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The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter Lesson 1, April 25, 1900

THE BEATITUDES.—Matthew 4: 25 5: 12

Read Matthew 5: 1-6: 18.

Compare Luke 6: 17-36.

Commit Verses 3-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*—Matt. 5: 8

Illustration of "Golden Text" under v. 8

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Summer of A. D. 28.

Place.—According to tradition, the Sermon on the Mount was spoken on the Horns of Hattin, or Mount of Beatitudes, a square-shaped hill, about sixty feet in height, with two tops, near the centre of the west coast of the Sea of Galilee, two or three miles from the sea, and seven southwest from Capernaum.

Jesus.—Between 31 and 32 years old

John the Baptist.—Thirty-two years old, imprisoned in Castle Macherus.

THE GATHERING MULTITUDES.—V. 25. The gospel message of salvation, enforced by miracles of healing, attracted multitudes to Jesus. They came not only *from Galilee*, but from *Decapolis*, a region east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee, so called because it contained ten cities, which the name means. *And from beyond Jordan.* Called Perea, east of the Jordan.

A NIGHT OF PRAYER.—The new epoch in the development of Christ's kingdom was ushered in by a night of special prayer. Although to Jesus prayer was daily bread, yet there were times when battles were to be fought, guidance given, power to be received; decisions of the hour; at these seasons Jesus would be a long time alone with his Father, in communion and prayer (Luke 3: 21, 22: Mark 1: 35)

THE SELECTION OF TWELVE APOSTLES, for instruction and training.—Luke 6: 12-16. For the names of the apostles, and their characteristics, see Lesson X of this quarter

PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.—In the three chapters which follow Jesus gathers together many of the principles of his kingdom, showing the multitudes what they must be and do if they would enter into the kingdom of God. *And seeing the multitudes, he went up.* From the level place on the mountain where the people were gathered, to a higher point, from which he could more easily be seen and heard. *Into a mountain.* A well-known place. *When he was set.* This was the custom of the Jewish doctors. *His disciples came unto him.* They gathered close to him, while the multitudes were farther off, but within hearing.

THE BEATITUDES.

THE FIRST BEATITUDE.—V. 3. *Blessed.* Blessedness is the express symbol of happiness identified with character. It is the joy that grows out of the soul itself, a part of its very nature, increased by happy outward surroundings. *Are the poor in spirit.* Those who are conscious of their sins and spiritual incompleteness, so that they seek the aid that can come only from God. It is the same spirit that is required when we are told that we must become as little children, if we would enter into the kingdom: willing and anxious to learn, to ask, to seek.

It is not mere poverty in worldly goods, though that often leads to this spirit. But one may be poor and proud. It is not poverty of mental faculties and gifts. It is no mean, abject feeling, no want of self respect, no cringing before man. But it is a lowly estimate of oneself in view of the goodness of God, the purity of heaven, the character of Jesus. It is the spirit that moves to prayer and leads to Christ. *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Not chiefly a locality, but the character, or state where God rules, where feelings, deeds, hopes, purposes, are heavenly. To the poor in spirit belongs this kingdom, because they only are in a condition to receive. It is a present as well as future blessing.

SECOND BEATITUDE. — V. 4. *Blessed are they that mourn.* This is a promise to all those who in the kingdom of heaven are brought into the experience of mourning, those who are in tribulation for Christ's sake. But chiefly the blessing refers to those who mourn over sin, both in themselves and in others, *For they shall be comforted.* Shall have strength, encouragement, consolation. It is not the taking away altogether of sorrow, but transforming and transfiguring it. It is not so much soothing as strengthening, inspiring, invigorating. It is the imparting of courage and fresh life.

THIRD BEATITUDE. — V. 5. *Blessed are the meek.* Self-controled and gentle; not easily provoked or irritated; forbearing under injury or annoyance. This is the meekness towards man. Submission to the divine will. This is meekness toward God. It is not a weak, but an heroic quality. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." *For they shall inherit the earth.* (1) They get the most out of the world and all its good things. Passion and revenge are unhappy feelings. Trust in God, control of temper, send peace and happiness over everything. Every earthly blessing has a heavenly flavor. (2) The meek have a super title to their earthly possessions; they are apt to live longer than the passionate and revengeful. (3) Christ's kingdom, whose members are characterized by meekness, is yet to possess the whole earth. The final and lasting conquest of the earth will be not by force of arms, not by force of intellect, not by political shrewdness, but by the spiritual power of the meek, by the gospel of Jesus.

