible is ignored in any respect. Several years ago when the Catholics

were having their conferences in Rome with a view of effecting peace between all Protestants and Catholics, many and varied plans and propositions were advanced, and these were given publicity in the newspapers; among the many plans was one from a Catholic priest who innocently suggested that there could and would be peace if we submitted all our differences to God! Such a suggestion was not considered by that convocation. They had man-made plans aplenty, but the idea of following the Bible and it alone was not considered.

And so even today many are crying, "Peace, peace" when there is no scriptural peace. The plans of men take precedence over the revealed will of God and so God is relegated to the background. Every man has his own plan and thus confusion multiplies abundantly. Of the wall daubed with untempered mortar, God has said, "Thus saith the Lord, I will even rend it with a strong wind, in my fury, and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it; so will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye be consumed in the midst thereof and ye shall know that I am the Lord." The above is very plain. These men the prophet condemned so severely had grandiose plans for unity, but they did not consult God; and that was their fatal mistake; and many such mistakes are being made today, and doubtless will continue to be made till the end of time. Men's voices are heard but not the voice of God. Has not God spoken (Heb.1:1,2) and is not his word plain and understandable? God's means of unity are as clearly revealed even as is the plan of salvation. It is as simple as ABC. Just eliminate the doctrines of men and submit only to the teachings of God's book.

Many times in past years I preached to the people of a Union Sunday School and I made the plea for unity in heart, practice and life that we accept only that which is commanded of the Lord in his word, and then we will be One in Christ. I was often made very happy when many accepted that plea. That plea is still effective today. Even as there is

one God, one Lord, one Spirit, and one Body, even so we who accept the oneness of the godhead are to be one in him - Christ.

To be a peacemaker among the divided and warring factions of the religious world, is indeed a "High Calling" of God in Christ Jesus. To plant the rose of unity where the briars and thorns of division and strife now dwells, is the world's greatest need and the Lord's greatest work for us.

THE REWARD

"For they shall be called the children of God." What a wonderful promise! God's children! Our Father is in the highest heavens, and possesses all power, wisdom and goodness. So many people are proud of their direct ancestors. They sing the praises of their fathers and mothers. Many of whom had reached real prominence among the people. The story is told of a certain king's son, captured in battle, and was taken to the capital city of his enemies. Later he was given a cup of milk, and was told that if he was able to take that cup and walk clear around the city without spilling a drop he would be released. This feat he accomplished. Afterwards he was asked if the multitudes watching him did not cause him embarrassment. He replied, "No, I thought nothing of the thousands watching me. I was thinking only of honoring my father." He loved and honored his father, and was determined to do nothing that would cause his father any grief. We too have a Father who is the most honorable of any in heaven or earth; and there can be no greater honor come to us than to be called his children. Are we appreciative of this great honor? Once a sinner, I was born again, and then God became my Father. Do we not joyfully sing--

My Father is rich in houses and lands
He holdeth the wealth of the world in his hands
Of jewels and diamonds, and silver and gold--
His coffers are full he has riches untold.
I'm the child of a king!

THE PERSECUTED

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’s sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you; and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name’s sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you”-Matthew 5:10-12.

Persecution has ever been the tool of the wicked, and is the proof of a weak cause. Cain persecuted his brother Abel unto death, and ever since that time the world has been made red with the blood of the persecuted.

The story has been told of the chief defense lawyer who whispered to his assistant “Attack the persecution lawyer because our cause at this point is weak.” And so it has ever been. A weak cause always demands the persecution of the opposite party. If men cannot overthrow the truth in any matter that affects them, then persecution will be the weapon that will be used to block the truth. Did not Jesus say “Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.” Jesus once gave a terrible indictment of the Scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites as recorded in Matthew 23rd Chapter “Woe unto you Scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites because ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous; and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore, ye be witnesses to yourselves that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets. Fill ye up the measure of the fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Severe language is it not, but who can deny its justiceness? He said further “Upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth; from the blood of the righteous Abel onto the blood Zacheous, who ye slew

between the temple and the altar.” Jesus knew beyond all possibility of doubt as to the terrible persecutions his people would have to endure, and that persecution began with the church in Jerusalem under Saul of Tarsus (who after was Paul the apostle). The church at that time was composed of several thousand, who had to flee from the city to save their lives. Only the apostles remained in the city, yet we know that the church continued to grow and multiply.

