

An Hour with the Editor

THE BEATITUDES

Much of the force and value of the teachings of the New Testament is lost by placing too liberal a meaning upon the words, and by seeking to discover something in actual life that bears out the exact meaning of expressions, which the context shows were used figuratively. The Oriental mind, like that of the aboriginal people of North America, is fond of imagery and delights in superlatives; and yet thousands of people today take the words attributed to Jesus as though they were uttered by a Twentieth Century Englishman to a company of his contemporaries. In like manner there are many who lose sight of the fact that the language and form of instruction employed by Jesus were in keeping with the age in which he lived and the manner of life of the people to whom they were spoken. Yet if we would think the matter over a little, it will be plain that these teachings must have had a local, racial and personal color, in order to be of any value at all. Nor are persons, who seek to explain the teachings of the Gospels always mindful of the circumstances under which they were spoken, and yet these form an important factor in the case, when we seek to arrive at the meaning of what is taught.

Take the Beatitudes, as they are called, that is the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th verses of chapter V. of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. These eight striking statements are the first recorded public utterances of Jesus as a teacher. They form the beginning of the famous Sermon on the Mount. Much discussion has arisen out of them, for it is said that they are not borne out by the experience of everyday life. To be meek is certainly not a title nowadays and never was to the inheritance of the earth, and to be "poor in spirit," as we understand the expression today, is to be a subject of contempt. Those who mourn are not always comforted; the merciful do not always obtain mercy. Therefore it is obvious that these Beatitudes are not to be taken literally. All through the teachings of Jesus we find this use of figurative language. Thus we read: "If thy enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for by so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." To heap coals of fire upon any one's head is to cause intense suffering, but the injunction is not given as a means whereby we can give pain to those who oppose us. Again we are told, "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away"; but no one supposes for an instant that this means that we should give what we have gained by our own efforts to the first person who says he wants it, for we read that if you do not agree with your adversary "quickly whiles thou art in the way with him" you shall be cast into prison and not be released till you have paid "the uttermost farthing." Again, we are told to take no thought of the morrow, but experience shows that improvidence is the bane of human existence. These illustrations show that if we interpret the Gospel language literally and live according to it, life would certainly not be worth living for any one who attempted to do what is right. If, however, we take the statements referred to, and others like them, as the words of an Oriental speaking to Orientals, and seek to discover their meaning, we shall find them to be of untold value.

The circumstances under which the Beatitudes were uttered were somewhat as follows: "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people." Very naturally "his fame went throughout all Syria," and we learn that "there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond Jordan." These people did not follow Jesus for the sake of receiving religious instruction. They regarded Him, not as a spiritual Redeemer, but as one who was about to restore the ancient glory of the nation. It is easy, if one chooses to give his imagination rein, to call up a mental picture of the scene—multitudes gathered from distant points, strangers to each other, some who had seen miraculous cures performed, others who only knew of them by hearsay, some who had felt the oppression of Roman rule, others who cherished ambitions in regard to places that they might possibly hold in the new kingdom, some doubtless hoping that they might be cured of sickness, many probably inspired by no other motive than curiosity. People nineteen centuries ago were a good deal like they are today; if we make allowance for their surroundings and their upbringing, we will have to admit that they were neither better nor worse by nature than we are. When we look upon a stained glass window in a church and see pictures intended to represent the characters of the New Testament, we are apt to get the idea into our minds that they were very different from ourselves, and most people have formed that conception of them not from pictures alone, but from the manner in which these characters are usually referred to from the pulpit. But they were just like we are, and the crowds that followed Jesus were just the sort of crowd that would follow a popular leader nowadays, only, and this point must not be lost sight of if we would appreciate the circumstances under which the Sermon on the Mount was spoken, they were largely animated by the hope that a political revolution was about to be inaugurated.

