

A Devotional Study of the Beatitudes

by J.R. Miller

The sermon explores the beatitudes as a guide to spiritual character and happiness, emphasizing the importance of poverty of spirit and mourning as a means of receiving divine blessing.

Scripture: Matthew 5:3

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "The Beatitudes"

Description

J.R. Miller explores the Beatitudes, emphasizing their counter-cultural nature and the profound blessings they promise. He highlights that true happiness comes from spiritual qualities such as humility, mourning, meekness, and a hunger for righteousness, which are often overlooked by society. Miller illustrates how these 'blesseds' reflect the character of Christ and the transformative power of receiving Him into our hearts. He encourages believers to embody these qualities, as they lead to a deeper relationship with God and a more fulfilling life. Ultimately, Miller asserts that the Beatitudes are not just ideals to admire but principles to live by, shaping our character and actions.

Transcript

The Master's Blesseds

A devotional study of the Beatitudes

by J. R. Miller, 1905

(J. R. Miller's genius is seen at its best in this book, and many as have been the expositions of that wonderful discourse of our Lord's, 'The Master's Blesseds' takes a place which none of the others have filled. And not only for the tender and beautiful manner in which the exposition is unfolded, but also for the fresh suggestions with which it teems.)

Now when He saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them, saying:

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

Blessed are those who mourn--for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek--for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness--for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart--for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers--for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness--for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Matthew 5:1-12

Introduction

The Bible is a book of beatitudes and blessings. "Blesseds" shine all over the inspired pages, like stars in the heavens. God's mercy lies everywhere. Wherever we see Jesus in the gospel story, He is giving out blessings--as the sun gives light and warmth. He was always reaching out His hand to impart good to some life that needed it. Now it was on the children's heads, now on the leper, now on the blind eyes, now on the sick, now on the dead--that He laid those gracious hands, and always He left some rich gift with his touch. One day those gentle hands were stretched out and nailed down on the cross--yet even then it was in blessing that they were extended, for it was for our sins that they were thus transfixed on the cruel wood!

Then it is a striking fact that in the very last glimpse we have of Jesus in this world, that He was in the attitude of imparting a blessing. It was on the mount of ascension. He had been talking with His disciples, and then He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them He was parted from them and received up into heaven. There could be no truer picture of Jesus taken at any point in His life, than as He appeared in that last view which this world had of Him. In heaven now He is still a blessing Savior, holding up His pierced hands before God in intercession, and reaching down His gracious hands, full of blessings for our sad, sinful earth.

It is well for us to study carefully the beatitudes that fell from our Lord's lips, while He was here. We are struck at once with their unworldliness. They are altogether different from men's beatitudes. They run directly counter to the maxims which rule in human society and give impulse to human ambitions.

"Blessed are those who mourn." Does the world pronounce any such beatitude as this, over the bowed head, the crushed heart, and the darkened life? The world looks upon sorrow as a misfortune. It writes, "Sad are those who mourn." It puts no glory, into the clouds of grief. It lights no lamps, in the darkness of trial. It gathers no fruits of righteousness, from fields of affliction. It sees no possible good, out of sorrow.

Nor has the world any beatitude for the meek. It writes meekness down among unmanly qualities. They say that the meek man is lacking in courage. The manly man, after the world's pattern, is one who will not bear insult, slight, injustice. His blood is up the instant he is wronged; his eyes flash and his hand is raised to resent the injury. As far as the East is from the West--is the spirit of the world from the spirit of Christ's beatitude upon the meek.

Or take the beatitude on peacemakers--that, too, is directly opposed to the ideals prevalent among men. Through the ages wars have stained the earth, and human strifes and conflicts have been waged between

nations, clans, families, individuals. The spirit of the world encourages hatred, variance, strife, jealousy, envy, resentment; rather than love, peace, forbearance, and forgiveness. The world drives angry men to hotter anger. It claps its hands and urges on the unnecessary quarrel. It taunts the man who is disposed to seek peace. Even boys on the playground drive their fellows to demanding satisfaction by the sneer, "Coward! I would not take that from anybody!" It is only the regenerated spirit, the heaven spirit, in the heart, which seeks to make peace.

Thus all the beatitudes are unworldly, in direct opposition to the maxims and tempers of the natural man. They are so because they are the laws of the spiritual kingdom. They are the maxims of the heavenly life brought down and established in a new kingdom on the earth, a kingdom whose object it is to transform this world into a realm of blessedness, to make the desert blossom with roses, to establish among men a reign of righteousness and peace. Confessedly, the beatitudes are not in harmony with human ideas. They are teachings which are intended to be against nature--and to revolutionize nature.

In one of Goethe's tales, he tells of a magical silver lamp, which, when placed in a fisherman's hut, changed the hut and all within it to silver. Just so, the object of Christ's beatitudes, when admitted to a human heart--is to change it into moral beauty, transforming its selfishness, hardness, cruelty, and inhumanity--into love, gentleness, kindness, sweetness. Thus, while the beatitudes are not after this world's spirit--they are given with the purpose of making the world over into a condition and a character like the spirit which is in them. These words of Christ are really transcripts of heaven's laws. All life in that blessed home--is lowly, meek, merciful, hungry for more of God, pure hearted.

Hence the beatitudes set us lessons which we must learn--if we are going to attain to true spiritual character and be ready for heaven. We must get them into our heart--and allow them to work out through the crust of our life--until they have transformed us into the temper and disposition of Christ!

Thus we see the use we should make of these golden sentences. They should not only be merely pondered and admired for their spiritual beauty--but should be allowed to rule in our heart, and work their radical changes in the spirit of our life, leavening our whole being and permeating it with their own new leaven of righteousness. We should not rest content until we get each beatitude wrought into the very texture of our being, until their lovely graces shine like gems in the adornment of our character.

