



THE MAKING OF THE CHRISTIAN MIND

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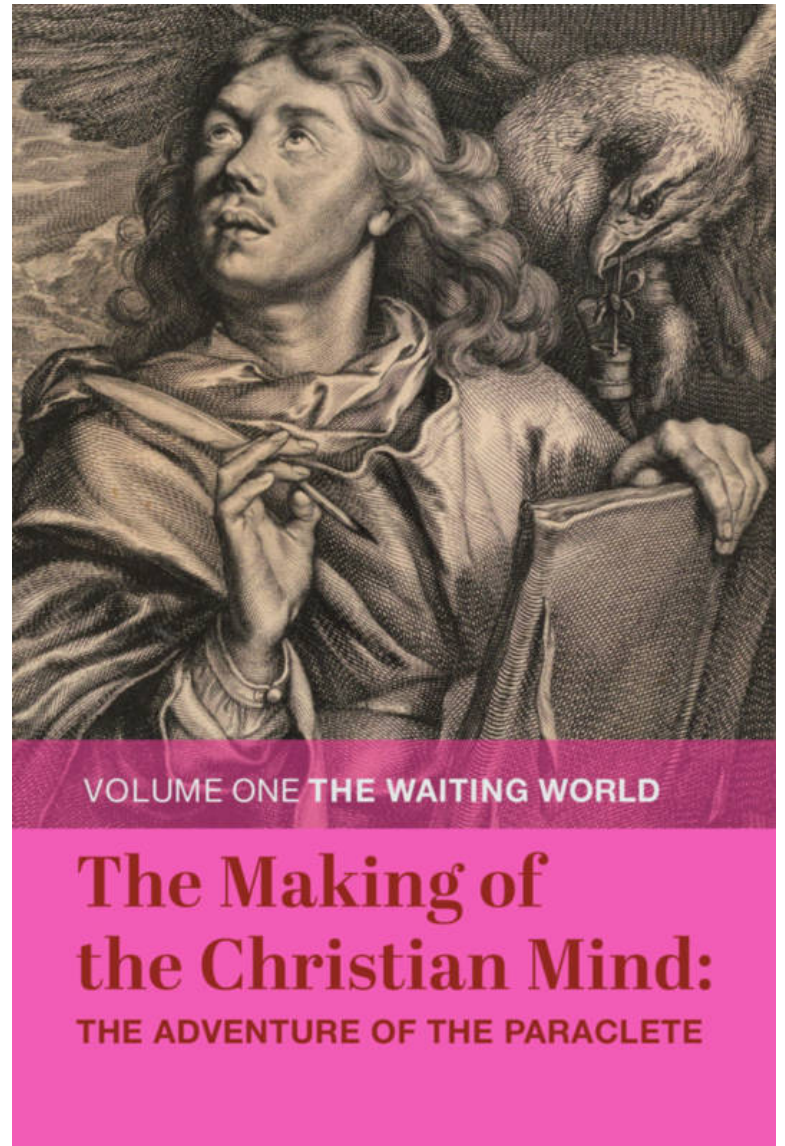
Courtesy of St. Augustine's Press, we are so very pleased to offer this excerpt from James Patrick's [*The Making of the Christian Mind. The Adventure of the Paraclete*](#), which is the first in a three-volume study of the creation of the Christian mind.

Dr. James Patrick has spent his life teaching, and in this book he seeks to tell on a larger scale the story of the Christian mind as it developed according to what he refers to as the "adventure" of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Christian mind moved from faithful intuition to writing and composing original ideas of concrete truths, and this in turn led to inspired foundations upon which a new kind of world became possible. Patrick does not wish the reader to think the Christian mind has ever intended to create utopia on earth or to proselytize, rather that the dynamic Christian intellect indicates a human heart made new and from this newness still spring horizons of hope and culture.

The Christian mind is, says Patrick, not only inspired and moved by the restless Paraclete, but revolves around the event of Jesus Christ. Christian history is therefore best understood not simply as chronology of events but as the vision of "the new heart in time," one that strives to be like that of the one who sent the Spirit into history.