Examples. The meek Christ drove out the money changers from the temple. He had perfect control of his temper. He was meek when Judas betrayed him, and when he stood before Pilate. Paul in prison at Philippi. Peter and John in prison in Jerusalem.

FOURTH BEATITUDE. — V. 6. *They which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.* Hunger and thirst are the sharpest spurs to action. Those whose strongest desire is for goodness shall be satisfied. All great good is gained through intense desire for that good. *For they shall be filled*, not by the destruction of the desire, but by its satisfaction. (1) All our growth is by means of these desires and their satisfaction. We keep hungering for righteousness, and the hunger is satisfied. And each time we have a larger vision of what righteousness is, and a more heavenly hunger, and then a larger, fuller, sweeter satisfaction. (2) It is better to long for unattained good than to be ignobly content. (3) Only that longing is blessed which is so intense as to lead to doing (4) Hunger is the sign and token of health, a mark of vigorous life, while the want of it tells of disease and coming death.

FIFTH BEATITUDE.—V. 7. *Blessed are the merciful.* Mercy is near of kin to love. It is love to the needy, the sinful even those who have wronged us. It relieves spiritual want and darkness as well as temporal; would give the gospel to the heathen as well as food to the hungry. *For they shall obtain mercy.* From man and from God. Like begets like. But most of all do we need God's mercy. And showing mercy to others proves that we have a state of heart which makes it safe for God to forgive us.

SIXTH BEATITUDE. — V. 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart.* Pure, sincere, unmixed with evil in motive, purpose, and love. The beatitude is not for the sinless, but for sinners forgiven. *For they shall see God* There must be a likness of nature and feeling, in order to understand another So only the pure can see a pure God. The impure, the bad, cannot even see him, much less enjoy him. They do not understand his nature. They do not know the meaning of his character. The selfish cannot understand love. **When do we see God?** Not only in heaven, but here and now. Just as far as any one is pure he sees God. What a privilege this is,—to see God, his goodness, his glory, his love!

SEVENTH BEATITUDE — V. 9. *Blessed are the peacemakers.* The founders and promoters of peace. The exact opposite of the quarrelsome, the passionate, the fault finders; and also those who are indifferent whether there is peace or not. (1) Those who try to reconcile men at variance. (2) Those who try to bring peace to the restless and troubled. (3) Those who seek, like their Master, to reconcile men to God, to bring divine peace into sinful souls.

This does not mean that we are not to oppose that which is wrong or disturb the quiet of corruption and crime. Nothing is settled till it is settled right. There can be no peace to the wicked Our first duty, therefore, is, at any cost of disturbance, to get things where peace is possible. *They shall be called the children* (better, sons, full grown) *of God.* Because they are like their Father. They inherit his home, his joy, his blessings, his love. God is ever seeking to bring peace to men. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are ever seeking to reconcile men to God. The gospel ever brings peace. The reign of the gospel will be the reign of peace.

EIGHTH BEATITUDE.—Vs. 10 12. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake*, as those are sure to be who try to live up to these Beatitudes, and promulgate them in an evil world. Blessed are they who are such positive factors in making the world good that they arouse the hatred and opposition of bad men, as described in v. 11. There are two conditions. (1) It must be for righteousness' sake ....*for my* (Christ's) *sake.* (2) It must be *falsely.* The charges against us must be untrue. Persecution and suffering in themselves do not inherit the blessing. *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Great is your reward in heaven.* After the battle comes the crown, after faithfulness comes the benediction, Well done. The larger part of their reward must of necessity be in the future. This cause will succeed. Their endurance of persecution proves their fitness for the reward The persecution itself developed their character, enlarged their goodness, made a higher heaven possible. *For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* This is confirmation of the assurance of reward. The best and the greatest men, who stand highest, have suffered just as you are suffering now.

Mother and Child.

Whatever comes to the child later in life, the remembrance of a mother's loving caresses and soothing words is a balm to the suffering, care-worn heart. It is sweet to live it over again, and no man, or woman, but is softened and and made happier by the recollection.

Thomas Ball, the sculptor, says of his: My dear mother lived only long enough to guide her boy by the quicksands and over the stumbling stones of his early youth to the fair and more open road of life, then leaving him the compass —the memory of her holy, loving life and precepts—went home to her rest. The influence of those mothering days stayed with him in his manhood years.

Dean Richmond said: When I get to heaven I want to see my Saviour first, then I shall look for my dear, old mother, whose loving, tender care for me in my boyhood days was so untiring and unselfish.

