The Beatitudes

Five Ceremonies
To Honor The Star Points
SIXTH BEATITUDE—ADAH

The Pure to Heart

The constantly growing understanding of the Eastern Star student is increased as the individual explores every facet of the teachings of our work. Particularly is the study rewarded in the case of Adah. Adah is associated with the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Just what things contributed to the purity which characterized Adah's heart and spirit and just how we are sure that she saw God make an interesting story.

When we speak of Adah as being spiritually pure, or pure of heart, we are describing, in essence, her singleness of purpose. It is nothing short of amazing that in an individual as young as Adah, there should be displayed such purposefulness in being a true servant of God. There is nothing in the story of Adah that indicated any self-interest or selfishness. When the duty which was hers was made known to Adah, she was not torn with several interests and desires. She wanted to do only one thing and that was her Father's will.

There is not one among us who is not at some time or another torn between duty and loyalty to several different issues. Often the life of individuals is complicated with the trying to satisfy one's sense of obligation to God, older members of one's family, husband, wife, or children. One of the important things which the story of Adah teaches is that if the individual is able to put his duty to God first, that all things necessary to the proper conduct of our lives are possible. Adah's story proves this point by showing how Adah was able to fulfill her obligation even with the sacrifice of life simply because she was willing to do her first and most important duty.

We then come to the second part of the sixth beatitude, "—for they shall see God." Actually, the details of Adah's communion with God are not described for us in her story. What we do have is "before" and "after" word pictures of Adah. Adah, before her journey to the mountain, was an individual who needed more than anything else to have her purpose strengthened and her courage renewed through prayer. Our "after" picture of Adah is truly lovely.

We have the picture of an individual transformed after her meeting with her Maker into a person equal to all of life's duty no matter what it might be. After all, what greater blessings could one seek in this life than to be equal to the demands of living through the sustaining power of prayer?

The story of Adah grows in meaning as we pursue all of the aspects of her lesson. Today, we who seek the solutions to many problems, may take comfort in the story of one individual whose purity of heart and willingness to seek God in prayer provided her with all things necessary to accomplish her life's work.

Bless us, our heavenly Father,
As we strive for that pure heart.
Make us constant in our purpose,
Help us as we do our small part.
Help us to come to Thee, God,
When life's way is steep and rough.
Let us be confident that Thou
For all needs, will provide enough.
When there are many demands on us  
   And we feel unequal to doing all,  
Help us, sustain us through prayer  
   Thy power will not let us fall.

God made men for some sure duty,  
   God made duty to serve His Cause.  
God made men equal to their duty  
   By giving His Love and Holy Laws.

Help us to be worthy of thy Blessing  
   Help us to cultivate a heart so pure  
That we may be equal to all of life  
   And each trial we may have to endure.

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THIRD BEATITUDE—RUTH

The Inheritance

The lovely story of Ruth is associated with the third beatitude, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." As we study over this lesson we can gain in our understanding of what is meant by meekness and understand more fully what is meant by inheriting the earth.

Often we are apt to associate meekness with spinelessness and lack of strength of character. Actually, the meek in spirit are those who are characterized by that gentleness of spirit that we associate with Christ Himself. It is that humility, that lack of false pride and snobbery, that permits the individual to love and value other individuals of all circumstances with equal compassion.

Let us see how Ruth was characterized by that meekness of spirit of which we are speaking. Had Ruth been characterized by false pride and snobbery the story would probably have been entirely different. Ruth might have, under such a reversal of character traits, discarded her association with Naomi for a number of reasons. She might have felt that because Naomi was a foreigner it might be well to look elsewhere for an individual more worthy of her friendship. She might have felt that others might consider Naomi's customs rather queer and be afraid to associate with her any further. Ruth might have been disposed to value Naomi less because of her religion which differed from that of the idol-worshipping Moabites. However, such was not the case. Ruth, that meek, gentle young woman, enveloped the aging Naomi with a love and friendship that knew no restraint of prejudice.

The beatitudes tell us that those who have this meekness of spirit are to inherit the earth. What does this mean? Actually, this seems to be in the nature of a forecast of the coming days when all people everywhere would share in the Christ-like spirit. Although the beatitudes were given to us long after the time in which Ruth lived, it is easy now to see why this particular beatitude has come to be associated with the second point of the Star.

Ruth's spiritual inheritance, reward, or compensation for the meekness of spirit which she exemplified so well, was found in the integral part she played in the establishing of the ancestral line of Christ. The inheritance of the meek of spirit in the world that is ours may possibly be found in being part of the growing number of individuals who share in striving to refine Christ-like spirits in themselves.

There is another matter that should be considered as we try to understand why Ruth is associated with the third beatitude. When Christ, the most meek and humble of all individuals, came to earth to do His Father's work, He did not look for nor expect, wealth, splendor, nor glory. When Ruth, a convert to the worship of the one God, went about the humble tasks necessary for Naomi's welfare, she certainly was not looking for fame and fortune. She only wanted to live the way she thought was closest to her understanding of what would be acceptable in His Sight. The inheritance, then and now, is the spiritual unity achieved with one's Maker.

