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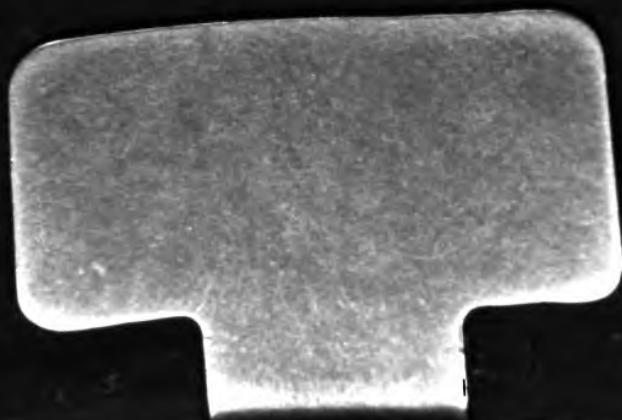


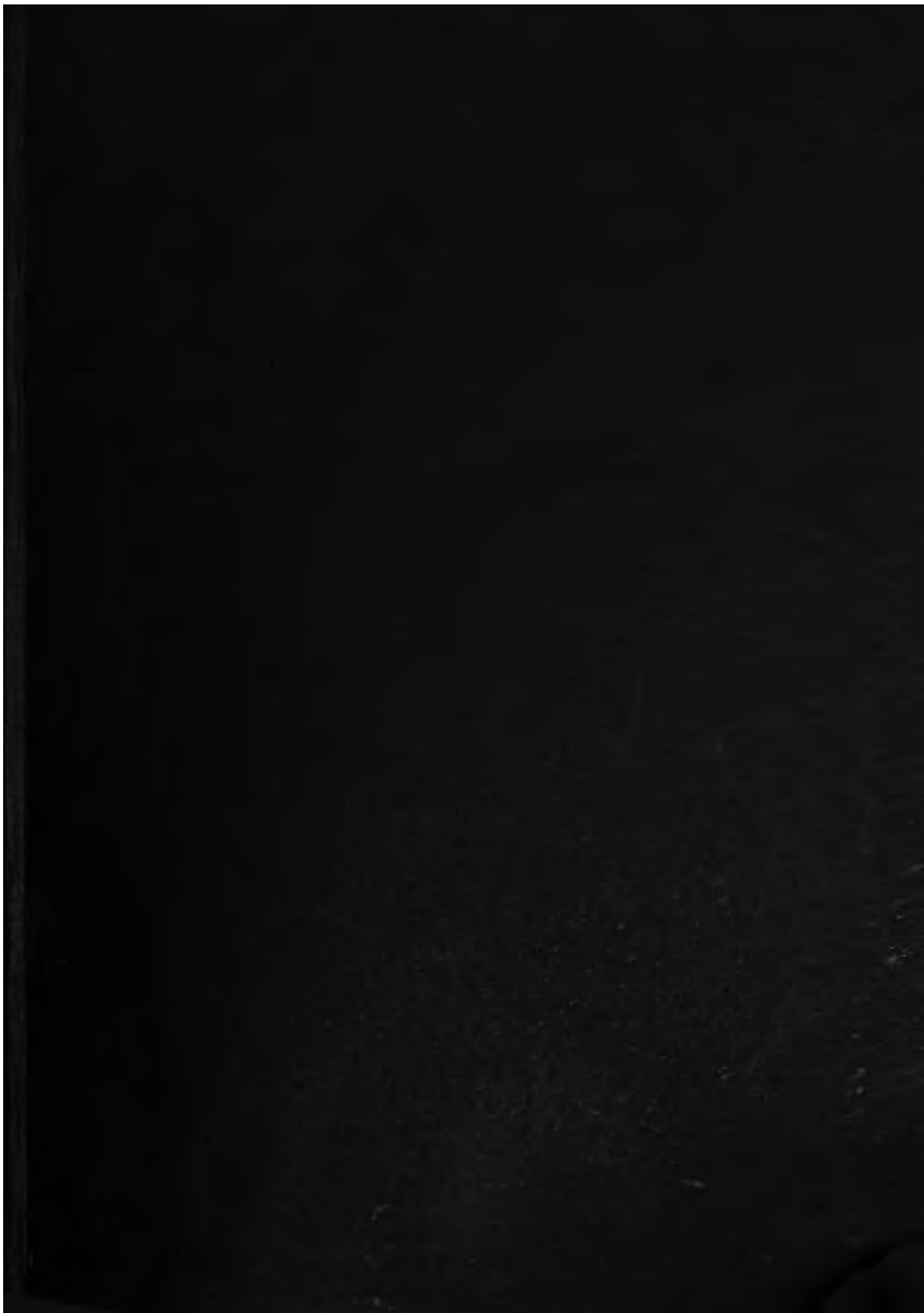
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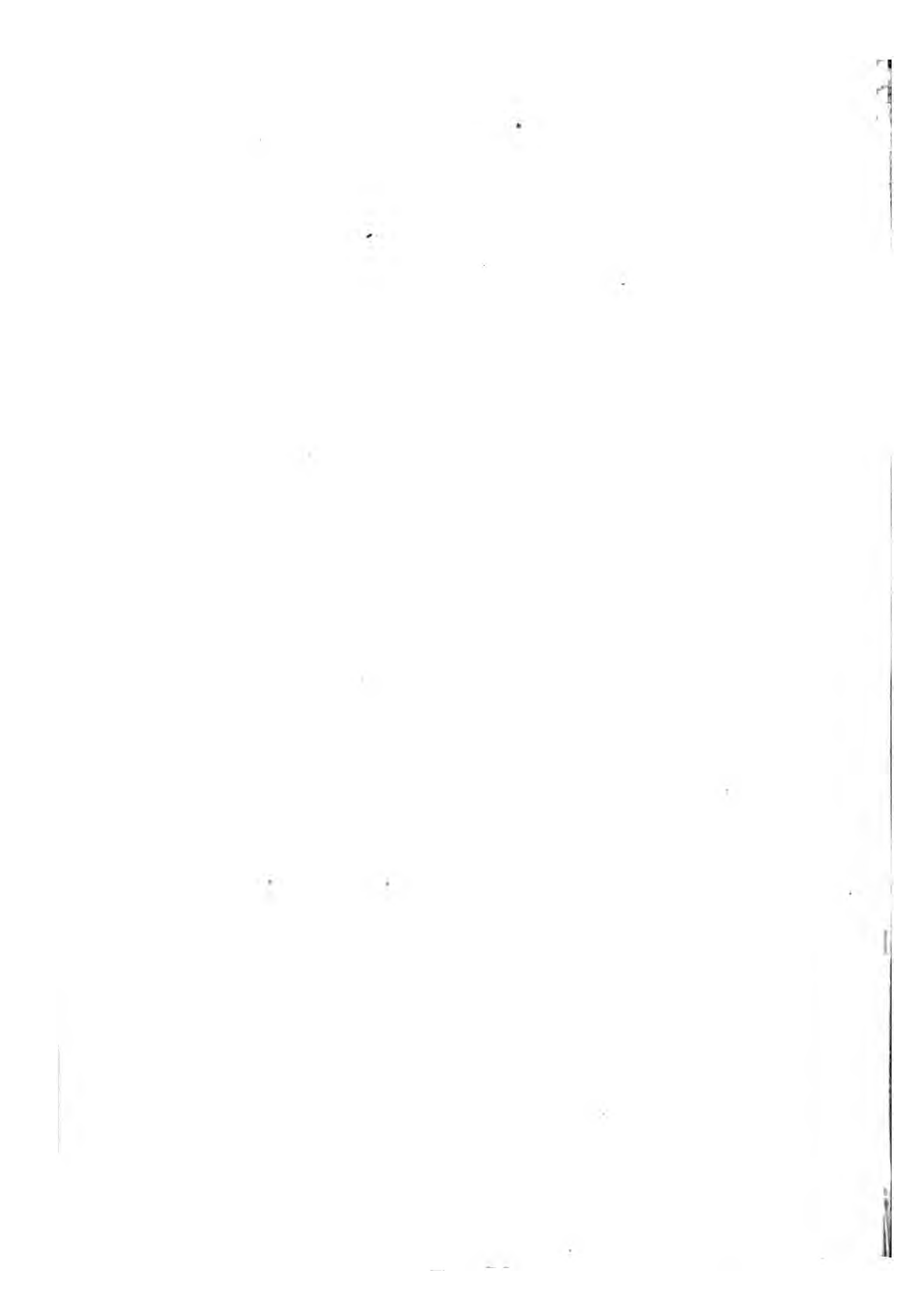
THE  
BEATITUDES  
—  
RICHARD GLOVER



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COMPANIONS FOR A QUIET HOUR.



IX.

The Beatitudes.

## Companions for a Quiet Hour.



I.—A COMPANION TO THE LORD'S TABLE.

II.—PRIVATE THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.

III.—AN INFALLIBLE WAY TO CONTENTMENT

IV.—LUTHER'S TABLE TALK.

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SCRIPTURE.

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VIII.—HYMNS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

IX.—THE BEATITUDES.

X.—THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK, WORK AND  
WARFARE.

Companions for a Quiet Hour.

# THE BEATITUDES

Discourses by

RICHARD GLOVER

*BRISTOL*



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY :  
56, PATERNOSTER ROW ; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.



**I** AM thankful to be asked to reprint the following lectures which have appeared in the *Sunday at Home*.

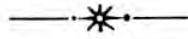
May the great words of the Master be, through these, brought nearer to many lives and be productive of all goodness and consecration.

RICHARD GLOVER.

BRISTOL,

*April*, 1888.

## The Beatitudes.



AND seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him:

And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs 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.

MATTHEW V. 1-12.

# THE BEATITUDES.



## I.

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit; for  
theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

MATT. v. 3.



**W**ITH fear and trembling I would attempt  
to expound and enforce the great  
Beatitudes.

The Sermon on the Mount is not the opening utterance of the Saviour's ministry. He first gathers disciples and appoints apostles, and then in this ordination charge gives His New Testament Church her great prescriptions. Since it was delivered, successive generations of all classes and kindreds of men have felt the authority of God in its tone. Since it was spoken, mankind has found in it, their law of duty, their light on God, their consolation in sorrow. Not merely all who

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went before, but all instructors of men who followed after, have fallen short of this great teaching. It has quickened the universal conscience, raised the general hope, enriched all men with the consolation of the living Providence of God. The great throne-speech of Christ—it is the great date of history, when old things began to pass away and all things to become new.

The Sermon on the Mount summing up the Saviour's teaching, the Beatitudes sum up the Sermon. For the qualities which Christ blesses are the essential graces elsewhere enjoined in more detail ; and the Benedictions which He utters are the promises elsewhere more fully made. It is therefore impossible to do justice to their wealth of meaning. At the same time their very wealth makes it easy to draw some comfort and quickening from them. This latter is all I dare hope to realize.

The crowds are becoming impracticable in their thronging, their excitement, and their vulgar curiosity in His works of healing. It

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will relieve Him of the more listless and worldly if He removes His quarters to a higher altitude and a distance from the throng of men. He goes therefore 'up into a mountain,' or 'the mountain;'—up, that is, from the low shores of Gennesaret to the upland plain which stretched away from seven hundred to one thousand feet above it—with mountains on every hand rising higher still. To one of these summits He repaired—perhaps alone—to pray; and, after a night of prayer with God, in the morning came down from the summit to the elevated position where He had left His disciples. There He chose and ordained the twelve, and there preached this sermon to them and the multitude.

The Beatitudes are His Salutation to Mankind. Entering the world, He greets it with His peace. It seems at first as if He had forgotten for a moment the world in which He was, and used the familiar salutation of the world of light. But the description He gives of those He blesses, and the nature of

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the blessings He proclaims, reveal that there is no mistake. The congratulation is given and benediction addressed to large classes of this suffering world.

John the Baptist gazing on the world saw little in it but sin, and his greeting was the cry Repent. The great and gentle Gaudama—the founder of Buddhism—gazing on the world, saw little but its misery, and proclaimed Patience as the great wisdom, and a Hope of ultimate extinction of conscious life as the great consolation of man. But the Saviour sees more than sin, and more than misery. In His Divine Heart He feels a Boundless Love. In the heart of man He sees a boundless capacity and a responsive life. He has such Divine energy of faith and hope that He can greet class after class as ‘Blessed,’ as rich in joy, possessed or within their reach ; as having a life grandly worth the living ; as being bathed in and filled with the benediction of God.

The Lament over Jerusalem is not uttered over the world at large. He can look on its

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misery without shame and without despair. The verdict 'Very good,' which He passed on the glories of creation, He finds not altogether unsuitable for the results of Providence. This brightness of the Saviour's view is so marvellous that we should note and copy it. We look on the very classes which He greets, and their apparent misery drives us to despair. It is exactly the sight of the poor in body or soul, of the sorrows of the bereaved, the ill-usage of the meek, the seemingly fruitless hungering after righteousness, the impotence of the merciful to effect their purposes, the solitude of sanctity, the distresses of the peacemakers, the sufferings of the godly, that moves men everywhere to feel 'the world is out of joint,' and to gather despair alike of the reality of Providence and the sufficiency of Grace. But here those features of the world that move your compassion or despair receive Christ's congratulations. He reverses all current estimates, and corrects our erring pity and our needless despair, as He exclaims, Happy are



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the poor, the mourners, the meek, the pure, the persecuted! He whose heart melted with pity over every woe, sees, notwithstanding, mercy in all misery, advantage in loss, privilege in all hardship, right ordering in confusion, the success and wisdom of God in what seems the failure of human history.

It is something in a world where Pessimism is a sin that easily besets us, to draw nigh to these utterances of comfort, and try to look below the surface of manifest misery, till we see the secret roots of compensating good.

For these words are not lightly uttered. They are not the paradoxes of conceited contradiction. They are not the satire of some heart cursing the hollow gladness of the world. They are not the poetry of inexperience. As man He shared every sorrow He felicitates, and knew its anguish. As God, the woes of men had sought refuge and relief in His heart. And it is with the profoundest knowledge of their working that He speaks. Yet class after class, multitude after multitude, He hails as blessed, happy, enviable!

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These words which treat our calamities as kindnesses, our woes as mercies, and argue hope from the premises of despair, are to be our theme.

The first is given in briefer form by Luke : 'Blessed are the poor.' I prefer that of Matthew, for he probably heard the sermon, was possibly converted by it, and certainly reports it more fully. He gives the first benediction in the words, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

This word confronts us in its simple majesty. Let us endeavour to understand it : not diluting it, to make it more credible and intelligible, but wistfully and devoutly addressing ourselves to learn its mystery.

At the outset, we mark that here we have evidently the keynote of the whole series. All the classes successively named might be included in the description 'Poor in spirit.' For the 'mourners' are 'poor' for want of gladness : and the 'meek' for want of their rights : and the 'hungerers after righteous-

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ness' for want of grace. And all the blessings named are included in 'the kingdom of heaven,' for it brings comfort, righteousness, mercy, rewards in heaven. So that if the Beatitudes sum up the sermon: this first Beatitude presents us with the sum and essence of the rest.

In endeavouring to attain its meaning, consider :

### I. THOSE BLESSED :

**Blessed are the Poor in Spirit.**

### II. THEIR BLESSING :

**Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

I. And first : Those Blessed : **THE POOR IN SPIRIT.** The strangest of all paradoxes ! If the benediction stopped at the word 'Poor,' and meant only the indigent, it would have been more intelligible. For we see the perils of wealth : its tendency to produce worldly content, to foster pride, to permit men to take liberties with duty, to divide us from our fellows and from our God.

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And we all can discern in the roughness of earthly discomfort an influence waking better longings and raising looks for help from heaven.

But poverty in the soul is a kind of indigence which seems to have no redeeming feature, *and all wise men shrink from it.* To be rich in soul is what our wisdom aspires to—for who is blessed, if not he who is rich in power of will ; in glow of feeling : in light : in happy memories : in buoyant hope ?