We can get the beatitudes into our life, only by receiving Christ Himself. We cannot reach the stars by climbing up any of earth's mountains. When the tallest peaks have been gained--we shall find ourselves only shivering amid the ice and snow--while the stars still seem as far away from us--as when we began our ascent from the grassy valley. Just so, we never can reach the beatitudes by any weary climbing up the heights of mere human excellence. When we have attained the loftiest summits of earthly possibilities, these heavenly stars will still hang infinitely outside, and utterly beyond our climbing. The only way to rise up into the heavenly life of the beatitudes, is to have heaven brought down to us, into our heart. There is no other way of reaching these celestial moral altitudes. It was to bring heaven down to those who never could have climbed up to its holy heights--that Jesus became incarnate. He stooped to earth--to raise us to the skies! By receiving Him into our heart--we enter the family of God on earth, and become heirs of eternal life and glory!

The Beatitude for the Poor in Spirit

"Blessed are the poor in spirit--for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

The quest of happiness is universal. Men's conceptions of happiness differ greatly--and they seek it along widely divergent paths--yet in every heart, the desire is for the same end--happiness.

The beatitudes give the secret of happiness and tell us where and how it may be found! The word blessed means happy. Of course it means more than men usually understand, when they use the word. Happiness as the world views it--is the pleasure that comes from things that happen. It is on the surface, chiefly, and is affected by every disturbing influence. But blessedness has in it a divine quality, and is not dependent on circumstances or conditions. Yet blessedness is that which human hearts really crave, and here in the beatitudes, are marked out the paths which lead to it.

But the world does not accept either this divine ideal of happiness, or these ways of finding it. It seeks the pleasures of the senses, and of the passing moment, and would find it in easy ways. These paths Christian blessedness, are too rough and steep. These laws of the blessed life, are too serious. The beatitudes run directly against human nature. Still it remains true, that here is the secret of happiness, and that these are the ways which lead to it.

The first beatitude is on poverty of spirit. We must try to get a correct definition--a mistake here will lead us far astray in our quest for the exact quality or condition of blessing indicated.

Precisely what is poverty of spirit? It is not poverty in one's worldly condition which is intended; or else many who are not entitled to it, might claim the blessing. No doubt also there are blessings in a state of poverty such as that, for example, in which Jesus Himself grew up--not poverty caused by men's own fault and sin--but the poverty merely of lowly circumstances. Such poor people live purely, honestly, faithfully, contentedly. Their life is oftentimes almost ideal in its simplicity. They know nothing of the great world's wickedness. There are many very charming things, in the life of the godly poor. Many of the loveliest virtues flourish in them. They are rich in gracious qualities. Such poor are indeed blessed--theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

But evidently it is not poverty alone as an earthly condition, which is meant in this beatitude. Not all worldly poor--are poor in spirit. One may be poor--and yet very proud.

Nor did Jesus mean poverty of nature. His own life was the richest in all its endowments and faculties, in all its powers and capacities, that this world ever saw--and yet He was poor in spirit.

Nor did He mean spiritual poverty, in the sense that one's spiritual life should be feeble and dull. Christ came into the world not only that man might have life--but that they should have abundant life, fullness of life. Jesus has infinite patience with the weak and with those who have little faith and many infirmities of character; but He wants us to be strong, abounding in all graces, bringing forth much fruit. He does not call poverty of spiritual life, blessed.

Nor, again, does this beatitude refer to that affectation of humility which is found in some people who in their common speech are profuse in self-depreciation. They are continually saying uncomplimentary things about themselves, telling others how unworthy they are, of how little value are their works or services. They seem to think that there is a virtue in talking lowly about themselves. But this is not true humility. It is most unwholesome. Perhaps it is never quite sincere. If some other person said the same mean, depreciatory things about these people--they would probably be very angry! Too often it is pride, not humility--which prompts such self-condemning.

Jesus Himself, in whom this beatitude found its perfect interpretation, never spoke in this way of Himself. He never said that He had no gifts, no abilities, that He could do nothing. Just before the record which tells of His washing His disciples' feet, we read of His consciousness of His divine origin and destiny--He knew that He came from God, and therefore He did this act of such wonderful condescension. True humility is entirely consistent, with full consciousness of one's ability.

What then is meant by being poor in spirit? It consists in the consciousness that one has not in himself, the abilities which would make him worthy of God's favor. Not only does he lack the qualities which would make his life holy and beautiful--but he knows that he lacks them! He has a lowly estimate of himself. His type is not the Pharisee, whose prayer showed no sense of need whatever--but the publican, who was overwhelmed by the sense of his unworthiness and his lack of all that would commend him to God. It is the opposite of pride. It is that spirit which is not puffed up.

To be poor in spirit is to stand before God in penitence, with nothing of our own to commend us, saved by grace alone. This does not hinder the Christian joy, which comes from the assurance that we are children of God and heirs of glory. We may appreciate our glorious privileges and rejoice that our names are written in the book of life--and yet not have a shadow of pride, because it is altogether of the mercy and the grace of God, that we are thus honored.

In our relations with others, this quality will save us from all pride, and lifting up of ourselves above them--as if we were better and worthier than they. It will lead us to hold the noblest powers of our being, as not too fine to be used in the serving of the lowliest of our fellow men who need the service. It will lead us to prefer others in honor, rather than ourselves. It will keep us from being conscious of the worth in ourselves, or of the beauty of the work which we do. Self-consciousness always mars spiritual loveliness! Moses knew not, that his face shone. The man who is poor in spirit is not himself aware of the shining of his own life, the splendor of his deeds, or the power of his words and ministries.

There is a beautiful legend which tells of a saintly man who was very greatly beloved by the angels who had seen much of his godly life on the earth. The angels asked God to give to this man some new power, some mark of the divine favor, some new gift which would make him still more useful. They were told to talk to the man--and ask him what special power he would like to have. The angels came and asked him what gift he would choose, which God might bestow upon him. He said that he was content and needed nothing more. They continued to urge him to choose something which God might do for him or give to him. Would he not like to have power to perform miracles? He said no--that was Christ's work. Would he not like power to lead a great many souls to Christ? He answered, No, for it was the work of the Holy Spirit to convert souls.

The angels still begged him to name something which they might ask God to grant to him. He answered at last, that if he must make a choice, he would like power to do a great deal of good among men--without even knowing it. So it was that from that day his shadow, when it fell behind him, where he could not see it, had wondrous healing power; but when it fell before him, where he could see it, it had no such power.

This is the spirit of true holiness and poverty of spirit--nothing for self, everything for God. One who has learned this lesson, is ready for noble service. God loves to use the life that will keep itself out of sight, and only honor Him.