"Matthew: The Making Of The New Heart"

Matthew was the Gospel. When early Christian writers turned to a source of Jesus' words and deeds it was to Matthew, or what became Matthew, that they turned. And within Matthew, their pattern of quotation suggests, they turned first to chapters five through seven, containing the Beatitudes and the dominical transformation of the law from the propositions of the Mosaic law as these were understood by the observant Jew to an interior, life-forming participation of the heart in the will of the Father. Jesus sat down, opened his mouth, and taught them. Thus began the Sermon on the Mount. Luke knows something of this text (6:20–49), but neither Mark nor John contains obvious parallels. Jesus' words in Matthew 5–6 as he transforms the Mosaic law held a hope for the regeneration of the human heart greater than the virtuous life Aristotle had taught in his *Ethics* and Cicero in his *On Duties*.



The opening verses, the eight Beatitudes, are at the center of the moral vocabulary of Christian mankind, although on any showing they are challenging at first sight. They are not prescriptive but descriptive, proposing no course of action but promising beatitude or blessedness to those possessing the right state of soul or, as in the seventh and eighth, able to bear persecution. In this way they are truly kerygma or preaching, a proclamation describing the blessedness that accompanies those on the Christian way. The Greek *makarios* is sometimes translated "happy," but "blessed" is better, for happiness is a subjective state of contentment or well-being, while blessedness is the state of being

fulfilled by God at his will and in his presence. Blessedness is not a virtue, not a natural virtue that the best efforts of man can achieve at least episodically, or even a supernatural virtue given silently at baptism, but a gift following upon that supernatural infusion of grace, life lived in the Christian way, the steady result of day by day, charity-inspired cooperation with the Holy Spirit. They are echoed in what Paul knows as the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22).

In this Matthean text Jesus does not tell the disciples how to seek blessedness; he does not, as elsewhere, urge repentance. The Beatitudes are gifts, and they are proleptic, looking forward to the coming of the Kingdom. Blessedness will come at Pentecost, when hearts will burn within and the question will be "Brethren, what shall we do?" Jesus is waiting: "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled" (Luke 12:49). But now, on the threshold of the last day, is the time to prepare the disciples for the new life that is coming, to give them words that they will remember when Jesus' first great promise, "I will send the Holy Spirit, the Advocate or Counselor," is fulfilled.

This is the life prophesied by Jeremiah: Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with house of Israel and the House of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt. [. . .] I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor, and each his brother, saying "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest (Jer. 31:31–34). And Ezekiel: "A new heart I will give you, a new spirit I will put within you. And I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (11:19). When Peter stood up at Pentecost he declared the descent of the Spirit to be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17–18, Joel 2:28–32). In that Day they all will possess the Prophetic Spirit. But the new way must possess the mind as well as the heart; the gift will be fulfilled in those who have been taught: "Go, baptize, teach."

The best of the Greeks and Romans had known that the good all men seek is not some possession extrinsic to the self but a state of soul. Aristotle's *Ethics*, with a spirit echoed in Justin's day by the stoic Epictetus, begins by asking what it is that all men seek for its own sake, not as an instrument leading to something greater such as wealth or wisdom, which we may desire because they promise happiness. Rather, happiness itself, *eudaimonia*, is what all men desire for its own sake. But quickly Aristotle turns

to the observation that happiness is not possible without goodness.

So the Philosopher does not, as Epicurus would later, propose happiness as the complement of pleasure, but as the best state of the soul in the righteous man. And this, famously, is to be achieved not through the appropriation of *theoria*, not through the exercise of intellect, but through the practice of the moral virtues—justice, temperance, prudence, and courage—and that not in a world-pleasing way, but as a good man might practice them. The means was the natural capacity of the self-commanding man to become virtuous. Aristotle's *Ethics* is the high summary of the best of Hellenism's moral proposals. Yet it neither elevated the eye of the soul above the realm of nature, which Aristotle would have considered impossible, nor purified the will.

