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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1873.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. SUNDAY, August 10th.

The Beatitudes.—Matt. v. 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways." Psalm cxviii. 1.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 3-9.

SUMMARY.—We enjoy the bliss of God only when we partake of the nature of God.

ANALYSIS.—I. The occasion. vs. 1, 2. II. Blessing in inward want. vs. 3-6. III. Blessing in inward wealth. vs. 7-9. IV. Blessing in outward woe. vs. 10-12.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 1.—Seeing the multitude. Referred to in the preceding verse. He went into a mountain "the mountain." He was in a mountainous region. The giving of this law of the New Covenant has naturally reminded of the giving of the Decalogue, and this mountain has reminded of Sinai. When he was set. It was the custom of Jews in their synagogues to stand when reading God's Word, but to sit when addressing the people. Luke iv. 20; Acts xiii. 14; xvi. 13, etc. His disciples came unto him. Christ framed his discourse with chief, but not sole reference to his disciples; to the whole body of them, not the twelve merely.

Verse 2.—Opened his mouth. Used to introduce a speech in a formal manner, and to call attention to it as of special weight. Acts viii. 35; x. 34.

Verse 3-12.—With these begins the discourse. They include what are usually called "the beatitudes," or blessednesses, for such is the meaning of the word. They form a natural beginning, since they define the sort of persons that are to be citizens in the kingdom. There has been a difference of opinion as to the number of beatitudes. Some say eight, others ten, others seven. This gives a perfect number, and verses 10-12 refer not at all to qualifications for citizenship, but merely to conduct as citizens.

Verse 3.—Blessed. The word so translated is not the same with that translated "blessed" in Luke i. 68; Rom. i. 25; ix. 5, and similar passages. It designates that inward condition which is the fountain of the highest bliss, even of an imperishable bliss, a well being like that of God's. Are does not appear in the Greek. "Blessed the poor in spirit," more terse, and forceful. So in all the seven. The poor in spirit; i. e., the utterly destitute, those having nothing at all. With no money, no resources, no chance or shadow of a chance of earning so as to claim in his own right, and so to call his own anything whatsoever, anything, unless it be just his miserable degradation and destitution, his helplessness and nothingness. The words "in spirit" guard against misunderstanding. This external beggary has in it no blessing; and the poor blinded one who have in past ages made themselves into beggars, and formed themselves into beggar societies, in hope thus to win the blessing here pronounced, excite only pity and contempt. Nor is this poverty of spirit weakness or emptiness of intellect. It is rather the consciousness of one's own entire want of anything either in his character, his deeds, or his possessions, that can secure God's approval, and the soul's salvation. Rev. iii. 17, 18. For theirs. And only theirs. Those who go about to establish their own righteousness, are ignorant of the righteousness of God. They think themselves whole, and hence do not apply to the Physician, and enter the kingdom of the healed.

Verse 4.—They that mourn. The mourning is the consciousness, keen, clear, and painful, of the presence of that which is contrary to the law of God, this is not his home. It makes him home-sick. See Rom. viii. 20-23. For they shall be comforted. While in the midst of the sorrow, the saint, "though sorrowing," is "always rejoicing." And when one has the most terrible sense of the evil of the world, and of his own heart too, as apart from Christ, he may also have a rich fullness of comfort in the assurance wrought within by God's Spirit, that nevertheless he is Christ's and Christ his, and that God's grace is sufficient even for him. Through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, God brings his saving help to his people to deliver them out of all their troubles.

