

The Berean.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—Acts xviii. 11.

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THE PILGRIMS.

Oh let us march, with cheerful song!
Our toilsome journey will not be long;
We must not linger, for the light
Will soon be dimmed by the shades of night.
Our home and our rest is far above,
And we long to reach that sweet land of love.

Earth shall not bid our footsteps stay;
Its brightest pleasures will soon decay;
The fairest flower that decks the glade,
With the first dark storm will droop and fade.
Transient is life's most cherished bliss;—
Oh! we find no rest in a world like this.

Oh let us march! we will not fear,
Though foes and dangers are always near;
Our faithful chart is by our side,
And Jesus has promised to be our guide;
His tender care will never cease—
Oh! his ways are pleasant, his paths are peace.

Think, when we gain our home in heaven,
How sweet the repose that will be given!
Tears shall be wiped from the trembling eye,
And hushed for ever the softest sigh!
No sin shall there our peace destroy,
Nor sorrow entwine round our deathless joy.
Concluded on the fourth page.

THE MERCIFUL.

Who then are the merciful? This perhaps, appears at first the most intelligible of all the Beatitudes which we have yet considered. Every man probably knows what mercy means, and what men are merciful men. The praise of mercy has been sung by poets, eulogized by orators, and lisped even by children. Are we then come to a Beatitude, which is no such very peculiar characteristic of a truly Christian man? I grant you that mercy is known and seen among others; I grant that instances of mercy may be gathered out of heathen history; I grant that a feeling of mercy may be felt in hearts which were never warmed with the mercies of God in Christ Jesus; but then, having made this concession, I assert, that the world's merciful man, and Jesus Christ's merciful man, are two different men. This you will soon see; first, in the nature of mercy. The mercy of a truly Christian man is a tender sympathy of heart with the bodily and spiritual woes of others. Its seat is the heart—its habitation is in the affections. The apostle bids us, "Put on bowels of mercies;" an expression which the merciful can feel and understand; implying a yearning of heart over misery and woe—when the sight, the thought, the hearing of the sufferings of another thrill the very heart with anguish. I am not sure, whether the mercy of the world has its seat quite so deep; but whether it has, or has not, I am in no wise disposed to argue, having a more pleasant duty, even to exhibit and recommend this amiable, gentle thing, named mercy. It has its seat in the heart; not merely in the head; in knowledge or intelligence; not merely in the hand; there may be gifts in the hand, with but little mercy in the heart. But true mercy is a tender sympathy of heart. It is sympathy; a fellow-feeling with the sufferer. Mercy makes another's woes her own, takes part of his burden, feels and assuages his sorrows, relieves his wants, if it be possible, and if not possible, condoles, alleviates, sustains, and comforts. Mercy is also tender, full of kind consideration, delicate in offering relief, entering into the sufferer's case with the affectionate interest of a parent, or a brother.

This her tender sympathy is with the bodily and spiritual woes of others. Here the world's mercy will not deny inferiority. The world can show mercy to the bodily woes, but not to the spiritual woes of others. It is very remarkable, if a friend or relative be ill in body, many, of merely worldly principles, can show much kindness and sympathy. In this we commend them. Even in this they shall have their reward. I cannot indeed promise them eternal life, simply for this their mercy; eternal life comes to us through Jesus Christ, whom they, whose case I have in view, know not; yet shall they have their reward. They shall meet with some gratitude. Others shall show to them similar kindness in their own sickness. But if that friend or relative be not ill in body, but what is worse, going on in sin, hastening to hell, destroying his own soul, do the world show any thing like the same concern for that soul in its fearful, awful, dangerous state? Now why not be as merciful here as in the other case? Again, if the poor were in deep distress, and I could prove for them a true case, I should fear a repulse from very few who have it in their power to give, were I to solicit aid in their behalf. But if I were to set out to plead for the souls of the poor heathen, the Mahometans or the Jews, and though I could prove too true a case of ignorance, depravity, and moral misery, which nothing but the knowledge of the Gospel can remove, I very much fear I should meet with many a rebuff in asking people to aid in sending them spiritual relief. This shows me, that the world's mercy and Christian mercy are different things. The world's mercy cannot see beyond home, and the bodies and outward circumstances of men; the Christian's mercy, while it sees, and pities, and relieves all that the other does, sees also and feels for moral, mental, spiritual woes and sufferings, wherever found, at home or abroad. Many a man will subscribe to an hospital, who would refuse with scorn to contribute to a society for sending the Bible, or the Christian Missionary, to those who are perishing for lack of knowledge. Again, I repeat, in order that I may not be misunderstood, that the true Christian's mercy has regard to bodily and temporal wants and woes. It were mere

affection of spiritual-mindedness, to pretend to have no room in the heart for feeling for temporal woes. So did not Christ; and so do not the merciful. They feel, they labour, they use active exertions, to relieve temporal sufferings, but these engross not all their pity; they feel for souls, they weep over the ungodly, they can enter into the spiritual sorrows of an afflicted fellow-Christian.