When after Pentecost Christians looked at the world around them, they saw the ravages of the flaw that would be called original sin, ignorance and that deformation of the will called concupiscence, which five centuries of the best of Greek and Roman moral advice had not been able to repair. Against this was set the moral proposals and the moral power of Jesus. Christ came not only with good advice but with the ability to change hearts. And first came the revolutionary ideas found in the fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, the prophetic descriptions of the Christian life called the Beatitudes or blessedness, a reward attached to each, and then the transformation of the law from divinely given rule to the very form of the redeemed heart.

Given the classical expectation regarding happiness and virtue, Aristotle's *eudaimonia* or good-spiritedness as the result of natural virtue, Jesus' words in the Beatitudes disappoint; many would find them puzzling, some would find them impossible, for the heart of natural man does not reach out to embrace poverty of spirit and mourning, to say nothing of persecution. Yet the Beatitudes are signposts along the royal road that leads citizens of a fallen world to the vision of God, to sonship, and to citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, a description of the realm of Our Father that stands contrasted with the kingdom of the earth.

Humility, sorrow for one's sins, gentleness, desire for God, mercifulness, purity of heart, peacemaking, acceptance of persecution for Jesus' sake; Jesus is describing God-given dispositions of the heart that may or may not always be evident to the world in actions. Indeed to the degree that any Beatitude excites public notice, it is in danger of betraying its divine purpose; humility and piety displayed already have their reward (Matt. 6:1). Later, in the series of dominical sayings beginning with "You have heard it said but I tell you," there will be specific teaching that tells the blessed heart how to live in the world

(Matt. 5:21–7:29).

The Beatitudes have been the subject of commentary by great teachers, but generations lacking scholarly insight have also understood his words as they walked in the way. Jesus, who knew what was in mankind (John 2:25), begins with the counsel that one who would be blessed will be humble, which means seeing oneself as one really is: a creature, clay in the Potter's hands, helpless in the one thing that matters most despite possessing many impressive competencies, reliance upon which as justifying before God is always deceptive (Isa. 29:16, Jer. 18:6, Rom. 9:21). "Blessed are the poor in spirit." God is forever ordering the moral universe by putting down the mighty from their seat and exalting the humble (Luke 1:52).

Jesus reminds his followers to seek the lowest place, assuring them that the order of this world is not the order of the kingdom of heaven; there many of the first shall be last and the last first (Mark 9:35). He opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:10). "He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts [. . .] and exalted those of low degree" (Luke 1:31– 32). God's opposition to the proud is a lesson humankind must repeatedly learn, rooted in the very nature of God, in whose sight a lie cannot stand, and who while summary of power and majesty, expresses his life in Trinitarian self-giving, the divine Son humbling himself for our sakes, "who being in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil. 2:6). To fail of humility and to cultivate pride is to fail to see things as they are; a broken and contrite heart God does not despise (Ps. 51:17).

This was the great lesson given Job, a good man, whom God never accuses of sins, but a man "wise in his own conceits" (37:24), clinging in the most subtle and unrealistic way to his own rightness before God, redeemed only when, having had his ignorance and littleness demonstrated by the Almighty most dramatically (38–41), he falls silent before the gift of the vision of God: "Now my eye sees Thee" (42:5). So, the Beatitudes open by declaring blessed one who is *ptōxoi* in spirit, a word for which the least dramatic definition is "poor in spirit," but connoting a deeper range of meanings that include "crushed, beggarly, mean or low."

The reference is clearly not to lack of this world's goods, but to that abandonment of self which opens upon the faith of the elect. There was a reason for Saul's having changed his name from that of the great king to Paul, which resonated with the Greek word for mean, of no account. The central psychological mystery of the religion Jesus taught is the necessity for that reordering of the soul that sees one's self in the order of reality as of no account in the light of God's glory, as deserving his wrath

in the light of his justice.