Verse 5.—The meek. The word translated meek is found in the Greek version of the Old Testament in use by the apostles [the Septuagint] in the following passages: Num. xii. 3; Psalm xxv. 9; xxxiv. 2; xxxvii. 11; lxxvi. 9; cxlvii. 6; cxlix. 4; and a few others; in the New Testament, Matt. xxi. 5; 1 Peter iii. 4; and the corresponding noun in James i. 2; iii. 13; 1 Peter iii. 15. From these it seems that in Scripture it first of all carries the idea of a child-like humility, arising from a deep inward sense of the need of God's all wise guidance. In looking to God thus, he becomes patient and gentle. Nothing tempts him to break away from the divine order, even though that order brings with it toil, weariness, suffering. Christ's meekness was shown in his temptation. Satan said, Turn aside from the long, hard way, and choose for yourself a short and easy way. Then, and till in victory, he shouted, "It is finished," Christ said, "Not my will, but God's be done." This meekness is not mere gentleness of natural disposition. It is a thing not of temperament, but of principle. Inherit the earth, or more exactly, "the land;" not the dry land of the globe, but "the land of promise." Christ quotes from Ps. xxxvii. 11. "The land" was Palestine. It was inherited from God according to promise. It was his to confer not only title to it, but possession of it. It was in his power to be won, not by man's will in man's way, but by "waiting upon God," and doing his will. For one act of impatient disobedience of God, entrance into Canaan was denied to Moses. Num. xx. 7-12; Deut. iii. 23-27. So also all who on leaving Egypt were twenty years old or more, Caleb and Joshua excepted, were refused entrance in Canaan because they provoked the Lord, and did not meekly follow him.

Verse 6.—Hunger and thirst after righteousness; who do this constantly, characteristically. Righteousness is the opposite of sin, and is first of all an attribute of God. Sin is unlikeness to God, and brings his just condemnation. Righteousness here is oneness with God, including both loving acceptance by him, i. e., justification; and full reception of him, the partaking of him, "change into the same image;" i. e., sanctification. Christ came into the world that he might bring to us these blessings. He was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Shall be filled. With what? With that for which they hunger and thirst, which is at once their meat and their drink, filled with the fullness, with all the fullness of God. God's people seem sometimes here to be quite full of God, but what shall be "doth not yet appear."

Verse 7.—We have thus far had the beatitudes of conscious want. We come now to those of possession. We have had a series, rising in natural order from the first to the last form of normal craving for grace. We come now to a series of like naturalness in which the action, the life of grace is seen. The merciful. The soul that has in it Christ, feels as did Christ for the lost. The sense of mercy, of love to souls, is wont to spring up at once in the new-born soul. Shall obtain mercy. We may not pray for forgiveness, save as we exercise forgiveness. Matt. vi. 14. See 2 Sam. xxii. 27.

Verse 8.—The pure in heart. To the Jews the distinction of the clean and the unclean was made familiar by their ceremonial laws and service. They knew the value of ceremonial purity. Christ reminds them of the real purity, which is spiritual, and of the heart. In Christ we have access to the Father. One with him, we stand in the presence of the great King.

Verse 9.—The peacemakers. The Son of God was the Prince of peace. His work had its aim and goal in the making of peace, perfect peace. Whatever else may or may not be in the passage, this at least is there, the very soul of that infinite, eternal peace which dwells in God's bosom, and which Christ brought and kept in his bosom, and which, as his dying bequest, he gave to his own to dwell in their bosoms. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Peacemakers are they who act with Christ in bringing the aliens back to God.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 1, 2. Where was Christ? Chap. iv. 23. What multitudes are here meant? Chap. iv. 25. Why should he go into the mountain? Were any present with him save his disciples? Chap. vii. 28. Why did he sit in speaking? Luke iv. 20; Acts xiii. 14; xvi. 13. Vs. 3-12. Why are these verses called the beatitudes? Give a reason for dividing these verses into three groups, as follows: vs. 3-6, 7-9, and 10-12?

Vs. 3. What does the word "blessed" mean? Why is "are" in italics? Who are "the poor in spirit"? The blessing promised? What is that kingdom?

Vs. 4. Who are here meant by "those that mourn"? When shall they have comfort? How?

Vs. 5. What is it to be meek? What is promised the meek? Repeat Matthew xi. 29.

Vs. 6. What is here meant by righteousness? What is it to hunger and thirst for it? What is it to be filled with it? When will the promise be fully realized? Psalm xvii. 15.

Vs. 7. Who are "the merciful"? Repeat Matt. vi. 14.

Vs. 8. What is it to be "pure in heart"? What to see God? Why can none but the pure see God? Repeat 1 John iii. 2.

Vs. 9. Who is the great Peacemaker? Isaiah ix. 6. To whom does he give his peace? John xiv. 27. Where is perfect peace? Rev. xxi. 4.

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 134.

SUNDAY, August 17th.—Teaching to pray. —Matt. iv. 5-15.

Youths' Department.

ONLY A GRAIN OF SAND.