Yet the Saviour here says, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit ;’ not those who ‘feel poor,’ not merely the lowly ; but those with poverty-stricken souls—souls in want of all things ; those starving for want of bread of life, sinking for want of wine of life : those poor for want of light on God ; poor for want of light on duty ; those so poor in strength that they dare face no temptation : those so poor in soul-forces that every duty strains them : those without raptures, without complacency, without joy in God or in success : without serenity, without satisfaction in the past, or confidence for the future !

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If any are pitiable, is it not such? And every one of my readers who feels heart and soul poor within him, feels himself one to be commiserated, and presents this poverty as a plea for sympathy, for pity, for help. His poverty is his despair. If he were only rich in soul, he would be indifferent to any poverty of body—but to be without the qualities, the forces, the faculties we most of all desire, is to be poor indeed.

Yet the Saviour says: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' What does He mean? How can the pitiful Christ speak thus?

The secret comes out in the reason He assigns. He saw what we see not—an infinite wealth of God available for all; surpassing all conceivable wealth of soul or circumstances. He saw a heart of God bent on imparting this wealth to human hearts; but, baffled in its efforts to do so, by finding them pre-occupied and satisfied with the poorer wealth of earth, and only succeeding where some aching void was craving for help and strength and love. To His eye, therefore, wealth was poverty, as

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it tended to keep out the truest wealth ; and to His eye poverty of soul was wealth, as that which, ready to admit, was certain to secure the true wealth of God.

He speaks from the consciousness of bringing infinite wealth within reach of the souls of men, and, from His point of view, those were most blessed who had most room within them for the heavenly wealth He brought. Possession seems to Him the real poverty, for the lesser wealth tends to prevent the getting the higher, and the lesser comfort to prevent the getting the heavenly comfort, and the common strength of character tends to prevent the gaining of a higher strength of grace, and natural hope prevents the finding a hope in the smile of God. The Pharisee's self-righteousness tends to prevent the attainment of 'the righteousness of God.' As what is glorious has no glory in the presence of a glory that excelleth, so what is rich has no preciousness if it prevents our gaining something richer still. We are the poorer for having our hands full of silver, if that prevents our

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getting them filled with gold. And because the Saviour felt Himself the bearer of divine delights, of infinite salvation, richest pardon, all-conquering grace, He pitied all who had no room for His gifts, and congratulates all the hungry-hearted on the wealth now near them.

This is most solemn as well as most comforting. For it warns us in our contentment, as much as it cheers us in our despair. 'What is gain to us,' we, like Paul, perchance, should count as loss, as damage, as something standing between us and true wealth. Many a man's wisdom prevents his seeking and finding inspired wisdom. Peter's strength moved him to presume, and ended in a fall, where weakness might have watched and prayed, and found a strength which overcame. Our great possessions may make us, like the young ruler, turn away from 'the treasure in heaven' the Saviour promises to us. Like the Pharisees, we may in our complacency reject the counsel of God against ourselves, while publicans and harlots

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in their despair welcome and enter His kingdom. Like Paul, when weak, then are we strong, for weakness supplies the occasion for the power of Christ to rest on our hearts. And so constant is the connection between self-emptiness and the fulness of God's power resting on us, that we like him would do wisely to welcome, and even glory in, the infirmities that attract the great forces of God to our help.

We have therefore to take this word in its simplest, strangest, fullest meaning as the truth of God. Blessed was the woman who washed Christ's feet with tears ; blessed, the dying thief ; blessed, the Syro-Phœnician woman in her grief ; blessed, Zaccheus in his contrition ; for the soul-emptiness, yearning, necessities, permitted the wealth of heaven to flow into them.

And blessed to-day are all those in deep soul-need ; most blessed, the most needy. Fear not to take this comfort, ye 'poor in spirit.' You to whom life is a great struggle, who yearn for more vitality, who have not



## The Beatitudes.

strength for your cares nor for your duties ; you who have deep sorrows needing solace ; you who have neither plea, excuse, nor sufficiency ; you who have not sufficient light to see all that you should believe ; you who want all things for earth and heaven, blessed are you—for Jesus brings nigh a great salvation, forgiveness, grace, comfort, light—all. And if there is only room in us for His mercies, He will fill us with all the fulness of God. Oh, mourn no longer your poverty ; but claim your share in the great benediction of God.

In marking those who are truly blessed, we have necessarily anticipated a good deal concerning the Benediction. I need add, therefore, only a very little on my second point.

Consider—

II. Their Blessing : THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. By the 'kingdom of heaven,' the Saviour always means that kingdom of grace which He, man's true King, sets up in the world. The kingdom

## The Poor in Spirit.

whose subjects serve God find now and here His protection, His salvation, His guidance, His mercies ; and find all these in fulness and perfection hereafter. The kingdom of heaven is, therefore, in the experience of men, grace, life, righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost ; every blessing of relationship and grace.

And the Saviour proclaims that this Great Kingdom in all its great mercy belongs to 'the poor in spirit.' It is theirs, as meant for them. The citizenship is open to them. Christ's demand is only Need. Grace, like air, fills every vacuum of the heart. Not righteous only, but sinners are called to it, and for them are the gates opened, and to them the welcome given. The infinite treasures of the kingdom are for these, the great atonement, the everlasting pardon, are for all, but specially for those in deepest need. Peace with God, God's love shed abroad in the heart, hope full of immortality, life abundant, grace sufficient, power of victory, power of usefulness, power of prayer, the great em-

## The Beatitudes.

ployments of the kingdom, its highest equipments, and its great rewards, all these are for the poor in spirit, all these things are theirs, in the great sense of being provided for them, brought to them, pressed on their acceptance 'without money and without price.'

And this being so, every sort of soul-poverty is a blessing, as giving room for the grace and wealth of God; and the more large the need, the better for him who has this wealth within his reach.

Thank God, that when none are worthy, all are welcome, and that the more needy the more welcome we are to Him. And the provision being so rich and free, and God's love so great, multitudes of poor souls have entered the kingdom, and been enriched with all its wealth! Some chiefs of sinners, some waifs and strays, some wrecked and seemingly ruined, some bankrupt backsliders, some despairing doubters, multitudes that none can number have felt their poverty, have carried it to their Saviour, and lost it in the kingdom of heaven!

## The Poor in Spirit.

Blessed are the poor in spirit still ; and if you have room for more light, for protection, for increase of strength, help in self-mastery ; if you need more peace, more joy, more hope, more feeling ; if you have room, in a word, for salvation and the love of God, blessed are you, for the kingdom of heaven is for you.

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### II.

Blessed are they that Mourn; for they  
shall be Comforted.

MATT. v. 4.



**T**HE first Beatitude having greeted all souls whose poverty permitted the entrance of blessing; in those which follow, successive classes of The Poor in Spirit are named by Christ, and greeted with their appropriate benediction. The order seems determined by that of our progressive development. Each Beatitude names a smaller circle of souls standing on a higher elevation; the whole giving the scale of graces or experiences which, when progress is fair and life is faithful, successively appear.

In the first Beatitude the Saviour seems to embrace the whole of mankind. For who is not poor in spirit? And in this second

## The Mourners.

He is only a little less universal in His greeting ; for who has not been a mourner ?

‘The air is full of farewells to the dying, of wailings for the dead.’ The world seems a vale of tears, and life itself a shadow of death. Are not all men covered in this great greeting ? Not all, for there is more in life than sadness ; there is the buoyancy of health, the pleasure of friendship, and the bliss of love. There is delight in action, there is the satisfaction of success. So that many do not mourn, their balance is on the bright side. Some have not reached their griefs, some have survived them. So that all are not ‘Mourners.’

Yet so many are ; and their sorrow is so grave that, perhaps, of all these strange greetings of Christ, the strangest in daring, in mystery, in faith, is this : “Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.”

Let us look at

I. THOSE BLESSED :

**Blessed are they that Mourn.**

## The Beatitudes.

### II. THEIR BLESSING :

*For they shall be Comforted.*

I. We begin with : Those Blessed : BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN. The Saviour's word is so wonderful that the first thought of most expounders has been to render it credible by limiting its dimensions. They therefore assume the Saviour is thinking only of spiritual sorrow ; of those who mourn for sin, or whose grief for those removed is the sacred sorrow that looks heavenward, and is hallowed by a gracious admixture of faith and resignation.

I do not ignore the difficulty which so many feel. For sorrow hardens some natures or crushes them ; trials make some selfish, and send some for comfort to ways of reckless evil. There is a sorrow of the world which worketh death. Yet Christ inserts no limit, as He speaks not of the actual possession of blessing, but of its infinite provision. He did not need to do so. For the universal sorrow He felt there was a universal consolation.

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The pitiful Christ looked on all woe,—natural, spiritual, wild or calm, despairing or trustful, and He hails all mourners without exception as blessed, as happy, in view of the abundant consolation which He brings near, which He freely offers, which He will successfully apply to all permitting Him to bless them. And whatever the origin of their grief, He hails all who have room within them for a great consolation, as more blessed in the presence of the richer comfort He brings than they would have been in the absence of any need for it.

I therefore dare not enfeeble this word by making unwarranted addition, or adding limitations the Saviour did not add. I dare not deprive any of the comfort Christ sends. But I take this word as God's sunshine falling on all sorrow.

It is worth while to ask exactly what classes are embraced in this ample gospel; for thus we shall the more easily recognise our own portion in its consolation. Note, therefore, those whom it cheers with its benediction.



## The Beatitudes.

1. First it includes *All the Bereaved*. The countless multitude whose treasures are in graves ; the funereal host travelling grave-wards, overshadowed with the darkness of death. All sorts of souls are in it—orphans and widows, and those who have nourished and brought up children only to see them wither before their eyes. It includes men who say, ‘Come, ye that pass by, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow ;’ and women weeping Rachel-like for their children, refusing to be comforted because they are not ; it embraces those stunned with recent grief and those whose grief ages, but does not leave them, who say with the poet,

Time but the impression stronger makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear.

It includes those pierced with many losses ; those that can find no moral solution of their experience, no resulting good, no relief of comfort, no response to prayer ; those despairing of the earth around and the heaven above them ; a vast multitude in every sort and measure of woe. And these Christ greets

## The Mourners.

and calls blessed, happy, as enviable in their high advantage of having the great comfort near them, and having room to admit it.

In addition to those mourning the loss of friends, the Saviour in this word includes, further—

2. *All the Afflicted.*—We are vulnerable in so many points, heart, mind, body, estate, that in addition to those lamenting the dead there is a multitude of mourners. Some are poor and some are feeble, and some have survived all who could have helped them. Some have been foiled in the great ambitions of their lives. Some have been crossed in love; some wish they had been. Some grind beneath the oppression of the strong or the calumny of the vindictive. Some lack the strength to win their daily bread, and some the work which would let them do so. Some are diseased with hopeless maladies. Some have to witness those dearest to them afflicted. Some have broken hearts, through their child's transgression. Some are unequal to the struggle of life. Oh, how endless are the forms of

## The Beatitudes.

sorrow that throng the world! Yet to the slave, the wronged, the oppressed, the struggling, the failing, the broken-hearted, Christ comes and says, Blessed are ye, for ye can be comforted.

And His greeting embraces—

3. *All who Mourn for Sin*,—not so numerous a throng as they ought to be, but still more numerous than many think them. For Conscience does not always slumber. Providential penalties awake it, God's Spirit fortifies it with His Light. With every forecast of the immortal future, the thought of sin grows into a burden on the heart. If any gentler sense of redeeming love is present, the sense of ingratitude rouses shame as well as fear. In honourable youth this mourning may only be a grave, sweet sadness of aspiration and contrition. But in multitudes there is the agony of remorse; the loathing of the folly that has blighted life; the yearning for lost innocence with all its gentle joys; the damning sense of having injured or degraded others, and of lying beneath the vengeance

## The Mourners.

of their Great Protector. There is no dialect under heaven which is not employed to express the grave solicitude of sinners.

What shall I, frail man, be pleading,  
Who for me be interceding,  
When the just are mercy needing?

is a question asked by hearts all over the globe.

And when the sense of God rises in the soul, in the majesty of His purity, laying bare the sin and crime of life in all its inexcusable evil, the spirit is overwhelmed with dismay. In its extreme degrees, when a wasted life seems irrevocable ; when faculties have been destroyed, forces lost, sensibilities blunted by evil ; when their example is a curse to those they fain would save from following it ; when they are doomed to see a spreading mischief resulting from their sin which they cannot overtake, and are impotent to repair—then there is a sorrow within which no other sorrow on earth can equal. Then, Conscience is a worm that dies not, and memory a fire

## The Beatitudes.

unquenchable. Yet for these the Great Redeemer has consolation. His greeting reaches all the depths of this bottomless pit of earthly despair. And these also He hails as happy, as blessed, in the fact that to them also a great consolation is brought nigh; a comfort and salvation so great, that a greater bliss is now within their reach than would have been had they needed no repentance.

Surely there is in this word the glad tidings which some of my readers need.

Such being the persons blessed; take a further step, and consider secondly :

II. The Blessing of the Mourners: FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED. Men are silent in the presence of sorrow. They can speak to others when pursuing pleasure, transacting business, seeking knowledge; but to men in grief—how rarely have they any word so strong and true as to be felt to be worth the uttering. Their effective comfort is the silent sympathy which sits with them on the earth, like Job's friends at first, and shares without attempting to console grief.

## The Mourners.

Even we who believe feel the facts of grief very solid, and the commonplaces of comfort very feeble—and shrink from the unequal wrestling with others' sorrow.

But here, undismayed by the aggregate of woes confronting Him, the Saviour hails innumerable multitudes of the sorrow-stricken and despairing with the word: Blessed are ye! happy are ye! for ye shall be comforted.

Many have thought there is nothing so profitless as sorrow: tending, as it seems to do, to depress vitality, to confuse purpose, to separate man from his fellows, to enfeeble the healthful interests of life.

But to the eye of Jesus sorrow seemed a Jacob's angel, strengthening by wrestling with us: and leaving us not dead, but emancipated, enriched and comforted. For He says, 'They shall be comforted!'

He is not ignorant of woe and of the difficulty of relieving it. For He sounded its depths; was a 'Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' What He calls comfort is not the poor mitigation of grief we

## The Beatitudes.

sometimes call by that name : the dull contentment scarce distinguishable from despair. But the memory of the Father's bosom and the loving serenity of heaven are in His mind when He speaks of comfort. And yet, gauging thus all woe, He proclaims that this celestial delight and rest and joy are possible to all who mourn : that the weakest may reach it—that it is here without money and without price, for all to take it who will.

It is a marvellous greeting indeed—in its universality, in its strength. *For our Lord assumes that there is no sorrow inconsolable ;*—not Job's, in the completeness of its desolations—not David's sorrow over Absalom, in the aggravations of its despair !

He assumes that no burden of the heart need go without complete relief : no care, no trouble of poverty or disease : no solicitude concerning others. That such is the power of prayer and help of Providence, that all such sorrow can be comforted.

And, greatest marvel of all, He assumes that all sorrow for sin—and all sorrow caused

## The Mourners.

by sin, can find comfort in the great Redemption. He assumes that all sin—even the darkest backsliding—can be forgiven: that the guiltiest can have peace with God: that grace can more than restore all lost power, and give us back more than an equivalent for all wasted opportunities: that no evil is unconquerable: yea, that there is no evil which may not by God's grace be turned into good. So that even for the darkest despair of remorse there is provided the consolation of God.

To Christ's eye, so large is the love of God, and so ample the provision of His grace, so omnipotent His cross, so helpful His Providence, that every sorrow may find what He, whose home is heaven, calls Comfort.

What a gospel is here! Is it credible?

Thank God, if numberless instances prove anything, there is abundant proof of the abundance of God's consolation of sorrow!