Then the motive and source of this merciful disposition are, I suspect, much higher than those of the mercy of the worldly. Whence these obtain theirs, they perhaps know best. Ostentation and vain-glory sometimes have a share in their motives to mercy. At the best, their motive is often little more than a natural softness of disposition, whereby tears flow more readily, and the feelings are sooner excited in some than in others. But leaving the world to settle their own motives; the true Christian if asked, why do you desire to love mercy? would reply—but I would hope you know his answer; Christians, ask yourselves, why do you desire to love mercy? Consider whether I describe your character, while I remind you why true Christians are merciful. They would disclaim, from the inmost soul, every feeling of ostentation and vain glory. They would aim, as far as possible, that their left hand know not what their right hand doeth—a text that, which the world do not understand. They would have no trumpet sounded before them when they do an alms. Neither would they lay claim to a superior softness of natural disposition. They were once unmerciful, even as others, strangers to tender sympathy of heart for the bodily and spiritual woes of men, hateful and hating one another, lovers of their own selves, all seeking their own. And what changed them? *Mercy*—God who is rich in mercy, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. They have been taught of Him, that "the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." It is He who has made them, as the apostle beautifully speaks, "vessels of mercy;" even vessels to be filled with mercy as full as Christ commanded to fill the water-pots, even up to the brim—yea, fuller still. David, himself a vessel of mercy, cried, "My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." I was once, they would say, unmerciful to others, and no wonder, for I was unmerciful to myself, unmerciful and cruel to my own soul, yea, and body too; while pretending to gratify the body with its fleshly appetites and corrupt propensities, I was loading it with disease, wearing it with vanity, and hastening its destruction; and then the soul was treated as a slave with worse than Egyptian bondage, made to serve divers lusts, laden with thick clay, with no rest, no relaxation, no peace, no consolation, no hope. But mercy came, and with her came light, grace, rest, peace, joy, and comfort. Mercy came, and the hard heart was softened, the rock was smitten, the streams gushed forth. Mercy descended as a copious rain, and lo! the lovely fruits of gentleness, tenderness, and sympathy, began to appear. Hence they can understand the Saviour when he says, "He ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." God's mercies to them are a motive and a pattern for their mercies to others. If you see a man implacable, unmerciful, harsh, rigorous, unforgiving, and unkind, pity him, he is a stranger to the mercies of God. Though you should suffer by his unmerciful conduct, still pity him and pray for him, and let him know by your own spirit and words, that there is such a thing as forgiving mercy, which returns good for evil, and that you have learned it of God who showeth mercy to the guilty and to the undeserving. The true source, then, of the Christian's mercy to others is God's mercy to himself by Jesus Christ, who taught mercy not only on the Mount of Beatitudes, but also in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the Mount of Calvary, and though in heaven, is still a teacher of mercy: he is "a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." He pleads for the undeserving; he sends down his Holy Spirit to make known the Father's mercy, and sinners, however hard-hearted once, can now understand and feel and obey the apostle's exhortation, already partially referred to, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness." You see here what I have termed the connection of the Beatitudes: we have met with meekness before; you recognize an acquaintance, you are not surprised to find meekness and mercy, two sister-graces, in company; the wonder would be to find them apart—the apostle exhorts us then to "meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

You perceive then the true motive to mercifulness. I must not, I cannot be thought uncharitable by those who know the world, if I repeat my conviction, that what is called mercy by the children of this world, has no such high, heavenly, and divine original. You have heard its nature, and its motive; consider further the extent and course of its operations. Though its seat is in the heart, it does not remain there dormant, stationary, inactive. It issues in the lips, and they drop tenderness; it has an outlet by the eyes, and they distil tears of sympathy and condolence: it employs the feet, and, lo! they run to and fro to do good: they enter the house of mourning, the chamber of sickness, the cot-

James v. 11.
† Psal. cxlii. 5, 6.
‡ Heb. ii. 17.

