

BEATITUDES

Jesus leads us to the Sermon on the Mount through ten beatitude doors. Here we may start in poverty of spirit and become possessors of the Kingdom of Heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven". "The meek" become inheritors of "the earth" in the true sense. The reviled and persecuted "for righteousness' sake" may "rejoice and be exceeding glad". Jesus preached this sermon on a mountain. He will preach it to us at all heights; in all depths; on all levels; and beside all waters. Thank God forever! Webster defines beatitude as "felicity of the highest kind". Those who look for abiding happiness on levels lower than the beatitudes will be disappointed. Earth's "broken cisterns" can never give the soul life-giving water. Christ alone can do that. If Christ has anathemas for the impenitent, He also has beatitudes for those who hear His voice. The first beatitude that greets us in the Book of Revelation reads thus: "Blessed is he that readeth and he that understandeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book". A benediction upon those who undertake the impossible; except as aided by the Holy Spirit the great guide into all truth. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord". "Blessed is he that watcheth", and "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city". The same Christ that uttered the beatitudes found in Matthew spoke those that are recorded in Revelation. The Book is entitled, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him". Many have failed to get the best out of this book. Some who hear the varied explanations of it wisely conclude that "It is better not to know so much; than to know so much that is not true". Others read and seek to understand under the Spirits' light. Jesus does not seek to mystify; but to interpret. John said: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day". We may have the same receptive understanding spirit. We thank God for all who approach the Apocalypse in a prayerful, teachable spirit. They see the beatitudes that are found in it; and regard them as bright spots amid its anathemas. Some "wrest the book to their own destruction." It is to them "a stone of stumbling; and rock of offence". Let me give an example:

A man recently tried to sell me a self written work on Revelation on Sunday. In explaining some of its content he said: "God has shown me that prohibition and church union are of the devil. The church is wholly corrupt. The only way to be saved is to leave it." There are no beatitudes in that. There is a temptation to dodge life's responsibilities; to leave God's elect and join a self-elected, sure-we're-right crowd. God and prohibition are not on the side of the saloon; or of any agency that creates and sells intoxicants to injure human souls. Jesus said, "he that is not for me is against me." The first church was of "one heart and one soul". That's church union. Why should the best souls on earth not pool all their God given resources of mind, heart, soul and earthly store to promote God's greatest ends? Such purported revelations as the one above mentioned are not the Spirits' breathings. Jesus said "the thief cometh not but to steal, to kill, and to destroy". The man mentioned above would have stolen the sheep from every fold and thought he was doing God service. The late Rev. Peter Cartwright was one of the foremost preachers at Methodist camp meeting held in the early history of the United States. He says that he was followed by Mormon teachers who sought to divert the crowds from the truth. One evening at dusk

Cartwright saw a flash of light on the outskirts of the camp. Going that way he found a prostrate seemingly unconscious Mormon teacher beside a large stump. A bystander Mormon said an angel had appeared to the prostrate man in the flash of light. Cartwright detected a smell of brimstone; and going to the stump saw a large powder smudge. A smouldering cigar at the foot of the stump told how the powder had been set off. Suddenly reviving the Mormon said to Cartwright "An angel appeared to me in that flash of light." Cartwright said "Did the angel smell of brimstone?" Going to the stump Cartwright pointed out the powder smudge and the cigar with which the powder had been lighted. We prayerfully believe that any purported revelation that classifies "prohibition and church union as of the devil" came from a brimstone source—from beneath, not from above. "Behold, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, for many false prophets are gone out into the world". Someone sings

"Let us gather up the sunbeams,
Lying all around our path;
Let us keep the wheat and roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff."