These considerations will enable us to form some idea of the circumstances under which the Beatitudes were uttered, and the thought that Jesus wished to convey by them. They

were just the words that the assembled multitude needed to hear. Among the people were many who had cause for sorrow, and they were assured that for them there was comfort. Those who cherished no lofty ambitions were told that they might gain the Kingdom of Heaven. The meek and long-suffering were told that to them, and not to those who strove with violence to obtain their own ends, would come the inheritance of the earth, or, as we would say in the jargon of modern science, they would demonstrate the survival of the fittest. Those who sought to be filled with the spirit of righteousness could have their desire fully gratified. The merciful would receive mercy, or, as Shakespeare said years afterwards, they would find that mercy blesteth him that gives and him that takes. Those who sought to promote peace would be as the children of God. To be persecuted for righteousness' sake was not to be regarded as a calamity, for those who were pure in heart would be brought into the closest fellowship with God.

The probabilities are that many of His hearers were disappointed when they heard these things, and yet not all of them, for when the Sermon was ended, "great multitudes followed Him," and yet it is very clear that the popular conceptions of the Messiahship were not satisfied by such teachings, otherwise there never would have occurred that tragic hour when "they all forsook Him and fled." We who look back over the long years that have passed since the Beatitudes were uttered are only now beginning to understand them aright; we are only beginning to realize that in the principles expressed in them is to be found the surest foundation of individual and social advancement.

LEADERS OF HUMANITY

It has been said of Buddha that his teachings have influenced the greater part of the human race. This statement necessarily takes no account of great teachers, who may have preceded him. A Buddha was, as was mentioned last Sunday, either a contemporary of Moses or very nearly so. This statement calls for an explanation. The Gautama Buddha, to whom is attributed the present form of the philosophy and ethics now called Buddhism, probably was born in the Fifth Century before Christ. He himself says he was descended from a line of ancient Buddhas, the term meaning simply "enlightened teacher." The founder of the cult of Buddhism lived more than a thousand years before. Buddhist philosophy has therefore in one form or another been influencing humanity for fully 3,500 years, and as its principles have had more or less effect in determining the lives and characters of the countless millions of people, who have inhabited Southern and Eastern Asia during that period, those who were instrumental in giving expression to those principles may be very properly regarded as among the great leaders of humanity.

Buddhism is unlike the theological system taught by Moses, in that it does not lay stress upon the existence of the Deity as a distinct entity in close touch with mankind. It does not concern itself at all with theology, but with humanity. It prescribes rules for living, and its code of ethics is quite as high as that of Christianity. "Self-conquest and universal charity are the foundation thoughts, the web and woof of Buddhism," says one writer. The Mosaic or Hebrew cult teaches these things, but it also adds to them the necessity for worship of a personal deity, and this Christianity in turn supplements by imposing the necessity of individual salvation through Christ. Buddhism taught the insignificance of life. The religion of the Hebrews and Christianity lay stress upon its importance. Herein we find the explanation of the progress which has marked Christendom and the stagnation that has characterized the races that have felt the influence of Buddhism.

The Third, Fourth and Fifth centuries before Christ witnessed the careers of many great men, whose influence on humanity has been profound. In addition to the Gautama Buddha, there were such men as Confucius, Lao-tzi, Mencius, Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Ezra, and others whose names may be mentioned later. These were not all, strictly speaking, religious teachers, regarding religion as having to do with the relations between men and the Deity. The attitude of Confucius on this subject may be expressed in his own words: "Respect the gods, but have as little to do with them as possible." At another time he said that the existence of a Supreme Deity must of necessity be admitted, but the problem was too profound for human comprehension, and it was a mere waste of time to try to understand it. He seems to have conceded that there is a spiritual side to man's nature, but he would not discuss its future, claiming that we have no trustworthy light to guide us in such investigations. He taught that man should strive to attain uprightness, decorum, wisdom and truth. He idealized nothing; he aimed at nothing resembling spiritual exaltation. If he knew the teachings of certain Greek philosophers, who taught that the mind should rise superior to the needs of the body, he paid no regard to them, for he was intensely practical. He placed the State at the head of human institutions, subordinating the family and the individual to it. Wealth and honor he considered worthy of acquisition, provided they were gained honorably; poverty and humiliation were to be borne without regret. He did not object to

prayer; but because he could not prove it did any good, he did not recommend it. He was indeed fairly representative of modern materialists, who hold to a high code of morality, not because it has any divine sanction, but because it is necessary to the well being of the community. Prominent among his favorite themes was respect for parents, a doctrine which in time became extended to the worship of ancestors.