† Rom. ix. 23.
‡ Luke xi. 36.
§ Col. iii. 12.

tage of the poor, the cell of the prisoner. Mercy commands the hands, and behold the fingers drop with the myrrh of liberality; Dorcas makes garments for the poor; the Samaritan binds up the bleeding wounds of the traveller; the pen of the writer is ready to write the affectionate epistle which may cheer and console, or the book which may instruct many, when the hand which wrote it is mouldered into dust.

Mercy's course is on the whole constant, uniform, and consistent. Some almost imagine that mercy is the sole prerogative of kings,—it is indeed part of their prerogative, and is the fairest jewel that sparkles in their crown, but Christian mercy may be exercised by the humblest and poorest of mankind. In loving mercy all may cultivate a royal spirit. Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God." And some seem to think that mercy is to be reserved for great occasions, such as occur some once, or twice, or thrice only in life, whereas it is a constant principle, of use and service every day. It finds work at home in a man's family; it requires greater principle to carry out mercy into the daily temper and all the detail of life, than to perform once or twice some splendid deeds of mercy. Mercy may be shown to relatives, to children, to servants, who, though they seldom in this land meet with injustice, yet often meet but little mercy. Mercy would surely allow to servants, and workmen, and tradesmen, what the God of mercy designed for them, a Sabbath, one day in seven, so far as absolutely needful services permit, and mercy would discover that these are much fewer than luxury and pleasure would describe. Mercy would encourage, instead of forbidding, domestics to go up once at least on the Sabbath to the house of mercy, the house of God. Mercy would endeavour to instruct or to obtain instruction for any about us who may be ignorant; and, I must add, that I do think mercy would often call all the family around her, and kneel down, and ask the God of mercy to bless the whole household. And mercy would retire also, and pray in secret for a brother, a sister, a father, a mother, a child, a wife, a husband. Oh what a blessing is mercy when she enters a family! she dispels strife, malice, enmity, and hatred, and she brings with her a lovely train of gentle sympathies and heavenly graces. And then she goes abroad—the merciful man in business—I need not describe him, you know him, though you may not often meet with him. He is not rapacious of gain, he is not harsh to a debtor, he is not pained at another's prosperity. The merciful man, retired from business, finds a new and better business—and what is it? *Mercy*—he has more leisure to do good—now he has time—what may a merciful man in business sighs for, time, I will not say for his soul and for religion—every man has time for that—but he has time and leisure to lay himself out to do good and to show mercy, to reconcile enemies, to alleviate distress; to console the mourner, to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction. It is a shame for any to say they have nothing to do, when there is so much needful and delightful work to be done in the way of mercy. Yes, if you inquire for mercy when she is gone abroad, look for her, not only in courts and palaces, but also in cottages and prisons. You have heard of Howard, the Christian philanthropist. That man was merciful, and he was so from Christian principle. He crossed and re-crossed seas, and mountains, and rivers. He exposed himself to disease and danger, and death, in a thousand forms. He penetrated the darkest of dungeons, to visit the most miserable of men. And his only object was mercy. If ever mercy had a martyr, he was one; and if ever mercy retires to weep (as she well may) over woes unwept, unpitied, and unrelieved by merciful men, it is at the tomb of Howard the philanthropist, amid the wilds of Russia. And not there alone. I could tell you, if time permitted, of many a grave over which mercy might well shed a tear of affectionate remembrance. I could tell you of Christian Missionaries, whose memory ought to be dear to the church of God, men of devoted piety and faith, who, touched with a sense of God's mercies in Christ Jesus toward themselves, felt mercy and pity for the souls of the poor heathen, and they went forth, literally forsaking home, kindred, country, the society of civilized, and, what was dearer to them, of Christian men, and they went among the rude, ignorant, and barbarous savages of the earth. There they had to contend not only with all that we have, in preaching to an ungodly world, but also with the grossest ignorance, the deepest depravity, the foulest superstitions, the most licentious, horrid, and revolting practices. They were as lambs in the midst of wolves. They had to learn the very language they had to use, a language often unfixed by any literature. They had sometimes to make the very grammar of the tongue in which they had to preach. And with these, and many other difficulties, there have been found men to struggle and contend. And there they have died upon their field of battle, and have blessed God in their dying hour, for allowing them the high honour of making known his mercy in Christ in that strange land. Christians, honour their memory, and follow them as they followed Christ! Surely the figure may be allowed, when I say, that mercy can often pass by the graves of conquerors and heroes, to go and water with her tears the meek and lowly flower, which blooms upon the grave of the Christian Missionary. But I need not figure. The converted heathens,—for, God be praised! there are living trophies of his mercy in heathen lands,—being themselves made partakers of God's redeeming mercy, honour the memory and respect the names of the men who came with the message of