It is significant that this beatitude of poverty of spirit comes first in our Lord's chart of life. It is not merely an accidental arrangement of the beatitudes that gives it this place. Poverty of spirit comes first--because it

must be first. It is the foundation on which alone the fabric of spiritual character can rise! It is the rich soil in which alone other graces will grow and flourish. Hilltops are barren, because the soil is washed off by the rains; but the valleys are fertile, because there the rich deposits gather. In like manner, proud hearts are sterile, affording no soil in which spiritual graces can grow; but lowly hearts are fertile with grace, and in them all lovely character grow. If only we are truly poor in spirit--our life will be rich in its fruits!

The form of blessing for the poor in spirit, is that theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They belong to this kingdom. Their character makes the citizens of it. The kingdom of heaven is wherever the laws of the heavenly life rule in men's hearts.

A little child was greatly concerned over the thought of the distance of heaven from him, and the question how he could ever get there. His wise mother told him that heaven must first come down to him--that heaven must begin in his heart. This is always true; to be in the kingdom of heaven--is to have heaven in us. To be poor in spirit includes all of the heavenly life, and all who have these qualities are already in the beginnings of heaven itself!

The Beatitude for the Mourner

"Blessed are those who mourn--for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4

The house of sorrow is a strange place to look for joy! Mourners are the last people, that the world would call blessed or happy. Men in their quest for happiness, would not think of looking for it in the shadows of grief. Yet Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn."

There are many who mourn. Few are the homes in which there is not some grief. Not all sorrows hang the death-crape on the door, or wear a badge of grief. There are secret troubles, and tears are shed where no eye sees them fall.

Does Jesus mean that all who mourn are blessed? No! there are sorrows which yield no peaceable fruits of righteousness. There are those who suffer--and are not blessed. He means that the state of mourning is one in which divine blessing may be received--rather than in a state of tearlessness. The deepest happiness is not that which has never suffered--but that which has passed through the experience of sorrow--and has been comforted. The happiest home is not one which has never known grief--but one whose songs of gladness have in them a minor strain.

There is a story of a German baron who made a great Aeolian harp by stretching wires from tower to tower of his castle. When the harp was ready, he listened for the music. But it was in the calm of summer--and in the still air, the wires hung silent. Autumn came with its gentle breezes--and there were faint whispers of song. At length the winter winds swept over the castle--and now the harp answered in majestic music.

Such a harp is the human heart. It does not yield its noblest music in the summer days of joy--but in the winter of trial. The sweetest songs of earth, have been sung in sorrow. The richest things in character, have been reached through pain. Even of Jesus we read that He was made perfect through suffering. This does not mean that there were evils in His nature which had to be expelled by the heat of trial, that there was dross in the gold of His being which only the fire could remove. The meaning is that there were elements even in His sinless humanity, which could be brought to full ripeness only through pain.

There is given us in the book of 'Revelation', a glimpse of the heavenly life, in which this same truth is revealed. It was in a vision of the redeemed, singing their praises to God. Among them were some who

appeared to have special glory--a great multitude which no man could number, gathered out of all nations, standing in the place of honor before the throne, wearing white robes and carrying palms in their hands. When the question was asked, "Who are these highly favored ones--and where did they come from?" the answer was, "These are those who came out of great tribulation." This joyous multitude came from homes of sorrow. They were the suffering ones on earth who had passed through a baptism of tears. In heaven they wear the white robes, stand nearest to the throne, and bear the emblems of the most complete victoriousness.

How strikingly this vision interprets the beatitude: "Blessed are those who mourn"! Earth regards suffering as a misfortune. The world pities those who are called to endure sorrow. The condition of mourning, is one from which men shrink. But in the kingdom of heaven those are the favored ones who are called to suffer. Instead of being the unfortunate, they are the blessed.

The same teaching runs through all the New Testament. Affliction is not a mark of the divine disfavor--but a token of the divine love. "Whom the Lord loves--He chastens." Instead of being hurtful to the life, working harm and marring--trial promotes the cleansing of the heart and the enrichment of the character. "No chastening for the present seems to be joyous--but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

The secret of this strange teaching is revealed in the second part of the beatitude. Why are those who mourn, blessed? It is because they shall be comforted. It is not in the mourning that the blessedness lies--but in the comfort which comes to those who mourn. Sorrow in itself is not a blessing. Sickness, pain, affliction, trial--are not favors in themselves. These experiences can be nothing else but hard and bitter. It is only in their fruits--that the blessing comes.

The divine comfort is such a revealing of love and good, that it is worth while to mourn in order to receive it. It is a blessing too which we never can have--until we have entered the experience of sorrow. We would never know of the glory of the stars--if the sun did not go down; but it would be a sore loss to us if we were to live our three score and ten years in this world without ever seeing the wonder of the starry skies. It is a blessing to have the night come--that we may see the splendor of the heavens. We would never know God's marvelous comfort--if we never had sorrow.

"Blessed are those who mourn--for they shall be comforted," means that it is well worth our while to be a mourner, with sad heart--in order to have such revealing. So rich a blessing is there in this heavenly comfort, that it were nothing less than a misfortune to go through life without receiving it.

There is an old fable which tells of the experience of our first parent at the setting of the sun, on the day of his creation. As Adam watched the glorious orb sink toward the horizon, it seemed to him that only calamity could come to the earth, and the canopy of light and blue, when the sun had disappeared. With dread and terror he waited for the coming of the darkness. But lo! Not distress and desolation--but new and marvelous revealing followed.

Just so do we dread sorrow. As we see it coming, for example, as we watch the approach of death to some dearly loved one, whose life has been the very sun of our existence; it seems to us that the darkness coming upon us, can bring only utter desolation and unrelieved gloom; that nothing of joy and beauty will be left to us, when the light of human love has departed. But when at last our friend has passed away and we find ourselves wrapped in the night of sorrow, alas! a glory of divine comfort stands forth revealed in the darkness!

What Christian mourner has not been amazed in the experiences of his grief--at finding such wonderful new things in the Word of God? He had read the precious words over and over, a thousand times, during his days of happiness--but he had never seen these wonderful divine comforts in them before! The truth is, he could not see them--while human joy flooded his life. They lay concealed within the brightness of earthly light--and could be revealed only in darkness. Blessed are those who mourn--for thus and thus alone, could they ever know God's special grace of comfort.