Let us like the gentle Ruth
Seek to be humble and meek.
Let our own spiritual good
Be the only reward we seek.

Let us not let false pride
And snobbery fill the mind.
Let us take care to uncover
The good in each man we find.

Let us do the humble tasks
Not looking for glory and gold.
The inheritance promised lies
In the friend's hand we hold.

Open our hearts and minds
That we may clearly see
The kind of men and women
Our God wants us to be.

Let us not desist in our effort
To grow in spirit each day.
Let us seek the help of God
As we humbly kneel to pray.

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SEVENTH BEATITUDE—ESTHER

Peacemakers

One of the ways in which the Presiding Officer can vary the material which is presented is to emphasize some of the ideas connected with a given part of our work that are ordinarily bypassed or overlooked. There is just such an opportunity in bringing to the attention of the membership the knowledge that each of the Star Points is associated with one of the beatitudes. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God," is associated with Esther.

Esther, as you remember, was elevated to the throne of Persia not too long after a period of acquisition in which the territory had been much extended. Ahasuerus, himself, had ascended the throne after a bloody contest with another aspirant for the kingship. Esther and her people were in Persia as a result of Jeconiah's victory over the King of Judah. Altogether, the time in which Esther lived was characterized by conflict and strife.

This matter of hostile relations was not limited to the relationship of Persia with foreign nations. The internal situation inside the boundaries of Persia itself was stormy and difficult. Esther's predecessor in the kingdom had been the lovely Vashti. In a moment of wrath the turbulent Ahasuerus dismissed her as his wife and banished her from the kingdom forever.

King Ahasuerus had entrusted the office of prime minister to a man whom he deemed worthy of such a trust. However, a succession of events established the fact that he was a scurrilous scoundrel in the guise of a statesman. Other factions were at work to add to the tense situation within the palace itself. Two of the king's trusted servants had plotted to take the King's life at the first opportunity. Only through the efforts of Esther and her beloved Mordecai was it that the King ever gained knowledge of these situations.

Indeed the young and lovely Esther began her career as Queen in an atmosphere that was anything but peaceful. However, we who also live in troubled and anxious times may be able to learn much that will be helpful to us. How did Esther create peace and harmony within the kingdom of Persia?

First of all, Esther demonstrated her devotion to her husband and his interest. Just what steps Esther took to thoroughly convince Ahasuerus to trust her are not specifically related. However, there is some indication that she attended to his personal wants and the proper administration of the palace household with diligence and efficiency. This matter comes to our attention in the account of Esther's part in the preparation of the feasts for Ahasuerus. In accepting and fulfilling her little duties with diligence Esther probably assured Ahasuerus of her utmost reliability, and influenced him in trusting her in matters of great import.

Secondly, Esther listened to the counsel of those whose wisdom and reliability had passed the test of time. She did not discard her former friends when she was selected as the Queen. Instead she leaned heavily on the sage Mordecai when she felt unequal to solving her problems herself. This part of the lesson demonstrates that true peace demands the co-operative effort of individuals. True co-operation does not relieve the individual of his own responsibility in a given matter, but co-operation does assist the individual to evaluate his own conclusions in better perspective.

Finally, much of Esther's success may be attributed to her complete honesty. From this phase of our story we can learn much. There is a difference between being unkind or friendly and refusing to accept people and ideas that are simply not right. When Esther gained knowledge that
Haman was really an individual steeped in evil and dedicated to wreaking havoc upon a hapless group of people, she did something about the situation. She could have pretended that she did not know about these conditions. She could have gone along with Haman and his evil plans. But she chose to expose Haman and do what she could to repair the damage his wickedness had created.

The story of Esther teaches us that if we would be true peacemakers bringing about harmonious conditions in the world in which we live, we must eliminate the factors in our existence which are not conducive to peace and good will. And, Esther, as we know, did just that even when her own personal safety was jeopardized by her actions.

It is no wonder then that our Esther is associated with "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Esther's story challenges us to be peacemakers, to reconcile hostile factions, and to stand firmly for those principles of honor and integrity which we know to be essential to any lasting peace.

Adah kept peace in her family
   By doing her father's will.
In the world in which we live
   An obedient self is needed still.

Ruth left the Godless Moab
   Seeking peace for a friend.
She was blessed and honored
   God, her works did commend.

Esther ruled with honest heart
   In a land of strife and fear.
Esther learned to stand firm
   For principles she held dear.

Martha harvested peace of mind
   Through faith in Father and Son.
Through constantly believing
   The Eternal Peace may be won.

Electa challenged us to make
   Sacrifice for that inner peace.
In this same effort we must not
   Ever grow weary nor ever cease.

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SECOND BEATITUDE—MARTHA

Comforted

The story of Martha is an enduring testimony to the truth of the second beatitude, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." The lesson taught at this point of the Star can indeed be welcome reassurance to each of us sometime in our lives. At some time or another, each individual is called upon to face the loss of a loved one, and certainly, during such a time as this, the individual is in great need of comfort.

