

HAPPINESS

Do you want to be truly happy?

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 **BOOKS**

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HAPPINESS

'Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!'

Psalm 144:15

An atheist was once addressing a crowd of people in the open air. He was trying to persuade them that there was no God and no devil, no heaven and no hell, no resurrection, no judgment and no life to come. He advised them to throw away their Bibles and not to mind what preachers said. He recommended them to think as he did and to be like him. He talked boldly. The crowd listened eagerly. It was 'the blind leading the blind.' And both were falling into the ditch.¹

In the middle of his speech, a poor old woman suddenly pushed her way through the crowd to the place where he was standing. She stood before him. She looked him fully in the face.

‘Sir,’ she said, in a loud voice, ‘Are you happy?’ The atheist looked scornfully at her and gave her no answer. ‘Sir,’ she said again, ‘I ask you to answer my question. Are you happy? You want us to throw away our Bibles. You tell us not to believe what preachers say about the gospel. You advise us to think as you do and be like you. Now before we take your advice, we have a right to know what good we shall get by it. Do your fine new ideas give you much comfort? Do you yourself really feel happy?’

The atheist stopped and he attempted to answer the old woman’s question. He stammered and shuffled and fidgeted and endeavoured to explain his meaning. He tried hard to turn the subject. He said, he ‘had not come there to preach about happiness.’ But it was no use. The old woman stuck to her point. She insisted on her question being answered and the crowd took her side. She pressed him hard with her question and would take no excuse. And at last the atheist was obliged to abandon his speech and sneak off in confusion. He could not reply to the question. His conscience would not let him; he did not dare say that he was happy.

The old woman showed great wisdom in asking the question that she did. The argument she used may seem very simple, but it is actually one of the most powerful that can be used. It is a weapon that has more effect on people’s minds than the most elaborate reasoning of the finest brains. Whenever someone begins to take up new views about faith and pretends to despise old biblical Christianity, try driving home at their conscience with the old woman’s question. Ask them whether their new views make them feel comfortable within. Ask them whether they can say,

with honesty and sincerity, that they are happy. The grand test of a person's faith and religion is this: does it make them happy?

Let me now affectionately invite every reader to consider the subject of this short book. Let me warn you to remember that the salvation of your soul, and nothing less, is closely bound up with the subject. The heart which knows nothing of happiness cannot be right in the sight of God. The soul of a man or woman who feels no peace within cannot be safe.

I intend to explore three points in order to address the subject of happiness. I ask you to pay special attention to each one of them. And I pray that the Spirit of God will write it all on the hearts of everyone who reads this book. First, let me point out some things which are absolutely essential to happiness. Secondly, let me expose some common mistakes about the way to be happy. Thirdly, let me show the way to be truly happy.

I. ABSOLUTE ESSENTIALS TO TRUE HAPPINESS

First of all, I have to point out some things which are absolutely essential to true happiness. Happiness is what everyone longs to obtain. The desire for it is deeply planted in the human heart. Everyone naturally dislikes pain, sorrow and discomfort. Everyone naturally likes ease, comfort and gladness. Everyone naturally hungers and thirsts after happiness. Just as the sick person longs for health and the prisoner of war longs for liberty; just as the dehydrated traveller in a hot country longs to see a cooling fountain, or the ice-bound polar voyager longs to see the sun rising above the horizon—in just the same way, we mere mortals long to be happy. But, sadly, how few of us consider what we really mean when we talk of happiness! Most people's ideas on the subject are vague and indistinct and undefined! They think some people are happy when they are actually miserable; they think others are gloomy and sad when they are truly happy. They day-dream of a