Dr. Norman MacLeod says that when he was a boy he was often discouraged, and in a fit of petulance once said, I wish I never had been born. His pious mother drew him lovingly to her side and whispered, Norman, you have been born, and if you are a wise bairn you would ask the Lord what you had born for. That was a wise bit of mothering which influenced that boy as he grew to manhood, to give the most and the best of his life to the service of his Master.

There have been a great multitude of good mothers, who have passed into the skies, whose children rise up and call them blessed; mothers whose names were not recorded before the outside world, because they felt their first duty was in the home with the children God had given them.

It is a sacred trust—that of motherhood—none other is as holy alone. God pity the children whose mothers find their highest pleasure and duties outside the nursery, and the duties to their children secondary considerations Oh, mothers, pillow and cushion your children's cradles with love. Don't be afraid of being too demonstrative in giving them a bit of mothering when they need it. No child was ever loved too well. The afterglow of a true mother's life has been like a light from heaven on the path of many a child, who, in later years, halted at the turning of the road when the holy remembrances of the mothering time kept them from falling by the way.

The good old Scoth soul in The Bonnie Brier Bush well says: When the Almighty sees a mightier bound up in her laddie, I tell ye He is sair pleased in His heaven, for mind ye how He loved His own Son. Besides, I'm judging that nane o' us can love anither without lovin' Him, or hurt anither without hurtin' him.

Our Umbrellas.

It was raining hard, and Miss Matilda, looking from her window, saw two schoolgirls hurrying homeward under umbrellas.

Look at those silly youngsters! Miss Matilda said. They fancy they're not wet. They're bent forward, and hold their umbrellas quite over their noses, while the rain pours down on their backs. But they don't know that, bless you! It's dry in front, and they don't see what is going on behind them. They make me think of some people I know, who are so intent on saving the great world out in front that they forget the mischief that is going on right back of them—in their own homes, may be.

I read in a paper the other day high praise of a talk given before a mother's club on the Moral Training of Children. The woman who gave it is a good earnest soul, and has some fine theories, but she hasn't the least suspicion of what any of the neigbors could tell her about the moral training her two boys are needing. Her moral umbrella is a good one, but she isn't holding it in the right place. I'm not saying anything against outside work, concluded Miss Matilda, but I've always thought it was sensible advice that Nehemiah, gave his men: each to build and watch over against his own house—Forward.

Lincoln and the Sentry.

Foreign visitors are surprised to find that there are no sentries at the White House. During the war a solitary soldier mounted guard, and on one occasion had a amusing colloquy with President Lincoln.

Mr. Lincoln emerged from the front door, his lank figure bent over, as he drew tightly about his shoulders the shawl which he employed for such protection; for he was on his way to the War Department, at the west corner of the grounds, where in times of battle he was wont to get the midnight despatches from the field. As the blast struck him, he thought of the numbness of the pacing sentry, and, turning to him, said: Young man, you've got a cold job to-night. Step inside, and stand guard there. My orders keep me out here, the soldier replied. Yes, said the President, in his argumentative tone. But your duty can be performed just as well inside as out here, and you'll oblige me by going in. I have been stationed outside, the soldier answered and resumed his beat. Hold on there! said Mr. Lincoln, as he turned back again. It occurs to me that I am Commander-in-chief of the army, and I order you to go inside!

An Idol that Could not get out of Bed.

A little lassie from a heathen home had been for a short time attending a missionary school. The idols in her home had been regilded.

One day the Goddess of Mercy was missing from her place. After some searching it was found in the school girl's bed

When asked how it came there she explained that she had heard at school that idols were pieces of wood; so she thought she would try for herself if it is were so, and she took down the idol to sleep with her in order that she might see whether it was wise enough to get out of bed in the morning when she got up.

It was rather clever of a little mite of eight years of age, at least so her grandfather thought, and he saved her from the beating her mother was going to give her.

But her strange act and the reason she gave for it were the subject of talk in the home, and the next Sabbath the whole family came to church.

Illustrations.

The teacher who gets his illustrations from the affairs of every day, from the newspapers, from country, the workshop, from any phase of real life, will never complain of lack of attention. The throb of reality is felt always in such illustrations; they are alive; they are part of the present, and every young person will open eyes and ears to them. One advantage in drawing our illustrations from the affairs of to-day is that we thus make familiar things alive with spiritual truth. The object and its teaching can be so thoroughly identified that one will constantly proclaim the other, and thus our scholars will be sent out into a world that is vocal with messages concerning invisible and eternal truth —Wm. T. Ellis

A fact never needs crutches.
White lies soon turn black.
Keep to the right and you will never get left.

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