



LESSON IV.—Jan. 23.

THE BEATITUDES.

Matt. v., 1-12. Memory verses, 3-10.

Golden Text.

'Ye are the light of the world.'—Matt. v., 14.

Daily Readings.

- M. Mark i., 21-34.—A Sabbath day's ministry in Capernaum.
- T. Mark i., 35-2: 14. — Other incidents in Jesus' Galilean ministry.
- W. Mark ii., 23-3: 6.—The story of the Galilean ministry, continued.
- Th. Mark iii., 7-19. — The choosing of the twelve.
- F. Matt. v., 1-12.—Sermon on the Mount — the Beatitudes.
- S. Matt. v., 13-32.—'Ye are the light of the world.'
- S. Matt. v., 33-48.—'Be ye therefore perfect.'

Lesson Story.

When Jesus saw the great multitudes that followed him to hear his teaching and to see his miracles, he went up on a mountain. His disciples and all those who wanted to hear more of his teaching, followed him up the mountain. When they were all quietly gathered before him he began to teach them about his new kingdom and the kind of people who should be in it. He taught them the real blessedness of life—something very different from what the world calls bliss.

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Lesson Hints.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v., vi., and vii.) has been called the Charter of the Kingdom of Heaven. The 'octave of blessings,' or beatitudes open and close with a description of the inhabitants of that kingdom. No one is too poor to belong to the kingdom, the very poverty and need of a soul constitutes a claim on the kingdom. Wealth cannot buy the least position in the kingdom. Worshipers of Mammon are absolutely excluded. Wealth of mind, culture, refinement, and knowledge are not necessary qualifications of those who seek to enter the Kingdom of God.

Entrance is secured through want, the acknowledgment of want, and the appropriation of God's supply for all our wants — Jesus himself.

'Mountain'—a little hill near Capernaum, where Jesus had spent the whole of the previous night in prayer. (Luke vi., 12.)

'Set' — the Rabbis always sat down to teach while the people stood.

'His disciples'—this probably includes all those who took the pains to climb the mountain that they might hear more of his teachings. 'Disciple' means a scholar or learner.

'Blessed'—happy. The term 'beatitudes' comes from the Latin word 'beatus,' blessed.

'Poor in spirit'—a class greatly despised in this world, but highly esteemed in the kingdom of heaven, for God fills such with his own Spirit, if they will let him.

'They that mourn'—Jesus came to comfort the mourner (Luke iv., 18) and the blessedness of the mourner consists in realizing Jesus' sympathy and compassion. The heathen mourns in hopeless anguish, the Christian in his darkest hour of anguish can see

a bright ray of hope and experience the deep, sweet, rich comfort wherewith Jesus himself comforts his loved ones. The comforting sympathy of Jesus makes precious every sorrow.

'Meek'—lowly, like Jesus. (Isa. llii., 7.) No pride, no self-conceit, no forwardness, Bold as a lion in danger, yet meek as a lamb in provocation. People of the opposite qualities think they possess the earth, but the earth is the Lord's (Ps. xxiv., 1) and he will give it to whomsoever he shall choose. (Psa. xxxvii., 7-11. Rev. ii., 26.)

'Hunger and thirst'—Soul longing, as real as the hourly craving of the body. The body must die without food. A famished soul may exist for many years in a torpor, but when it wakes it hungers and thirsts. The soul that thirsts for fame may not be satisfied. The soul that thirsts for wealth may not be satisfied, even if wealth is obtained.

The soul that thirsts after God cannot but be satisfied: God stands ready with the Water of Life to fill the empty soul. The Water of Life is satisfying. (John iv., 14. Rev. xxii., 17.)

'Merciful' — merciful in our thoughts as well as deeds. Not only clothing the poor and feeding the needy, but thinking kindly of our brothers and sisters. No sarcasm, no unnecessary criticism, or harshness should be in the heart of a follower of Jesus. (Jas. ii., 13.)

'Pure in heart'—not only those whose conduct seems to the world correct, but those in whose hearts God finds no cherished evils. The world cannot know all our thoughts, but God can. We must resolutely shut our hearts against those evil imaginations which the enemy of our souls wishes to hide there. We are not strong enough to keep our hearts pure — no, but Jesus is. Jesus can fill us with his own thoughts, thoughts of God, so shall we see him. (II. Cor. iii., 18.)

'Peacemakers'—those who yield everything but principle for the sake of peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isa. ix., 6.) So often it is in our power to speak the kind word which averts a quarrel. So often an explanation or apology from us would set straight a misunderstanding. The meek and merciful will find no difficulty in being peacemakers, and thus showing themselves the children of God.

The citizens of the Kingdom are persecuted, scorned, and jeered at by the world because of their lack of worldliness. (John xv., 18-21; xvi., 33.)

Nine times our King calls his subjects happy, then he bids them to rejoice and be ex-coeding glad.

Primary Lesson.

