

***ELLEN  
G. WHITE***

***THOUGHTS FROM  
THE MOUNT  
OF BLESSING***

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# **Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing**

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Contact: [DigiCat@okpublishing.info](mailto:DigiCat@okpublishing.info)



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# Foreword

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Hundreds of thousands of copies of Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing have been printed and distributed in nearly a score of languages since it was first published in 1896. In English-reading countries several editions with identical textual content but with variations in format and pagination have been widely distributed. To eliminate confusion in the use of the volume in reference work, a standard page has been adopted which will serve as the basis of present and subsequent printings.

In several former editions, in an endeavor to achieve a certain format, selections from verses of poetry were, with the consent of the author, inserted by the publishers in a number of places throughout the text. In this edition, only poetry selected and made a part of the text by the author herself is retained. The addition of both Scripture and subject indexes makes this volume more useful.

That the lessons drawn from the teachings of the Master herein set forth may continue to enlighten, encourage, and bless mankind, is the sincere wish of the publishers and

The Trustees of the Ellen G. White Publications.  
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# Preface

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The Sermon on the Mount is Heaven's benediction to the world--a voice from the throne of God.

It was given to mankind to be to them the law of duty and the light of heaven, their hope and consolation in despondency, their joy and comfort in all the vicissitudes and walks of life. Here the Prince of preachers, the Master Teacher, utters the words that the Father gave Him to speak.

The Beatitudes are Christ's greeting, not only to those who believe, but to the whole human family. He seems to have forgotten for a moment that He is in the world, not in heaven; and He uses the familiar salutation of the world of light. Blessings flow from His lips as the gushing forth of a long-sealed current of rich life.

Christ leaves us in no doubt as to the traits of character that He will always recognize and bless. From the ambitious favorites of the world, He turns to those whom they disown, pronouncing all blessed who receive His light and life. To the poor in spirit, the meek, the lowly, the sorrowful, the despised, the persecuted, He opens His arms of refuge, saying, "Come unto Me,...and I will give you rest."

Christ can look upon the misery of the world without a shade of sorrow for having created man. In the human heart He sees more than sin, more than misery. In His infinite wisdom and love He sees man's possibilities, the height to which he may attain. He knows that, even though human beings have abused (p.viii) their mercies and destroyed their

God-given dignity, yet the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption.

Throughout all time the words that Christ spoke from the mount of Beatitudes will retain their power. Every sentence is a jewel from the treasure house of truth. The principles enunciated in this discourse are for all ages and for all classes of men. With divine energy, Christ expressed His faith and hope as He pointed out class after class as blessed because of having formed righteous characters. Living the life of the Life-giver, through faith in Him, everyone can reach the standard held up in His words.

E.G.W.

# On the Mountainside

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More than fourteen centuries before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the children of Israel gathered in the fair vale of Shechem, and from the mountains on either side the voices of the priests were heard proclaiming the blessings and the curses--"a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God:...and a curse, if ye will not obey." Deuteronomy 11:27, 28. And thus the mountain from which the words of benediction were spoken came to be known as the mount of blessing. But it was not upon Gerizim that the words were spoken which have come as a benediction to a sinning and sorrowing world. Israel fell short of the high ideal which had been set before her. Another than Joshua must guide His people to the true rest of faith. No longer is Gerizim known as the mount of the Beatitudes, but that unnamed mountain beside the Lake of Gennesaret, where Jesus spoke the words of blessing to His disciples and the multitude.

Let us in imagination go back to that scene, and, as we sit with the disciples on the mountainside, enter into the thoughts and feelings that filled their hearts. Understanding what the words of Jesus meant to those who heard them, we may discern in them a new vividness and beauty, and may also gather for ourselves their deeper lessons.