A man who for years carried an old and cherished watch about him, one day called on its maker and told him it was no longer useful, for it would no longer keep time correctly.

"Let me examine it," said the maker, and taking a powerful glass, he looked carefully and steadily into the works, till he spied just one grain of sand.

"I have it," he said; "I can get over your difficulty."

About this moment, by some powerful but unseen power, the little grain, suspecting what was coming, cried out,—

"Let me alone; I am but a little thing, and take up so little room, I cannot possibly injure the watch. Twenty or thirty of us might do harm, but I cannot; so let me alone."

The watchmaker replied, "You must come out, for you spoil my works, and all the more so that you are so small, and but few people can see you."

Thus it is in the home. One cross feeling, one hasty word, one angry look, may mar and hinder the running of the perfect machinery. We may go alone, and with God, set again the time-piece; but if we do not trust in His keeping power, how soon the old enemy is on hand, to thrust in again the little grain which will impair the works, and hinder the wheels, and present a false face to all who are around! Let us then look to our Saviour as one who is able to "keep us from falling," and trust Him as the God who will deliver in the temptation, and keep the home watch running perfectly.

STICK IT ON THE MIND.

A boy, in a fit of passion, spoke God's name in vain. As soon as the words were out of his mouth he was ashamed and sorry and when he went home he asked his mother to write down all the Bible said about profane swearing. He said he "wanted to study it, and stick it on his mind, and carry it about with him everywhere." So she found and copied the following texts:

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."—Exodus 20: 8.

"Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God; I am the Lord."—(Lev. 19: 12.)

"Because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up." (Jer. 28. 10.)

"I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."—(Matt. 5: 34, 37)

"Above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by the earth; neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." (James 5: 12.)

He learned these scriptures, and I have written them down for every boy who reads these lines to learn them also.—Christian Intelligencer.

The age skippers like to reach—anchor-age.

SELECTING A WIFE.

We have heard of this test being applied to servant girls, but John Starkley was the man who applied it to the selection of a wife. The Starkleys and the Belknaps had been friends through several generations. In the present generation there was in the Starkley family, one son, and in the family of Belknaps there were five daughters; and it had been arranged between the parents that the heir of the Starkleys should take him a wife from among the daughters of Belknap. John, the heir aforesaid, at the age of five and twenty, had returned from his travels, when his father bade him select from the daughters of the friendly house the one he would have for a wife. John was a dutiful son, and his heart was whole, and as the maidens were all fair to look upon, he accepted the situation, determined to master it if possible.

John spent several evenings in the company of the young ladies, and it was difficult to decide which was the most charming though his fancy rested most lingeringly upon the youngest—not that she was the handsomest, but she appeared the most sensible.

One day John was invited to dinner, and in advance of the family he made his way into the hall, and threw a broom upon the floor directly across the passage to the dining room. By and by the summons sounded for the meal, and John watched for the result. The eldest daughter stepped over the broom loftily. The second went around it. The third gave it a kick from her path. The fourth gave it an extra kick. The fifth—the youngest—stooped and picked the broom up, and took it to the far corner of the hall, and set it carefully out of the way.

And John selected the meek-eyed, fair-haired maiden who had thus stood the test, and he never had occasion to regret his choice. She proved to be a wife who looked well to the ways of her household, and her heart had no lack of faith and love.

HOW TO DESTROY GOOD ALREADY DONE.

Some suggestive hints are given in the Sunday School World on "How to spoil the work of a school." We suppose if the method is reversed it will produce opposite results:

1. Put a bad motive to every action of the superintendent or earnest teacher. It works precisely as when a pastor's best labors are criticised instead of seconded.

2. Doubt the soundness of the conversions. Let it get around to a young soul, just in its first battle, that he is considered by some Christians as dishonest, or at least as not thoroughly converted, and you will be the best ally the devil has found.

3. Balk work just as work is mostly needed. It brings you into prominence. Probably the superintendent will have to come and beg of you to hold on to your class. you can then do so, and plague him in a number of little ways.

4. Sneer at the young Christians whenever they do wrong. Taunt them with their profession, and infer that they disgrace Christ. This works thoroughly in the family or in the school. A mother can ruin her children as quickly in this way as by any known method.