The teachings of this remarkable man had a profound effect upon the people of China. To them indeed the character of the hundreds of millions of people, who have inhabited that country during the last twenty-three centuries, and that of the modern Chinese is very largely due. In proportion to the number of persons, who have followed his precepts, Confucius ranks among historic characters next to the Gautama Buddha. It is perhaps not an overestimate to say that these two great teachers have had an influence upon the lives of more than thirty billions of people, and they have undoubtedly influenced the national growth of all Eastern Asia. Dismissing all questions as to the relative value of their teaching, and regarding the fruits of their work from the standpoint of numbers only, it must be conceded that the Gautama Buddha and Confucius were the greatest leaders of humanity that the world has ever seen.

IRISH HISTORY

While the Irish were successful in their resistance to the Danes, the years of strife that preceded the battle of Clontarf destroyed any hope of an Irish nationality. It has already been shown that the island was divided between several so-called kings, and there was a further subdivision into clans or septis. The clans frequently fought with each other, and the kings warred on a larger scale. They all acknowledged a species of allegiance to the Ard-Rhi, but as there was rarely a common enemy, other than the Danes, against whom the people were called upon to unite, national consolidation was impossible, except in such rare instances as that of Brian Boru, whose strong personality overshadowed all other chieftains. The social condition of the country was unique. It was almost patriarchal in its nature. The people were deeply religious in the sense that they were devoted adherents of the Church. The country was filled with monks, priests and nuns, who lived in monasteries and convents, which were scattered in great numbers all over the island. There is no doubt that the presence of so many non-producers in the country had much to do with keeping the people in a condition of poverty, which was likely under any circumstances to be their normal state, for property in land was not recognized, and there was little incentive to accumulation. Indeed, so great was the hostility of the people to anything resembling commerce, that the general accumulation of wealth would have been impossible even if there had been any desire on the part of the people for it. Money was almost unknown. The Irish of the Eleventh Century were a disinherited people, largely in a condition of poverty, superstitious to a degree and burdened by the support of a priesthood out of all proportion numerically to their numbers. Upon these people the English invasion came with terrible force.

When Brian Boru died he divided his kingdom between his three sons, and strife arose at once between them. The condition of the country was deplorable, and to Henry II, King of England, the opportunity seemed ripe for the extension of his rule over the western island. He claimed that he was authorized by Pope Adrian IV. to take possession of the country. The Danes, who remained in the coast cities of Ireland, had embraced Christianity, but racial antipathy between them and the native Irish completely prevented any ecclesiastical harmony. The Danish churches therefore placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the See of Canterbury. Thus a tie was established between Ireland and England. Simultaneously a slave trade sprang up, and thousands of Englishmen were kidnapped and sold into slavery in Ireland. The condition of the clergy in the Irish cities and the mischief wrought by the slave trade furnished Henry excuses for the invasion, which his ambition prompted. He therefore besought the Pope for permission to conquer the island. John of Salisbury was sent to Rome to obtain it. He represented that Ireland was isolated from Christendom, that all learning had died out, that the people had relapsed into barbarism and were guilty of all manner of vices. He asked, therefore, to be permitted "to enlarge the bounds of the Church, to restrain the progress of vices, to correct the manners of the people, to plant virtue among them, and to increase the Christian religion." He promised "to subject the people to laws, to extirpate vicious customs, to respect the rights of the native churches and to enforce the payment of Peter's Pence." John of Salisbury brought back with him from Rome what purported to be a Papal Bull, although its authenticity is a subject of dispute. By it Henry was commended for his ardor of faith and love of religion, and the people of Ireland were exhorted to receive him with all honor and to acknowledge him as their lord.