How many mourners for the dead have had, by the Saviour's grace, their sorrow turned into joy! Whatever Marys watch



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beside the grave there are still angels that console them. 'The night also is God's,' as the Psalmist teaches us. In the night of sorrow the soul is sobered, humbled, purified. The coarseness of prosperity changes into the refinements of affection and religion.

The fountains of the great deep within us are broken up. The immortal part wakes, presents its claims, asks its questions. None but God can answer our questions and satisfy our desires. The heart turns all voice, and Heaven turns all ear to its pleadings and its inquiries. Whether we survive this mortal life, and where; and the conditions of bliss, and the help available to reach it; these themes occupy the inquiries of the awakened soul. And the uncreated light dawns gradually on the soul with its great disclosures, till, somehow, they who in despair asked, 'If a man die shall he live again?' sing, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and out of my flesh I shall see God.' Weeping endureth for a night, but this joy cometh in the morning. And the mourner who groped after light,

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comfort, God, finds them, and with them a great peace. The memory of a broken, becomes the hope of a renewed, fellowship.

They come down from their Mounts of Communion with faces shining with a celestial radiance ; not only comforted but comforters of others, with the power of inspiring peace and strengthening the troubled hearts.

It is the Mourners who have always been the great prophets, the great poets, the great teachers of men.

Love and sorrow, as Archer Butler taught us, were the great factors in the life of Jesus. 'Love drew the Godhead of Christ from its throne : Sorrow, sanctifying sorrow, lifted the manhood into meetness to share it !'—and as with the Captain so with the sons He leads to glory : our manhood is not destroyed, it is 'perfected through sufferings.' And one of the commonest of all pathways trod by man, is the path which leads through sorrow to serenity.

And is sorrow for the dead exceptional in this, that it is comforted ? Is there no

## The Beatitudes.

evidence of the comfort of other sorrows? Why, the compensations of affliction are universally recognised. Would any reader have had a life without trials? How coarse, how vulgar, how shallow, how feeble such a life becomes! How universally those that hallow their afflictions find them change into a quiet resting-place. You have an invalid child, and she is a heaven in your home. You lose a fortune, and find a Saviour. Trials make you pray. 'Affliction worketh glory,' the glory of discipleship, consecration, of redeeming the time. We never are at rest till some storm strands us on the Rock of Ages. Providence reveals its loving tenderness, and Prayer its power of engaging the omnipotence of God; and Grace imparts its light and forgiveness and peace—to none so richly as to the afflicted. Gather these sweet uses of adversity, and come to Christ, and have thy sorrow changed to peace.

And if bereavement and affliction find consolation, on how vast a scale have those who mourned for sin found comfort!

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He knew when He uttered this greeting how much the cross would achieve : the sufficiency of its expiation : its power to melt, to win, to bring nigh the sinner : to give peace with God, to form the link through which all forces and comforts of the Spirit would flow into the soul. And, indeed, mourning for sin, the chief sinners have found a great salvation. The outcasts have come nigh, the backsliders have been healed ; those 'last' have become first in the kingdom of heaven. Dying thieves have repented on their cross, and risen from their cross to Paradise.

And it is not only forgiveness. But there is a strange, all but incredible power in the grace of Jesus to restore more than had been lost. From unwomanly coarseness, grace lifts the contrite heart and so refines it, that she who had been 'a sinner' washes Christ's feet with tears, and shows the glorified how to bring their vials of sweet odours to His feet !

Yea, grace seems to convert the sin as well as the sinner, and make it part of the all things that work for good. 'Much sin'

## The Beatitudes.

becomes, through much forgiveness, 'much love.' Falls become watchfulness; the memory of faults a tender charity; back-sliding turns to gratitude; a weakness into prayer; the denial of Christ into a power to strengthen our brethren. While, in addition, *Grace enables men to effect the great impossibility of overtaking, arresting and ending the evil they have wrought.*

Yes, here and now, by multitudes that none can number, the heavenly comfort of the contrite heart is abundantly enjoyed.

We see these things; Jesus saw them more clearly. And He saw more than these—the consolations of heaven, where all tears are wiped away, the victory over sin complete, and all desires of the enlarged heart fully gratified. And seeing what multitudes would come out of great tribulation, and having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, would stand before the throne, He says: 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

Some, content with their portion here, have

## The Mourners.

neither eye nor longing to lift on high, and miss these things. Is it marvellous if He felicitates the sufferers on the light affliction, which is but for a moment, which works the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?

Reader, for thee Christ has died ; for thy salvation He yearns ; for thy healing the Comforter has come. However deep thy woe ; however vast thy trouble ; however dark thy guilt ; however strong thy chains of evil, for thee there is great consolation. Come to thy Saviour and receive it.

## The Beatitudes.

### III.

Blessed are the Meek: for they shall inherit the Earth.

MATT. v. 5.



I AM now to treat the Unappreciated Beatitude. For while there are multitudes poor in spirit, and many mourners, the meek are few: so few that we hardly understand the meaning of the name. It has come to suggest feebleness of spirit, the passive character that accepts instead of conquering Fate, the apologetic existence, grateful for sufferance and void of high ambitions. As to the old Greeks, so to the modern Christian, lowliness of mind is apt to wear the aspect of infirmity. Our heathen forefathers on this island, according to the Roman historian, found a reason for insurrection in the

## The Meek.

argument that 'men got nothing by meekness but an increase of their burdens.' And that old heathen strain seems in our blood still.

It is not difficult to understand this imperfect appreciation. The days of outward persecution are ended, and with them the great stage for the display of heroic meekness. There is no demand for the meekness that can endure spoiling of goods, or sword, or stake. Civil disabilities have ceased. The Christian from being the paradox of worldly wisdom and the jest of worldly fashion, is master of the social situation. We have to pay heavily for our privileges, and part of the price is the loss of that heroism, that unworldliness, that lowliness, that gentleness, which the Saviour calls by the name of meekness.

Yet we never can get into any circumstances where any Christian grace is a superfluity. There are still strifes arising, injuries to be borne, tempers to be repressed. The presence of meekness in our homes, churches,



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in the state itself, means a sacred peace with all its blessed and restful influence. The absence of it means strife, with its confusion and every evil work.

Some need exhortation to cherish a neglected grace; some cherishing it need encouragement and consolation. Perhaps the very lack of appreciation of this Beatitude indicates a special need for its lessons.

Let us consider :

### I. THOSE BLESSED :

*Blessed are the Meek.*

### II. THEIR BLESSING :

*They shall inherit the earth.*

And first consider :

I. Those Blessed : BLESSED ARE THE MEEK. The Saviour expects to find meekness with its sorrows, needs and glories amongst men. He expects that wisdom will have taught some ; example charmed others ;

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that the folly of anger will have been felt by many, and the movings of grace obeyed by more : that the poor in spirit will be meek through lowliness, and made indifferent to the pride and property of earth by their possession of the kingdom of heaven. He expects mourning to have made many hearts humble, and the comfort of God to have made them gentle. He expects His own Divine Condescension to be creative of this grace. He has Himself come choosing the lowliest lot and the meekest way, as those that fit redemption best. He has revealed in incarnate form the lowliness and meekness of the Lord God Almighty as His supremest glory. He has chosen the Cross as the path to empire, the secret of widest influence, His resting-place of bliss. And He expects disciples to behold His glory, and catch the spirit of this all-mastering meekness.

His first lesson to the disciples was to deny—that is, to dethrone Self, and take up the Cross. His last example is to endure the contradiction of sinners and pray for the

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forgiveness of those who slay Him. He never permits them to anticipate a time when meekness will not be needed. He warns them that they will be hated by all men for His name's sake. The method of their mastery of the world, is, like His own, to be Endurance; blessing when persecuted; turning the left cheek when smitten on the right. He sends them forth, sheep on a mission to convert wolves; to win them by permitting their wolfish rage to rend them.

He expects meekness to be the seal on every servant's brow, his strength, his charm, his likeness to his Lord. And He means by that word, not any feebleness of spirit—no passive inertia of soul, but pure spirituality that soars above all objects of the world's ambition; the content of inward wealth in the midst of outward poverty; the dignity of soul that can forgive; the lowliness that springs from fellowship with God.

If such features are altogether absent from our character, we are not disciples of the Divine Redeemer. If they are feeble, our

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whole religious character is feeble also. It must be passing strange to the Saviour of men, that Meekness should seem a strange thing to us. It is the fibre of Christian character, one of the noblest fruits of faith, one of the heavenly works of grace.

It should dwell and thrive and reign in every soul.

In some it is found. Let me indicate a few of the forms in which its presence is seen, and over which this benediction of the Saviour rests.

1. The meekness here blessed of Christ is, *The Lowliness of the Spiritual*. There are some, thank God, whose eyes have not been confused with the glamour of things worldly; who are not covetous of earth's wealth, ambitious of its distinction, or eager for its delights. They have seen a vision, 'The King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off.' Their affections that are on earth they mortify. They give where others hoard; consecrate the wealth which others use in display; deem the poor God's bankers,

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and lay up for themselves Treasure in Heaven.

They addict themselves to the course of life which promises highest usefulness, not greatest wealth. They exclude from the scope of their plans of life what men may think of them. To walk with God and help others to do so is their aim. Others blame them for making 'needless sacrifices;' for being over-scrupulous; for the foolishness that neglects great opportunities. But they fear pomp and station and wealth, and have seen celestial glories that move a higher ambition than any of these.

Such have comfort: in calm labour and in lowly peace; but they sometimes need a comfort richer still.

For it is not in human nature to forego distinction and security without a pang. They are obscure, are mocked, and sometimes they question whether a little worldliness, which might bring them into the broader pathways of men, might not enable them to extend their influence. Sometimes

## The Meek.

the darker question rises, whether the sacrifice they make is fruitful; whether result on earth or reward in heaven is commensurate with its pain.

If my reader has cherished this holy lowliness, let him mark it as itself a comfort; he is one of whom the Saviour says, *Blessed are the meek.*

This meekness blessed by Christ includes also :

2. *Patience under Injury.* — We live in fellowship, dependent on one another. But we differ from one another in views, desires, principles. Our interests often do conflict, and more often seem to do so. Our faults, and sometimes even our virtues, elicit anger. Every fault of our neighbour has in it a prompting to something injuring ourselves. Now, selfishness injures us in our property; now, envy in our good name. Now, we are misunderstood; and, now again, understood yet opposed. No purity of motive will escape misconstruction. Elijah will always seem to some the Troubler of

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Israel. Goodness, if conspicuous and courageous, will attract calumny and hate. None can get through the world without suffering some injuries, and the way we bear them reveals our character, and forms our character as well.

The protection provided by Nature against injury is Anger—resenting it, revenging it, and rousing the whole force of our nature to do so.

There are, alas! many Christians who hardly get beyond this natural law. But the way of Grace is different, and some choose it. Some, reviled, revile not again; persecuted, they bless. They ponder every accusation as a help by which their penitence may discover some sin to be repented. They gaze on the Sufferer of Calvary, and mark how He accepts the persecution of a world, and like Him they pray for the forgiveness of the wrong they endure.

Some are so full of pity for those who injure them that they cannot cherish vindictive feelings. To pain these is to interest

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them hereafter in your welfare. They are sandal trees perfuming the axe that wounds them. Too few act thus; resentment finds easy access into most hearts. We take the revenge of proclaiming our wrongs, when we forego an attempt to punish them. And bitterness of thought and word and act retaliates, and inflames the evil from which we suffer.

There is thus Strife in our homes, in our churches, in society, in the state. And Meekness is rare.

Whenever it is practised, it has its hours of heavenly acknowledgment and gracious rest; but it also has its pains. It is abused, and its injuries increase. It is misunderstood for weakness or indifference. It irritates still further the wrong which feels defeated when it cannot rouse the wronged to anger. And the sorrows of the meek are many. Take meanwhile this comfort. If with all your heart you are addressing yourself to endure injury with patience, to forgive in silent love the wrongs which break



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your heart—you are of the number of those of whom Christ says, *Blessed are the meek.*

And there is a third kind of meekness, still found among us :

3. *The meekness of the benefactor.*—It is a marvellous picture of meekness which Paul presents to us in the description of his life (1 Cor. iv. 11-13). 'To this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place ; and labour, working with our own hands : being reviled, we bless : being persecuted, we suffer it : being defamed, we entreat : we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.' It is a picture true of almost every great benefactor of mankind. None is assailed so much as the reformer, even though purest mercy animate his every act. The man who started in England the great cause of the Emancipation of the slave died of a broken heart from the contumely with which he was treated. It fared worse with Abolitionists in America. There are

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women to-day in this land pursuing the moral reformation so much needed and the protection of their feebler sisters, and no beauty of holiness, nor glory of the Saviour's likeness, protects them from bitter taunts that wound like the piercings of a sword.

Our missionary brethren go forth sometimes into savage as well as heathen lands. What records of heroic meekness do you come across in the story of African missions from Robert Moffat to Bishop Hannington ; in the early story of the evangelisation of the South Sea Islands ; in the story of New Guinea to-day. Strength of gentleness has its insults, strength of mercy its abuse, strength of compassion its martyr's death.

With what meekness multitudes in other fields bear the obscure perils which bring no renown.

What is seen on a conspicuous scale on these fields is found at home. There is no path of usefulness we can tread, where meekness is not a necessary grace. If you will be of service to your fellows, you will have

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to face opposition, misunderstanding, scorn, hate. And unless your love is strengthened with meekness you will fail.

Are you finding a Gethsemane or a Calvary in any work of faith or labour of love ; do you need to summon all your lowliness and self-restraint to persist in a course in which you are misunderstood? You too are included in this great benediction, 'Blessed are the meek.' Ponder the need for such a grace, the rareness of it, and aspire to belong to that class so marked with the likeness of the Lamb of God.

For, blessed in the sweetness of their life, I have now to ask you to consider the additional blessing they receive from the Lord.

II. Their blessing is, **THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.** If Jesus had said 'HEAVEN,' His word would have sounded less strange. For we all feel that in their action there is much that betoken<sup>s</sup> meetness for the inheritance of the saints. But when He says they shall inherit 'The Earth,' His word surprises us. For they seem quite unfitted to gain or

## The Meek.

keep any earthly heritage. They will not condescend to take part in the strife ; they sacrifice their rights ; permit themselves to be ill-used ; seem to be at everybody's mercy, and bound 'to go to the wall.' Yet the Saviour says, 'They shall inherit the earth !' Yes ; and in the fullest sense of the word they do so. For

(1) More than all other classes, *They enjoy whatever God sends them.* Our wealth is always in the ratio of our possessions, multiplied by our power of enjoyment. And you will observe that while the range of difference in the amount of our possessions is limited, the range of difference in the power of enjoyment is very large. The thankful heart overflows with delight in simplest mercies, while another will fret with indignation at any lot short of the most distinguished. The meek have gratitude, have the peace of regretless lives, have the fulness of their joy undiminished by discontent, by doubt, by envy, by distrust. They have free hearts at leisure to delight in the beauties

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of Nature, the friendship of man, the faithfulness of God. They know nothing of either competitor or rival. The lowly valleys where they dwell are green pastures with still waters. And to the unworldly there comes such power to pray, such visions of heaven, such comfort, such whisperings of God's approval, that if success in life is measured by the joy extracted from it, the Meek are those who more than the worldly inherit the earth.

But there is more than this in their lot.

2. *They inherit the earth, in the sense of possessing more of it than others.* Fighting is not a thing that pays. The quarrelsome are not the rich. Sharp men cut their own fingers. Those readiest to look after themselves do not really know how to do it. It is the meek who thrive, not the unscrupulous. So constantly indeed is this the case, that their worldly prosperity is their only danger. They prosper because their calmness gives judgment, their content gives safety, their fairness attracts confidence.

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All men like to deal with men they can trust. Character helps, it does not hurt business. One half of the over-reaching practised by the world springs from a fear of being over-reached. The unworldly and honourable, as soon as they are known to be such, are protected from all of that moiety of injury.