mercy to their shores. While teaching their children Christianity, they teach them to list the names of those servants of Christ, who came each with his life in his hand, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, and who sealed their testimony with a life of piety and labour, and with a faithful death. But I enlarge not on this: some may think it altogether a digression: but I could not forbear, in explaining the extent and course of the operations of mercy in a practical form, to say thus much in regard to what is one of its highest, purest, noblest exercises, namely, when seen in the devotedness of a true Missionary. Let none say, What have we to do with mercy in this form? The same spirit of mercy would make you a Missionary spirit in your families, in your neighbourhood, and in your sphere of duty and of influence. It would very much enlarge that sphere. It would excite in you an interest in the progress of the Gospel at home and abroad. You would help us more by your fervent prayers; you would help the Missionary more by your prayers, and by liberal contributions to those Societies of Christians which send him forth.

Mercy, then, in its extent and operations takes a wide range. It comes from heaven: it is an emanation from God, it descends through the grace of his Spirit, and the doctrine of his Son, into the heart of man. There, like the prophet's salt cast into the waters, it sweetens the native bitterness of the fallen heart, it softens, melts, and subdues him, who was once harsh, obdurate, and unforgiving. Then mercy is seen in the man's relation to his family, next in his business, then in his neighbourhood; and, by degrees, in many an effort and desire to do good to the souls and bodies of men throughout the world. Mercy in the heart is in effect like the throwing of a stone into a pool. First, one, and that a small and near circle, is formed; then, a second and larger; and then a third, a larger still; and thus on, till the extreme circle reaches the very margin of the pool.—From Sermon by the Rev. John Hambleton, M. A., Minister of the Chapel of Ease, Islington.

THE PECULIARITY TO BE AIMED AT.

I could enlarge upon this topic, and there are others which I could wish to notice, particularly the encouragement and the direction of Sunday-Schools, were it not time that, (if I may borrow the allusion,) I should draw in my sails and make for the shore. I will only say, then, in conclusion, that if, as I have intimated in the course of these observations, we stand as a distinct and peculiar body, in virtue of being a branch of the Episcopal Church, this is not the highest or the most important peculiarity by which we should be marked. Our distinction as Episcopalians will very little avail us, unless we take heed that we are not behind others in the genuine characteristics of the people of God; a peculiar people, in the language of one Apostle, zealous of good works—a chosen generation; according to the description of another, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, who show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. This is the mark which we should set before our followers, and to the attainment of which we should seek to lead them on. We should keep clear and conspicuously bright the lamp of Holy Truth, which, as the Priests of the Temple, we are appointed to watch; holding forth constantly to view, (for this is the life and light of the Church, and in exact proportion as it is obscured, our Ministry fails of its purpose,) the salvation of sinners through the free Grace of God in Christ Jesus. We should magnify the love which was displayed in the rescue of a guilty race, and in the gift of the Spirit of Holiness: we should press these things home to the bosoms of our hearers, and teach men to make them their own: we should labour night and day to awaken those who are plunged in the sleep of sin, and to dissipate the dreams of those who smooth over the Doctrines of the Cross, and are satisfied in conscience, because they satisfy the nominally Christian world: we should regard it as the business of our lives to be instrumental in turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And even if it were to please God that we could turn but one, shall we not think the labour of our lives to have been better spent than in the pursuit, however successful, of any worldly object, when we remember, for our encouragement, the value of one immortal soul, as set forth in the declaration of Him who paid its ransom—that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth?—From Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Quebec, by the Right Rev. G. J. Mountain, D. D., Lord Bishop of Montreal, 1838.

PRAYER FOR THE DEAD.

Letter from the Rev. Dr. Wainwright to the Editor of the New York Churchman.

