

—yet an honest and candid opponent, who intends to cite every available piece of evidence, whether favourable or adverse to religion, that he has been able to collect from the materials which he has studied.'

He is anxious to be considered fair while 'frankly announcing his anti-religious convictions.' But it is amusing to find him confessing that he has 'split a record or a quotation into two or more parts, and assigned these to different and perhaps widely separated chapters.' 'If by chance,' he then says, 'any reader, turning up a

reference, should find that something derogatory is quoted but some qualifying praise omitted, he may rest quite assured that, were the complete work before him, he would find the balance of praise duly credited to the proper account in the appropriate chapter.' Now the complete work is not likely to be 'before' the reader for some time. It is to consist of forty-eight chapters, of which the present volume contains only four chapters, and other four have been published previously.

What is the object? It is to prove that the best education is a purely secular one.

The Beatitudes.

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WE have had handed down to us, in two different forms, a group of sayings spoken by Jesus at the outset—both traditions agree in this—of His greatest connected discourse regarding the Kingdom of God. The sayings may number seven, or eight, or nine. According to the version in Matthew, there are nine apparently—all of them beatitudes. According to the version in Luke, there are four beatitudes flanked by four woes or curses. On the whole, with reservations to be noted below, one concludes that Matthew's report is much the more credible. Our brief investigation takes no account of the problems of higher criticism, but its results may easily be harmonized with the usually accepted solutions of the Synoptic problem. So far as we are concerned, it is equally thinkable that Luke modified the tradition, or that it came into his hands already recast.

Let us begin with the common nucleus of four beatitudes. In calling it a nucleus, one does not mean to affirm that the nucleus was ever separately published. To the present writer, that seems in a high degree improbable. It may have been a nucleus in the mind of Jesus, round which other kindred material gathered. But it will be safest to understand 'nucleus' as merely a piece of classification or generalization. We shall employ the term, as lawyers say, 'without prejudice.'

(a) The nucleus does, however, reveal a common character, as contrasted even with Matthew's remaining beatitudes. The four sayings which are

jointly attested might be termed the 'paradoxes' of the Kingdom of God. To be poor, to be sad, to be hungry—*i.e.* full of longings—to be persecuted, is to be *happy*. Of course each paradox is fully half resolved by the time Jesus has completed the sentence in which He formulates it; He is no epigrammatist, talking for effect. But it was His manner, to startle His audience into thinking. He catches their ears at the outset with one, two, three sayings which begin as a challenge to the stolid common sense of worldly minds.

(b) It follows that Matthew's expansions are more likely to be interpretative glosses than a literal historical report of what Jesus said. The position is not quite clear; one might quote O.T. parallels, like Is 57¹⁶ or 66², which include as much interpretative matter as we find in Matthew's version of the Beatitudes. Yet one judges it likelier upon the whole that Jesus did not Himself blunt the startling quality of His opening half sentences. On the other hand, Matthew (backed as we have noted by the O.T.) seems altogether right *ad sensum*. The 'poverty' which Jesus—or which the O.T.—commends is not mere impecuniosity. Since wealth is a temptation and virtuous industry a safeguard, the word 'poor'—and kindred terms—had come in the later days of the O.T. to connote godliness.

(c) There is a direct O.T. origin for the second beatitude; it comes—almost *verbatim*, after the Greek Bible—from Is 61². When we compare

Luke's synagogue sermon at Nazareth, we see how closely the two Gospels—our first and our third—agree in the keynote which they sound at the outset of their record of Jesus' teaching. Matthew as well as Luke makes Christ begin with 'glad tidings to the poor,' and with a promise of consolation to the mourners. For the promise to the hungry, we should rather compare Ps 107⁶⁻⁹. The promise to the persecuted does not admit of O.T. parallels. Partly, and obviously, the hope of 'reward in heaven' was too late in its origin to create within ancient Israel any Christian tone of triumphant joy. But, more deeply too, the whole 'worship of sorrow'—if one may borrow a striking though not altogether accurate phrase—is Christ's creation. His people are happy not merely in spite of, but because of their sufferings and persecutions. Let us just note that the blessing pronounced upon the mourner remains un glossed. If any gloss were introduced, we should have to explain the sorrowfulness which Christ praises as sorrow for sin—the pangs of a conscience-stricken mind. Some of the O.T. verses already referred to might support that interpretation. Yet on the whole we may be glad that not these verses but rather the pattern of Is 61² has prevailed, and that other sadnesses besides the sacred sorrow of penitence are included in the welcome uttered by Jesus.