5. In case of too much prominence being given to a practical good, suggest what is not being accomplished. Show how the prayer-meeting is thinly attended; how the teacher's meetings are dull; how poor teachers are employed; insist that none but church-members be allowed to teach; criticize the selection of hymns; the prayers; annoy the school organist; suggest a change of choristers.

6. Be terribly alarmed if a disagreement or ill-feeling arises between two teachers; tell of it everywhere; try to settle it by scolding it about in public places.

"One of our local judges lately took a lesson in spelling, in a Justice's Court, when a Mr. Wood was the witness.

"What is your name?" asked the clerk.

"Ottiwel Wood," answered the witness.

"How do you spell your name?" then asked the somewhat puzzled judge.

Mr. Wood replied:

"O-double T,

I-double U, E-double L, Double U-double O-D."

The astonished judge thought that was one of the most extraordinary names he ever knew, and after two or three attempts to record it, both he and the clerk gave it up, amid roars of laughter.

HINTS FOR CHORISTERS.

A correspondent of the Western Recorder gives a few simple directions in regard to the best mode of teaching new music to Sunday schools, which may be of use to those who have that matter in charge. A good deal of the value of this delightful exercise is lost by inattention to just such little things as are here referred to. The chorister, he says,

Should sing the part the children do, for that is the dominant or leading part. In learning a new tune, let the leaders sing it over one to three times, alone, just as they wish the school to sing it; then let the school sing lightly until the leader sees every note is right; then let them sing in full force. The leader should always face the school, and must have full control of the entire audience. Do not let them hold their books too low, but up, that they may easily look over them and see the leader. If you use an organ or piano, do not take time to play the tune through first; it takes too long, and there is no sense in it. Let the leader teach the tune, as I have said above. Avoid all display, but try to make good music. Sing fast, and in true time. If any are inclined to drag, let the leader go right on and leave them. They will soon stop it, and keep up. Don't sing too much; the Sunday school is not a singing-school. Tell them what you are going to sing about. Explain the words; get an interest in this way, and you will have a benefit as well. Do not allow whispering or talking by any while you sing, nor the taking of a collection.

RECIPE FOR A SERMON.

The following was found among some old family papers, written, it is believed, by Dr. Salter, master of the Charterhouse, 1761-1777: "A receipt how to compose a sermon.—Take some scraps out of the best books you have; weigh them, and sift them thoroughly; then divide them into three parts, for dividing them into more is generally thought to crumble them too much; work these well and handle them neatly, but neither mince nor chop them. Season the whole with a due proportion of salt; put in nothing that is too hard or difficult to digest, but let all be clear and candid; it should have some fire, for that will raise it and prevent its being heavy; you may garnish it with a few flowers, but not so thick as to hide the substance; take care that it's not overdone, for, as it is the last thing served up, if it's not inviting, some of the company may not taste of it; in a hard frost or extreme cold weather it should be done in twenty minutes; in more temperate, it may take half an hour; if it's done in a quarter of an hour, it's for a king."

A MISUNDERSTANDING.—The parson went in to condole with Mrs. Jones. Poor Jones! It was very sudden; and the widow was altogether inconsolable. So the parson prepared to depart, saying, as he took his hat:

"I will leave you, poor bereaved one, with this injunction, pray—pray that God will vouchsafe His comfort; that He will enable you to perceive the promised bow in the—"

"Oh! parson!" she burst in, "how can you think of such a thing? It's too—too premature, I'm sure!"

The old gentleman departed, slightly mystified; and it was only after many minutes, and much cogitation, that it occurred to him that the "bow" he was talking of was not at all the "beau" of which Mrs. Jones was thinking. And he pulled up "old Charley's" reins just long enough to smile.

CONVENTIONAL.—Punch has a pathetic picture of a married couple on a calling trip. As they wait at the door where they have rung the bell, Augustus is thus cautioned: "Augustus, love, let me beg of you! Do not give way to any insane demonstrations of delight before the servant if she says they're not at home!"

As some lady visitors were recently going through a penitentiary, under the escort of the superintendent, they came to a room in which three women were sewing. "Dear me!" one of the visitors whispered, "what vicious looking creatures? Pray, what are they here for?" "Because they have no other home. This is our sitting room, and they are my wife and two daughters," blandly answered the superintendent.

What part of a ship is like a farmer? The tiller.