What is this comfort which it is so blessed a thing to know? Few words are more generally misunderstood than this word 'comfort'. Many of us think we are comforting people when we go and sit down beside them in the time of their trouble, and in our own measure enter with them into their experiences, going over the sad details of their grief--yet saying not one uplifting word. But that is not God's way of comforting His sorrowing children. The word comfort means to give strength. When Jesus was passing through the agony of Gethsemane, the Father comforted Him by sending an angel to strengthen Him. The cup of deep sorrow could not pass away--but the Sufferer's heart was cheered by the angel's ministry, so that He was enabled to drink it even gladly.

That is the way God would comfort all His children in their sorrow. He may not spare them the grief, because there is blessing in it, either for themselves or for others--but if they must drink the cup, He would strengthen them for it.

In Psalm 55:22, there is a word which is full of rich suggestion. "Cast your burden upon the Lord--and He shall sustain you." In the margin, however, is the word gift--"Cast your gift upon the Lord." So our burden is God's gift to us! This is true whatever the burden may be--duty, sorrow, pain, loss, care. Being God's gift--there must be a blessing in it, something good, and something we could not miss without sore loss. It may be a blessing for ourselves, or it may be for others. In the garden of Gethsemane, it was the blessing of redemption which was in the bitter cup that was pressed to the lips of the holy Sufferer. In every case, our burden is God's gift--and it would not be a kindness to us--if He were to lift it away.

But there is more of the promise. We are to "cast our burden upon the Lord--and He will sustain us." That is, He will give us strength to carry our load, to endure our suffering. The story of Paul's thorn in the flesh illustrates this. The torturing burden was not removed--but instead there came sufficient grace--the strength of Christ to balance the human weakness, so that Paul was enabled to rejoice in his infirmities, because of the blessing which came to him through them.

This, then, is part of the blessing, which comes to those who mourn--they receive the strength of God to sustain them in their sorrow. The burden may not be lightened--but it is really an answer to the heart's cry for help--if new strength is imparted. Then the sufferer is enabled to sing--and the sorrow is changed into joy.

There is blessing also in the fruits of sorrow, in the life of those who abide in Christ. There is no doubt that suffering waits at the gateway to all the higher and better things of spiritual experience and attainment. "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of heaven." There is a baptism of fire--a baptism of pain that is necessary in connection with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Even Jesus Christ received this twofold baptism. Though He was a Son--yet "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Much more is it necessary for us, if we would reach the uplands of God--to go through the way of pain. There must be a purifying in the fire--if we would be cleansed of our sinfulness; and we must burn--the oil of our life must be consumed--if we would shine!

There are blessings, therefore, which we cannot obtain--if we cannot accept and endure suffering. There are joys which can come to us--only through sorrow. There are revealings of divine truth which we can get--only when earth's lights have gone out. There are harvests which can grow only--after the plough has done its rough work.

"Blessed are those who mourn--for they shall be comforted." Not to be willing to endure pain and suffering, is not to be able to get the best things of grace!

The Beatitude of Meekness

"Blessed are the meek--for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5

Meekness is not an easy grace. Indeed, no grace comes easily. It is the heavenly life into which we are being fashioned, and nothing less than a moral and spiritual revolution will produce in us the heavenly qualities. The old must die--that the new may live. Spiritual graces are not merely amiable traits of human nature trained and cultivated into gentleness--they are transformations wrought by the divine Spirit.

An old prophecy, in a vision of the reign of the Messiah, pictured the wolf dwelling with the lamb, the leopard lying down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion in close companionship. Whatever we may say as to the literal fulfillment of this prophecy in the subduing and taming of ferocious animals--it has its higher fulfillment in the regeneration of a human soul, which is wrought through the gospel. The wolf in men's disposition and temper--is changed into lamb-like gentleness.

Christian meekness, for example, is a converted wolf. Human nature is resentful. When struck--it strikes back. When wronged--it demands reparation. "An eye for an eye--a tooth for a tooth," is its law. It is not natural for anyone to bear injuries patiently, to submit without bitterness to unkindness, to forgive personal wrongs or insults, and not to nourish grudges. It is only the person who has been regenerated by grace, who follows the law of meekness.

Indeed, no heathen morality ever gave meekness a place among the fine things in character. The best that Aristotle could say of it, was that it was "a defect." It is only in the Christian ideal, that meekness shines as a virtue. The world calls it unmanly, a cowardly quality, and a defect unworthy of one who wears the human form. The boy on the playground who submits to wrong or injustice without resentment, is sneered at as a coward. It is only in the new manhood which Christ came to create and inspire, that meekness is set to shine as one of its divinest features.

What is meekness? It is defined in one dictionary as submission to the divine will; patience and gentleness, from moral and pious motives. Another definition gives this--gentle or mild of temper, self-controlled, not easily provoked or irritated, forbearing under injuries and annoyances.

There are two different phases of meekness indicated in these definitions--a submissive spirit toward God; and a patient, quiet, forgiving spirit toward men.

We should be meek toward God. We should accept whatever He sends, without complaint, without a rebellious word or feeling. It is easy to find reasons why we should do this. He is our Father--and loves us with a love which we never can doubt. Nothing but good can ever come from Him to us. Whatever the form of the providence may be, we know that it enfolds a blessing.

We are confident, too, of God's wisdom. He makes no mistakes in any of His dealings with us. When our ways are set aside for His, we know it is because His are better. Payson was asked, when enduring great bodily affliction, if he could see any particular reason for the painful dispensation. "No," he replied, "but I am as well satisfied as if I could see ten thousand reasons; God's will is the very perfection of all reason."

When we think of these great truths concerning God, our heart should be quieted in any experience of pain or sorrow, or in any mystery of darkness, and it should appear reasonable to us to wait and suffer in patience, and with trustful, songful acquiescence. Why should the frail creature doubt the wisdom and the goodness of the strong Creator? Why should the child distrust the love and wisdom of the Father? With faith in God, it should be easy for us to be submissive toward Him.

