

# The Quiet Hour

## The Beatitudes.\*

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D.D.

Multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judaea and from beyond Jordan (v. 25). Decapolis means a group of ten cities. These cities lay to the east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Precisely which these cities were is not certainly known. Jerusalem and Judaea were far to the south of these cities. "Beyond Jordan" was Peraea,—a country more thinly inhabited. From all these various places a confused throng—for that is the meaning of "multitudes"—gathered to Jesus. Behold the attractive power of Christ, and to people most dissimilar.

He went into the mountain (v. 1). Tradition points to a double-top mountain, the "Horns of Hattin" as the place.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven (v. 1). The theme of the Beatitudes is the character and privileges of the subjects of the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are synonymous: in the one case the kingdom is named from its capital, heaven, the place where God specially manifests Himself; in the other case, the kingdom is named from its king, God. Both phrases mean precisely the same thing; namely, the reign of God in the reconciled heart. And the "poor in spirit" are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom. "The poor in spirit" does not mean those who have stripped themselves of worldly wealth; nor does "the poor in spirit" mean those who deprecate themselves and dodge service by an effectation of inability. They are poor in spirit, they "conscious of moral poverty"; they recognize the fact that because of sin they have fallen, missed the mark, come short.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted (v. 4). "They that mourn" are primarily the penitent; they sorrow for their sin so as to forsake it. Secondly, this beatitude, I am sure, includes those whom sorrow and trouble have befallen. If such things show you your helplessness and force you to God, your mourning is blessed; and resulting conscious intimacy with God is restful and strengthening comfort.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth (v. 5). "Poverty of spirit is humility looking Godward—a grace before God; meekness is humility looking manward—a grace before men." And this grace before men will manifest itself in a sweet and steady self-control. It will not be swift to take offence, or censorious, or claiming the best for itself.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (v. 6). Righteousness is right-being

in the self, toward others, toward God. There is no more blessed craving than craving for such right-being. It is craving for the very thing God most intends the soul shall cry for. And, if we do hunger and thirst for this, we shall as surely reach it as God's, and is true.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy (v. 7). Being merciful is not having merely a tender feeling toward others, and letting it stop there. He is merciful who also acts mercifully. Here is the law of harvest: plant mercy, and you reap it.

Blessed are the poor in heart: for they shall see God (v. 8). "As purity when affirmed of other things means freedom from mixture, so purity of heart means singleness of moral aim, freedom from all alloys, whether of insincerity or distraction or bias," and such shall "see God," for purity is congenial to and reveals itself to purity. Such shall be admitted to God's presence, as in Oriental usage the man admitted to the King's presence was said to see him. This beatitude forces me at once to Christ. I can only pray, "O Saviour, both clothe me and interpenetrate me with Thy purity, that I be not abashed before God."

Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called sons of God (v. 9). The blessing is not for those who are lazily quiet, but for the peace-makers, those who actually set themselves at joining men to God and to one another. And such shall be seen to be the sons of Him who is the God of peace. Have you not known such? Their presence and speech united people instead of divided and irritated them, and their gracious words and mein irresistibly attracted Godward.

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (v. 10). You are in a hard place, perhaps you are the only Christian where you work. There are plenty of covert sneers for you, and irritations, and all sorts of petty persecutions. And you are quietly and lovingly standing your ground; you are maintaining righteousness, your Christian profession. Yet sometimes it seems very hard to you, and there is even temptation to wavering. Let this beatitude brighten and strengthen you. It is a blessed thing your Lord so trusts you as to give you the opportunity of serving Him thus and in a place so difficult. He is the truest soldier who is chosen for the most trying duty, and sneers and gibes cannot rob you of your great possession—the kingdom of heaven, God's daylight in your soul.

Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake (v. 11). Be sure that others speak evil of you, if they do, falsely. Endure it for the sake of Christ. Be even jubilant, for heaven's reward is sure. You

are in the noblest possible company; you are comrades with the prophets, with all Christ's enduring soldiers.—S. S. Times.

## The Sanctuary

HUGH MORTON.

From yonder sacred place whose hush  
Falls like a spell on troubled hearts,  
Where is forgot life's madd'ning rush  
In the sweet joy that peace imparts.

Back to the world of toil we come  
To labor 'neath the scorching sun,  
And burdens bear that chafe and numb,  
To strive as men till day is done.

Yet tread we firmer for that hour,  
And work with nobler purpose yet,  
For thought of that glad place hath power,  
New strength and purpose to beget.

Collingwood,

For Dominion Presbyterian.

## Rent Rocks.

BY GEO. W. ARMSTRONG.

"And the Rocks rent Math. xxvii: 51."

Rocks are alluded to in Scripture very frequently. They are spoken of as a place of refuge and safety, and as a defence to a nation because of their stability and permanence. They have been called everlasting because of their hardness and durability. Our Saviour calls the man who built his house upon a rock "A wise man." Rarely indeed do we find any record of rocks rending—of rocks being torn in pieces. Moses once struck the Rock Horeb and waters gushed out to satisfy the wants of the children of Israel. In the Book of Kings we read about Elijah standing on this same mount and "a great and strong wind rent the mountain and tore in pieces the rocks before the Lord," but in no case except the one in connection with the phenomena surrounding the death of Christ do we read of rocks rending when there was no apparent internal or external power operating upon them. In this case the rocks were not operated upon by a strong wind, nor struck with a rod, but like the rending of the veil of the temple and the earthquake it happened the moment Christ expired. These rocks rent, must I say? In fulfilment of the declaration of our Saviour to the Pharisees when they wished Him to rebuke His disciples for saying: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord? Christ replied, "Should these hold their peace the stones would cry out." The disciples had now held their peace, one had betrayed Him; another, the boldest of them, with cursing and swearing denied Him; and they all forsook Him and fled, and now that He is bereft of all and none left to acknowledge Him—the Rocks utter their tremendous voice and proclaim the power of their Creator—the God-man, Christ dying rent rocks. Wonderful act! What can it signify? Its meaning cannot be insignificant. Does it not show the hardness of the human heart?

At the death of Jesus rocks clave asunder, but men's hearts instead of being broken became hardened. Look at them, hearts more like flint than flesh, and hear what they are saying: "And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads and saying: Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself! If Thou be the Son of God come down from the cross. Likewise the chief priests mocking Him with the scribes and elders, said: He saved others Himself

\*S.S. Lesson I, for April 1, Matt. 4: 25-5:12.  
Golden Text—"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"—Matt. v. 8.