

called themselves his disciples the names of twelve men, whom he summoned to a close attendance upon himself, to receive his instructions, that they might in due time become his messengers. With these, the twelve, he descended from the peak to a little plain on the mountain's side. Here he was met by a vast throng, who stood around the inner circle of the apostles to listen to his teachings. The Sermon on the

Mount was addressed primarily to the apostles, but was heard also by the multitudes. It contains a statement of the principles of the new covenant, the laws of the kingdom of God. But it was only preliminary to the higher teachings of salvation through the blood of the Lamb, which was to be given to the apostles, and by them after the glorification of Christ, to the world.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. Seeing the multitudes. The previous chapter shows that in his audience every part of the land was represented, from Judea to Galilee, and from the Tyrian coast to the provinces east of the Jordan. Thus the report of these teachings would be extended through every section, and the way be prepared for the higher teachings of salvation by the cross of Christ. **He went up.** Not to withdraw from the crowds, but to draw after him the earnest seekers after truth.

(1) *There is something in Christ which meets the wants of the world, and draws the hearts of men. Into a mountain.* Rev. Ver., "the mountain." The use of the article shows that it was a well-known place, and associated with the Saviour's ministry. Probably the Saviour's meeting with his disciples after his resurrection took place at the same mountain. It is believed to be Kurn Hattin, "the horns of Hattin," which stands at the head of a valley leading down to the Sea of Galilee, and about seven miles from the Sea of Galilee. It receives its name from its two peaks or "horns," between which lies a little plain, where the discourse may have been delivered. On this very place, where Jesus pronounced a blessing upon the peacemakers, a bloody battle took place in 1187 A. D., when the last of the crusaders were destroyed by the Sultan Saladin. **When he was set.** He sat down; the usual posture of an Oriental teacher while giving instruction. **His disciples came.** The audience consisted of the twelve just chosen, the general company of believers in Jesus, and a crowd of curious listeners. (2) *Every congregation contains various classes of hearers, and varied degrees of interest in the word.*

2. He opened his mouth. An expression which is used only with reference to a set discourse or an important utterance. (3) *"When the Lord opens his mouth, we should open our ears and hearts."*—Schaff. **Taught them.** The discourse was addressed to disciples, not to the Jewish people. Its aim was to instruct the followers of Jesus in the new dispensation and its principles. It might be called "the new law," explaining and supplementing the ten commandments.

3. Blessed. This word means happy, but also something higher: "the more than happiness produced by God's sunshine in the soul; not a momentary joy or pleasure, but a permanent state; not the passive receiving of a blessing, but the active possession of a source of enjoyment. He who receives a cup of cold water may be happy, but he who has the spring from which it comes is blessed. Carlyle has said, "One may lose happiness and find blessedness." The poor in loss of happiness and find blessedness. The poor in need and are eager to satisfy it; in contrast with the Pharisees, who were self-righteous and self-satisfied. All of these beautitudes or blessings are spiritual, and bestowed upon spiritual states or conditions; so here the reference is not to the humble or the abject as such, but to those who feel their need of spiritual blessings. **Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Every body was expecting that Jesus as the Messiah of Israel would at once set up a throne, throw off the Roman yoke, and lead the Jews to a universal empire. This was their conception of the kingdom of God; "a kingdom for themselves, as God's chosen people. Christ tells them that the citizens of the new state should not be the ambitious and the self-seeking, but the lowly and spiritually minded. (4) *Only those who are conscious of spiritual needs are in condition to receive spiritual blessings.*

4. Blessed are they that mourn. The second beatitude depends upon the first. Those who recognize themselves as in need of divine, spiritual blessings are those who mourn over their own condition. The mourning here referred to is not mere sorrow under afflictions, nor misery from the ills of life, nor remorse over sins; but a sorrow of heart and true penitence begotten from poverty of spirit. (5) *The world counts those happy who rejoice; Christ blesses those who weep. They shall be comforted.* Not all who mourn will

be comforted, for much of the sorrow of the world is over earthly disappointments, and does not turn toward God. But all who are of sad heart over their own unworthiness and seek for spiritual comfort shall enjoy the infinite consolation of Christ. (6) *When we weep, let us look upward and not downward.*

5. Blessed are the meek. The lowly-minded as opposed to the ambitious—those who endure evil rather than do evil, having for their motive the love of God and of men. **They shall inherit the earth.** They may not always gain earthly possessions, but they obtain true joy in all conditions of life; and in the final result of the Gospel they will have abundant reward. Take for example Jesus himself, who suffered wrong, and yet has conquered the earth, and is conquering still. (7) *He who has an eternal life can afford to wait for his inheritance.*

6. Hunger and thirst. Who have such an eager desire as can be likened only to hunger and thirst; the keenest and most overmastering appetites. **After righteousness.** The Divine standard of character, right acts, right aims, and right affections—life, will, and heart after the heavenly pattern. **They shall be filled.** Every one attains to the standard of character which with all his heart he seeks after, whether high or low. Men may hunger after gold or honor or love, and be unsatisfied, but every yearning after God's likeness shall be satisfied.

7. The merciful. Those who love their fellow-men, who feel with them in their troubles, who strive to help others, and live to make the world better. **Obtain mercy.** Men generally receive from others what they give to others. Those who deal harshly meet with coldness, and find the world selfish; those who are friendly find friends, and those who forgive find God do good to men obtain mercy here and hereafter.

8. The pure in heart. Purity of heart is more than the ceremonial cleanness required of those who entered the temple; more than chastity of conduct and of thought; more than sincerity. It is "that steady direction of the heart toward the divine life which excludes every other object from the homage of the heart."—Schaff. **They shall see God.** Only those who have something in common with God can commune with him; and only as the heart is consecrated can the communion be complete. (8) *"When the heart is clean the eye is clear."*—Whedon.

9. The peacemakers. "They who work peace": the one, loving God, seek to plant mutual love in the hearts of all around them. **Children of God.** Because of God's Son comes to make peace they resemble him. (9) *It is Christ-like to avoid quarrels, and to reconcile enemies.*

10. Blessed are they which are persecuted. This is not the world's view. We are apt to pity the sufferers for Christ's sake, those who have been driven out like the Pilgrims, those who have been put to death as martyrs. But the Pilgrims in New England were happy; and what martyr in glory regrets the fiery trial now? said Patrick Hamilton at the stake, "This seems to be dreadful, but it is the gate to everlasting life." **For righteousness' sake.** As Augustine says, "Martyrs are made, not by the fact of suffering, but by the cause for which they suffer."

11, 12. Blessed are ye. He emphasizes the promise by localizing it. **Persecute you.** Christ would not have his followers expect worldly advancement in his service. **Falsely, for my sake.** It is our part to see that the evil spoken of us is false, and then Christ will see that the wrong which we suffer turns to good. **Rejoice.** Only Christians of the highest type can rejoice while suffering wrong. **The prophets.** In whose good fellowship we are honored.

13. Ye. The believers in Christ and citizens of the