It is easy to see the blessing there is, in such submissive trust. The captive bird which flies violently against the wires of its cage, trying to escape--only beats and bruises its own wings, and at the end of its frantic struggles, is still a captive. Alike hurtful to one's self and unavailing, are all resistings of God's will.

Wiser far is the bird which, when it finds itself shut in the cage, unable to escape--begins to sing, filling its prison with sweet music. It spares itself all hurt. It shows a spirit of trust and confidence. Then even in its captivity, it scatters blessings all about it, in its notes of cheerful song.

This illustrates the meekness with which God's children should accept even then most painful events of life. Their faith should never fail. They should look upon the inevitable, not as a decree of stern fate to which they can only submit--but as a revealing of the Father's will, and therefore something holy and sacred; something, too, in which a thousand blessings of love are folded up.

The form of the blessing promised to the meek, is very suggestive--"they shall inherit the earth." Resistance to God's will, gets nothing for its striving. A man cannot contend with God--and hope to overcome omnipotence. The struggling bird has only hurts and bruises--as the result of its struggles. It has broken no wire of its prison. It has loosened no chain. It has opened no door. But the bird which cheerfully accepts its bondage and sings in its prison--is no longer captive. It is as free as if it were soaring in mid-air. All the world belongs to it. Acquiescence in any suffering, already has the victory over the suffering. The Christian who rejoices in the midst of pain and trial--has overcome all pain and trial.

Paul was the freest man in Philippi, that night when he lay in the deepest dungeon, his feet in stocks, and his body covered with gashes. His heart was free and he filled all the prison with his hymns of joy. His meekness made him the inheritor of all things. Just so, the poor man who has the joy of the Lord in his poverty, owns all things--the blue skies are his; the beautiful fields are his; the springs of water, the rivers, the hills, the mines, all the treasures of the earth, are his. Meekness makes a man free indeed, and gives him possession of all things.

The other phase of meekness is that which is manifested in our relations with men. It commands us to be mild in temper and disposition, not to strive, to be gentle, not easily provoked, slow to anger, not resentful.

The meek spirit has been compared to the fragrant wood, which bathes the ax that cuts into it, in perfume. It is like those flowers which give out their sweet odor--only when they are crushed. Its best is revealed only under injury or wrong. It is said of a certain godly man, that people never found the richest treasures of his nature--until they did him a wrong or showed him an unkindness; then his heart poured out its surprise of love.

It was thus with Christ Himself. The world would never have known the most marvelous love of that heart--if it had treated Him only with honor and affection. It was men's sins--which led to the wonderful revealing of the cross. The same is true in smaller measure, of all meekness; we would not know of its sweetness, were it not for the injuries and wrongs it receives.

Christian meekness is not mere softness or easy going disposition. There are those who by nature are submissive and unresisting, who are easily imposed upon, who allow others to take advantage of them, and will never lift a finger to assert or maintain their rights. But that is not Christian meekness. The meek man is he who feels keenly the insult or the injustice, and is naturally disposed to claim his rights or to resent the injury--but who curbs his feeling, controls himself because he is a Christian, and lets love have sway, returning kindness for unkindness.

Christian meekness is a fruit of the Spirit. It is the love of Christ in the heart, overcoming natural feeling. It manifests itself in patience with disagreeable and unreasonable people, in the forgiveness of injuries, in the quiet enduring of wrongs, in the returning of good for evil, in uncomplaining self-forgetfulness for the sake of others.

A Brahman compared the Christian missionary to a mango tree. It puts forth blossoms and then weights its branches with fruits. For itself? No, for the hungry who come to it for food. By and by the tree is assailed with clubs and stones. Its leaves are torn and its branches are bruised and broken. It is stripped bare. But does it resent this cruel treatment and refuse to yield fruit another year? No! Next year it is more fruitful than ever. So it is with the Christian missionary, said the Hindu. He gives his rich life for the helping of others. He endures enmity and persecution--but his only response is more help, new fruits of love, the repaying of wrong and cruelty with love's best gifts.

That is Christian meekness. It had its highest exemplification in the Master Himself, who always returned good for evil, who at the last, when nailed on a cross, gave from the cruel wounds made by men--His blood for man's redemption. It is thus we must live--if we would be indeed followers of Christ.

The blessing of meekness comes to every one who truly learns the lesson. To worldly thought, it seems loss indeed, to allow one's self to be wronged, injured, thrust aside and trodden down. How can one inherit the earth--when one is continually being robbed of the things which are esteemed as earth's chief good? Yet there is a sense in which those who seem to lose all things--really gain all things.

It is told of Phillips Brooks, that once, after listening quietly, with deep sympathy, to a young woman who came to him with a story of a grievous wrong which had been done to her, he said to her, "I am very sorry for you. It is hard to be misunderstood, injured, and wronged, in this manner. Yet, shall I hurt you more if I tell you that I am not so sorry for you as for someone else?" Then he spoke to her of his pity for the wrong-doer, who had so needlessly caused such pain, adding, "It is so pitiable to have made so much trouble in a world already so full of heartaches!"

It is never the one who is wronged or injured--who is the real loser--but the one that does the evil. He who suffers and sins not--but keeps loving and sweet--is enriched by what seem losses. His heart is at peace, and this fills the world with beauty for him.

The spirit of meekness also yields contentment, and he who is contented is rich, owning all things. Then love enriches. Nothing hurts one's life as resentment does. It poisons all joy, and embitters every sweet pleasure. But love fills the heart with cheer, and makes all the world bright with the smile of God. Thus the

meek are the inheritors of all things.

The Beatitude of Hunger

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness--for they shall be filled." Matthew 5:6

We would probably say, at first thought, that the satisfied are the happy, that those who have every desire fulfilled are the blessed. We do not think of intense and painful hunger, as a desirable state. Yet the Lord pronounces one of His beatitudes upon the unsatisfied, those who hunger and thirst.

However, it is not in the condition of hunger, itself, that the blessedness lies--but in that of which hunger is the sign, and that to which it leads. It is the token of life and health. A dead man has no desire, no longing for anything. One who has no craving for that which is good, no thirst for God, no yearning to be holy, to be like Christ, to be filled with the Spirit--is spiritually dead!

