

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B.,

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EDITORIAL.

THE HUNGRY AND THIRSTY WHO SHALL BE FILLED.—Matt. 5, 6.

On some occasions our Saviour spoke to the multitudes, but His sermon on the Mount was addressed to His disciples, and shows how He prepared citizens for His approaching kingdom. Instead of telling them what they were to do, and what not, He cheerfully declares those blessed who have the character He describes. His life was to bless and not to curse, and was always in harmony with the song of the angel who heralded His birth, "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Of the eight beatitudes of this sermon we will specially consider the fourth: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."

How simple are Jesus' figures. Who is it that does not understand what hungering and thirsting mean? And He pronounces them blessed who hunger and thirst for righteousness. We sometimes talk of the blessedness of heaven: its inhabitants, and sing, "What must it be to be there?" But Jesus unveils the blessedness of earth's inhabitant, and is especially concerned to make that happiness ours. Righteousness is to be right with God and men. As it is with God and men we have to do: whosoever is right in thought and act, and feeling, with them, cannot be very wrong with anything else. But if Jesus had said: blessed are they that are righteous.—Where could such be found? Not on earth, for "all have gone astray, and there is none righteous, no not one." Such blessedness, therefore, could not be ours. A righteousness of our own is worse than nothing, as it only prevents us from seeking and obtaining a better, "even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." But Jesus has said, "blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." It is those, therefore, who hunger and thirst after that righteousness of God who are blessed. All need it, and God bestows it on true believers in Christ.

This beatitude opens a whole volume of important truths.

1. Man is without righteousness. Angels do not hunger for it; neither did Adam in his pristine purity. They and he were blessed in being right. But by his sin he and his offspring became wrong. It is the sick that crave health, and it is the wrong that hunger and thirst after righteousness.

2. God has a righteousness for man in his need, and bestows it freely on all who hunger and thirst for it. He justifies or makes right the ungodly. That righteousness has so much of God's glory in it that it required four thousand years for it to rise upon the nations, in which time it was foreshadowed by the

law and testified by the prophets. But it has risen and will shine for evermore, the song of the redeemed and the admiration of the universe. When Jesus uttered these words he well knew the love that originated this righteousness, and the spotless life and ignominious death by which it was to be brought in, and who can imagine the raptures of His heart when describing the blessedness of those who would be filled forever with its glory?

Jesus does not call those blessed who hunger for anything but righteousness. He does not call those blessed who hunger and thirst after health, although it is so precious, for afflictions have proved a blessing to many. Paul was very anxious to have the thorn in the flesh removed, but it was not; for the Lord's grace was better for him than its removal, showing us that we should not be too urgent for temporal blessings. But we cannot be too urgent for righteousness, or to be right.

An earnest minister of the gospel hungers and thirsts for the conversion of sinners, but sees few or none turn to the Lord. He is disappointed and is ready to conclude that his labors and prayers have been in vain, and that he has mistaken his calling. Stop, my brother, let us reason together. Jesus has not said, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for the conversion of sinners, for they shall be filled or satisfied, but He has said: "That he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, one soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor. Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors."—John iv: 36, 37, 38.

If our great desire is to be righteous, we will labor patiently and hopefully as sowers, and if it please God to permit us to reap, we shall be glad, but if, instead, he sends others to reap where we have sowed, it will also gladden our hearts, and in the great harvest both sowers and reapers shall rejoice together. In our great anxiety to be reapers, selfishness may mingle with our prayers, but nothing can make us too anxious to be right.

If we are disappointed in our anxiety for men's conversion, let us remember Him of whom the prophet wrote: "Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed." And when we read the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and behold the Man of Sorrows, despised and rejected of men—as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, let us not forget that it is as blessed to be in sympathy with Jesus then as when he shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. The great company in white robes were those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, through hardships and discouragements, as well as what we might esteem success.

This beatitude is wonderfully suited to every member of the Church, which is the body of Christ. It can be understood by every member, and can be most helpful to all. This body has many members with different

offices. Each of the officers has important duties to perform, and each who knows his place and responsibilities, exclaims, at least to himself, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Jesus pronounces such of these blessed who hunger and thirst after righteousness. How appropriate for each of them to be continually and most anxiously pleading with God that he may be right, be in the right place, and may fill it according to the will of God. If he is in Christ and led by His spirit in all righteousness and truth, he will be a useful man and a happy man. The man that thus hungers and thirsts shall be filled.

The same is true of every member as well as of the officers of the church. If constantly inquiring what the Lord would have them to do, and hungering and thirsting to be right, God would hear them and grant their desires. Let every child of God consider this matter and he or she will be surprised to see how plainly Jesus speaks and how easy it is to enjoy his promised blessing. One may feel his great weakness and his shortcomings, and that when he would do good, evil is present with him. But Jesus says: Blessed are they that want to be right, that hunger and thirst for it. This puts it within your reach. He says such are blessed for they shall be filled. How wonderful is the love of God to us, that by hungering and thirsting after his righteousness we will be filled and enjoy Jesus' blessings! Let us see that we do not refuse it.

Since Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance, there is encouragement in this Beatitude to the lost. They have no righteousness, they have sin. But Jesus died for their sins, and with a heart overflowing with divine compassion invites them to come by him to God, who will forgive all their sins and make them righteous. It is right for sinners to hear Jesus, to believe him, to obey him, to come into the divine family and be filled.

Original Contributions.

THE HEBDOMADAL SICKNESS.

T. H. BLENUS.

I am not quite sure in which of the four primary classes in Dr. Farr's system of Nosology the hebdomadal sickness should be placed; but, probably, that of Class 1st, which treats of zymotic diseases. Be that as it may, this disease is a widespread disorder, found in almost every climate, and in its character is more endemic than epidemic; although, at times, in some localities it seems to prevail periodically. It is said that, in a strictly scientific sense, there may be disease without much pain and uneasiness, in the ordinary and generally accepted meaning of these words. This is to some extent the case with the disease under consideration, and for this reason, by being too often neglected, it becomes deep-seated and prolonged. While