Paul later confessed with great sorrow how he persecuted the church-1 Timothy 1:13. But he did it “ignorantly and in unbelief.” Many were the local persecutions Christians endured in that first century, but the greatest persecution of all was when that monster, Nero, unsheathed the sword against the Christians whom he wished to blame them for the burning of Rome. Some historians claim that Nero himself set Rome afire to have the conflagration as an inspiration for his songs. These things are unproven and unprovable rumors of history; but Nero’s general persecution of the church is so firmly established that no one will deny it. It was in this persecution that Paul most probably perished. It is related that so many Christians were crucified that they ran out of wood for more crosses, and while on the crosses the Christian’s bodies were covered with tar and set afire, and this illuminated the city. In all during the reigns of the Roman Emperors from Nero to Constantine, it is estimated that over a million Christians suffered martyrdom. They were covered with the skins of wild animals and driven into an arena and the wild beasts, lions, bears and such like animals quickly devoured them. Persecution only scattered the seeds that enabled the gospel to spread to far-flung nations. *The church survived!* Had not the Lord predicted “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper”-Isaiah 54:17? The scriptures are abundant with predictions that as long as the world shall stand, the people of God shall be persecuted. Paul affirmed “Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”-2 Timothy 3:12; and Christ himself had stated “If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you.” John 15:20, and in so saying he made it plain that even today we will be persecuted. Maybe someone is ready to

exclaim "How?" There is more than one way to persecute, ways that may be refined but just as cruel. The cross, the fagot, the stake and the sword. They are passe-out of date, but there is the sharp tongue, the ridicule and scorn if you won't "run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."

Acts 7th Chapter illustrates this point. Steven's enemies pretended they were letting him defend himself, but when that fearless man spoke the truth in regard to their evil deeds they stopped their ears, refusing to hear more, and in their devilish anger they stoned him to death.-Acts 7th.

And we must not forget the case of the apostle Paul. That faithful servant of the Lord, Ananias, who was sent to baptize the humbled and penitent Saul, was told by the Lord, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my names' sake"-Acts 9:16, and suffer he surely did! He was persecuted from Pillar to post, and he himself testified "Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice I was beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck. In journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils of the among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchfulness often in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness"-2 Cor. 11:24-27. Paul was an impressive example of what it meant to follow Christ. His testimony was "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern (example) to them which should hereafter believe in him to life everlasting"-1 Tim. 1:16. Paul above all others gave to the world an example of suffering for Christ, and he gave this command, "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ"-1 Cor.11:1. Near the end of his life he wrote most impressively, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Did he think that all his suffering had been in vain - that the Christian life was too expensive? God forbid! Hear him further "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of

righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day; and not to me only but to all them that love his appearing"-2 Tim. 4:6-8. A life of persecution and now an eternity of joy, happiness that has no end. Truly Paul believed in Christ's word that "Great is their reward."

And we are reminded of Paul's words to Timothy "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience. Persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, Lystra, what persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me" 2 Tim. 3:10,11. What a faithful and courageous warrior he was! Nothing daunted him. Neither man nor the devil could frighten him. He was invincible! He could and did say, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" Phil. 4:13. O that the church today had a dozen men like Paul! In such a case the church would shake the foundations of all nations. Alone and forsaken by man he boldly stood before the notorious Nero and defended his life and work for Christ. True, he lost his life but he gained the wealth of heaven. And so it will be with all the faithful of today. The scorn, ridicule and contempt of the world will be only as the dust following a storm. The storm passes, but faith in God never fails.

In Revelations 6:9 we are informed of a group that attracted the apostle's attention and he was informed that they were the "souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus." Their faith in God led them to endure persecution that resulted in their death; and their pleas for justice did not fall upon deaf ears, for the Lord assured them that in due time, justice would be meted out to their wicked persecutors. The *Lord always remembers his own!* If a day of justice is coming to them, we can be sure that great day of reward will come to us.

THE REWARD

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven." That is Jesus's sacred, immutable promise, and he cannot lie. To be faithful to God in the midst of persecutions merits heavens richest blessings. In Revelations 7th chapter

we have the record of John's vision of a great multitude "which no man could number; clothed in white robes, and singing the songs of eternal redemption. John is informed that this group was composed of those "who have come out of great tribulation (persecution) and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Thank God they had lived for something! They were not a spineless, cowardly group that feared the wrath of Satan and his cohorts. Their deep principles of decency, honor and love of God were deep in their hearts and even though tribulations came, they did not waiver in their devotion to the Lord. In that wonderful day we will know the fullness of Jesus's words "For great is their reward in heaven."