A little girl once said she was learning the 'Beautytides.' She meant the Beatitudes, but I don't think she made a very great mistake in the name.

The Beatitudes are pictures of beautiful people, and the rewards that God gives them. The first beauty picture is of those persons who are always looking out for other peoples' happiness.

'Poor in spirit'—they are not always thinking of the things that belong to them, or the things they ought to have, or what other people ought to do for them. They do not think themselves better than anybody else. They think everyone else better than themselves, and rejoice in the goodness of others. They are never jealous or mean or proud. They are loving and generous and meek, like Jesus. They are beautiful in God's sight.

Did you know that doing beautiful acts and thinking beautiful thoughts will make your face beautiful? The plainest face will grow into beauty as its owner grows into the likeness of Jesus. The prettiest face will lose its beauty if its owner keeps unkind or jealous or proud selfish thoughts in the heart.

If you wish to be beautiful when you are old, you must begin now by the power of Jesus to do loving deeds and to think sweet loving thoughts.

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

Jan. 23.—Matt. v., 1-12.

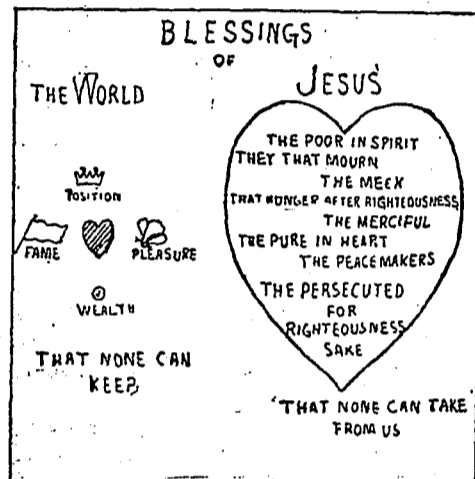
Jesus' pulpit was sometimes a mountain, and sometimes a boat. The greatest of open-air preachers, whose words always taught the attentive ones. Verses 1 and 2. The poor in spirit are often persecuted for righteousness' sake, but both enjoy the same blessing. Verses 3 and 10. Nothing can comfort the mourner like the promises of God. The merciful are rewarded according to their works, for God is rich in mercy.

Verses 4 and 7. They whose character is fashioned after the meek and lowly Jesus, will be blessed in this world also, for the earth is the Lord's. Verse 5. The perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ always satisfies those who hunger and thirst after it. Verse 6. They only are pure whose hearts are washed in Calvary's fountain. They who sacrifice everything for peace except truth are the true peacemakers. Both are sons of God, and shall be satisfied when they awake in his likeness. Verses 8 and 9. Persecution for Christ's sake is small compared to the heavenly reward, and should beget joy rather than sorrow. Verses 11 and 12.

The Lesson Illustrated.

Blessed in the Greek means a divine, a godlike happiness, and we notice at once that all Jesus' blessings pertain to what we are, while the world counts as blessings the things we have. So we put his blessings in a heart, noticing that the second, third and fourth refer to our attitude to God, the third, fourth, and fifth, our attitude to men, the sixth includes both, and that no man can take these from us.

Contrast with this the world's blessings; a crown for position, a flag for fame, a but-



terfly for pleasure, and a coin, or better, a bag, with the sign for dollars upon it, to stand for wealth, all outside the heart, liable to be taken at any time, certain to be taken from us soon.

The two pictures form a very vivid presentation of on one side, the Messiah, and blessings the world expected; and on the other the character of the saviour who came.

Lesson Hymn.

O happy band of pilgrims,
If onward ye will tread,
With Jesus as your Fellow,
To Jesus as your Head.

O happy if ye labor,
As Jesus did for men:
O happy if ye hunger,
As Jesus hungered then!
—Joseph of the Studium.

Suggested Hymns.

'A child of the King,' 'Christ receiveth sinful men,' 'We are but little children,' 'I've found a Friend,' 'The Prince of Peace,' 'O see how Jesus trusts Himself,' 'More like Jesus would I be.'

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Jan. 23.—Practical applications of the Beatitudes.—Matt. v., 1-12.

NOTES AND NOTICES.

Safety in buying seeds. — There is no other way to measure the value of seed than by the value of the crop. A good crop simply cannot come from poor seed. Second-rate seeds will waste good land, good fertilizer, and good labor, and the crop won't pay expenses. Now, as the practical farmer cannot afford to waste time testing seeds, to find out whether they are true to name, sound and clean, it stands to reason that the only safe way to buy seeds is to seek the protection of a name that has stood for reliability in the past. The great seed house of D. M. Ferry & Co., Windsor, Ont., has sold seeds all over Canada and the United States for the last forty-two years, and the steady growth of the business is a sure indication that Ferry seeds have given satisfaction. 'Ferry's Seed Annual for 1898,' a standard guide for farmers and gardeners, containing much valuable information, is sent free to persons writing for it.