Henry found much opposition among his barons to his proposed invasion, and fourteen years elapsed before it was undertaken, and even then it was not so much in the way, ostensibly at least, of an intended conquest, but only to restore the King of Leinster to his

rights. Dermot, the king referred to, was forced to fly from his domains by a party of rebels, and he sought refuge in England. One of his first acts after his arrival was to do homage to Henry, that is, he acknowledged the English King as his suzerain. The laws of feudalism compelled Henry to restore his vassal to his rights, and he readily consented to the proposal that a band of knights should follow Dermot to Leinster and restore his authority. Accordingly in 1169 Robert Fitzstephen with a hundred and forty knights, sixty men-at-arms and between three hundred and four hundred archers, landed on the Irish coast. This little force, some of them clad in mail and riding powerful horses, were able to scatter the Irish with ease. The slaughter was terrible, and Dermot set an example of frightful cruelty.

The news of the success attending this expedition induced other adventurers to set out from England, and among them was Richard, Earl of Pembroke, better known in history as Strongbow. His departure from England was forbidden by Henry, but he disregarded the royal command and landed near Waterford with a force of fourteen hundred men. He joined Dermot, and they marched to Dublin, which city was taken by surprise. Strongbow received, as a reward for his services, the hand of Eva, Dermot's daughter, in marriage, and on Dermot's death, which occurred soon after, he became the virtual ruler of Leinster, the lordship of which was vested in his wife. He thereupon returned to England, and did homage to Henry for Leinster as an English lordship, thus surrendering all claims of independence. The English King thus by the customs of the time became King of Leinster as well as of England, and he listened to Strongbow's persuasion to attempt the conquest of all Ireland. He found the way to the accomplishment of this ambition seemingly not difficult, for while the King of Connaught and the chiefs of Ulster refused to do homage, the majority of the people acknowledged his rule, and the bishops in synod recognized him as their lord. He was preparing to consolidate his power and bring the island under complete subjection, when difficulties with the Pope arising out of the murder of Thomas a Becket, compelled him to return to England.

Stories of the Classics

(In the *Bayland* column)

THE STORY OF ULYSSES FROM THE ODYSSEY

"As one that for a weary space has lain Lulled by the song of Circe and her wime In gardens near the pale of Proserpine, When that Aeneas forgets the main, And only the low lutes of love complain, And only shadows of wan lovers pine, As such an one were glad to know the brine Salt on his lips, and the large air again, So gladly, from the songs of modern speech Men turn, and see the stars and feel the free Thrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers; And through the music of the languid hours They hear, like ocean on a western beach, The surge and thunder of the Odyssey."

With the end of the siege of Troy, the heroes' trials were not over, for they had deeply offended the gods, when in the exultation of their victory they demolished all of the altars in Troy town. Athene, who had been so strong an ally, and to whose direct intervention they laid the cause of their triumph, was the most incensed of all the deities, and she sowed discord among the Greek chiefs, until they were incessantly quarreling with one another. She incited them to drink too deeply of strong wines, until they lost control of their better judgment. At her request the gods of the elements sent storm and adverse winds, and scattered the ships, so that the Greeks lost all reckoning and sailed away from instead of to the shores of Greece. Only a few of the heroes were permitted to reach home in safety and in a reasonable time; the rest were months and years making the return journey. In the Odyssey Homer most beautifully relates the wanderings of Ulysses.

It will be remembered that when the Grecian ships were called upon to aid Menelaus in the sack of Troy, Ulysses of Ithaca had not desired to take any part in the expedition. Penelope was young and lovely and devoted, and his little son Telemachus, the idol of his father's heart. Indeed so very distasteful to Ulysses was the idea of leaving home, that he pretended to have lost his mind, so that he might be left behind. To test his sanity, Palamedes, who had been sent to Ithaca to invite him, went to the field where Ulysses was plowing, and taking little Telemachus from his nurse, placed him in the furrow before the advancing horses. The hero saw through the ruse at once; but would not for an instant endanger the life of his son, and running to him lifted him in his arms. Palamedes was satisfied with the success of the test, and Ulysses was obliged to take part in the siege, while, for his deception, the gods decreed he must remain away from home for twenty years. His deeds of valor were so many, that the gods might have pardoned him when the war was over and permitted him to return to Penelope, whose waiting was so long and weary; but having once predicted, there seems to have been

no unsaying with the Greek deities, and we behold Ulysses driven from one shore to another under the spell of Calypso and Circe; ensnared by the sirens' songs; fascinated by the food of the Lotophagi; detained by adventures with the semi-divine mariners of Phaeacia, whose ships, endowed with human qualities, obey the spoken word; meeting with the one-eyed Cyclopes, the gigantic Laestrygones, and wind-ruler Aeolus.

However, it all makes very delightful reading, and we like to leave Ulysses as Homer left him, when his long journeyings over, he was permitted to return home, where he found his faithful wife awaiting him. Other poets have not allowed Ulysses to remain in domestic oblivion, but have made him the hero of many further adventures. For instance, the epic poem called "Telegonia" tells us that after a pleasant sojourn in Ithaca, he traveled far afield, his journeyings including a visit to the underworld. In the country of the Thesprotians he married the queen; the son by this marriage was Polipoctus, and thus was Ulysses claimed by the Thesprotian kings as their mythical ancestor. Telegonus, his son by Circe, coming to Ithaca in search of his father, killed Ulysses without knowing who he was. By his prayers to the gods, and the aid of his mother Circe, Penelope and Telemachus were blest with the gift of immortality, and by a peculiar and to the modern mind a most unattractive arrangement, Penelope, ageless and lovely still, was wedded to Telegonus, while Telemachus became the husband of Circe. Of Homer's description of Ulysses' home-coming we shall speak later, after we have related some of the hero's adventures.

WOE OF MAN

He cannot keep his bank book straight,
No sooner does his pile grow fat,
Than Easter swings the sword of fate
And soaks it for an Easter hat!
Then, when from Easter he appears
To be recovering, I declare,
His wife and daughters—precious dears!—
Demand outfit for summer wear!
So in the fall, then Christmas sings
Its call for furs with might and main—
And ere he's paid for winter things,
Here comes that Easter hat again!

—Baltimore Evening Sun.

SIMPLY SHOCKING!

"Has your husband any hobbies, Mrs. Jumtuppe?" said the hostess to the afternoon caller.

"No, I can't say as he 'as," replied Mrs. Jumtuppe, who was one of the old school. "Oh, how nice!" gushed the other. "Now mine, you know, is a terrible nuisance in that way. He's a downright bibliophile. When he's at home there's no getting a word out of him; he's simply wrapped up in his book-shelves."

"I say, John," said Mrs. Jumtuppe to her spouse later in the evening, "that there old Tomkins is a nice old cup-o' tea. 'Is wife told me today that he's a regular bibulous old file, and that he comes 'ome fairly speechless and goes to sleep on the bookshelf. Shockin', ain't it? An' 'im a man of 'is eddication, too. Wot-ewer's the world a-comin' to?"

IN THE SAME BOAT

"We get some sad cases," said the attendant at the Balm Lunatic Asylum to the interested visitor, and opened the door of the first cell.

Inside was a man sitting on a three-legged stool, gazing vacantly at the wall.

"This is an unhappy story," said the attendant. "He was in love with a girl, but she married another man, and he lost his reason from grief."

They stole out softly, closing the door behind them, and proceeded to the next inmate.

This cell was thickly padded, and the man within was stark, staring mad.

"Who is this?" inquired the visitor.

"This?" repeated the attendant. "This is the other man!"

BUSINESS SYSTEM IN THE HOME

"My husband amuses me," says the hostess, "by the excuses he has for being detained down town of evenings. Sometimes I can almost hear his brain working out an excuse as he tiptoes up the stairs."

"My husband," says the caller, "is different. He is a very systematic man, you know, and some time ago he wrote out a list of various excuses and numbered them. Now when he comes in he just calls up the stairs, 'Number four,' or 'Number twenty,' or whatever the number may be."

SPRING MEDICINE

A favorite spring exercise this year is to run down and look at the Canal. It does the liver-saddened winter-workers good to inspect an honest job. Three hundred and sixty millions is all that Colonel Goethals intends to spend on that canal, and he asks for only about three years more time to build it in.

Go early while the cuts are still a-cutting and the dams a-building. The show is not going to be open much longer!

"Mrs. Inuit has a graceful carriage."
"Can't she afford an auto?"