

## Sabbath School Lessons.

February 23rd.

## THE BEATITUDES.—MATT. v. 1-12.

In these beatitudes we have eight great truths taught us. They are characteristics of the Christian, and as such may be employed by us to test whether we are Christians or not. These principles of Christ are very different from the principles of the world. What Christ inculcates, the world despises.

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* Theirs is the kingdom of heaven; ver. 3. This is the reason assigned for their blessedness. For, &c.; ver. 3. They are also blessed in the possession of this poverty of spirit; Prov. xvi. 19. They are blessed, moreover, by having the promise of God dwelling with them; Isaiah lviii. 15.

The poor in spirit are those who are humble or lowly-minded and self-abased—who are deeply-convinced of their sinfulness in the sight of God.

2. *Blessed are they that mourn;* for they shall be comforted; ver. 4. Worldly men say blessed are the *merry* but Christ says blessed are the mourners. "They are blessed, for their sorrow shall be turned into joy;" John xvi. 20.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" Rev. xxi. 4.

Those who mourn are those who sorrow on account of sin. That is, with a godly sorrow, and with an eye to the Lord Jesus Christ. They mourn over the corruption of their nature. They mourn over their actual transgressions. They mourn over the hidings of God's countenance, and over the sins of others.

They may be in distress now, but they shall be comforted. If not comforted in time they shall be comforted in eternity.

3. *Blessed are the meek;* ver. 5. The promise to such is that they shall inherit the earth; ver. 5. By the meek Christ means those who are of a patient and contented spirit, who are willing to put up with little honour on the earth. They can bear injuries without resentment, and are not ready to take offence. If the Lord lays his afflicting hand upon them, they quietly submit to his dealings.

They are *blessed*, inheriting the earth; v. 5. In delighting themselves in the abundance of peace; Psal. xxxvii. 11. In being beautified with salvation; Psal. xlix. 4. In being like the blessed Jesus, who was meek (Matt. xii. 29), and in having the undisturbed enjoyment of themselves, their friends, and their God.

They shall "*inherit the earth.*" This is almost the only express temporal promise in the New Testament. They may only possess a small part of it now, but like Lazarus in the parable, they are content to wait for their

good things. They shall not lose in the long run, for one day they shall reign in the earth.

4. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.* By these our Lord means those who desire above all things to be entirely conformed to the mind of God. They long not for riches, nor wealth, nor distinction, but after conformity to God. They desire to be made holy, they desire to possess every spiritual blessing. They shall be filled. They shall be satisfied to the full; John iv. 14; Rev. vii. 16; Psal. xvii. 15.

5. *Blessed are the MERCIFUL,* for they shall obtain mercy; ver. 7. The merciful are not generally supposed to be the wisest, nor are they likely to be the richest, yet Christ pronounced them blessed. They are full of compassion towards others. They pity all who are suffering either from sin or sorrow, and are tenderly desirous to make their suffering less. They are merciful, because they have known the mercy of God in their forgiveness (Eph. iv. 32), and they thereby show that they shall obtain mercy; Matt. vi. 14; Heb. vi. 10; James ii. 13.

6. *Blessed are the PURE IN HEART,* for they shall see God; ver. 8. This is a comprehensive beatitude. Holiness and happiness are not only fully described, but they are put together.

The pure in heart are those who do not aim merely at outward correctness but at inward holiness, and are made pure by the truth. None else can see God so as to enjoy him; Heb. xii. 14.

7. *Blessed are the PEACEMAKERS,* for they shall be called the children of God; ver. 9. The "peacemakers" are peaceful, and promoters of peace among others. Only such are accounted the children of God; Gen. xiii. 8; James i. 17, 18. They learn this from the Gospel; Eph ii. 14.

8. *Blessed are the PERSECUTED for righteousness' sake.* This is the greatest paradox of all, and peculiar to Christianity, and therefore it is put last and more largely insisted upon than any of the rest; vers. 10-12.

Christ means those who are laughed at, mocked, despised, and ill-used, because they endeavour to live as true Christians. The Apostles were reviled, but they were happy in the midst of it; Acts v. 41; xvi. 25; Rev. i. 10.

March 2nd, 1862.

### JOSEPH RULES OVER EGYPT. GEN. xli. 37-57.

1. *Pharaoh's preferment of Joseph.* Joseph having interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh with that confidence which Divine inspiration alone could give, with admirable