When the Saviour began His ministry, the popular conception of the Messiah and His work was such as wholly unfitted the people to receive Him. The spirit (p.2) of true devotion had been lost in tradition and ceremonialism, and



the prophecies were interpreted at the dictate of proud, world-loving hearts. The Jews looked for the coming One, not as a Saviour from sin, but as a great prince who should bring all nations under the supremacy of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In vain had John the Baptist, with the heart-searching power of the ancient prophets, called them to repentance. In vain had he, beside the Jordan, pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. God was seeking to direct their minds to Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Saviour, but they would not hear.

Had the teachers and leaders in Israel yielded to His transforming grace, Jesus would have made them His ambassadors among men. In Judea first the coming of the kingdom had been proclaimed, and the call to repentance had been given. In the act of driving out the desecrators from the temple at Jerusalem, Jesus had announced Himself as the Messiah--the One who should cleanse the soul from the defilement of sin and make His people a holy temple unto the Lord. But the Jewish leaders would not humble themselves to receive the lowly Teacher from Nazareth. At His second visit to Jerusalem He was arraigned before the Sanhedrin, and fear of the people alone prevented these dignitaries from trying to take His life. Then it was that, leaving Judea, He entered upon His ministry in Galilee.

His work there had continued some months before the Sermon on the Mount was given. The message He had proclaimed throughout the land, "The kingdom of (p.3) heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17), had arrested the attention of all classes, and had still further fanned the flame of their ambitious hopes. The fame of the new

Teacher had spread beyond the limits of Palestine, and, notwithstanding the attitude of the hierarchy, the feeling was widespread that this might be the hoped-for Deliverer. Great multitudes thronged the steps of Jesus, and the popular enthusiasm ran high.

The time had come for the disciples who had been most closely associated with Christ to unite more directly in His work, that these vast throngs might not be left uncared for, as sheep without a shepherd. Some of these disciples had joined themselves to Him at the beginning of His ministry, and nearly all the twelve had been associated together as members of the family of Jesus. Yet they also, misled by the teaching of the rabbis, shared the popular expectation of an earthly kingdom. They could not comprehend the movements of Jesus. Already they had been perplexed and troubled that He made no effort to strengthen His cause by securing the support of the priests and rabbis, that He did nothing to establish His authority as an earthly king. A great work was yet to be accomplished for these disciples before they would be prepared for the sacred trust that would be theirs when Jesus should ascend to heaven. Yet they had responded to the love of Christ, and, though slow of heart to believe, Jesus saw in them those whom He could train and discipline for His great work. And now that they had been long enough with Him to establish, in a measure, their faith in the divine character of His mission, and the people also had received evidence of His power which they could not (p.4) question, the way was prepared for an avowal of the principles of His kingdom that would help them to comprehend its true nature.

Alone upon a mountain near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus had spent all night in prayer for these chosen ones. At the dawn He called them to Him, and, with words of prayer and instruction, laid His hands upon their heads in benediction, setting them apart to the gospel work. Then He repaired with them to the seaside, where in the early morning a great multitude had already begun to assemble.

Besides the usual crowd from the Galilean towns, there were great numbers from Judea, and from Jerusalem itself; from Perea, and from the half-heathen population of Decapolis; from Idumea, away to the south of Judea, and from Tyre and Sidon, the Phoenician cities on the shore of the Mediterranean. "Hearing what great things He did," they "came to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and...power came forth from Him, and healed them all." Mark 3:8, R.V.; Luke 6:17-19, R.V.

Then, as the narrow beach did not afford even standing room within reach of His voice for all who desired to hear Him, Jesus led the way back to the mountainside. Reaching a level space that afforded a pleasant gathering place for the vast assembly, He seated Himself upon the grass, and His disciples and the multitude followed His example.

With a feeling that something more than usual might be expected, the disciples had pressed about their Master. From the events of the morning they gathered assurance that some announcement was (p.5) about to be made in regard to the kingdom which, as they fondly hoped, He was soon to establish. A feeling of expectancy pervaded the multitude also, and eager faces gave evidence of the deep interest.

