

to its subjects: no, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven.

And then, who is it that says all this? Not a scribe, discussing this and that rabbi's opinion, and saying, "I *think* so and so." Jesus speaks "as one having authority, and not as the scribes," (vii, 29.) See chap. v. 17, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; vi. 2, 5, 16, 25, 29; vii. 21-23. It is constantly "I say unto you." Not a Prophet merely, but the King himself; this is what the Nazarene Carpenter claims to be!

In teaching the lesson, an interesting picture can be drawn of the reports spreading, the crowds gathering, the ascent of the mountain, the listening audience, &c. What follows can then be illustrated by the eager attention of a school when any announcement of a "treat" or excursion is to be made, the startled surprise manifested if *not all* are to go, the anxiety to know who will be the privileged ones, the amazement if it were declared that the clever and leading children were *not* qualified, and the respect paid to the announcement as not the mere opinion of an individual teacher, but the authoritative utterance of the superintendent.

This will open the lesson effectively; and then the various characters which Christ pronounces to be "blessed" can be gone through, regarding them as *tests* by which we may judge ourselves whether we be true and loyal subjects of the kingdom or not. No tests could be better for Sunday-school boys and girls. "Meek," "merciful," "pure in heart," "peace makers"—which of them can be so described? "Mourners," "hungry," "reviled and persecuted"—which of them wishes such words to be true of them?

Berean Notes.

I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

Christ delivers the Sermon on the Mount. In the portion under consideration we learn who are the "blessed."

II. TOPICAL AND EXPOSITORY NOTES.

Topic: Blessings from the Author of every good and perfect gift.

THE BEATITUDES. Mentioned in chap. iv. 25. THE MOUNTAIN may have been the eminence now known to pilgrims as the "Mount of Beatitudes," lying near the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is but a hill rising about sixty feet above the plain. According to the custom of Jewish teachers, Jesus sat while he delivered this discourse.

1. THE POOR IN SPIRIT, ver. 3. BLESSED. *Happy.* These blessings are called "beatitudes," from the Latin *beatus*, signifying "happy." But the happiness indicated by Christ is of a higher type than any language of earth can express. Peter says the Christian's joy is "unspeakable."

1. Pet. i. 8. (*Illus. 1.*) POOR IN SPIRIT. "Poor" signifies *humble, needy*. As those who are poor in things temporal earnestly appreciate large bestowments of wealth, so those who are *spiritually* poor receive with great thanksgiving the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, which is altogether spiritual. Rom. viii. 17; Psa. xxxiv. 18. (*Illus. 2.*)

2. THE MOURNERS, ver. 4. Some mourn all their life long, and then pass into an eternity of wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matt. viii. 12; xiii. 42, 50. The mourners to whom Christ refers mourn over sin—they who "mourn in Zion." They receive "beauty for ashes," "the oil of joy for mourning." Isa. lxi. 3; Psa. cxxvi.

5. THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED. Wonderously on earth, but chiefly in heaven. Rev. xxi. 4. (*Illus. 3.*)

3. THE MECK, ver. 5. Christ was "meek and lowly." Matt. xi. 29; xxi. 5. The "meekness of Christ" is used by Paul as a strong plea. 2 Cor. x. 1. The meek do not wrangle. Their motto: "Good for evil." Not puffed up, not easily "slighted." Are gentle, courteous, amiable. A pleasure to be in their society. Their character is "of great price." 1 Pet. iii. 4. (*Illus. 4.*) THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH, or "the land;" that is, primarily, Canaan. And they shall "inherit all things." Rev. xxi. 7. They whose lovely lives would adorn even heaven are certainly most entitled to possess earth.

4. THE SEEKERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ver. 6. Men "fill" themselves usually with the kind of food or drink which they prefer. If the soul crave sin it shall be filled with sin and the curse of sin. The soul that desires spiritual good SHALL BE FILLED, that is, *satisfied*, with the food of the righteous. Isa. lv. Souls can never thrive on chaff. John vi. 35. Righteousness blesses; sin curses. Mal. ii. 2; Gal. iii. 10; Eph. vi. 8.

5. THE MERCIFUL, ver. 7. God is merciful to us, else we could not be merciful to others. Lam. iii. 22, 23. (*Illus. 6.*) The merciful not only "weep with those who weep," but also, when possible, bestow time, influence, money, as well as tears, upon the sad and unfortunates. "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Luke vi, 37.