There is a touching story of one who was in declining health and went to the warm South in the winter to search of renewed life. She wrote to her friend, cheerful letters in which she spoke of the charm of the place, the wonderful luxuriance of all vegetable growths, and the abundance of food upon the table. Yet every letter contained the sad note, "If only I could eat, I would soon get well here; but I have no appetite." Then in a few weeks her frail body was borne back to her home--dead amid plenty, not for the lack of food--but for lack of hunger. Blessed are those who hunger, for hunger is a mark of health and of vigorous life, while the lack of it tells of disease and coming death.

The same is true of the mind. Hunger is blessed, because it is a mark of intellectual health. While one craves knowledge and is eager to press out upon the broad sea to discover the new worlds that lie beyond it--one's mind is alive and in wholesome state. Satisfaction with one's present knowledge, without desire to learn more, is evidence that one has reached the limit of one's mental growth. The artist had reason to weep, when he found himself satisfied even with his magnificent creation, recognizing the truth that he had now reached his best, and that there was no further progress for him.

In spiritual life, the principle is the same. Those who hunger--are blessed. The unsatisfied, are those whose souls are prospering and in health. Not to be eager to know more of God and to have more of the life of God in the heart--is to be spiritually dead. Longing is an invariable mark of true religion. Not the soul at ease, content, satisfied--but the soul thirsting for God, is the Scriptural ideal of God-likeness. Men are represented as hungry and thirsty. The soul is too great to feed on anything which this world can furnish. The beginning of salvation is the awaking of a desire to find God, to come back into His favor, to be restored to fellowship with Him, to be blessed with His love and to be filled with His life. The state of true blessedness, is one of hunger for God.

Thus Jesus spoke of Himself as bread, the bread of life, offered to meet this spiritual hunger. He said He was the bread of God, bread from heaven, of which if a man should eat--he would live forever. The faith that turns to Christ and receives the blessings that He has brought to the world, is spiritual longing. It begins in a consciousness of personal need, which finds full satisfaction in Christ. Not to hunger is therefore to go unblessed. It tells of a soul satisfied without God. But a yearning for God, is evidence of the beginning of spiritual life.

There is a story of child who had dwelt by the sea--but who was found by a wealthy relative and carried away to an inland valley. His home there was more beautiful and luxurious--but he was not happy.

Something was lacking. He missed the music of the ebbing and flowing tides. He missed the dewy spray on his cheeks. A feeling of homesickness possessed him. One day he climbed to the top of a high hill, and far off he saw a blue spot on the horizon. "The sea! The sea!" he cried, with trembling heart. He rested not until he had found his way back to his heart's beloved home. So it is with the soul that becomes homesick for God. It finds no satisfaction, until it rests in God. Blessed is such hunger, for it tells of hope.

Hunger is blessed also, because of the good to which it leads. It is the inspiration of every worthy advance and development. It drives the scholar to his patient and unwearying researches which result in benefit to the world. It sends the explorer out on untraversed seas to discover new lands with their treasures. In the Christian, it is hunger for God and for holiness, and for the privilege of ministering. It is the inspiration of everything beautiful. Spiritual longing is the fire in the heart--which impels to all consecration, to all holy effort, to all giving and doing, to all self-denial and sacrifice. It is the empty hand stretched up to God, to receive the gifts of grace. It is the fire in the heart, which kindles all love for God and burns on the altar in all pure desire.

It is not all longing which has the seal of blessedness upon it. It is "those who hunger and thirst after righteousness" to whom the promise of satisfaction is given. Righteousness is godliness. It includes all that is worthy and Godlike. The lofty standard is set in our Lord's teaching: "Be therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." We have another glimpse of it in the prayer, that we may do God's will "as it is done in heaven." The life of heaven, is the pattern for those who are seeking after righteousness. It begins in the heart when Christ is first received, and works itself out into all the life and character. In its perfection, this righteousness is the image of Christ--a measure which embraces all moral excellence.

It is important that we understand well the true nature of the hunger to which such blessedness is promised. It is not a vague and empty longing. There is a craving which is not the sign of wholesome spiritual life--it is sentimental, morbid, and sometimes sickly. It is not merely a desire to know more of God, to be made more like God, to be led into deeper consecration or more perfect self surrender to Christ. This may only be an idle, dreamy yearning--which leads to nothing worthy or beautiful.

Righteousness is something very real. It is holiness of life. It is Christ-likeness in character. It is uprightness and integrity in all conduct, obedience to all God's commandments, the cheerful acceptance of the divine will, even when it traverses our own will. This is very different from many people's thought of holiness. They think of it as a sort of halo encircling the brow, a spiritual ecstasy too sublime, too ethereal, for this world's everyday life. But the righteousness which the Bible sets as copy for our living--is righteousness which takes God's commandments as working rules for all life.

The longing which climbs to heaven's blessedness, is longing for the mind that was in Christ Jesus in His condescension and ministry. That was an intense longing to do the Father's will, and to save a lost world. Many people sing with fervor, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," but really have no real desire to get nearer to God. Many pray to be made more like Christ, who never think what it would mean to them to become indeed like Christ.

Nor does this hunger for righteousness exhaust itself in mere longing. There is too much idle longing. It says its prayers and sings its hymns and breathes out its sighs and aspirations for holiness--but takes no tangible steps toward the realization of the righteousness it so yearns to possess. Not so easily, can this righteousness be attained. Nor artist ever dreamed a great picture upon his canvas; it takes skill and toil to see this dream in color, so that its beauty may charm the beholder. No godly man ever longed himself into

a splendid character; it took years of patient self-denial, self-restraint and self-discipline to build up the life which so reflects the holiness of Christ. "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." 1 Timothy 4:7

True hunger for righteousness puts its longings into holy endeavors which grow into worthy deeds. It dreams beautiful dreams--but it seeks at once to bring its dreams down into the life of the common days, and to translate them into beautiful acts! The visions of loveliness which raise the soul in the hour of prayer, or at the Lord's Table, or on some transfiguration mount--it seeks to work out in lovely character, in Christlike disposition, or in loving service.

Nothing is so worthless in Christian life--than emotions which come to nothing, good resolves which are never kept, and ecstatic feelings which fade out and leave the heart colder than before!