As they sat upon the green hillside, awaiting the words of the divine Teacher, their hearts were filled with thoughts of future glory. There were scribes and Pharisees who looked forward to the day when they should have dominion over the hated Romans and possess the riches and splendor of the world's great empire. The poor peasants and fishermen hoped to hear the assurance that their wretched hovels, the scanty food, the life of toil, and fear of want, were to be exchanged for mansions of plenty and days of ease. In place of the one coarse garment which was their covering by day and their blanket at night, they hoped that Christ would give them the rich and costly robes of their conquerors.

All hearts thrilled with the proud hope that Israel was soon to be honored before the nations as the chosen of the Lord, and Jerusalem exalted as the head of a universal kingdom.

# The Beatitudes

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*"He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."  
Matthew 5:2, 3*

As something strange and new, these words fall upon the ears of the wondering multitude. Such teaching is contrary to all they have ever heard from priest or rabbi. They see in it nothing to flatter their pride or to feed their ambitious hopes. But there is about this new Teacher a power that holds them spellbound. The sweetness of divine love flows from His very presence as the fragrance from a flower. His words fall like "rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth." Psalm 72:6. All feel instinctively that here is One who reads the secrets of the soul, yet who comes near to them with tender compassion. Their hearts open to Him, and, as they listen, the Holy Spirit unfolds to them something of the meaning of that lesson which humanity in all ages so needs to learn.

In the days of Christ the religious leaders of the people felt that they were rich in spiritual treasure. The prayer of the Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men" (Luke 18:11, R.V.), expressed the feeling of his class and, to a great degree, of the whole nation. But in the throng that surrounded Jesus there were some who had a sense of their spiritual poverty. When in the miraculous (p.7) draft of fishes the divine power of Christ was revealed, Peter fell at the Saviour's feet, exclaiming, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8); so in the multitude

gathered upon the mount there were souls who, in the presence of His purity, felt that they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17); and they longed for "the grace of God that bringeth salvation" (Titus 2:11). In these souls, Christ's words of greeting awakened hope; they saw that their lives were under the benediction of God.

Jesus had presented the cup of blessing to those who felt that they were "rich, and increased with goods" (Revelation 3:17), and had need of nothing, and they had turned with scorn from the gracious gift. He who feels whole, who thinks that he is reasonably good, and is contented with his condition, does not seek to become a partaker of the grace and righteousness of Christ. Pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. There is no room for Jesus in the heart of such a person. Those who are rich and honorable in their own eyes do not ask in faith, and receive the blessing of God. They feel that they are full, therefore they go away empty. Those who know that they cannot possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action, are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed.

Whom Christ pardons, He first makes penitent, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to convince of sin. Those whose hearts have been moved by the (p.8) convicting Spirit of God see that there is nothing good in themselves. They see that all they have ever done is mingled with self and sin. Like the poor publican, they stand afar off, not daring to lift up so much as their eyes to heaven, and cry, "God, be merciful to

me the sinner." Luke 18:13, R.V., margin. And they are blessed. There is forgiveness for the penitent; for Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. God's promise is: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "A new heart also will I give you.... And I will put My Spirit within you." Isaiah 1:18; Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

Of the poor in spirit Jesus says, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This kingdom is not, as Christ's hearers had hoped, a temporal and earthly dominion. Christ was opening to men the spiritual kingdom of His love, His grace, His righteousness. The ensign of the Messiah's reign is distinguished by the likeness of the Son of man. His subjects are the poor in spirit, the meek, the persecuted for righteousness' sake. The kingdom of heaven is theirs. Though not yet fully accomplished, the work is begun in them which will make them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Colossians 1:12.

All who have a sense of their deep soul poverty, who feel that they have nothing good in themselves, may find righteousness and strength by looking unto Jesus. He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden." Matthew 11:28. He bids you exchange your poverty for the riches of His grace. We (p.9) are not worthy of God's love, but Christ, our surety, is worthy, and is abundantly able to save all who shall come unto Him. Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour