

PEACEMAKERS.

The opening sentences of our Lord's Sermon upon the Mount, known in the Church by the name of the Beatitudes, give us a delineation of the saintly character. We shall misunderstand these Divine sentences if we suppose that we find in them so many different classes of saintly men. It is not that the poor in spirit form one division, and that the mourners a second, and the meek a third, and they which hunger and thirst after righteousness a fourth, and the merciful a fifth, and the pure in heart a sixth, and the peacemakers a seventh, and the persecuted an eighth; all the saints of God have that true Gospel poverty of spirit which Bishop Taylor calls "the highway of eternity;" all mourn; all are meek; all hunger and thirst after righteousness; all are merciful; all are pure in heart; all are peacemakers; all, more or less, are persecuted for righteousness' sake. We have not so many different kinds of characters; but so many aspects of one and the same character, not eight different vines, but eight different clusters of one and the same vine.

It is an easy thing to speak about the saints and the saintly characters, admiring them as we might admire the radiance of an autumnal sunset: but we are all called to be saints; unless that character be formed in us, we shall have no share in the beatitudes of the Sermon upon the Mount. Let us consider that aspect of the saintly character which is exhibited in the words, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

1. Who are the peacemakers?

If we inquire merely what our Lord's first hearers must have understood by the term, no doubt it may be restricted to the signification which has been given by an old divine—"pacific, gentle, good-natured."

Even in this obvious and superficial sense of the word there is much force. How strangely and touchingly gentle must it have sounded in the ears of men in that age, which has been described by historians in hues of such intense blackness! Even now, after the Gospel of Christ has been eighteen hundred years in this distracted world, we cannot afford to do with-

out this signification of the seventh beatitude. When we look round us, are there not quarrels in houses, quarrels in societies, quarrels even in churches, between those who are only divided by some wretched shibboleth? When men see how good a thing it is to drop a little oil upon these troubled waters, even worldly hearts are ready to say "Amen" to the Saviour's blessing.

It is interesting to remember that at the last commission for the review of the Liturgy, in 1689, it was proposed, among several changes of a much more questionable character, that at the greater festivals the Eight Beatitudes should be read, either in addition to, or in place of, the Ten Commandments. On a Christmas or Easter morning it would surely be beautiful to hear, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God," with a response, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and make us partakers of this blessing."

But this does not exhaust the meaning. The world is, for once, so well pleased with the literal interpretation of one of the words of Jesus, that it would see no further. Not so the Christian. Rather, as one of old has said, "from the promontory of the Saviour's words he gazes down into the clear and fathomless depths of his Divine thought."

When we read any thoughtful book, we strive to ascertain the sense in which the author uses important words. What, then, does Christ mean by peace?

Peace seems to mean a wholesome and perfect harmony of man's nature. Man has a twofold enmity rankling in his soul. He is the enemy of God. When we remember the heathen philosopher's description of a wicked man—how he cannot bear to be alone, because he can find nothing in himself to love; how his whole soul is in a state of revolt and mutiny—we need not fear to say that he is at enmity with himself.

Our Lord says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The world's courteous words are hollow. It can speak them with curled lips, and a tongue of ice, and an eye of stone. But the word which the world uses heartlessly