The self-deception called pride is the natural defense of every man from this truth. Enjoying justly some human esteem, avoiding public shame, capable of good deeds—God never accused Job of moral failure— mankind will find it easy to ignore that fact that our decency is fragile, our self-interest perfect, our thirst for something other than the righteousness of God ever-present. There is a sweetness in reality, always hard for the sin-encased soul to see, and perhaps especially hard to see in an age when self-esteem is considered a cardinal virtue. But it is the locating of one's self rightly in God's just order that is a sign of blessedness, and this awareness of who we are is the basis of every other Beatitude and the ground of every gratitude. The poor in spirit are blessed because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The interior greatness of every human action on earth is rooted in the acknowledged littleness of every man before the glory and majesty of God. This humility, this poverty of spirit, has as its companion the reality of sorrow for sin and sinfulness (5:5). "Blessed are those who mourn; they shall be comforted." Christians are never encouraged to ruminate on past failures; we are ever to be putting behind us the past with its failure and looking to the future, "forgetting what lies behind, pressing forward and straining forward to what lies ahead" (Phil. 3:14).

But for the burden of our actual sins, forgiven but perhaps still bearing the debt of undischarged penance, our weakness and instability in the face of temptation, not despair but holy sorrow is the medicine for the soul. The great spiritual writers seem inhumane when they counsel against light-mindedness and denounce hilarity as being inappropriate to the pilgrim, but life is in the end no laughing matter. To have holy sorrow is to begin to hate that to which we have been attracted. This is the happy sorrow that is blessed. God, we are promised, will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Rev. 21:4), but to enjoy that supernatural friendship there first must be tears of sorrow.

The word translated meek (*praus*) in the third Beatitude is equally well, or better, translated "gentle." Jesus will say, "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. 29:11). And again Jesus quotes Isaiah: "Your king comes to you, gentle, seated upon an ass, and upon the foal of an ass" (Matt. 21:5, Is. 62:11). It is these, the meek, the gentle, who, contrary to the claims of power, will inherit the earth when it is God's earth again. The adjective used in Matthew 5 occurs only four times in the New Testament, but as the abstract noun "gentleness" Paul includes it among the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22.

To be gentle is to refrain from using power rightly possessed to achieve a purpose that, while it may be just, reads out the moral requirement of the second commandment, love your neighbor as you love yourself, by imposing one's own just will without mercy. Jesus assures his followers that it is not the grasping and aggressive but the gentle who will inherit the earth. The divine ground of Christian gentleness is the Lord's willingness to show us just so much of himself as we can bear, to enwrap his power in his humility. He did not cling to his divine nature in a way that prevented his display of that divine gentleness that is the unvarying companion of his majestic justice. The images of Jesus with the woman at the well, calling little children to himself, not condemning Peter and the twelve when they cannot watch for one hour, and washing his disciples' feet, have always engaged the Christian heart.

Gentleness is the choice of reserve rather than rashness; in its most common form it is the gentleness of politeness, standing aside for another, not claiming the highest place, that will find fruit in the gentled civilization founded upon the Beatitudes. What inheriting the earth means is surely that these will inherit the new creation when Christ returns, but it may also mean that even now the gentle will know the good life of the soul as it belongs to this present age.

The fourth Beatitude describes the blessed soul as one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness. Jesus is not speaking of the desire to be righteous as the Pharisees on a certain day might have understood righteousness, but of the desire to be in communion with God, to be right-hearted in relation to the creator and redeemer, which disposition has itself a justifying power. This is the desire, itself a gift of grace, that shapes life in Christ.

Whether the words belong to the playwright [Robert Bolt](#) or to a contemporary account, we are told that when Saint Thomas More mounted the scaffold he tipped the executioner with the words, "Do your work quickly for you send me to God," to which the cleric standing by replied, "Are you so certain Sir Thomas?" More replied, "He will not refuse one who is so blithe to come to him." Those who hunger for righteousness will be satisfied. This blessed hunger, this holy restlessness, made ever memorable by Augustine's words, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee," is the gift to every person who will listen, for we will in the end achieve what we have desired.

If our wills are formed to the neglect of God who is reality, the end may be darkness and waste. But for those who can grasp just one of the rays of glory that God has scattered across the world, who can long for something other than themselves, there is the promise of satisfaction, of the fullness of which the world offers a thousand intimations.

This hunger for God leads through the trials of life to our sharing in the great banquet that every Eucharist foreshadows. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." The Christian call to mercy is founded in God's own mercy to us. That mercy, rooted in his justice, began in his will never to abandon his rebellious creation but rather to heal it through long ages. In the fullness of time his plan was perfected in the merciful gift of his Son who brought regenerating life with water and the spirit, giving those he called the white robe of justification at baptism (Tim. 1:4–7, Rev. 7:9).