Besides God is on their side, whispering wisdom, blessing their going out and coming in; and God's favour tells, whatever men may think of it.

So Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that to come. The meekest sect in England to-day is not the poorest. Robert Haldane, in the gracious meekness of his heart, sold his estates for £35,000, and gave it to the cause of Christian missions; and the estates he sold came all back again to his family through the marriage of his child. 'Them that honour Me, I will honour,' says God. And so the unworldly prosper in the world. 'I have been young, and now am old, yet have

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I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.' 'Trust in the Lord, and do good. So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.' The meek inherit the earth in the sense of possessing it.

3. *The meek are rewarded by a sovereignty that none else can reach.*

They are the calm advisers to whom men listen, the uncrafty whom they trust. The less they seek the more they find of influence with their fellow-men. 'The man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth;' and what an empire over the souls of men he has wielded in the last three thousand years. Gaudama, the founder of Buddhism, is conspicuous in the history of mankind for the exquisite gentleness, the marvellous meekness of his nature. Though 2,500 years have passed away, probably one-fourth of mankind sit at his feet and take him as their guide. The 'Saints' are remembered and regarded when the mightiest are forgotten.

The martyr's stake has ever been a throne,

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the blood of martyrs the Church's seed. Within four centuries of the obscure birth of the Church of Jesus, she is found wielding the powers of the Roman Empire. Her meekness has been the Church's might in far-off heathen lands, and on our own shores as well.

The meek and lowly believers of the Reformation period who could die for their Lord have given England liberty, have given the determining impulses which have made her what she is.

The statesmen whose policy and whose wisdom is the gentle equity that seeks the people's good, are those to whom all nations turn, whose guidance they follow, and whose names are held in blessed memory. Summon to your recollection the names of those who in town or village you have known as carrying the greatest weight. Are they not those of men and women of gracious lowly goodness? In private life and common relationships, in the conflict between meekness and evil, Meekness ever wins, has its



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ways, gains its opponent, finds its heart's desires, emerges crowned and blessed.

Seek this victory and this sovereignty. 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil. Overcome evil with good.' Whoso can suffer will surely reign. The way through a Calvary to Power in heaven and in earth, is the way we all must tread. Wear thy crown of thorns, and on a painless brow thou shalt wear many crowns. Joy, prosperity, sovereignty are with the meek. 'In Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness.' Let us repent, that our small natures have fretted where they should have endured, and let us gaze on the meek Saviour till we are changed into His image, and learn the Meek and Lowly Heart, whose Yoke is easy, whose Burden is light, and whose recompense is heavenly and everlasting.

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## Hungering and Thirsting.

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### IV.

Blessed are they which do Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness : for they shall be filled.

MATT. v. 6.



**I**N each successive Benediction there is a suggestion that it is the habit of goodness to improve.

The first blessed mere Poverty of soul, the second finds that poverty developed into something of finer fibre—into the Sorrow which comes of true life or true love. The existence of strong and gentle Meekness marks the development found where sorrow has purified and solace has sweetened the soul. And now we are to deal with a still nobler mark of manhood—*the Hunger after Righteousness.*

By 'Righteousness,' the Saviour means more than we usually note by that term.

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The wear of words, continually impoverishing their meaning, has told on this word 'righteousness.' Throughout Scripture it is habitually used for 'Goodness' in its broadest forms. It is frequently used in the specific sense of generosity, and a sense of kindness is never absent from it. Its meaning has worn away, until to-day it suggests little more than uprightness—honesty of dealing, innocence of life, sincerity of character.

The Saviour employs it in its old Bible sense, as meaning all that is beautiful in lovingkindness, all that is stately in holiness, all that is gracious in honour.

There are those who hunger and thirst after goodness in this large sense. The world pities them, deeming their desire folly, their struggle at once painful and fruitless.

And the pains of this Hunger are indeed great and many. Yet the Saviour greets the Hungerers with His benediction, and promises that their longing will not be futile, nor their pain unrecompensed, but that they shall be filled with the graces they desire.

## Hungering and Thirsting.

Let us consider this great word, and mark :

### I. THOSE BLESSED :

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

### II. THEIR BLESSING :

For they shall be filled.

I. Those Blessed: THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS. The world imagines such are few. It sees men hungering after gold, comfort, knowledge, power; but the longing after purity and goodness is one which rarely attracts its notice. The biggest things in the world go unseen by the world, and when men see this hunger, they are sceptical of its sincerity and contemptuous of its solicitude.

And, indeed, it is to be admitted that those following after goodness are too few; and especially those whose pursuit has that intensity that would warrant the expression *Hungering and thirsting*

But there are some, and indeed not a few,

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who cherish this strange desire with intensity. For we are made in the image of God, and there is no soul that is quite destitute of this trace of the diviner quality of our being. The body is not the only seat of appetite. The heart has its yearnings for love, and reason its longings for light, and the soul has its yearnings for that goodness which is its true life.

Probably no soul is absolutely without some longing to become better than it is. A nature never resisting its evil inclination, or seeking to suppress a weakness, is surely so rare as to be phenomenal in its license and abandonment.

Most men have some wish to be better than they are. They show their spiritual nature by some shame or regret at the wrong they have done, by instinctive respect for goodness—even, to some extent, by the hypocrisy which copies goodness or the envy that resents it. Were we not made for righteousness, the disquietude of soul at our imperfections, shown in these various ways,

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## Hungering and Thirsting.

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would not be felt. Unfortunately, too commonly the aim is poor,\*contemplating little beyond the conventional propriety and the common honesty of life.

Yet in many the Divine and Immortal part is moved with higher aspirations. When Thought begins to ponder the meaning of life, Goodness takes a higher value in men's estimates. Any example of the beauty of holiness thrills them with a strange respect. With the feeling of immortality there arises a dread of an everlasting consciousness of imperfection, and an enduring self-reproach, and this dread stimulates desire still further. Mercies of God add force to those yearnings, and the demands of God elevate still further their aim.

Conscience—the Word behind us, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it,'—becomes clearer the more it is obeyed. Every penalty of wrong tends to increase the desire to shed off the evil of our life. And the Holy Spirit of God, who broods on our hearts, keeps stirring the sacred discontent and

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imparting power to the upward moving of the soul.

Hence, in vast multitudes of hearts, the sense of an aching void. Hence, the religiousness of man, which makes him everywhere a worshipper. Hence, the multitude of religious ascetics—(in India alone they probably exceed a score of millions)—seeking by abandonment of the world the purification of the soul. Hence, all that yearning after God, which in all ages and lands has somewhat relieved the darkness brooding on the face of mankind.

And in innumerable hearts where its presence is unsuspected this longing works. None guessed that a hunger after righteousness dwelt in the heart of Zaccheus, and moved the modest munificence of his life. None thought that the breast of the woman who was a sinner was the home of sacred regrets and pure relenting. None guessed that in the heart of the dying thief, honourable feelings of compunction, reverence, and repentance could find place.

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But these feelings were there unseen ; and feelings akin to these dwell in innumerable souls to-day.

We deem the number of souls ripe for surrender to God small and limited ; but the Saviour deems *The Harvest*, that is, not the number of mere souls, but of *souls ripe for the gathering* — ‘*plenteous* ;’ and lamented the waste of candour, longing, preparedness, through the fewness of those that gathered them. And when this *Hunger* turns its eye Godward and gazes upon that Calvary Throne which is ‘the place of His people’s Sanctuary,’ then it becomes the true Repentance, which is the mother of all graces in the soul, the hand that grasps the salvation of God ; the lowly grace over which the angels do well to rejoice ; the mysterious reverence which adores the purity before which it trembles, which trusts the Saviour its sins have crucified, and which prays for cleansing, though it be possible only through a baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire.

From this hunger of contrition the new



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## The Beatitudes.

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life dates, and all Christian graces take their rise in it.

And where the growth of the better life is fair and unimpeded, this hunger and thirst increase. With each attainment a finer penitence and a loftier aspiration rise in the soul.

‘Not as though I had already attained, neither were already perfect,’ is the feeling which moves to an effort ever rising in power and dignity. The longing to be conformed to Him, to know His resurrection power, to get that power of sacrifice and willingness to die for others which Paul calls ‘the fellowship of His sufferings,’ dignifies the soul, till with more intensity of purpose than avarice or ambition ever know, the soul hungers and thirsts to be like its God.

‘Then shall I be satisfied,’ said one great hungerer, ‘when I awake in Thy likeness.’

Blessed indeed are those thus hungering ; for this longing after goodness is the wisdom as well as the dignity of man.

The world thinks it foolish ; but read the

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Book of Proverbs, and you can see the old Hebrew sage made the pursuit and practice of goodness the whole of Wisdom. Read the Dialogues of Plato, and you will find the Greek philosopher in absolute agreement with him.

For the perfecting of our character is the supreme good.

It is the state of our Soul, not of our circumstances that chiefly determines our bliss. Righteousness is health of soul, a state in which—as in health of body—activity of every organ is accompanied with pleasure. In this health of soul Reason is bright, Anticipation hopeful, Memory grateful, our friendly spirit lives in a friendly world.

This Righteousness is our only safety. In the degree in which effort is strong and aim is high, we are safe from low temptations.

It is the secret of highest usefulness ; it is our link of fellowship with God ; yea, of more than fellowship, for where righteousness is, the promise of the Saviour is fulfilled : ‘ We will come and make our abode with Him.’

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Righteousness is besides the immortal wealth of the soul—all other wealth we must leave behind us ; but the soul carries this wealth with it. Happy he who lands on the further shore with some meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, with those beginnings of the Likeness of God which the vision of God will perfect, with tastes for the purities and powers for the ministries of heaven. How rich he is compared with those whose very wealth makes dying harder, and starts them on the further shore with sense of loss and weakness !

We do wrong to seek so earnestly what is of so little worth, and seek so languidly that righteousness which is our life.

Let us repent of our contentment with commonplace character, of our worldliness, of our indulgence of what is weak within us. And hunger and thirst, above all other things, for that Righteousness which is God's glory, God's bliss, and God's greatest power.

But this exhortation proceeds on the assumption that the righteousness for which

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we hunger can be attained. Can it be reached? The question leads us to the second part of this Beatitude.

Consider :

II. The Blessedness of those hungering and thirsting after righteousness : **THEY SHALL BE FILLED.**

This is the strangest part of this strange greeting ; for it promises satisfaction in a matter in which satisfaction seems impossible.

A feeling insinuates itself that we have our moral as we have our physical limit of stature, that as in bodily so in spiritual force, let us cherish ourselves as we may, we cannot develop more than a certain limited and poor amount of force.

And yet here the Saviour speaks as if this higher longing knew no disappointment, and this nobler struggle no failure. *They shall, He says, be filled.*

Disappointment is a common experience in every other pursuit, and failure in every other enterprise. But here, of the pursuit and the enterprise in which success would

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seem most impossible, the Saviour affirms that a rich and complete satisfaction will await us. Is this true? that we may be filled—satisfied—in the triumph and success of our effort after righteousness? What glad tidings of great joy are here, if we may believe them!

This is The Truth of God, in the lips of The Faithful and True Witness. We do injustice in our common thoughts to the greatness of the Divine Grace that comes to us.

Consider what Hungerers after Righteousness really find which fills and satisfies them.

1. Turning to God *They find a Grace of God, assisting repentance, consecration, and every duty.* The gift of the Holy Ghost is no nominal endowment. 'To this man' He comes, 'who is of a lowly and contrite heart.' The Hungering after Righteousness opens the door to Him who knocks, and it is a day to be remembered throughout eternity when the Holy Spirit enters a soul. For though He comes with impulses to high

## Hungering and Thirsting.

duties, impulses which are hard to obey, in every impulse there dwelleth power, and in obedience to it, triumph and peace.

The change which begins in conversion is due to a 'Christ formed within us,' and albeit, at first, He may seem weak as the Babe of Bethlehem, His omnipotence of grace in due time progressively reveals itself, mastering faults that are hard to conquer, and replacing with nobler purposes the selfishness which is slow to die.

Yes, hunger after Righteousness, and Christ will enter you, bringing His grace. And that grace, though never *felt* to be sufficient, is always *found* to be sufficient for us. The inward Guest increasingly displays His Godhead, till you can say with Paul, '*I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.*' And the Son of God dwelling in you, He is the root of that Divine Righteousness ('Righteousness of God' is Paul's phrase), which stands in such vital contrast with all the poorer righteousness which, unaided, law-driven man can reach.

## The Beatitudes.

There is a satisfaction begun when the great Christ so enters and inspires the soul, that the saving decision is made possible, and the soul addresses itself with hope and ardour to the life of faith and the high calling of God.

Hunger after Righteousness, and Christ will enter and fill your soul; will make His throne within you, and from the midst of His throne within you there will flow a River of the Water of Life.

That is not the perfect, but it is a supreme, satisfaction of the soul.

There is more than this :—

*2. In the pursuit of Righteousness the soul can realize a larger growth than in any other direction.*

There is this great solemnity in sin—that every act of sin is a fall, involving us in the loss of some power or some finer sensibility.

There is this great advantage in righteousness—that with every deed of goodness a rise of the soul is achieved, a higher taste developed for things divine, a larger liberty, an

## Hungering and Thirsting.

enterprise, a courage, a dream of still higher reaches of sanctity and usefulness.

And indeed the progress reached and consolidated is sometimes amazing. What a rise Matthew found wrought by his hunger and God's grace, from the coarseness of a publican, to that artistic delicacy of moral vision which enabled him to portray the Lord! What an expansion of being was that, by which the fisherman of Bethsaida became the John of the fourth Gospel and the Seer of Patmos!

There seems an immeasurable development dividing Paul the Pharisee from the Paul to whom to live was Christ.

One of the great masters of human thought has urged, in a great sermon on likeness to God, that one feature of man's likeness to God, is a certain infinity of moral qualities which sometimes is developed: a constancy of martyr strength which all the world cannot shake: a fixedness of faith which no arts of hell can overcome.

You know not the dimensions of a man



## The Beatitudes.

till this hunger after righteousness admits its Lord. Then, light, strength, patience, sacrifice, victories on a scale which angels marvel at, become possible. The largeness of our hearts depends on what they hold within them ; and if the Lord of glory be in them, they are great indeed.

I do not suggest that even when the growth is most ample, a consciousness of perfection is ever reached. No, the hunger grows by what it feeds on. The 'filling' stops the pain, but whets the appetite. It takes eternity to fully make a man, and the surest sign of growth is the growing elevation of standard and enlargement of idea. There will be defect and fault also, over which to mourn ; but in an immeasurable degree the forces of the soul may be, and in multitudes of cases are, developed, and it is undoubtedly true that to the last inch of space which hunger opens and growth enlarges in the heart, the forces of God enter and fill it.

And lastly :

3. *What grace begins and growth develops,*

## Hungering and Thirsting.

*heaven will perfect*; and if we are Christ's, one day the great complacency will be ours which comes, not from standard lowered, but from growth perfected. How that change will be wrought we need not speculate. The yearning of man craves for it—the faithfulness of Christ pledges it. 'It doth not yet appear *what* we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is;'—like Him in purity, in pity, in love; *like Him in the graces that made Him leave heaven to save us*; in the tenderness that makes Him a great Intercessor both here and there; like Him in fitness for exalted service; in power to diffuse celestial blessings; in rulership over many things; in the charm which 'drew all men to Him' when there lifted up. One day all of us who hunger and thirst after righteousness will find this perfecting of our being; this end of sin—this fitness for eternal joy.

Believe this future.

Now the struggle seems endless, progress doubtful, and sometimes the result seems

## The Beatitudes.

likely to be the wreck of all our fondest hopes. Let us look again to our Lord, gaze on His cross, welcome His Spirit and take His leading. The failures that we fear come not to the Hungerers and Thirsters after Righteousness. Be it ours to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and at last He will give us our heart's desire, and crown us with that Righteousness which is man's only and unfading Crown.