Let us "gather up" all the beatitudes in God's book. They will inspire us as we see sin abounding as it does now. Paul said "where sin abounded grace did much more abound." The grace of God is not an opiate producing moral insensibility to evil conditions about us. It is a great eye-opener, and soul enlightener; revealing the true state of things. No evil could pass the vision of Jesus undetected. We should have vision to detect all that would make flesh triumph over the Holy Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

"Chaste, holy spiritual delights" are the heritage of those who "walk in the Spirit, and do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh". Jesus Christ, who is the inspiration of the beatitudes would have us wear them now as a garland of glory. They will bloom into fulfilment day and night; winter and summer. We expect to wear crowns. We may wear the beatitudes before the crown. "Bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart." We offer here our God-given, prayerful best. "Go thou and do likewise."

B. T. GASKIN

WOLVES IN THE FLOCK

Paul was a great shepherd. He carried his sheep on his heart. His last address to the Ephesian brethren is one of the most remarkable pieces of literature found in our language. It is recorded in Acts 20:17-38. The faithfulness, devotion, solicitude and love of the great apostle gives one a striking picture of what a true shepherd of the flock of Christ should be. He touches a most pathetic strain when he says: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things. . . " Satan is ready to employ any agent to tear down the flock of Christ and to destroy those for whom Christ died. Recently, we had a letter from an old pilgrim who had withdrawn from the church because of one member engaged in "pulling the class all to pieces." How sad after a membership of forty years. Sometimes this is the result of zeal without knowledge. More often it is the result of downright carnality. Fanaticism can take an unteachable attitude and try to enforce its visionary notions on the church. We have

known some to insist that they were being blest when they were tongue-lashing young Christians in a most harsh and unkind manner. Some professing Christians have carried so much "wolf" in their nature that they cannot testify or pray without taking a bite out of somebody. We have known many lambs of the flock to suffer and even to perish because of one old wolf. Thank God we do not have much of this to contend with but one wolf can do much damage. The love of God in the heart takes out harshness, rabidness and stubbornness and is easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits. Christians who enjoy the love of God will carry great solicitude for the lambs of the flock and would rather suffer than offend one of these little ones. And how wisely the Lord can help the older ones to instruct the younger ones in the things of the kingdom. May the Lord give us many fathers and mothers in the church who will be fathers and mothers indeed.—*The C. F. M. Herald.*

UNMODIFIED HOLINESS.

We become weary at hearing, "I believe in holiness but—" "Holiness is all right, but there are so many who do not live it." "Holiness is all right, but there is so much fanaticism." That was the way the spies talked about the land of Canaan. They said it was a goodly land but there were those giants. It was a fruitful land but there were those walled cities that could never be taken.

The fact is that those who use the conjunction "but" do not very much believe in holiness so far as being identified with it is concerned. You never hear a holy man saying, "I believe in holiness but." He makes no modification. A man who has the real experience of holiness has it unmodified. He never hesitates in his utterances on the subject. He talks as did Caleb and Joshua, unmodifiedly, "We are able to go up and possess the land."

Let us beware of the influence of the "Holiness—but" people. They do not mean unqualified, burning zeal to spread the doctrine of the Bible.—Christian Witness.

MINORITIES NOT TO BE DESPISED

From a recent issue of the Mail and Empire we quote a few statements as given by Sir Robert Falconer, President of the University of Toronto, in an address to the student body. He expressed his belief in the opinion of small groups rather than the masses.

"The truth is not to be found necessarily in what masses of people think: I am inclined to have sympathy with minorities. They may have the future in their keeping while majorities may be merely the heirs of a decadent present. Do not be afraid to cling to your faith if you find it reasonable, even though few may hold it. The world has become richer because of the Quakers and others who have become witness to truths that the multitude neglected," he said.

Sir Robert believed that the universities should set for themselves certain aims if they were to bring about a liberal education and assist in contributing to the world of average people.

There was another aim which he suggested. "Abide by the old, old wisdom that our external conditions do not altogether fashion us." He told the students not to be ashamed of their enthusiasm, though they might meet older individuals whose faith was dimming.—*The Can. F. M. Herald.*