

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY



"What Reward Have Ye?"



But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. . . .

For if ye love them which love you—what reward have you?

Matthew 5:44-46.

Here, as in various other instances, the Christ stresses reward as a consideration in the life of an aspirant. What reward have ye? asks the logical Lord, implying this: Why do these things, enjoyable though they be, if they bring no gain to YOU; why waste your precious life energy in pursuits that accomplish nothing for YOU? The real YOU, of course—not the personality which lives for itself, but the YOU that is universal in its helpfulness.

The reward, He stated, is "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven," and, contrary to the supposition of unaspiring idlers, striving for this reward is not selfish. The requirements involve the most difficult procedure a mortal can impose upon himself, eternal vigilance and unceasing discipline; making himself do things he does not want to do, and holding himself back from doing things he does want to do; tying himself down to principles, the straight and narrow way, which demands sacrifices that, without the reward, would be foolish, illogical, and futile. The attainment of the reward, however, is the greatest boon that a soul can give to the world.

Not only is such conscious striving for this reward unselfish but it is imperative. Some time every mortal must

rouse himself to meet this demand of the Law of Life, of evolution; must voluntarily enter that stream that moves away from the physical toward the spiritual; must root himself less in the trammels of earth, more in the powers of heaven. Most of us live seldom in the heavenly regions within ourselves. Boredom, loneliness, sickness, fear, our daily lot; these do not exist for the soul that lives in heaven. These unrealities belong to the personality and to the consciousness that yields to its control. That control must be broken, its selfish indulgences stopped, or what reward have ye? What development of spiritual power?

The way, says the Christ, is to love those whom our personality does not *feel* inclined to love, enemies, persecutors. Such loving costs something, effort, that rouses the spirit and makes it grow, releasing heavenly currents that change us, make us less the man and more the Child of God.

Where we are is the place to begin, in our relations with those with whom we live or work. **THEY** provoke us, bore us, get on our nerves; by merely being what they can't help being they unconsciously persecute us. They are the enemies we must learn to love; not merely tolerate in suppressed impatience or forced resignation, but in understanding sympathy *feel* that they too, like ourselves, are striving to become. If we could only grasp the eternal truth that every mortal is like ourselves within, a groping, stumbling creature, persevering toward the Light, our blame would melt to pity, resentment to understanding, hatred to love, and great would be the reward therefrom.