## The Merciful.

### V.

Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall  
obtain mercy.

MATT. v. 7.



‘**B**LESSED are they that hunger and thirst  
after Righteousness,’ said our last  
Beatitude, adding the reason, ‘for they shall  
be filled.’ When this promise has been in  
some degree realised, then the soul blooms  
in Mercy.

In this Mercy, Righteousness loses its  
rigidity, the aspect of effort and of strain ;  
and becomes gentle and sweet-souled. Where  
a poorer Self had to be denied a better Self  
is born whose promptings are obeyed. All  
the fellowship with God to which poverty  
prompted and sorrow led : which meekness  
enjoyed and the longing for goodness main-

## The Beatitudes.

tained—further the great change. They who thus looked to Him were changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

It is therefore no slight grace that now invites our attention. Some may disparage it as due rather to finer susceptibilities of nature than to workings of grace. And others may see in the austerities of the ascetic something nobler than in the ministries of the kindly. But the Saviour by the very order in which He names it gives it a distinguished place. The genuineness of the preceding graces is proved by their producing Mercy. If what seems a spiritual zeal blooms in Mercy, it is from above : if it hardens into coldness and pride, it is of the earth earthy.

In studying this word let us consider :

I. THOSE BLESSED :

*Blessed are the Merciful.*

II. THEIR BLESSING :

*They shall obtain Mercy.*

## The Merciful.

We begin with :

I. 'Those Blessed. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL. We might have expected earth to be full of this glory. Ourselves have been cherished by love, and we are bound in honour to pay the debt. Every instinctive witness of Nature commends it, and every testimony of grace proclaims that 'Though we have all knowledge, and all faith, so that we could remove mountains, and have not Love, we are nothing.' We are surrounded by the 'children of the needy.' 'The poor are with us always.' There are those enfeebled in health ; there are those broken-hearted in sorrow ; there are those degraded in character ; there are those whose surroundings are such as doom life to be a painful struggle ; there are those who have no pity on themselves ; there are those whose vices involve all belonging to them in wretchedness and despair ; there are the fallen ; there are the unbelieving ; there are the dark places of the earth, still full of cruelty.

The voice of creation is still a groan ; its

## The Beatitudes.

appeal is never absent from our ears. Owing all we value most to earthly and heavenly love, it might be expected that Love thus cherished and thus appealed to, would beautify every heart, and be the universal link of a blessed brotherhood. Especially might we expect this as we live beneath the constraint of an Infinite Example.

The open secret of an Infinite Heavenly Love, half told in the whisperings of Nature and the tokens of Providence, has been uttered fully in the Incarnate Son of God. We now know that all Heaven is Mercy; that God's life binds itself up in our lives; that God is Love—only Love; that His very severity is the effort of Mercy to reclaim men by discipline; that His purity is the brightness of a burning Love; that He looks on no creature of His hand without some form of affection rising in His heart; pity for its pain; or grief for its sin; or delight in the virtues of those whom He has made. Seeing the Father in the face of Jesus—we see that the everlasting activities of God are

## The Merciful.

those of Mercy ; that He is in His worlds as One that serves ; that He honours all men ; that no insignificance in our lot permits us to be overlooked ; that the very aggravations of wayward evil which bar out His help, move Him to weep over those who refuse to let Him save them. We see Him hungry to taste every woe beneath which men suffer ; attracted by the sorrows of mankind :—*His joy, saving men* ; His heart pierced with every sorrow of the human heart. The vision of God that meets our view is of One all Mercy : saying not that aught He possesses is His own ; yearning to share His life, His bliss, His heaven with all ; imploring men to turn from evil, and appealing to them with tone of anguish, Why will ye die ? We see God in Christ counting all things but loss to win man from his desolation and his woe ; and following up His great atonement by the working of His blessed Spirit on every heart. If saved, it is by this Mercy we have been saved ; if prayers sent heavenward have brought down blessings, it is from this



## The Beatitudes.

Mercy we have received them. Whenever the clouds part above us and disclose our God, this Mercy is seen as the light of His countenance—the glory of heaven, as it is the consolation of earth.

It is therefore no slight constraint that binds us to the practice of Mercy. All we have and are we owe to it; it is the course which infinite wisdom has chosen as its own; it is the Eternal Activity of God.

Surely when all our bliss comes from Mercy, and when it is enthroned in the heart of God, and when such need for it abounds around us—all should be found living in its daily practice.

We should expect this the more, because Love is fraught with bliss. Its action in the the soul is Peace; its very sorrows yield a richer gladness than wealth and pleasure can furnish to a selfish heart.

But, alas! with so much to move us, we are but rarely moved to Mercy. For Mercy is costly. We cannot serve our fellows, save at some sacrifice of money, or labour, or

## The Merciful.

thought, or feeling, and our selfishness sets up a competing claim for every thing by which another can be enriched. Our pride despises those our Redeemer holds so precious. Our casuistry inquires whether a nearer neighbour to the sufferer than ourselves does not exist. The magnitude of the ills to be redressed moves us to despair. False modesty never finds within itself any fitness for dealing with the troubles of men. We fear we shall need all our resources for ourselves. We criticise the character of the needy, the conduct which has led them to require Mercy. If the Mercy needed is our forgiveness, we magnify our claims and the greatness of their offence. We especially dwell on what we take to be the usual ingratitude of men, and discharge ourselves from the duty of showing Mercy destined to be insufficiently appreciated. We lump men in masses, and assume essential differences between them, such as discharge one class from all duties to another. We leave the ills of life to statesmen to discover a cure for

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## The Beatitudes.

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them, and the poor to the operation of the public provision for their case. Till it comes to pass that no need for Mercy ever arises without an excuse for not showing it appearing as well. The present is invariably the inconvenient season for our showing help. Miseries are perpetuated which we could end, and sorrows break the hearts we could comfort, and the glory and reward of Mercy alike are lost. There is indeed nothing more marvellous than the greatness of the good we might accomplish, excepting the littleness of the good we attempt.

But there are, blessed be God! some whom the Saviour of men can designate by this gracious name of Merciful. Everywhere, and in all ages, some have been found breathing the gracious thought and living in the kindly deed. There have been some of whom, as of Job, it could be said, that when the 'ear heard them it blessed them, and when the eye saw them it gave witness unto them.' And when Jesus came, supplying highest motive, pattern and force for

## The Merciful.

Mercy, the number of these gracious souls grew and multiplied. The old wintry world began to grow warm with love; the flowers of finer feeling appeared in the earth, and the history of a great philanthropy began. The ancient world reckoned four cardinal virtues: — Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, and Wisdom; *but omitted the virtue of Mercy*, which the Church of Christ took and put above them all. Multitudes entered into the Saviour's spirit, seeking not to be ministered unto, but to minister; some were glad even to pour forth their life a sacrifice on the altar of human well-being. Multitudes found that Light in which Jesus lived: and saw men as He beheld them in all their preciousness, their possibilities, their woe.

Some did more than gaze on the Cross of Christ—they shared it. There are so many woes that can be cured by sharing them, and in no other way; that love and pity kept impelling them to suffering for the good of others. 'God forbid that I should glory' (says Paul) 'save in the Cross of our Lord

## The Beatitudes.

Jesus Christ, *on which* (margin, Gal. vi. 14) the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' And, like the great Apostle, many coveted to know 'the fellowship of Christ's sufferings'—the power of enduring crosses, in order to save the perishing. No evil is lightly cured. Every wrong has vested interests. Every philanthropist even is a disturber of Israel.

But the Church in all ages has been so rich in Mercy that her record is one of victories of Mercy won. She found law horrible in its severities, and made it just: the pleasures of the people scandalous, and purified them: the common tastes so cruel and merciless, that gladiatorial shows, with their immense and inhuman sacrifice of life, were the universal delight of nations—defended by philosophers, and enjoyed by women—and she abolished them. She cared for the poor; she stopped infanticide; she purchased their freedom for captives taken in war. Slavery, universal in its prevalence, atrocious in its wrongs, the prolific root of infinite evils,

## The Merciful.

she found, she censured, she limited, and at last abolished. The weak—woman, slave, peasant, diseased—were her peculiar care.

As her record has been one continuous success of Mercy, the fairest names in her roll have been those of the gracious heroes whose godliness bloomed into this heavenly beauty.

Thank God the altar fire of Mercy has never burnt out; but wherever Faith has linked the souls of men to Christ, Love has made them like Him.

We have had a century in which in our own land spiritual life has progressively revived. With it large-hearted love has grown as well. Now it was a Clarkson labouring to end the Slave Trade; now a Wilberforce labouring to end Slavery; now philanthropists have sought to abate the unholy rigour of penal laws; and now to extend the blessings of civil freedom; now poverty, now ignorance has been the evil men have sought to destroy; now drunkenness, and now the sorrows of the unfortunate. Now holy ardour has moved itself to the long sacrifice and

## The Beatitudes.

many dangers incident to the pioneer work of Christian missions. And now gentle hearts have yearned to bring the thoughtless at home to the light of God.

No sun rises on the world without revealing deeds of generous kindness over which the heart of God delights. Acts of generous pardon ; labours of the poor to help their neighbours in their woe ; the consecration of wealth to the needs of men ; endeavours to bless the young ; the yearnings of compassion ; the energies and enterprise of innumerable labours of Love.

Blessed are the Merciful ; those whose hearts are not chilled with any shadow of self ; who live for others ; who see no sorrow they do not make their own ; who aspire to be their brothers' keepers ; who value life for its opportunities of good.

Happy those of whom it can be said as was said of Cranmer, That to do him an injury was to secure his lifelong kindness, Happy those who seek the lost to save them, and the needy to succour them.

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## The Merciful.

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For such have blessings that others cannot know ; a heart all peace ; a heaven all light ; gratitude of man and smile of God.

Alas ! that I have to add, these numbers are small, and God's good work drags because they are so few.

Every saved soul ought to belong to the number of those Christ-like in Mercy. Yet how few have been led to deem Mercy their high calling in Christ Jesus, and their bounden duty !

Remember the world of need around thee : the world of Love above thee. Let thy religion be the sort that visits the widow and the fatherless in their affliction. *Remember there is no limit, God helping us, to our power of doing good.* And aspire to belong to the number of those who with blessed, confused surprise will hear from the lips of the Great Judge of all men the words—'I was an hungered, and ye fed Me ; thirsty, and ye gave Me drink : '—'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me. Come, inherit the kingdom.'



## The Beatitudes.

If such is the grace that is here commended, I must add a little on the second point.

II. Their Blessing: THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.

They ask for no reward except to serve Christ still. But reward is given. The recompense of evil is not the only retribution. That is the reluctant retribution of God's necessity; but the recompense of good is the joyful retribution of God's delight.

They have indeed a rich reward in their work itself. They taste it in the Master's joy. They catch His anointing; and, in the power to wipe away the tear, to heal the hurt mind, to win souls to goodness, they have great recompense of reward. But He who gives an increase, thirty, sixty, or an hundredfold to the good seed sown, gives an exceedingly great reward to all goodness done.

For—

1. *Shewing, they find mercy amongst men.* It is strange how, by ordinance of God, the world seems ever to be to us what we are to it; to be, as one has put it, a looking-glass

## The Merciful.

in which we see the face we bring to it. To the froward it is froward; to the merciful it is kindly. Jacob, unbrotherly and deceiving, is to be cured of his faults by suffering at the hand of Laban an unbrotherliness and deceit kindred with his own. And good men are to be confirmed in their goodness by finding others reciprocating it. Honour finds men honourable, and kindness finds men kind. And Mercy finds an environment of kindly regard, a sympathy with its sorrows, an affectionate interest in its woes, that selfish hearts would deem impossible.

What affection, benediction, prayer, compass a good man's life! The merciful, when their turn comes to need the ministries of Love, find them richly given.

But there is more than this.

2. *Mercy opens the heart to all the Love of God.* We are here not dealing with the grounds of forgiveness, which are to be found only in the work of Christ, but with the *conditions of its reception*, which are in ourselves. The Mercy of God seeks to enter

## The Beatitudes.

all hearts, but is barred by want of faith. Suspicion says, 'Art Thou come to torment us?' and shrinks from its touch. But faith trusts its Lord, welcomes Him into the heart. *Therefore, faith saves.* The least measure of this trust, turning Christward, admits the saving grace into the soul.

Where Mercy is altogether absent, it denotes the absence of both penitence and faith as well, and in this state we are disabled from receiving grace. If we forgive not men their trespasses, it is because we are destitute of the penitence which would permit God to forgive us. But Mercy is Faith in its fullest bloom and richest energy. 'Perfect love casts out fear.' It trusts the heart of God; trusts the Saviour's guidance; trusts His constraints, His guidance, His impulse; so that God's grace is free to work its perfect work.

Mercy thus offers the Saviour the largest of all welcomes; the readiest of all obedience in the ways in which He most desires to guide us; the softest, tenderest, gratefulest frame of the soul, for the Spirit to operate

## The Merciful.

upon. Mercy vivifies the clay, and makes it more yielding to the potter's hand, so that where it is the vessel is not 'marred upon the wheel,' but turned into a thing of beauty. 'Love believeth all things, Love endureth all things, Love hopeth all things.' On many hearts God cannot shed the smile of His love, for it would harden them. But love gathers only lowliness and gratitude from that smile, and God can lift therefore on Mercy all the light of His countenance.

Thus love dwelling richly in the soul renders it more easy to be blessed than otherwise it could be. Because, therefore, faith is perfected in Love, and finds all its receptivity and responsiveness indefinitely increased by it, the merciful can in an especial and marvellous degree admit into their souls the Mercy of God.

And yet this evidently does not exhaust the Saviour's word. In addition to both of these *results* of Mercy, I have to remark—

3. *The Saviour here predicts special rewards which await the merciful.*

## The Beatitudes.

There are no 'rewards of debt,' but 'rewards of grace' abound to all who serve our Lord. He delighteth in all grace and all affection, and delights to express and embody that delight. So rich is His love that not a cup of cold water given from love to Him loses its reward. How ample and sublime must their reward be, whose life is a ministry of kindness, whose heart is a home of love!

*They need often the finest healing ministry of God.* For often the heart that consoles the troubled is itself broken, and the soul that seeks to save the lost is battling hard for its own salvation. And though Mercy may sing,

My burden is fallen from me,  
It is buried in the sea,  
And only the sorrows of others  
Cast their shadows over me:—

these shadows may be very dark, may awake Solicitudes that are Gethsemanes.

But all sorrows of the gentle heart find God's richest balm and tenderest handling.

## The Merciful.

All fears of the gracious soul have His special care. For them the sweetest whisper of His love is waiting, and to them the fullest answer of their prayer is on its way. For them Jordan becomes still waters, and its banks green pastures. To them the entrance into the inheritance of saints in light is abundantly administered. To them is given the Saviour's warmest greeting, and for them is waiting

The full and everlasting and passionless renown. They of all men have drunk most deeply of Christ's cup, and they of all men sit highest with Him on the throne. And their lowly apprenticeship in Mercy here has given them a fitness for the highest ministries of Mercy which employ the power of the glorified !

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, man gave into their bosoms ; but with the everlasting delights of His Divine approval and infinite love, the Lord of Mercy crowns and rewards The Merciful.

To that number may we belong !

## The Beatitudes.

### VI.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for  
they shall see God.

MATT. V. 8.



**A** GAIN we have a Beatitude which fills us  
with surprise.

That the pure in heart are blessed is not our wonder. For though inclined to pity the tension of their lives, their constant sacrifice of inclination and of pleasure, we know too much of the unrest and misery of the impure heart to look on the saintly purity without some envy of its peace.

What we marvel at is not the blessedness pronounced upon the pure in heart, so much as the fact that the Saviour finds such to bless. In a world of sin and misery, He, the pure Christ, living in the enjoyment of

## The Pure in Heart.

the vision of God, speaks of some as if already they had reached the heights of sanctity and were bathed in the bliss of heaven. Great lessons on both earth and heaven are evidently here. Let us ponder:—

### I. THOSE BLESSED:

*The Pure in heart.*

### II. THEIR BLESSING:

*They shall see God.*

I. Those Blessed: — THE PURE IN HEART. It is strange that any should be so described. The depravity of human nature we feel and witness. The strongest assertions of it come from the lips of Christ. ‘*Ye, being evil,*’ is a preface to one of His words; and ‘*Ye must be born again,*’ is another.

All, without distinction, He called on to repent. Nor did He deem evil easily destroyed by repentance itself. He sanctions no delusion of easily-reached perfection. ‘*Forgive us our debts, and Deliver us from evil*’—are prayers He gives for daily use by



## The Beatitudes.

all His saints, never to be laid aside while here below.

Those that have drunk most deeply into His Spirit have felt most keenly not only the guilt of sin, but its persistence. 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,' said John, in his ripest meetness for glory. 'Not as though I had already attained': 'when I would do good, evil is present with me,' are the lowly words of the chief of the apostles.

So that we may not take this word as if it meant that in any heart here below the conflict is over, the victory complete. No heart is altogether insensible to the outward appeal, or unconscious of the inward tendency to evil. There is ever some joint in the harness. 'The Amorite is still in the land.' The struggle grows more hard as it is more successful, and the standard rises with the attainment. So that where growth is true, there is increase in the tenderness of our contrition and in the force of our hunger after righteousness to life's very end.

## The Pure in Heart.

But while Nature to Life's end betrays some weakness, Grace has victories of the sublimest kind. It enters the hearts of men, moving Penitence, leading them to the Cross; quickening the Higher purpose, moulding them after Christ's likeness, and enabling the soul to achieve deeds of victorious Love.

With every act of obedience, the Spirit of all grace enters the soul in still larger measure. In conversion He regenerates; and in the after life He renews us day by day. He gives Life and Light: The Life quickens Purity of Heart; the Light permits the seeing God. This Beatitude is thus occupied entirely with the blessed and immortal results of His Divine operations.

Because He quickens us, there are some whom the pure Christ rightly names *The Pure in heart*—some who have a true purity, though not a freedom from every fault. There are consciences alive with the light of God, that make men feel themselves the chief of sinners, and yet they have no *cherished*

## The Beatitudes.

*evil* to impeach, or unrepented wrong to rebuke. There are souls that are bright with honour; beautiful in self-forgetfulness, refined in consecration, with their reason unstained with doubt, their heart with selfish purpose, their desires with unworthy passion: souls transparent, who are what they seem, and seem what they are; Israelites without guile, whose only secrets are those of modest goodness, who would find the light that reveals all things a reward, and not a shame. There are some who have innocence of life. They have not indeed such innocence as is the charm and the beauty of childhood—the innocence that lies in ignorance of evil and unconsciousness of temptation. But they have the grander innocence of manhood, which knows evil and suffers from temptation, but which resists and conquers both. There are souls over whose fair likeness to Himself the Lord rejoices, and whom the Spirit delights in as furnishing Him with a temple meet for His habitation. This purity of vital health, this bloom of gracious beauty,

## The Pure in Heart.

this eminent freedom from the poorer qualities and common stains of life, is here greeted. Thank God it is not uncommon!

This world is not a place of the dead alone—a land of failures only, a shore strewn with wrecks, a wilderness where nought but the carcasses of souls that have fallen in their waywardness are found. But the soul of man is quick and vital—responsive to heavenly grace. And where it yields to heavenly influence and welcomes the Saviour to its inmost throne, it rises by successive steps of obedience, trust, repentance, service—until it is ‘fair as the morning’: ‘all beautiful within’: loosed from the bands of its neck and free of the dust of its defilement, and clad in the beautiful garments of all living graces.

*Take no low view of man.* Unbelief has this as its perpetual characteristic, that in the degree in which it fails to believe in God it also fails to believe in man. The atheist, alas! is cursed with the inability to believe any heart is pure. He admires the blame-

## The Beatitudes.

lessness of children; the honour of some, the kindness of many. But he suspects the inward motive of all. Every activity of life he resolves into some form of selfishness more or less refined. His dismal doctrine is that self-love stains darkly every heart. That every man has his price. That what passes as virtue is only an enlightened prudence.

Give heed to nought that undermines your faith in either God or man. Honour all men. Let honour, like charity, begin at home. We cannot have too high a self-respect. We cannot repent the past till we respect ourselves, and see the glory of that nature we have defiled. We cannot plan our future aright till we admit the great thoughts of what God meant us, and would enable us, to be.

Go not forth to the struggle of life expecting to be baffled and defeated: to fail and sink. It is no hopeless enterprise on which we embark when, relying on the help of Grace, we set out to follow the leading of the Saviour.

## The Pure in Heart.

Multitudes have even here attained, and we may attain a dewy freshness of complete and blooming goodness. And the Saviour may rejoice with exceeding joy over us, and call us 'the Pure in heart.'

But the possibility of reaching purity in heart is not the only thing here.

There is a great lesson here on the secret of attaining purity. For the order in which the Saviour names is the only order in which we can reach it. Meekness must precede: and Hunger after righteousness: but especially Mercy. *Without Mercy true Purity never blessed a human heart.*

It is of great importance to note this. There is no history more pathetic in its interest than the history of asceticism. The Pythagorean Greek, the Jewish Essene, the Hindoo devotee, the Christian monk—men in millions have sought the attainment of purity by the method which simply strove for the suppression of their evil. There are axioms of error common to all climes and creeds—pre-eminent amongst these are the

## The Beatitudes.

two, That the root of all evil is in the flesh, and That the allurements to all evil is in the fellowship of man.

Moved by these considerations, men in millions have sought the wilderness, like St. Anthony; the forest depths, like Gaudama; the cave of the hermit, the monastery of associated devotion. The spirit that animates these experiments is apt to rise in all men: viz. the idea that evil is to be cured by watching its rise with sedulous self-introspection, and slaying it with remorseless destruction, at cost it may be of the very body in which it seems to lurk. What a ghastly tale of tortures of all kinds—from the scourging of Hindoo fakirs to the self-flagellations of Romish ascetics, is the story of this pursuit of purity! But you take the world with you when you flee furthest from it: and the soul may crush the body in its efforts after purity, and yet only find itself infected by faults as bad as those it seeks to destroy. Asceticism has hardened human hearts and created pride and selfishness, apparently with the

## The Pure in Heart.

regularity of a law of Nature. And nothing can be sadder than the contrast between the high hope with which such courses are commenced and the failures in which they end.

Now the Saviour's order here teaches us that no negative method will succeed. You cannot keep evil out of the soul by any system of mere exclusion. You can only keep evil out by getting good in.

*Secure attainment of grace, and you will find exemption from evil.* Seek meekness, hunger after righteousness, practise mercy, and Purity will come and dwell within you. 'Give alms of such things as ye have, and all things are clean unto you.'

For selfishness, in some form or other, is the essence of all evil, and the blackness of every stain. Self, disputing the claims of God, is the root of all sin against God; and self, ignoring or competing with the claims of men, is the root of every sin against man.

Show mercy, and with every act some particle of self within us is destroyed. What



## The Beatitudes.

law cannot do with its restraints, grace and love can do with their fair influence.

Mercy dwells in the light of God, mercy rejoices in the good of man. The selfish thought clouds the soul; the selfish fear enfeebles it; the selfish purpose permits other faults to thrive unhindered. A selfish desire for purity even will make the heart harder. Every breath of self stains the spirit, and excludes that light of God's smile, and the fresh air of the Spirit's influence, enjoying which the soul would put on the cleanness and the bloom of health.

But live in mercy — outside the cold shadow of self—and memories will be so sweet, and gratitude so deep, and grace so freely admitted and so richly given, that every power of the soul will thrive; and the purity, which is the bloom of health, the brightness of strength, the affluence of all fine affections, will appear in the heart.

Monasticism fails in its efforts, but love never faileth. And where it thrives and animates a life, there purity, exquisite in its

## The Pure in Heart.

sweetness and force, exists. No impatience and no ambition dwells with mercy—nor any craft, nor any revenge. Mercy arrests the rise of lust and passion within the soul, as shame itself can never do. Mercy is so conversant with heaven that the defiling greed, the dishonouring artifice, cannot effect lodgment in the soul. In the heart of mercy Jesus dwells, and where He dwells the purity is not the dead purity of a soul strewn with corpses of suppressed evils, but the living purity of a soul which is itself a New Jerusalem, with Christ in its throne, and a river of the water of life flowing within it.

Mark, therefore, in the first place, the glory we may reach on earth—**WE MAY BE PURE IN HEART.** Mark the true method of reaching it—the positive hungering after righteousness, and practising of mercy.

Shall we not try and reach it? Some of my readers, whose steps have erred from the path of purity, would give or endure all things to get back even to the inexperienced purity of honourable youth. You can reach

## The Beatitudes.

something higher still. Hunger after righteousness, practise mercy, and the strenuous purity of high attainments may yet be yours.

Let the young keep all purity they have, and strengthen and enrich it with the higher purities which are wrought by the Holy Ghost in souls submitting to His control.

Seek that vital purity which only the Omnipotence of Grace can give. Nothing rises above the level of its source. If the only force of our purity be that of Nature, our purity will be poor, negative, feeble, and formal. Drink of that pure river of the water of life which flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb, so that your goodness may be God's righteousness within you. Without that fulness of entrance and control which the Holy Spirit can have only when a consecration and submission of all our powers takes place, the purity of salvation and meetness for glory cannot be reached. Seek this Best of all Donations God can give or man implore. For without purity there is no rest, no true life, no

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safety, no power. It alone is 'the rest that remaineth for the people of God.'

Alone of all teachers—Jesus cheers us with the great hope of reaching this. We see many reaching it. Many who will only find increase of honour when the thoughts of their hearts are all revealed, and what is secret is known abroad. Reverence the human nature you wear, and which the Saviour stooped to wear: and so welcome God's grace and practise that mercy to which He moves you, that you will be by the lips of Christ named: *Pure in Heart*.

If such are those who are greeted in this benediction:

Consider secondly:

II. Their Blessing: **THEY SHALL SEE GOD.**

How strange to read this promise, and to feel that the words describe no remote and reserved experience in glory, but the present and immediate as well as the future and eternal issue of purity of heart. And yet the Bible is too full of references to the face

## The Beatitudes.

of God, to the light of His countenance, the seeking and the seeing of God's face, and the bliss of intimate communion, to permit us to hold that these words exclusively refer to the future beatific vision of our God. And their intimation is that *Purity of heart is the organ of a knowledge of God, direct, clear, ample, satisfying, not imparted to any other condition of soul*: such that they who are thus pure and thus rewarded are rich indeed. Into the mystic depths connected with this promise I cannot enter. I only premise to avoid misunderstanding, that it is of course to be remembered that no function of bodily sense can be attributed to the soul, save by way of parallelism or analogy. But while the seeing is not literal vision, it is yet something sublime. For what is bodily vision? It is the regal faculty; the perfectest of all the senses; that perceptive faculty, which has the widest range, the keenest discrimination, which gives the fullest, clearest, surest knowledge of any of the senses. And when

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Moses asks to behold the glory of the Lord: or David desires to behold the beauty of the Lord, as he has seen Him in the sanctuary: they want a kind of perception of God, direct and full, like that which comes when light from the object falls on the sight of the beholder: a knowledge of man or thing such as we have when nothing intervenes to intercept or dim the light: a knowledge of what is felt to be within the scope of our sense; a perception of the thoughts and feelings of His heart, such as those we have of man when we can look upon his face.

For such a knowledge of God we are made, and such a disclosure of Himself God delights to impart. Like is revealed to like: the image of God within us has from its divine affinities the power of perceiving the character of God without us. Schoolmen have indeed disputed on the kind and limitation of that knowledge. But mankind has rejoiced in it. Enoch by means of it 'walked with God:' *The*

## The Beatitudes.

*Lord appeared unto Abraham:* and that appearance led to the great pilgrimage by which he has blessed all nations. 'I have seen Him face to face, and my life is preserved:' was the description given by Jacob of the great experience at Peniel. From a cleft in the rock Moses beheld the goodness of the Lord. David sunned himself beneath the smile of God, and sang of God's face as the fountain of all his joy.

'In the year that King Uzziah died,' Isaiah 'saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple:' and that vision changed him into the great prophet of the Lord. So, the record of interaction between God and man proceeds. Now, in voices such as came to Jeremiah: now, in visions like those which came to Ezekiel, the Lord enriches us by, in many ways, imparting the knowledge of Himself. Do we not all feel the reality of these representations? Do any feel it would be strange to find the overshadowing presence of the Lord? Nay, is our restless-

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## The Pure in Heart.

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ness not often due to a sense of His nearness? Are not some afraid to be alone, lest God should speak to them: to turn, lest they should see Him? Nay, are not some so haunted by a divine presence, that, like Jonah, they 'flee from the presence of the Lord?'

We must remember, therefore, God imparts the knowledge of Himself to human souls, and the soul is able, by its affinity with God, as it were, to see the Lord.

Now the promise of our benediction is, that purity of heart will purge and perfect the vision of the soul, so that clearly, surely, largely, and by direct perception we may know the great God in all His glory.

Affinity of nature supplying the faculty, affinity of character perfects it. The quickening of grace is at once rewarded, perfected by the enlightenment of grace as well. Distorted glimpses of God oppress the soul; but His true aspect imparted to the pure eye is its heaven.

The impure heart has this as its greatest



## The Beatitudes.

penalty—that *it is in the dark*. Whether God is: whether if He is, He have any regard to the work of His hands: whether He forgives, or only punishes sin; whether in the immortal future we are to dwell beneath His benign protection, or to be cast out: whether Providence is friend or foe: whether our prayers are despised or regarded—all these things are ‘greatly dark’ to the impure spirit. Dark, temporarily I admit them to be sometimes to some not impure; but they are habitually and necessarily dark to these. I say necessarily, for we feel lust, anger, unbelief, selfishness—any sin, in the very moment of its being roused into action—beclouds the soul.

That darkness is agony. To feel at the mercy of one whose heart we cannot penetrate, and whom we can but suspect, and to do this with eternity in view, is agony. For in the dark we feel without God; and to be without God is to be without hope in the world.

But purity calms the spirit, permits it to

## The Pure in Heart.

gaze steadfastly, clears the eye, and attracts the great God near ; so that to the pure in heart heaven is ever open, and God is known.

To such He manifests Himself by entering the heart (John xvi. 22, 23), and revealing Himself to nearest gaze and feeling, so that they know for themselves, their eyes see and their hearts handle, the Lord of glory. Their lowly dwelling has its house-top with visions of the Lord ; their prison is a Patmos, where their God and heaven are seen. Their senses are exercised, so that wherever God is they can see Him ; everything divine is detected by them.

How amply is this fulfilled !

While some are creedless, comfortless, aimless in life, the pure in heart live not with a dead heaven above them, or a hopeless earth around them. They see God in Nature, and feel her wide spaces a sanctuary which He fills. They see Him in Providence, and feel it is full of the life and the love of God. They turn to the Bible, and lo ! it is alive with God ; its books are

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## The Beatitudes.

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‘Ivory Palaces of the King,’ where His beauty is beheld, and His voice is audible. They turn to the Saviour, and where some see ‘no beauty, that they should desire Him,’ they ‘behold the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father.’ They see the very heart of God laid bare in Him. They stand beneath the cross, and see all God’s sanctity, all His pity, all His gentle fatherhood, all His yearning passion to save men, incarnate there.

Life is an apocalypse to the pure-hearted when they see God, it is not a small or unimportant vision : but they behold infinite Love filling all things : an infinite Heart affording a quiet resting-place for the weary hearts of men : an infinite Pity sharing every woe : an infinite Saviour delivering from every evil. And serving God here and now : they are on their way to a vision of God sublimer still.