(d) The nucleus as we find it in Luke has no softening explanations. Everything is clear-cut and sharply defined. Hence some not unnaturally hold that the Lucan tradition of the sayings is the more original, Wendt, *e.g.*, recognizing in it Jesus' desire to speak 'with the greatest emphasis and brevity.' Not because that is an unfair report of Jesus' manner, but because of peculiarities in the present passage yet to be noted, one is strongly disinclined to think that the social-revolutionary version gives us the real or even the literal teaching of the Master. Yet the social-revolutionary reading of Christ's words is attested not merely in the Third Gospel, but in the Epistle of James. And, absurd as is the view that primitive Christianity was a proletarian striving—who can say how much of this element may have cooperated with higher influences? Nay, who can show—or could wish to show—that these enthusiastic or even wild hopes had not their part to play in the redemption of the world?

(e) A question of no great importance still remains. Is 'Matthew' right, who puts the sayings

in the third person, or Luke, who transfers them to the second? Matthew, I believe. If I may trust my sense of Greek idiom—but this I do not do unreservedly—the Greek lends itself better to Matthew's formulation; the difference being of course confined to a single Greek word in each verse—'yours,' 'theirs.' True, of course, that Matthew's closing saying itself gives us 'Blessed are *ye*.' But this argument is double-edged. The closing saying in Matthew is no longer than any of the others; where it stands as number 4 in Luke, it again appears of unusual length—quite out of proportion even to the length of the fourth Woe, which Luke balances over against it! A saying of exceptional type, more fitted to stand at the end than in the middle—surely it is the first gospel, not the third, which must be followed here! And so we may accept the first Gospel's 'Blessed are *they*'—if it were of importance; it hardly is.¹

II.

What shall we say regarding Luke's enlargement of the nucleus by adding four corresponding Woes, or Curses?

The Pentateuch tells of a hilltop scene, in which blessings (on obedience) were to be spoken from one mountain, and curses (upon disobedience) from another. The text has reached us in curious confusion. In that passage, at any rate, blessings have disappeared, and curses alone remain—a state of matters which a Christian may well be disposed to think characteristic of the economy of law. Shall we not call it equally characteristic if the N.T. shows a converse change? If here it is the curses that disappear—if blessings alone are spoken by Christ on His hilltop? But let us look at the evidence. We have already confessed that Jesus *might* have intensified His emphasis by antithetic enlargements. No human speaker was ever so unguarded as this Master of ours. One might almost say, He had rather be misapprehended than that the truth He spoke should be wholly neglected. He is our great example—but, before we ourselves strive to copy Him in detail, let us be sure we are equal in

¹ Supplementary evidence against Luke's record might be added from the next words he subjoins, 'I say unto you *that hear*.' If these are not an echo from omitted parts of the discourse: 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you'; they are an awkward return from the rhetorical apostrophe of the absent 'rich' to the actual surroundings of the Speaker.

some sense to His methods. It is useless for weaklings to seek to bend Ulysses' bow.

The evidence will be found particularly in the 'reasons annexed' to each blessing or to its corresponding curse—they hang very closely together. The mourners are happy—for they are to laugh; those that laugh are unhappy—for they are to mourn and weep. The hungry are to be full—and the full are to be hungry. Is this an intenser emphasis upon spiritual truth? Or is it—more likely—a degraded version of Jesus' words?¹ The world is well aware that 'he laughs best who laughs last.' We hardly need Holy Writ to confirm us in that persuasion; nor should we expect the school of Christ to find in *that* circumstance the distinctive superiority of godliness over sin. The first blessing of all stands in Luke as good as unchanged. There is something to be learned, however, from the first Woe. The rich 'have received their consolation.' One word—'have received' appears to be an interesting echo of Mt 6^{2, 5, 16}; the other—'consolation'—recalls Is 61², Mt 5⁴. But is it not misplaced in Luke? The *promise* of consolation is appropriate to those who are now mournful; the *taunt* of 'consolation already' is cruel mockery if addressed to those who have fallen victims to 'the deceitfulness of riches.' Surely the mocker is Luke, or an Ebionite source of Luke's, rather than Jesus Christ. The *last* 'woe' is exceedingly interesting and felicitous, yet not beyond the power of pious Christians who had begun an antithetic amplification of the Beatitudes and knew the O.T. well.

Accordingly, while it is not unthinkable that Jesus should have spoken as Lucan tradition alleges, and while the meaning is much the same on either tradition, the strong probability seems to be that the Woes are unoriginal—an idea borrowed from the denunciations of Mt 23, Lk 11.

III.

Lastly, we have to consider Matthew's additional beatitudes, and their possible O.T. origin.

The blessing on the *meek* seems to be unoriginal in this context. It is a mere literal repetition of Ps 37¹¹—unimproved. It stands between the

second and the third of the Paradoxes, interrupting them. It really covers the same ground as the first beatitude. 'Poor' and 'meek' are absolute synonyms. They are merely rival renderings of a single O.T. word. Finally, Jesus has risen above promising inheritance in the 'land.' The Kingdom He pledges is incorruptible and unfading. It is an altogether 'better hope.'

The blessing on the *merciful* is almost equally literal in its dependence on Ps 18²⁵. Almost, but not quite; it exhibits at least something of that characteristic heightening which we generally find when Jesus borrows O.T. sayings. And the thought, we know, was characteristic of our Lord; compare, e.g., Matthew's sequel to the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6^{14, 15}).