At the sixteenth-century Council of Trent when, Luther's advocacy of justification by faith alone having raised the issue, the question arose as to whether, having been made righteous once and perfectly through the gift of baptism, the wayfarer at life's end, having marred the robe of baptismal purity, required and would be offered a second justification by the merits of Christ's passion, the conciliar conclusion was in the negative. Christians are assured that, while called to be perfect, "If we say we have not sinned we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8–10).

For our post-baptismal sinfulness the Church offers the repentant the mercy of true forgiveness, sealed by the power of the keys (Matt. 16:19, John 20:19–23). And for the still imperfect heart, marked with holy sorrow and freed of any note of rebellion, there is the merciful fire of purgatory, a state imagined differently in different ages but one whose end is certain: the fruition of life in the vision of God. This is the ultimate mercy promised by the fifth Beatitude: the merciful will obtain mercy. This greatest mercy, this perfecting love, rooted in God's own mercy, is the hope of Christians, shining down the days of every life and inspiring the gentling of the world by those who have been shown mercy. The apostle James writes, "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgement" (2:13).

Since Paul wrote to the Corinthians of the necessary purification of the elect by fire, it has ever been the teaching of the Church that those faithful in whom love exists but which has not found full fruition will by the mercy of Christ be perfected in holiness after death (1 Cor. 3:10–15). But pure in heart we all then will be. This mercy is then the ever present background for the making of the pure heart which has as its purpose and reward the renewal of that conversation which sin interrupted in the garden. This is the mercy of the love that will not let us go until we are fit for the innumerable company of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect, and God who is the judge of all (Heb. 12:22). "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." The creation of the clean heart is ever the master-work of the apostolic mission, a work which while it begins with the proclamation of the Gospel is effective in the sacraments,

with the elect, God's chosen, being perfected by the means to holiness Jesus purchased with his death, when the Holy Spirit came with his regenerating gift of baptism and with forgiveness and communion that light the Christian way.

The heart sees; it has an eye which, sin-clouded, cannot behold its maker. Purity of heart is a way, a praxis, that requires more than emptying the soul of evil like the demon-cleansed house in Matthew 12:43–45 that soon was to be filled with demons more vicious than the first. Purity of heart requires that the house of the soul be filled with the light of grace by the Holy Spirit; the human heart cannot be purified of sin without being filled by God, and then, the eye of the soul wiped clean, we will see. Peacemakers, says the seventh Beatitude, are the sons of God, whose will is that peace of the kingdom that Augustine calls the order of tranquility.

The rhetoric of the world has as its underlying purpose incitement to strife, to emulation, to aggression, to self-pity, grievance, and ultimately to perpetual warfare. God's sons, his children, bring peace into the world by bearing rather than striking, by walking the extra mile when one has already walked as far as justice requires, by giving more than is just. The presence of evil in the world is never mitigated until it is borne. Those who enjoy the blessings of the first seven Beatitudes will be rewarded with citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, and inevitably will be persecuted by that mystery of evil called the world.

For the first three centuries, and even now, faithfulness might mean death. But presently in the West that persecution will not often be with rack and rope; it cannot be resisted with any violence, only with patience and finally suffering, but it will nonetheless be real. Christians living through modernity know what it is, if not to be reviled publicly, to be held in gentle contempt and on a certain day to be thought an enemy of all that is best by one's neighbor. Less obvious is the persecution inherent in the world that while it assaults the senses allures with the enchantment of technology's transcendence over nature, offering comforts that often seem to render restraint and discipline pointless.

This new war with the world does not threaten with the executioner's fire and lions, but with the subtle luring of the soul into self-willed pusillanimity. Bearing the cross and denying oneself in a culture whose ignorance of the true dimensions of life makes such actions meaningless, may seem harder to bear than the inquisitor's fire. Yet living a life that bears witness when one can never know the world is listening makes Christians part of that great company who, beginning with the prophets whom Israel despised and persecuted, have been a light in this world, and who have ever been rewarded with the presence of God.