Ancient Greek, and still more ancient Egyptian, regarded the vision of God as the essence of heaven.

## The Pure in Heart.

Where it is, heaven has indeed begun : for when it can be said of any heart that the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light of it, a peace which passeth all understanding is there.

But here our heavenly bliss is but a foretaste. The bare beginning—the mere dawn of the vision of God. And above and beyond the bliss of soul which comes of knowing Him now, there is the promise that knowledge will one day be perfect, and we shall know even as we are known.

‘It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.’ All heaven is summed up in that word. ‘His servants see His face, and His name is in their foreheads.’ Here you pity them for that purity of heart which seems to you a bondage—a privation—an imprisonment within narrow limits of choice and poor range of pleasures. You cannot bring your mind to the sacrifices and the restraints of such purity as theirs. How

## The Beatitudes.

enviable will these appear when their purity perfects itself into an infinite capacity of everlasting joy : enabling them to bear and to enjoy that light which solves all questions, ends all fear, satisfies all desire !

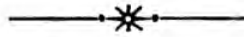
Many are now in the light. Purity found the vision of God : and has been perfected by it. Shall we find that home of light awaiting us ? Let none be content until for himself he has seen the Lord : with the eye of the purged heart let us aspire to 'behold the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off,' and not spare our efforts to perfect purity of soul, until the face of God becomes our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning are ended.

## The Peacemakers.

### VII.

Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the Children of God.

MATT. v. 9.



IT is a blessed thing that each grace attained makes the attainment of other and higher graces possible. Purity of heart that sees God has for ever after the great heart of God for the background of every picture. It sees the strifes of earth in the light of the grief they cause in heaven; the quarrels of His children in the light of the infinite heart so sorely wounded by them all.

And mercy comes to aid in healing the troubles of which purity has so clear a view. For mercy, bent on healing all sorrows of men, does not confine its regard to our poverty or bodily pain. It regards troubles of the heart as well. And in its luminous consideration

## The Beatitudes.

of all human woes gives, by the necessity of its wisdom, supreme regard to that which is chief of all woes, and parent of innumerable sorrows, the Discord which divides men from one another and from God.

By gradual development, therefore, all previous graces lead up to and are crowned by this Grace of Peacemaking.

Let us study it: considering—

### I. THOSE BLESSED :

**Blessed are the Peacemakers.**

### II. THEIR BLESSING :

**They shall be called the Children of God.**

We begin with

#### I. Those Blessed: THE PEACEMAKERS.

If there is need of any grace in fullest exercise, it is of the grace of Peacemaking.

Peace is not a single advantage, one amongst many comforts, but it is the element in which all blessings thrive. Peace between individuals secures the joys of friendship; the flow of those fine sympathies which

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augment the delights of life, which quicken its intellectual forces, which soothe its sorrows. Peace permits the mutual trust which is the condition of all co-operation: and as man can do few things in this world single-handed, this co-operative trust is an essential condition of all social well-being. Where peace is in a family or community, it permits and promotes the development of all the finer qualities of the soul—of esteem, of affection, of the imitation of all that is good, of the concentration of the soul on goodness and on duty.

Where strife comes, detraction, envy, the turmoil of passion, self-contempt, degeneracy sets in, and with them 'confusion and every evil work.'

There is no waste of energies like that which takes place in discord.

In the conflicts of nations war stands conspicuous as the calamity costing most in treasure, in life, in trade, in happiness, in liberty (for freedom never grows when force is rampant), and yielding the least of all return in abiding good. In the family it changes what



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might be an Eden with every tree good for food, into a wilderness with thorns and briars.

There is nothing that wears men like strife. Nothing chills their hearts like it. There is no trouble like its suspense. No moral injury greater than that which it inflicts. It is the nurse of anger, unfairness, outrage, of pride, revenge, injustice. In the old Hebrew vocabulary the word Peace summed up all prosperity. Its 'Peace be with you,' was its universal benediction. So that if honourable usefulness has power to attract the heart, one might have reckoned that many would aspire to play the sacred part of peacemakers. But, alas! while peacebreakers are many, peacemakers are few; few having the purity, the mercy, and the depth of human interest to make them such.

Many things make us peacebreakers, and all of us have faults tending towards strife. Selfishness assumes that the interests of others are ever competing with its own. Greed does not take the necessary leisure to weigh the claims of others. Pride never deems

## The Peacemakers.

itself sufficiently appreciated; nor can recognise the propriety of the will of others being consulted. Envy has a delight in detraction; rises higher in self-esteem, and thinks it rises in esteem of others, from disparagement of its fellows. Impatience unites with suspicion to assume the worst. Temper hurries suspicion into act or utterance. With each harsh word or deed the gulf is widened, and retaliation deepens mutual resentment.

There is, in addition, a strange law of Nature, by which *we hate every one we injure*. He whom we have wronged is the man of all others we find hardest to forgive. And, injustice once done, enmity reigns in the heart that did it.

Fear and timidity, also, occasion feuds. We strike through fear of being struck, and do wrong through the nervous anxiety to prevent ourselves being wronged.

So that much in each one of us tends to produce discord, and much tends to augment discord between others. The cheapest and vilest form of sympathy we can offer is to con-

## The Beatitudes.

dole with those who think themselves illused, and augment their indignation at their wrongs.

There is a sinister satisfaction felt at the troubles of others. We sow discord by whispering what we should leave unsaid ; by partial representation ; by our flatteries of those present and our disparagement of those absent ; while few care to take the trouble of attempting to compose the strife they see. An ignoble love of ease makes us decline the trouble ; a shrinking from consequences makes us forbear to suggest the extenuating circumstances which would modify ill-will. It is a delicate, difficult, and generally painful work to endeavour to compose a quarrel, and few, accordingly, attempt it. Thus discord thrives, and homes that might be holy places, full of all delights, are made haunts of misery by strife. Churches split in factions and disintegrate in coldness. Nations run into wars so needlessly that subsequently all marvel at their entering them. And over the strife which thus desolates the world, the great Father-heart of God laments ;

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## The Peacemakers.

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marvelling at the waste of precious ointment, of powers, opportunities, and joys in needless conflicts.

But there are some who deplore this waste ; whose hearts swell with pity over this weary world ; some too saintly, too self-forgetful to do anything but deplore it, and labour to prevent its increase. Some have so drunk in the spirit of the great Peacemaker, that you may say of them, *They are in the world reconciling*. Their acts, words, characters, all emit an influence of healing peace. Blessed are all classes of these Christ-like souls !

1. Blessed are *those*, for instance, *that do all in their power to prevent peace being broken*.

There are such, not perhaps endued with the weight of character necessary to compose a quarrel, but still full of the ardent affections that are very potent in preventing quarrels arising. There are lives so affluent in friendships that they link multitudes of other lives together. There are generous natures, contact with whom always leaves you with a better estimate of your fellow-men ; some who never

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feed a flame of ill-feeling; some have the faithfulness to give the good report of those disliked, and go through life making no enemies, but many friends. In their lips the estranging sarcasm is not found, and in their hearts a cold indifference has no home. Some souls are so bright, and diffuse so much delight, that contention is kept out by joy. They are too loving to be scornful, or impatient, or unfair; not ready to 'take up' an ill report; so good that they easily believe in goodness; so self-forgetful that injuries, unpleasant words, or unkindly acts take no root in their memory, and no grudge ever rises in their heart.

These peacekeepers are peacemakers; and if any in this world are blessed, it is those that help to bind their fellows to each other in bonds of mutual affection and esteem.

2. A second class who come in for this benediction consists of *those who compose the strifes which disturb their fellows*. It takes no slight eminence of character to exert a power like this! A shallow or ungenial

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nature cannot do it. You cannot unite two estranged hearts by simply reproofing the faults from which the quarrel rose.

No fault-finder can be a peacemaker; for such work one must love both of those he would unite—be trusted by both. He must be distinctly free from the faults which in each offends the other. He must be willing to be accused of partiality, and temporarily suffer some abatement of affection. There must be in him a tender lowliness, which will prevent his censure becoming offensive, through assumption of superiority. He must have that magnetism of the strong, child-like, kindly soul that draws men in the direction in which they should move. There are such souls, beautiful with every feature of grace.

Blessed are such indeed! Priceless gifts of God! Happy the home with one such inmate! Happy the church with one such man in office—happy all at variance who can find one such true friend to compose their discords into harmony!

2. This word surely has a benediction for

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*The statesmen who seek to maintain peace between the nations of the earth.*

We are, alas ! still far from that promised period when nations shall learn war no more. Three-and-a-half millions of men are under arms in Europe to-day ; a burden intolerable in its weight on the industry of every nation ; an obstacle to all progress ; an inflammable element lending itself easily to explosions ; a willing tool for ambition or tyranny to employ. Of the wars of the last century Earl Russell has said : ' I do not see one of these wars in which, if there had been proper temper between the parties, the questions in dispute might not have been settled without recourse to arms.' And a statesman still living (Mr. Bright) has passed the same verdict on the wars of this century, with the single exception of the great American war which terminated in the abolition of slavery. Yet who mourns the crimes of these needless wars ? Who marks their folly, their mischief, their corrupting influence, the obstacles they present to the growth of liberty ; the brutalisation of the

## The Peacemakers.

conquering power ; the despair of self-contempt or the wasting ambition of revenge that comes to the conquered? The last war between France and Germany cost nearly 400 millions of money—and nearly 300,000 lives. And yet a few months ago, another war between the same two powers seemed on the point of breaking out, which would doubtless have slain as many men and covered as many homes with the shadow of death. We in England are not without the guilt of blood upon our hands. Yet there are but few statesmen and few citizens alive to the evil of war. The fact that above all other courses war unites the maximum of disadvantage and of harm with the minimum of resultant good, has not yet been realised by us. Some are, however, alive to these considerations, and have reached the wisdom from above which is pure, peaceable, easy to be entreated. There are statesmen and citizens who allay the ambitions which lead nations wrong ; who hold the golden rule of Christ to be the highest maxim of international wisdom, and



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who, strong in the justice they enthrone, are free from the wild alarms that so often betray unscrupulous nations into war. Such souls are embraced in this benediction. Pray God to enrich the nations of the world with such! And let us each in his station uphold all those who seek above all things to give '*Peace unto the people.*'

Not to multiply further classes which receive this benediction, note:—

4. That it includes also and specially *those who labour, and labour successfully, to make peace between man and God.*

There are some who mourn the distance and variance which keep men from enjoying the love of God, and set themselves to bring nigh those that are far off. The wisdom that wins souls belongs to them, and is no slight gift. It is chiefly a sublime love that clings to a redeeming God on the one hand, and to men needing redemption on the other. Blessed are they who have it. Their hearts are radiant with the joy unspeakable: their Saviour is the object of a gratitude that

## The Peacemakers.

dominates the life. Their love is deep, and its keenest solicitude is that those dear to them may be saved. Moved by that love, they seek to lead souls to Christ. They expound Him by their lives ; they commend Him by their lips ; they glorify Him by the bliss in which they live. They plead with men. They pray for men until, the influences of God working through them, and these blending with finest human influences proceeding from them, men wake to wisdom, seek their Saviour, and trust and live. Blessed above all other peacemakers are such !

Let my reader reflect on these things. We have all great reconciling power, if we will but use it. Let us remember that whatever we can do to maintain and develop true affection amongst men furthers every kind of good. Value highly the gift of a friend, the worth of your brethren. Impair no kindly regard men feel for others. Guard more sacredly every friendship. Let no chill touch your own love for those dear to you. Leave it to the foolish to take offence—it is a kingly glory, as

## The Beatitudes.

Solomon has taught us, to 'pass by a matter.' Once lost, it is not easy to restore mutual love. Life is too brief for experiments on estrangement. When there is no virtue that is more richly its own reward, let us at any cost endeavour to attain the Christ-like glory of peacemaking.

But if there is such need of peacemakers and such value in this service, consider secondly :

II. Their Blessedness: THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

The Saviour promises a great distinction : that they shall be specially owned by God, as full of His own life and Spirit; as the divinest souls on earth; as those likest to God in heart, in feeling; fittest for His use, and richest in the honour He bestows.

In this word the Saviour assumes they are sons of God, and promises they shall be owned as such.

*They are sons of God.* There is no greater proof of our sonship to God than brotherhood to man. If filial, you are sure to be fraternal.

## The Peacemakers.

Love Him that begat, and you love those begotten of Him.

The true children of God are all marked on the brow, and the love that maketh peace is their divine stamp. God is a God of peace; Jesus came to this world to be 'our Peace.' The great element of salvation is, 'peace through the blood of His cross.' The quickened heart, therefore, sets Peace before it supremely, clearly, as that for which it is to aim.

When the pure heart has seen the Lord, men are seen in all their preciousness to Him, and, childlike, it fears to grieve the Father-heart by word or deed unkind to them. The desire of God that we should dwell in love is recognised, and the heart seeks to realise it.

The great God is ceaselessly playing the Peacemaker. By the nature He gives us, framed for loving, finding bliss in love, and misery in the absence of it, He promotes peace amongst men.

When the great gulf seemed fixed between

## The Beatitudes.

us and Him, He threw Himself into that gulf, and by the sacrifice of Himself made peace for us. And the passion of God's heart being a yearning for the reconciliation of all, none carry such outward sign of inward sonship as those whom the very Spirit of Christ constrains to be peacemakers.

Let us ponder this, and measure our sonship accordingly.

And peacemakers being children of God, the promise runs that they will be *owned as such*.

There are strange endorsements that come to gracious lives even now. Men have not always to wait for heaven to hear the 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' uttered to them, nor for the final manifestation to have their good made known. Acknowledgment and manifestation come often here. 'There's a divinity doth hedge' a saint as well as a king; a mystic atmosphere surrounds the good; approvals from on high bring men to worship at the feet of those that are God-like, and to know that God has loved them. And though no aureole of outward glory

## The Peacemakers.

encircles their brow, yet men know the peacemakers as heaven's finest work and God's dearest children.

Their words carry strange weight, as if oracles of God. The 'still small voice' of their gentle wisdom haunts the memory and penetrates the soul. Their sufferings—for all reconcilers have a cross—are so kindred with those of Jesus, and their meek endurance recalls so clearly that of the Saviour, that somehow all feel the peacemakers are owned and honoured of God, living in His light, stamped as His own dear children. That owning, here, is a great thing; let us seek to gain it.

And yet there is something more than this. The dread day is coming when all shall be manifested, and receive the retribution which is their condemnation or their reward. To stand approved on that day will be the infinite delight, as to be disowned by the Judge of all will be the unspeakable dismay.

There will be degrees in the glory, and distinctions in the rewards above. Some will

## The Beatitudes.

'*hardly* enter the kingdom of God,' their elementary contrition having merely started them on the path of life. Some will be richly rewarded as good and faithful servants, and will enter into the joy of their Lord.

But in that day the peacemakers, more than penitents, higher than servants, shall be owned as sons, with the richest, most endeared, and delightful of all welcomes, as sons of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, fittest of all souls for His highest heavenly work and service. It is almost incredible that such glory should be within our reach. But it is so. Let us aspire more worthily. Let us repent of the much we have done to promote dispeace, and the little we have done to cherish peace amongst men. With all the ardour of our being let us seek those things which make for peace; that in the great day which is so nigh at hand we may find ourselves with all the peacemakers, amongst those who have the bliss of being owned as the children with most of their Father's likeness, the saints who have caught most of the Saviour's glory.

## The Persecuted.

### VIII.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness' sake: for theirs 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. v. 10-12.



THE last crowns the series of The Beatitudes. From Poverty to Crucifixion, the Saviour's Life unfolded; exhibiting all the graces, activities, and experiences here commended. He expects that the new life—



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which begins in the hearts of the disciples in poverty of spirit—will grow till it reaches that vigour of holiness, mercy and usefulness which finds a cross, and has power to bear it.