There is no doubt that Martha suffered greatly when Lazarus passed away as a result of his illness. Martha had not heard Christ say to his companions, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God—." As far as Martha knew, the death of her brother was different from that of others only in the fact that the little family believed that through belief in Christ man might enjoy Life Eternal.

Martha was not the only one consumed with grief because of the passing of Lazarus. Mary and their family friends were overcome with the loss and we have an account of how the mourners gathered, weeping, at the burial place of Lazarus. When Jesus came to the grave, He wept and the company gathered there said, "Behold how he loved him." No one, not even Christ, is spared the agony of grief. But, it is also true, as the story of Martha teaches, that no one need be without comfort.

The restoration of life to Lazarus is proof positive that, through His Son, God has demonstrated the Power to grant life after death. This Power of God to bestow the gift of Life Eternal is so overwhelming, so miraculous, and so far beyond mortal ability, that, as individuals, we have difficulty in genuinely comprehending its meaning. Even some of the witnesses to the resurrection itself were unable to understand what they saw. Lazarus lived, and walked and talked, again, and continued with his mortal affairs. People could see him, touch him, and talk with him. For them, the Power of Life after Death had become a living reality.

For us, the proof positive of Life Eternal has been preserved in the Holy Bible. The Promise is there. The proof is there. There can only be one thing that is not there: and that single thing each grieving individual must bring to the Word of God is his own personal faith and belief.

The comfort for those that mourn is in the sure realization that there is a life beyond mortal life and that through faith each individual may live forever in the completion of Eternal Life. As surely as Martha's belief and faith brought comfort to her through Christ, so we who also surrender ourselves to His Eternal Truths may be comforted in our great needs.

Martha lived through her agony
Sustained by unwavering belief.
Her faith made hope a reality
Bringing comfort for her grief.

We have her example to follow.
We have God's Promise and Word.
We have the reassurance that
Life beyond the grave is assured.
We each have the one Holy Bible
   To serve as our hope and guide.
If we bring our faith and belief,
   Comfort's gates will open wide.

We are not alone in our sorrow
   Grief was shared by God's Son.
We know that through mortal death
   Eternal Life has just begun.

Thank you, God, for everything,
   Thanks for His Enduring Light.
Thank you for the knowledge
   That will set our lives aright.

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EIGHTH BEATITUDE— ELECTA

Kingdom of Heaven

If the Eastern Star fully understands the lesson of Electa it is easy to understand why this point of the star is associated with the eighth beatitude. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Even the most cursory consideration of this lesson displays that indeed Electa was persecuted for righteousness' sake. However, it does demand more of us than a mere reading of the lesson to appreciate how Electa was a kingdom of heaven.

We are all familiar with the way in which Christ is referred to in the Bible as The Sun of Righteousness. It is apparent that the love of righteousness is the same as the love of Christ himself. In order to understand how Electa enjoyed the kingdom of heaven, it is necessary to consider that Electa loved wholeheartedly. Electa did not love with reservations.

In the course of our daily living, we are all familiar with people whom we like or love enough to do certain things for their welfare. Generally, we love them well enough to do some things for their sakes, but we come to a point where we freely admit that there are some things we would not sacrifice for their welfare. For example, it would indeed be a rare individual who would willingly sacrifice his every material possession, his home, his car, and his security for the sake of the love he felt for another individual.

But Electa loved Christ so completely that she willingly placed herself in a position where she was persecuted for her love of righteousness to the extent that she not only lost all of her material possessions but her life as well.

What is difficult to understand about this problem is just how Electa enjoyed the kingdom of heaven. A share in the kingdom of heaven means that we have a spiritual share in the completeness of the wholeness of God. This unity with the Divine Spirit is what we anticipate when we contemplate Eternal Life. But it is also the Blessing of the Kingdom of Heaven. Electa loved so completely and wholly that she was beyond the reach of acts of persecution.

The sheer joy of reaching the state of complete spiritual harmony with her Maker was Electa's blessing. She achieved this state through a love so complete that she was heedless of the persecution drives her actions incited within others.

The important thing which the story of Electa teaches us lies in increasing our understanding. When one's complete love of righteousness causes the individual to be persecuted, deprived of life, liberty, or possessions, the sense of unity with His Great Spirit makes the loss we have suffered negligible. The kingdom of heaven lies within the hearts and spirits of those whose love of righteousness knows no limits.

The love of Christ demands of us
That we give for His Sake our all.
With completeness and whole heart,
Must we answer His most urgent call.

There can be no limit to our love,
No line drawn that marks its end.
Those that love completely shall
See the kingdom of heaven descend.
Electa loved Christ so deeply well,  
    That persecution could not prevent  
Her joy and sense of satisfaction  
    Through death and long imprisonment.

May we be helped as we learn  
    To love with all of our hearts.  
May we value the real happiness  
    That love its own self imparts.

May we learn from Electa's story  
    How blessed we are knowing how  
To lavish our love on righteousness  
    And share in His Kingdom now.

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