Jesus' description of the gift of blessedness to the soul is followed by the images of salt and light that establish the character of Christian witness in the world. Christ's followers are the salt of the world, and in that sense a gift to it, but if the salt has lost its savor, "What is there left to give taste to it?" It is Christian witness that lifts up the world in hope. This witness is a light that is not to be put under a barrel but lifted high, set on a lampstand so that the Christian way can shine brightly before men who see its good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

Having described the blessedness that belongs to the kingdom, its consequences for believers, persecution, and the necessity of their witness in the world, Jesus turns to the question raised persistently by the charge of the Pharisees that he and his disciples have no regard for the Law of Moses. His disciples pluck grain from the fields on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1); he eats with sinners, and without ritual purification (Matt. 15:1). So, Jesus will assure the Pharisees of every age: "Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have come not to destroy the law but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished," until the holy ones who are the citizens of the kingdom are called and fulfilled.

And then the warning and the promise to teachers: "Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men to do so shall be called least in the kingdom, but who obeys them and teaches them shall be called great" (Matt. 5:13). And the new standard: Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, those whose whole work is fulfilling the propositions of the law while leaving the heart in shadow, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And how is this to be achieved? By entering perfectly into the love of the Lord through the door to that interior castle, the will. Hardly a new idea: "You shall love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind."

But what Jesus does not reveal in this place is the fact that this new law will require a new heart which can only be formed by his Pentecostal gift his death will bring. Six times the phrase "You have heard it said" is repeated, to be followed by "But I tell you." What has been said by men of old is the Law of Moses. What Jesus teaches those listening is the new law of the heart that places moral weight not in good deeds, although these will follow, but in the renewed will. It is not what goes into a man that defiles him, the working of the world upon us is to be borne; what makes the man is that expression of the heart that forms our words and actions (Matt. 15:11).

The renewal Christ commands surpasses the righteousness of the Pharisees for it will make men and women of a flawed and fallen world citizens fit for eternal life in the kingdom of the new heart. The first

contrast between what has been said and the new law teaches that the death and destruction that characterize life and history begin with contempt, anger, and insult, which can only be amended by the willingness to ask forgiveness, perhaps even when just grounds for anger are present. Be reconciled to your brother before you offer your sacrifice. Litigiousness and contentiousness unlamented lead to prison from which you will not escape until justice has been fully served (5:25–26). It is not enough to refrain from adultery; one must reject from the heart the desire for the pleasurable possession of one not yours but another's, for the settled desire is as good as the deed done (27).

There is then the new law of language: abjure hyperbolic claims that presume a power you do not have. Jerusalem is not yours but is the city of the great king; you cannot make one hair of your head white or black (5:33–36). And do not take refuge in ambiguity; let your pledged word be sealed with a yes or no (37). This means that in the kingdom of the new heart the duty of the rhetor and the author, of every man as he speaks and writes, is to be ever obedient to the reality of the thing, whether it be an object or an idea or an emotion. And as for revenge, give it up, putting it away with the willingness to bear something, to do more than the importunate or the would-be oppressor asks. And this turns upon the extension of the second great commandment to include not only the neighbor, but the neighbor who wishes you harm (5:43–48). "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" had been at the heart of justice as the Old Covenant commended it. It was a principle of Greek morality that revenge was the justifying motive of morality, but among Jesus' followers, something is to be borne.

Of the six contrasts through which Jesus teaches, the most shocking to his hearers was surely the abrogating of divorce, which had been allowed, as Jesus would tell his disciple in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, because of the hardness of men's hearts, but which now was to be done away with in obedience to God's will as expressed in the primordial unity of man and woman in the Garden; "It was not so in the beginning" (19:8). This renewed vision of marriage would be developed by Saint Paul with the analogy of the relation of husband and wife to the indissoluble union between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:25). But in the context of Matthew 5, Jesus only teaches that, assuming the divine justice of the Edenic disposition to be true, putting a wife away inevitably sends her into another household and to another husband, if not into the street, and by doing so makes both her and the head of the household into which she may have been taken adulterers. Jesus' teaching on divorce would be put forward fully in chapter 19:3–12, where divorce would be seen as a violation of God's will that "the two shall become one" (5).