Dear Mr. Editor,—In your notice of my "Order of Family Prayer" in the last Churchman, you quote with high approbation one of the Prayers, and anticipate for me on account of its publication "the thanks of all true Churchmen for my fearless testimony to the ancient custom of praying for the dead," and you commend me for my "manliness evinced in this boldly setting forth the true doctrine of the Church, and reducing theory to practice." Now this praise, sincerely expressed without doubt, gave me much pain and, emanating from such high authority, I felt that I could not safely or conscientiously rest under what I anticipated would be the effect of it, even for a single day. I availed

extremo in jam sub fine laborum vela traham, et terris festinam adverteo proram.

myself, therefore, under the necessity of the case, of the friendly aid of a secular journal, to repel without delay a charge which I believed to be totally unfounded, and which if credited would seriously impair my ministerial usefulness, and compromise my character as a consistent member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. As my communication to this journal may not meet the eyes of many of your readers, I now ask of you this opportunity most distinctly, to assert my disbelief of there being any scriptural warrant for Prayers for the dead, or of this being a true "doctrine of the Church" and therefore my conviction that the revival of this practice would be not merely inexpedient but dangerous.

Did any expression in the Prayer above alluded to, in my estimation authorize the inference that has been drawn from it by you, I should deeply regret its introduction, and should take immediate measures to have it expunged from my book. The language of the Prayer I contend has been misrepresented, not intentionally, but being read by one approving, and possibly adopting, the practice in question, he has interpreted it in the light of his own thoughts and convictions, which I imagine must be very different in this respect from those of the great body of the devotional writers of the Church since the Reformation. The prayer as I have supposed was put into its present shape with the express design of precluding its being used as a prayer for the dead. It was copied by me exactly from the Liturgia Domestica of Arthur H. Dyke Acland, a work dedicated by permission to the present Bishop of Exeter, who could not for a moment be supposed to countenance this practice, when the Church of England has most clearly in her revision of the Liturgy refused to sanction it. By Mr. Acland the prayer was copied with some omissions from the Devotions of Bishop Cosin. By him it appears to have been taken with very considerable alterations and omissions from the Prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church as found in the first Liturgy of Edward the VI. Now place the following extracts from the Prayer in King Edward's Liturgy, and the Prayer which I have adopted side by side, and see if the inference may not be fairly drawn that the latter was remodelled with the express design of discountenancing the practice in question.

King Edward's Liturgy.—*Holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, whose examples (O Lord) and steadfastness in thy faith, and keeping thy holy commandments, grant us to follow. We commend unto thy mercy (O Lord) all other thy servants which are departed hence from us, with the sign of faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace; and that at the day of the general resurrection, we and all they which be of the mystical body of thy Son, may altogether be set on his right hand and hear his most joyful voice: Come unto me, etc.*

Bp. Cosin.—*Holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, whom we remember with honor and commemorate with joy, and for whom, as also for all other thy happy servants our fathers and brethren, who have departed this life with the seal of faith, and do now sleep in the rest of peace, we praise and magnify thy glorious Name; most humbly desiring that we may still continue in their holy communion, and enjoy the comforts thereof while we are on earth, following with a glad will and mind their holy examples of godly living and steadfastness in thy faith; and that at the last day, we with them, and they with us, may attain to the resurrection of the just, and have our perfect consummation of bliss, both in body and soul, in thine eternal kingdom.*

The first is obviously prayer for the dead, a commendation of them to God's mercy. The latter is as obviously a commemoration of the faithful dead, and the prayer is that we may follow their holy examples, and that at the last day we being with them, and they with us, that is, we being united to their company, may attain to the resurrection of the just. We supplicate no mercy for them. And as to praying that they may attain to the resurrection of the just, I can see neither object nor propriety in such a petition. The matter of it is in no possible sense a contingency. The resurrection of the just is the fulfilment of a covenant. God has promised this infinite mercy through Christ to man on certain conditions. Now when these conditions have been fully and finally and without any possibility of abrogating them, complied with, are we to venture to beseech God not to violate his pledge? The very least that can be said of prayer for the dead, in connexion with the true doctrine of the resurrection, as it seems to me, is that it is totally unmeaning. But prayers that we may become partakers with them, and of course they partakers with us in a promise of which their participation is certain, while ours is yet contingent, is needful to the very last moment of our lives, lest by any means "we fail of the grace of God."

The prayer I have inserted in my book, in my view of it, means no more than the Church means when in the Prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church Militant she puts into the mouth of her children this language—"And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly Kingdom." And again in the first Collect of the Order for the Burial of the Dead: "We give thee hearty thanks for the good examples of all those thy servants, who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labours. And we beseech thee that we with all those who are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul in thy eternal and everlasting kingdom."