The blessing on the *pure* may be described as a marked heightening, as well as reiteration of Ps 24⁴. What is the requirement for admission to the presence of the King of kings? A pure heart! Such a one shall *see God*.

The blessing on the *peacemakers* seems to be absolutely original. The word appears to have no O.T. parallel; the only N.T. parallel² seems to be the verse in Col. which speaks of God's making peace by the blood of Christ's cross. The *promise* in this case comes out of the very heart of Jesus. It meets us again when He speaks in the same chapter to those who love their enemies.

We may infer then, with high probability, that Jesus spoke three paradoxes—blessings on the poor, the sad, the longing; followed them up by three positive moral requirements—pronouncing blessings on the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers; clinched all six in a seventh saying, half paradox, half requirement—'Blessed are the *persecuted* who suffer for *righteousness*' sake.' He can give these no higher promise than He gave to the poor! Those who are heirs to God's Kingdom inherit all things. But—as many an expositor has noted—those persecuted for righteousness' sake have been tested and have stood firm. And so the chain returns upon itself. The first saying and the seventh are linked in one. Lastly, Jesus restates His concluding beatitude with direct reference to His own disciples: 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you.'

Christ's words then pronounce a blessing first on human need, next on humble human goodness.

² Apart from the echo, Ja 3¹⁶.

¹ There is something closely analogous in Lk 17; but one recalls Sharman's judgment, that the greater part of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus may be Judaism untouched by the Christian spirit.

While the Lucan tradition concentrated on the paradoxical praise of need, we may feel tolerably confident that Jesus' blessings included alike those who needed help and those who were fitted to help others. This supreme Son of God knew no painful friction between religion and morality, between faith and 'works.' Yet no one can suppose that Christ leaves the smallest loophole to self-righteousness! The goodness He praises is that which

needs mercy from God and accepts mercy as a supreme boon.

We may also infer from these sayings what is, in Jesus' mind, the central spiritual significance of the Kingdom of God. Comfort—satisfaction—Divine mercy—the unclouded sight of God—to be the true child of such a Father. Blessed, indeed, are they whom the King thus welcomes into God's Kingdom!

Recent Foreign Theology.

Know Thyself.¹

STUDENTS of philosophy, who are unable to read Italian, can now read in their mother tongue some of the works of contemporary Italian thinkers, and can form some estimate of the philosophic activity of Italy. Some of the works of Croce have already been translated, one of the works of Alliotta we noticed lately, and now the work of Varisco has been made accessible to the English reader in the volume before us. The translation of Varisco's *Great Problems* has already been published in the 'Library of Philosophy.' In the same library has also been published Professor Villa's *Contemporary Psychology*. We mention these works in order that the reader may be aware of the philosophical activity of Italy, and of the place she is taking in the great endeavour to understand ourselves and the world in which we live. We have mentioned only a few of the contributions of Italy to contemporary thought which have been rendered into English; but these are only a part of her work, and represent writers whose eminence is great enough to have transcended the Alps. Students of philosophy ought to keep their eye on Italy. Croce, Alliotta, and Varisco have not the same point of view. Nay, they have criticized the works of each other. But the notable thing about them all is that they take up the universal tradition, and labour at the problems

of philosophy as these are determined, not by the tradition of any one country, but by the interaction of all the countries that have striven with the great questions of philosophy in all the ages of the past. In the works of these writers we have mentioned, reference is constantly made to authors who have written in English, in French, in German, and even in Russian. That is one of the notable things in contemporary Italian philosophy. It grasps the problem as it has been set to former ages, and to other nations than the Italian.

Professor Varisco deals in this volume with what may be called the fundamental problem of philosophy, and deals with it in a most suggestive way. The reader must, however, bring patience and interest to the study of the volume. There are many things in the argument which give him pause, for the connexion or the inference is not at once apparent. This arises partly from the character of the argument, and partly from the style. While the translation is on due scrutiny intelligible, it is not always couched in the forms which an Englishman is wont to use. The style adds a little to the difficulty of mastering the author's argument. Yet with diligence the book can be understood.

We think that we must begin with a characteristic quotation, which illustrates the style and also the method of reasoning of the author. It is from the introduction, and the paragraph is called 'Consciousness and Subconsciousness.' It is as follows: 'No doubt, to admit this conclusion, indeed to understand it, we must admit that the constitutive consciousness is not equally clear in every subject: over and above the clear or actual consciousness, there is another, and much larger,

¹ 'Library of Philosophy,' edited by J. H. Muirhead, LL.D. *Know Thyself*, by Bernardino Varisco, Professor of Theoretic Philosophy in the University of Rome. Translated by Guglielmo Salvadori, Ph.D., Lecturer in Moral Philosophy in the University of Rome. London: George Allen & Unwin Limited. 10s. 6d. net.