The disciples answered for fallen mankind: "If it is this way between a man and woman, better not

marry." This might have been said of the entire body of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. If it is this way; forego revenge, love your enemies, abjure contempt and insult, walk the second mile, achieve purity of heart, who can bear it? But the divine teaching of Matthew 5 does not consist of moral maxims addressed to the world but to citizens of the kingdom of the new hearts that Pentecost will bring. These six recastings of the law in Matthew 5 offer the clear outlines of the new way of life that marks the kingdom. They are redolent of the nobility of the faith and presuppose the humility the giver of the new law displayed on the night he was betrayed (John 13:1–17).

Jesus' sermon on the mountainside was the foundation, laying down the principles of the way that would blossom from his words after his sacrifice made the new heart a possibility and a reality through the gift of the indwelling Advocate and Comforter at Pentecost. "I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away; the Counselor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). The Spirit comes with power to confirm memory and to lead into all truth, to comfort, to convict, and to convert, and to give the peace the world cannot give, and finally, our work done, to bring us to himself.

The Holy Spirit redefines the meaning of life and of history. Sin is now not simply a violation of the law but failure to believe Christ's words and to accept the gifts that make for holiness. Righteousness is rightness of the heart formed by faith and by participation in Christ through his sacramental gifts so as to become a new creature. Mankind is made for the holiness that pleases God, enabling the sons of Adam at last to enter the conversation that was forestalled when our first parents chose the serpent's way.

The entire Pentecostal faith, with its promise of forgiveness and the reward of communion introduced the waiting world to the great adventure that gave every man the possibility of becoming a new creature. Thus it would be that when Christians began to write they would turn to this text, to Matthew 5 and 6, to discover the foundations of the kingdom of the new heart. Other Matthean texts would be cited by writers of the post-apostolic age, the apocalypse of chapters twenty-four and twenty-five would find a permanent place in Christian faith, and the Gospel parables have never ceased to form Christian conscience and imagination: the wicked servant who, having been mercifully forgiven his debt, grasps his fellow servant by the throat demanding payment of the small debt owed him (18:20–35); the householder who gave those who had labored little as much as those who had labored long because it was his to be gracious as he chose (20:1–16); the king who gave a wedding feast to which many refused to come, and one who did was cast out as not being properly attired (22:1–14); and

the parable of the talents.

These would always engage and teach, but it was the words of Chapters 5 and 6 that rippled out from a mountainside in Galilee to make a new world. The teaching of the new way issued in a new piety, with prayer, almsgiving, and sacrifice; things not to be done in order to be seen by men or to earn their approval, but privately and without calculation (6:1–15). Jesus' followers do not need to storm heaven with many words, for they do not like the prophets of Baal need to arouse God with their shouts. Christian prayer is made in the knowledge that Our Father in heaven knows what we and every other creature needs this day, for the new heart beats within its living relationship to the ever-providential God who made it.

The first petition of the great prayer recognizes with praise that God's name, that is his being, is holy, asking that his will, reigning gloriously in heaven, may soon be perfected in the Church and in the world. The words, "Give us this day our daily bread," have been variously understood because the word for "daily" may be understood to mean "supersubstantial" rather than daily in the ordinary sense, so that the prayer for daily bread refers as well to Eucharistic bread.

There follows the petition that our debts or transgressions may be forgiven as we forgive others, a reference to both the fifth Beatitude above and to 6:14–15 below. "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father also will forgive you." Always considered the first Gospel, Matthew, with the Beatitudes and Jesus' perfecting of the law, "You have heard it said of old, but I tell you," laid the foundation for the life of the new heart that his sacrifice would bring to the world, accomplishing in the elect the perfect virtue that the philosophers and Pharisees had foreseen but which the fallen could never accomplish apart from the cross of Christ and the regenerating Pentecostal gift he bought.

When Jesus sat down on a hillside in Galilee to teach, his words made a new world.

The *image* shows, "Sermon on the Mount," by Ivan Makarov, painted in 1889.