The longing that is blessed, seeks at once to climb to the new height it has discovered. The heavenly vision granted to it--it attempts to paint on the canvas. Thus it makes each today better than yesterday, each tomorrow fairer than today.

Very precious is the promise which is made to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, "They shall be filled." No such assurance comes to those who hunger after earthly pleasures.

We are not to infer that the hunger is fully satisfied at once, that the moment one begins to long for righteousness, desire ceases. There is a satisfaction which does come as soon as the soul finds its home in Christ. Peace then begins. There should be no longer any unhappy restlessness. But satisfaction is not complete, and never can be complete, in this world. The peace of God which is promised, passes understanding, and yet it is to come into our heart with tides like the flowing of an infinite ocean. The hunger is to continue, for we are to continue to grow in grace--until grace ends in glory.

We must not suppose that the blessedness of Christian faith, is something which we can take in at a single draught, as one would drink a cupful of water. It is not an experience in which we reach fullness of joy, in one hour. It is something whose meaning it will take eternity to learn.

It is a comfort to us, to know that Christ promises to satisfy all our longing. One of the world's religions proposes to give happiness by quenching desire. Destroy life's longings, it teaches, and the soul will be at peace. But Christ offers to satisfy every hunger and thirst. The desires and longings of our nature are not sinful; they do not need to be destroyed. A man found a torrent in the mountain. As it rushed on impetuously it could only work ruin. He builds a flume for it and carried its waters in a quiet stream into the valley where they turned spindles and wheels, watered the fields and gave drink to the thirsty. Thus Christ would take the mighty cravings and longings of human souls--and yoke them for obedient life and holy service. That is the way He would satisfy our longings--not by destroying them--but by leading them in ways of righteousness. If we take Christ's yoke upon us and learn of Him--we shall find rest unto our soul.

No doubt the blessing seems oftentimes to come slowly. Our hungers seem not to be satisfied. We continually fall far below the excellence we seek to reach. The pure flowers of our heart's intentions, blooming at the opening of the day, lie withered and stained in the dust at the days close. We fail in our attempts to make our dreams and visions come true.

But we should never be discouraged. Even though we appear not to be growing into the divine likeness, we should never become weary. Every earnest striving, with faith in Christ, sets our feet a little higher on the steep mountain path. Even when we seem not to be advancing, we are really in some way climbing

upward, and at last we shall come out of all the struggles, into full blessedness at the feet of Christ.

The Beatitude for the Merciful

"Blessed are the merciful--for they shall obtain mercy." Matthew 5:7

Mercy is a shining quality. Yet, like all the qualities in this cluster of beatitudes, its brightness is heavenly, not earthly. Christian mercifulness is not a fruit of mere human nature; it is not found nor even remotely suggested among the "works of the flesh." It is a fruit of the Spirit. It is born from above.

Mercifulness manifests itself in two ways--first, in patience and forbearance toward those who do wrong, leniency toward those who fail; and secondly, in ministrations of kindness and love to those who are in need.

The first of these manifestations is negative. The merciful are not exacting. They do not insist on claiming all that is due to them. They do not deal harshly with those who injure or offend them. The word mercy has in it always the thought of grace. It is kindness to the undeserving. The merciful are those who look with pity upon the unworthy, and who are forgiving and long-suffering. In this view, mercy is akin to meekness.

The other phase of the quality is active and positive. The merciful are not only disposed to be forbearing and patient; they are ready to show their love in ministries of kindness, not to the good and worthy only--but to the unworthy and undeserving as well. They have a heart of gentleness, which prompts them to acts of mercy.

It is easy to find the lesson of mercifulness written out for us in the Book in which all our life's lessons are set down. We find it first in God Himself. What if God were not merciful? Where then would be our hope? The first favor we must ask and receive of Him--is mercy. Until we are forgiven--we cannot stand in His presence. Mercy is the first word of blessing we hear, as we look up into the divine face with penitence in our heart. The cross of Christ is the most wonderful point in all history; and the cross is the divine mercy giving itself, the Lamb of God bearing man's sin. Everywhere God's mercy shines. We live under a canopy of love.

When we turn to the narrative of God's dealing with men, it is one long story of mercy, divine forbearance, pity, compassion. In every line of the record of Christ's life, we find the same marvelous quality. We see it in His infinite patience with sin, injustice and wrong. We see it also in His life of love, in His ministry of kindness, in His unceasing work of compassion.

One of the old legends says that as our Lord walked away from the grave, on the morning of His resurrection, lovely flowers grew in the path where His footfalls pressed. It is only a legend--but there is a sense in which sweetest flowers did indeed grow in every path which those holy feet pressed. He went about doing good. We can count up a certain number of miracles which are recorded in the Gospels--but the miracles were the smallest part of His acts of love. His days were filled with unrecorded mercies. No one ever came into His presence in need--and went away without a blessing. His life was full of merciful deeds.

When we turn to the teachings of Christ, we find the lesson set for us in shining lines on every page. He called it love--He said His followers should love not God alone--but their fellow men as well. He was careful, too, to break down every fence, so that not one man or woman should be left out from the company of those whom we are to love.

He was particular to say that we are to love our enemies. Anyone can love a kind friend. Anyone can be kind--to one who is kind to him. But we are to go beyond what common human nature would do--we are to bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who harm us and persecute us.

Then in that wonderful story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus made it most clear that the love which His followers are to exhibit, must not be a mere gentle sentiment, like so much of what people call religion--but must be a love that ministers and stops at no cost in its ministering. The priest and the Levite were types of good men--we need not say harsh things about them, for the great majority of modern religionists do the same thing every day--but they lacked the true mercifulness which the need before them demanded. Then the Good Samaritan came along--a man who made no profession whatever of love for the Jews. The wounded man by the wayside hated him--but this did not hinder the flow of the Samaritan's compassion in immediate, costly and most helpful ministry. That is our Lord's thought of what mercifulness should be ready ever to do.

In His representation of the judgment, our Lord shows in a wonderful way the place which mercifulness has in the divine thought of a good and true Christian life. Those who are called to the right hand of the King, are not the great theologians, the brilliant scholars, the distinguished church leaders--but those who have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, shown hospitality to the strangers, clothed the naked and visited the sick and the prisoner--that is, the merciful, who with gentle heart and thoughtful sympathy--have ministered to the needy ones of the earth.