It seems strange to us that the Saviour does not close with the seventh Beatitude, as this eighth names apparently not another grace, nor even another activity of the saint, but only a casual experience due to unfortunate surroundings.

If there was something only occasional in persecution, it would be strange that it should receive the importance of a special and indeed the crowning benediction. And if there was nothing peculiar in the character of those persecuted, that strangeness would be increased.

But the temper that attracts persecution for Righteousness' sake is one of pre-eminent vigour and consecration; and in the judgment of Jesus, some suffering for Righteousness is a constant and inevitable necessity of the conflict between good and evil.

## The Persecuted.

To us at ease in Zion, this beatitude may seem strange. But remember, looking forward a few months, the Saviour beheld martyrdom awaiting the Baptist: Beyond the martyrdom of John, stood Calvary: Beyond that, the stoning of Stephen and the death of James, the brother of John, by the sword. A little further along the vista, He beheld Paul consummating a constant living martyrdom in a bloody death; and the cruel death in which Peter glorified God. He saw James the son of Alpheus hurled from a pinnacle of the Temple, and Andrew crucified; the remaining apostles all suffering persecution—prisoners for the testimony of Jesus, like John, or rejoicing they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's name. While, for centuries, the mark of the cross stamped the Church's life.

Was it strange in such circumstances that He should have something to say of persecution? Or that, remembering how the first thing in Scripture history after the fall was the persecution of Abel; and the last

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thing in Scripture prophecy before the final glory, the persecution of those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast, He should feel that in all ages of her history, the Church would need the consolation which He gives?

This Beatitude has therefore a necessary and crowning place in the series. Let us consider it :

### I. THOSE BLESSED :

Blessed are they which are Persecuted  
for Righteousness' sake.

### II. THEIR BLESSING :

Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven :  
Great is your reward in Heaven.

I. Those Blessed : THE PERSECUTED FOR  
RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE. It seems strange  
there should be any such. Impatient, one-  
sided, prejudiced as we admit men to be, yet  
that they should persecute some because of  
their goodness, seems all but incredible.  
We know good people have suffered and do  
suffer. But we are always inclined to assume

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that it is rather for faults mingling with their goodness, than for the goodness itself ; for imprudence, not faithfulness ; for intolerance, not affection ; for over-freedom in assailing others—not for goodness and likeness to the Lord.

And indeed, it might well seem impossible that by deliberate animosity the world should persecute the best and most useful of its inhabitants.

But here the Saviour assumes that persecution will assail what He calls righteousness ; will attack the lowly goodness ; the gentle meekness ; the merciful compassion ; the pure faultlessness ; the brotherly peacemaking, which He enjoins. There will be degrees of suffering—from evil-speaking to martyrdom ; but He expects none who are pure to be free from pain.

Generations will of course differ in degrees of animosity, and society will soften in the degree in which it is imbued with Christian feeling ; but where the heart is carnal it will hate God, and where it hates God, its

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hatred will extend and embrace all who are like Him.

A little thought will show how constant must be the antagonism of the world to Sanctity, for observe:—

1. *Every Saint of God is a 'disturber of Israel.'* He is an embodied conscience. His character is a law of God brought nigh to men. His purity reproves; his honour shames men. The gravity of his purpose and His aims seems to light up the solemnities of the unseen world. All levity, all vileness, all selfishness, are exposed and put to shame by the silent contrast of a Better Life; so that, however meek and merciful and peaceful a holy life is, it tells of duty, of responsibility, of the claims of God, of the wrong of sin, of a judgment to come.

*We do not like to be disturbed;* and we hate those that awake the apprehensions of the soul.

2. *Every Saint of God offends the Pride, as well as disturbs the Peace of men.*

There is a fairness of beauty, an eminence

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of dignity in all true goodness, that overshadows and annoys our envious hearts. Aristides is disliked and proscribed merely because men call him 'The Just.'

We want on cheaper terms, that homage and regard of men which the beauty of holiness, the glory of love, attract to themselves. And we dislike the competing and rival graces.

Moreover, goodness attracts some measure of power and influence: 'inherits the earth' in the ample sense in which it is promised to the meek; and those who wish to have eminence and rule and power amongst men resent the intrusion of this competitor.

'Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?' It is no small hatred that envious evil feels to goodness. It cried, 'Away with Him, crucify Him.' Pilate knew that 'for envy they had delivered Him.' The mere wilfulness that wished to escape the reproof of Christ's goodness, and the envy that grudged His superiority, committed the infinite crime of

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Calvary. Where our lives have a purity and eminence at all resembling those of Christ, the world will show some of the same hatred to us which it cherished for Him.

Then further : the Saviour expects :—

3. *True saintliness will always be an aggressive thing. Where it is such, its activities rouse enmity.* We have different views from the Saviour on this subject of aggressive goodness. We think saintliness is at liberty to be an unobtrusive, silent, self-saving thing : carefully restricting its service to the quiet influence of its example, content to develop its own life sweetly. But the Saviour calls for something more vigorous than passive piety. Prince of Peace as He was, He proclaims : ‘I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword :— To set a man at variance’ with those around him. He defines His object to be to ‘send fire on the earth,’ and tarries only until it is kindled. He assumes that evil must be assailed, that falsehood will be contradicted and sin denounced. He intends a true peace to be

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reached by the disturbance of the false. He expects sanctity ever to have something of the soldierly quality and that the life will be a fight of faith. He did not contemplate sanctity adopting a *Live and let live* policy in the presence of falsehood and evil. Silence is the earth in which the talent of truth is buried. He expects us to be His witnesses ; bids us say 'Repent,' not merely to men in general, but to sinners in particular ; expects us to reprove all evil, as well as to point to Him who is the source and pattern of all good. He expects us to carry the offer of mercy to those who will resent our faithfulness ; He expects our testimony to be a fire, burning up refuges of lies ; a hammer breaking in pieces the rocks. Wherever love is thus aggressive, truth thus bold, mercy thus active—hatred of the intensest kind must rise. For who can bear to have his ways denounced as evil ; his views as false ; his destiny—perdition ; his duty—repentance ?

Moreover, the Christian has to be the



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reformer in a world of vested interests. And there is no evil under heaven, from idolatry to drunkenness, from gambling to gaiety, from heresy to vice, but some have interest in maintaining it. You will not achieve any usefulness of any sort without the cry: 'This our craft is in danger,' rising to the lips of those profiting by others' ignorance or servitude or evil. In these circumstances, however meek and peacemaking the saint of God may be, if he is faithful to his Saviour, and to the interests of men, he will suffer from the bitter speech, or the deed of hatred of those who resent his whole spirit and activity. Not till all evil is dispersed, and all souls inhabited by Christ, can the true saint of God expect to avoid persecution. And to-day, as in all past ages, while only the foolish desire persecution, and the wicked deserve it, the godly have to suffer for it.

I know there is but little persecution experienced by the Church of God to-day. But why?

Partly, no doubt, because the Saviour's au-

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thority pervades society, and the evils which we oppose are feebler, more apologetic and less dominant than in other days. But is that the whole reason? Not all the seven churches in Asia suffered persecution. But the two conspicuous for their faithfulness—Smyrna and Philadelphia—against which the Faithful and True Witness had to record no fault, were conspicuous for their trials. Two, however, seem to have altogether escaped them. Laodicean lukewarmness attracted no assault; and Sardis, with the name to live, but dead, aroused no enmity. Has our lukewarmness not something to do with our comfort? Is the absence of the idea of aggressive godliness from most Christian minds not a secret of our peace? If every saint was a reformer; every Christian soul a prophet of repentance; if in discipleship we took up our crosses—our gallows—expecting to suffer much for Christ; if, daily, self were ‘denied,’ that is, dethroned, and Jesus reigned within us; if to save men was the business of our life, and a high calling of God in Christ

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Jesus allured us onward, I doubt whether we should live many months without having to endure what would make us ponder with more solemn interest this great Beatitude.

In the past there have been many such. And there are no human histories so sublime and so soul-quickenning as those which tell of the innocence, the endurance, the faith of the noble army of martyrs. And to-day, though the Church is lukewarm, there are still some who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

The rack and the stake are over, but zeal and faithfulness, however gentle, have to endure some shame and some anguish.

Those who for conscience' sake strike out on a course which dearest friends oppose, are included in this benediction. The Pillar of Cloud leads not always in the ways in which parents and friends are moving. And when men and women follow it, there are those that will treat faithfulness to Christ as pride and wilfulness, or as indifference to those who claim their love.

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Blessed are ye if, for Christ's sake, men say these things against you falsely.

There are some saints of God solitary in the society in which they move, whose goodness is the butt of ridicule, whose faith is the jest of the worldliness around them; but who yet abate no warmth of consecration and no boldness of confession. They are covered by this benediction.

There are some faithful to minor truths of the Gospel who suffer for their faithfulness at the hands of those who resent differences of opinion and of action. These are embraced in this word of Christ. Then I note further—

*4. There are those faithful souls who in matters of philanthropy, or social or civil good, plead for causes with which they deem the well-being of men are bound up—but for causes which are unpopular.*

It will often be one of the most important of religious duties to plead some cause of common righteousness. Whoever does so at cost of repute, of feelings, of property, is one who is persecuted for righteousness' sake.

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And then there are all those who cannot rest in the solitary enjoyment of salvation, who plead with friends, though their pleadings are resented ; who carry the Gospel to the crowded courts of large cities, where treatment ruder than jest will ofttimes meet them ; who love their fellows with too deep a love to leave their evil unreprieved. Amongst the Salvation Army there are some who know what persecution for Righteousness' sake is. And some who have gone forth to heathen lands have—like Coleridge, Patteson, and Bishop Hannington—sealed their witness with their blood.

We ought to note these things. Expect not all plain sailing ; desire not to escape hardships, for persecution has its place in the plan of God. It has great purifying and strengthening power ; promotes humility and prayer ; under it, the finest qualities of our nature are developed. Remember, we 'count them happy that endure.' Remember, 'they that will live godly in Christ must suffer persecution.' Remember the friendship of

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the world is enmity with God. Let us fear that shrinking from reproach which is a snare to so many souls. And let us be solicitous to take our share in the reproach of Christ, and in the cross which rests on those that love their Lord.

For there is a great reward to such as suffer with their Lord. Let us next consider :

II. Their Blessedness : THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN.

One verse sufficed to declare the blessedness of previous classes named : The Saviour takes three for these.

There seems perhaps something strange in the fact that the Blessing attached to the first class named is precisely the same as that attached to the last. Of 'the poor in spirit' and 'the persecuted for righteousness,' the Saviour says alike, 'theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.' But the strangeness is easily explained. Partly it is due to the fact that our progress upward is by a spiral,

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ascent on which, circle after circle, brings us round to the same relative positions, though each time on a higher level. Go the round of the Beatitudes—and when you reach Persecution for Righteousness' sake—you find a new, deeper, vaster, Poverty of spirit, needing more than ever the Kingdom of God, with its supports and consolations. And from new Poverty you move onward afresh to new Mourning and new service.

And the strangeness is fully explained when you mark that those who have Righteousness for which to be persecuted have the Kingdom in a different sense from that in which the poor in spirit had it. The poor have it in provision, in offer, in opportunity. The persecuted have it in enjoyment, possession and triumphant experience of its blessings.

They have the Kingdom. . . . They are associated with the prophets. . . . They have a great reward in Heaven! Thus are they blessed. Ponder each of these points.

1. *Theirs is the Kingdom, in actual blessed*

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*participation of its grace and comforts.* By their persecution all powers of the soul are strengthened, and faith makes sure of its ground. Solitude strengthens them to stand alone. Nothing compels men to prove all things so much as the contradiction of those around them. The more man shuns, the more the Saviour has consorted with them. They have been cast into no furnace without finding one like unto the Son of Man there, to cheer them; nor into any prison, without angels loosing the bonds of the soul. Every Patmos has been a vestibule of heaven—a Pisgah from which in a vision, clear as that in which Moses beheld the earthly—they have beheld the Heavenly Canaan.

How marvellous is the grace martyrs reached! Children, maidens, those naturally timid, common people in their simplicity, have dared and died with a heroism that turned their anguish into joy. 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up unto the House of the Lord,' said one martyr as he was condemned to die.



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This prison very sweet to me  
Hath been since I came here,  
And so would also hanging be,  
If Thou didst then appear,

sang Bunyan in Bedford Gaol, his heart overflowing with the enjoyment of God's Love.

'Methinks they strew roses at my feet,' said one James Bainam, as the faggots were lighted beneath him. As Argyle laid his head upon the block, his physician found his pulse full and calm as in his usual health. In the first Scottish persecutions, after the Reformation had commenced, a Robert Lamb of Perth and his wife were condemned to die. She had besides other children, a little babe but recently born. He was condemned to be burnt alive—she to be tied in a sack and drowned. She asked that she might die with her husband, but the request was refused. She cheered him on his way—saw him die the awful death of fire: was led to the pond in which she was to suffer. She took her babe from her bosom, and committed it to the charge of a nurse she had secured; and, only

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beseeking her friends and neighbours to look kindly to her orphan children, she too, calmly, bravely, triumphantly died.

If those were rare instances they would have less weight. But they were characteristic of the martyrs. And they show that exemption from suffering is not all gain: that the Persecuted for Righteousness have habitually reached a consolation—a strength—a rapture, which showed that theirs was in very deed the Kingdom of Heaven.

*2. And this bliss is enhanced by the blessed influence they exert; they rank with the prophets when they share their fate.*

The glory of the prophets was their usefulness; their 'kindling souls;' the way in which they quickened faith and piety in human hearts.

The persecuted for righteousness share in the prophets' sufferings and in their usefulness.

Who will reckon what we owe to our Martyrs! What Manhood was created by their memory! What faith was quickened by their testimony! What sturdiness of resolve

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crept from them into the communities in which they lived and died ! What fitness for freedom and power to achieve it came from the example of these heroes ! Every stake was a throne from which the sufferer swayed the hearts of men ; an illumination in which men read the creed of Hope. We forget too much our debt to these illustrious Saints.

Look back to our Protestant forefathers : to the Covenanters of Scotland : to the great host of Puritan martyrs : to the Quakers, eight hundred of whom died in prison in the reign of Charles the Second, and who, between the years 1660 and 1833, when all civil disabilities were removed, were called to pay over a million of money as fines for refusing to do what conscience condemned ; and realise how much our gospel light, our national strength, our civil liberty is due to them. These were our line of prophets, and all that is noblest in our modern life draws its origin from them.

But if they have the Kingdom of Heaven, and take rank with the goodly fellowship of

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the prophets, there is still another promise made them.

### 3. *Great is their Reward in Heaven.*

We are children of Immortality, and the main question of our life is what that Immortality *is going to prove*. For all goodness there is reward, reaching down to the cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple. But for the Persecuted there is a 'great reward in Heaven.' 'Because thou hast kept the word of My testimony, I also will keep thee.' They who confess Him will be confessed by Him, and that Crown of Righteousness which is the special award of Grace, will be given them on that day.

Their large souls expand above, and for highest rulership and divinest joys find ample fitness within them.

Ponder these things. Soon all will be Retrospect with us; and of all we have and do nought will remain but the memory, the result, and the reward.

There is a denial of Christ where no words are used: a 'hiding of our faces' from Him.

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Let repentance discover every reproach we have avoided that we should have shared, and every sacrifice we have spared that we should have made.

Let us aspire to a more virile Godliness.

Let us be witnesses to the world, not conformists to it. Let us endeavour to embody in our lives an epitome of the graces which the Saviour has greeted with His blessing in these eight great Benedictions.

*Happy is he who tastes the bliss of any of them: but happiest he who in some measure tastes them all.*

May reader and writer alike know them in vital and rich experience!

THE END.

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LONDON: KNIGHT, PRINTER, MIDDLE STREET, E.C.

