

## The Wellspring of Happiness

*Happy are the people in such a state; Happy are the people whose God is the Lord!” (Psalm 144: 15)*

These closing verses of the 144<sup>th</sup> Psalm have set Bible commentators scrambling to unravel a seeming contradiction to the general tenor of gospel blessedness.

David prophesies a plethora of desirable eventualities. *“That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as pillars, sculptured in palace style; that our barns may be full, supplying all kinds of produce; that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands to our fields; that our oxen may be well-laden; that there be no breaking in or going out: that there be no outcry in our streets. (vs. 12-14)*

When we contrast this with Jesus’ beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-10, the problem is evident. Are we to understand that David qualifies blessedness in terms of mature, handsome sons, beautiful and stately daughters, full storehouses, multiplying livestock, and loads of goodies? Not even the contrasts between the Old Covenant and New Covenant can reconcile these ideas with “Blessed are the poor in spirit...they who mourn, they who hunger and thirst for righteousness.... they who are persecuted for righteousness sake”.

What are we to then think?

David has been blessing Jehovah Who trains his hands for war and subdues his people under his rule. He then entreats the Lord to come down and discomfit his enemies, to shoot out His arrows and destroy them, to rescue him from the hand of these foreigners, and deliver him from their lies and their hands. Then he postulates the benefits that will flow from such disabling of enemies that God will affect.

The world is filled with people who have all these carnal things. Indeed, these are the very thing which all godless peoples of the earth sell their souls to attain, and having attained them, find them nothing but chains, curses and emptiness.

No, blessedness is not in the obtaining of these desirable things, but *how they are attained*. If we lie, cheat and steal to get them, our wicked deeds will be known, and we will be hated and despised by God and man. If we have gotten them by our own cleverness and hard work, then we have none to thank but ourselves. We are our own gods, and will soon perish with none to rescue us from the grave which is yawning for us even now.

Blessedness and happiness is in knowing that the Lord is our God, and that every thing we have, every deliverance from evil, every good thing that comes our way is not by our doing, but by the favor, the might, the irresistible power of the eternal God. These perishing things of clay will soon be gone, but our God, and he who does the will of God abides forever. That is true happiness.

-C. M.