These are mere fragments of the teaching of our Lord, inculcating the duty of mercifulness. His whole gospel pulsates with tenderness. There never beat in this world, such another heart of gentleness as the heart of Jesus--and His followers are to be what He was--repeating the pity, the compassion, the patience, the comfort, the sympathy of His life, wherever they go. Everything that is harsh or unmerciful is denounced as unworthy a disciple.

"The servant of God must not strive--but be gentle," said Paul. Very rarely did Jesus utter a severe word--yet He spoke with burning condemnation of those who professed to be the religious teachers of the people--and yet were lacking in the spirit and practice of love" "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness."

The holy indignation of that great heart of love burned in hot flame against all injustice and unkindness, against all unmercifulness. In the same judgment scene in which such honor is put upon common kindnesses--the most withering curse is uttered against the mere neglect of mercifulness--not feeding the hungry, not giving drink to the thirsty, not showing hospitality to the stranger, not ministering to the sick. It is not enough to refrain from rudeness, harshness and unkindness; the lack of mercifulness is sin against the law of love!

As we study closely the New Testament definitions of true religion, we learn how inadequate are those conceptions of a Christian life, which leave out the practice of the law of mercy and love. "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?"

The blessedness pronounced on the merciful is: "They shall obtain mercy." Thus mercy is indeed twice blessed. It blesses him who gives--and him who receives.

It is true, that the merciful shall obtain mercy, and the unmerciful shall find no mercy. This is taught in the petition, "Forgive us our sins--as we forgive those who sin against us." Thus divine mercy and human mercifulness are linked together. If we will not forgive--we cannot be forgiven. But if we forgive--we shall find forgiveness. So important is this truth that our Lord repeated the teaching over and over, speaking one of His great parables to enforce the lesson that the unmerciful cannot obtain mercy from God.

But the same is true in our relations with our fellow men--the merciful obtain mercy; and the unmerciful find no pity. Those who judge others--shall be judged by others. With the measure that we mete out--it shall be measured to us. We receive--what we give. We find in the world--what we are prepared in ourselves to find. The lover of beauty finds beauty everywhere, even in a desert; while he who has no eye for loveliness finds dreariness even in a garden. He who has songs in his heart--hears songs in every place; while the man with no music in his soul--would hear only harsh discords if even angels were singing. The selfish man tells you everybody is selfish--while he who has a generous heart finds generous spirits in every company. The unmerciful find only coldness and ungentleness; while the merciful obtain mercy.

Then there is the law of spiritual harvest--whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. Those who deal unjustly--shall gather injustice into their own bosom, sooner or later; and those who scatter merciful deeds--shall harvest mercy.

Sometimes, however, this beatitude may seem to fail in this world, and those who sow love in the fields of need, may appear to get no return, or may suffer neglect or ingratitude in the days of their own need. But this world does not see the end. Ofttimes there is only the sowing here, the harvest coming in the life beyond. We may be sure at least, that in the end there will be no failure of fitting return. We have our Master's word that not even the giving of a cup of cold water shall miss its reward. No ministry of kindness will be forgotten, or will fail to bring its blessing.

There are two things which this old world needs--tenderness and cheer. All about us are hearts hungry for sympathy, for kindness. Then everywhere are weary and discouraged ones, needing the uplift of hope to make them brave and strong enough to go forward to meet the future. We could do nothing better with our life, than to consecrate it to a ministry of tenderness and encouragement. This is one of heaven's paths to happiness, for the merciful shall obtain mercy.

The Beatitude of Purity

"Blessed are the pure in heart--for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

A little child was asked which of the beatitudes she would choose, if she could have but one of them. After reading them over thoughtfully, she said she would choose the beatitude of a pure heart, for, if she had this one--she would have all the others.

This beatitude of a pure heart seems at first an impossible one, for those who belong to the human family. Who can claim it? Only unfallen angels are without sin's stains. But it is not sinlessness that is thus chosen for blessedness. The Master would not offer a blessing which the lowliest of His disciples could not obtain.

There is an Old Testament beatitude which throws light upon this word of Christ's. It reads, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven." We would have filled in the sentence differently--"Blessed is he who has never sinned." But the way it is in the Bible is far better. Our way of writing it, would have shut out all the world; God's way leaves no one so guilty, that he may not come within the circle of blessing.

The beatitude is not for the sinless--but for the sinners forgiven. The pure are those who have been purified. The visions of heaven in the book of Revelation, show us saints in glory, wearing spotless garments; but we are told that "these are those who have washed their robes--and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The robes are washed robes--they are not always white.

Then we remember that there is a verse in the book of Isaiah which runs thus: "Wash and make yourselves clean. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." There is a New Testament word also which answers as antiphonal to this: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin."

It is very clear, therefore, that this beatitude, lofty and heavenly as it is--is not impossible of attainment, and does not exclude any sinner of the human family. The pure in heart--are sinners who have been forgiven and cleansed.

Forgiveness is not all. One might be forgiven, and yet be no holier, no cleaner in heart, than before. The old evil might still be in the nature, and the stains of sin might still blotch the life. But the divine forgiveness not only remits the penalty--it also takes away the sin itself. It also changes the heart. "You must be born again" is its word of healing. Into the forgiven soul--there comes the Holy Guest to stay, and He cleanses His new habitation to make it fit to be God's temple. A pure heart is one in which the Holy Spirit lives.

Yet it is no ordinary holiness which is described in this beatitude. All the beatitudes are for lofty spiritual attainments; attainments which are not easily reached. It costs to be truly godly, and to wear the honors of real sainthood. Not all professing Christians are pure in heart. Too many live on a low plane. They are borderland Christians. Like the Israelites, settling in their promised land, they do not drive out all their enemies. They tolerate some of them. They allow favorite sins to share life with them.

Christians with a pure heart, have exterminated every Canaanite. They have made an entire consecration of their life to God. This means that they have given Christ full possession. We often ask how we may have more of the Holy Spirit. It has been well suggested that we should ask also how the Spirit may have more of us. Many of us are keeping from Christ some little or larger room in our heart--which is shut up and dark. If we would become indeed pure in heart, we must see that the Spirit gets possession of every such dark corner.

To be pure in heart is to have

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