

## The Righteousness of Christ.

Lord Bacon — "The times, in many cases give great aid to true interpretation."

What were the "times" of the sermon on the Mount?

Theologically they have been considered very fully; socially, politically and economically very little.

Just before this we learn that the son of a Galilean carpenter, had been going up and down the country, disputing in the synagogues, healing the sick and proclaiming the "gospel of the kingdom".

What was this "gospel of the kingdom"?

Multitudes from Galilee, Jerusalem, <sup>and</sup> <sup>Judea</sup> Caperna, <sup>and</sup> <sup>beyond</sup> Jordan followed him to find out. It must have been a most mixed multitude. What interest could they have in common?

Was it the desire for salvation alone or a community of earthly life, as well that induced them to follow this young Galilean to learn what he had to propose for their benefit?

One thing should be remembered. — All these were subject to certain evils of a most sore and grievous character. They were all ~~people~~ inhabitants of a region which had passed its primitive productivity. It was greatly overpopulated; had no foreign commerce; no manufactures; no external trade. The millions who inhabited Palestine at that time were compelled to subsist wholly on its agricultural resources. Fruit, ~~little~~ wine, black barley bread, the fish of Galilee; milk and the few of the herds that remained constituted their only food. A court was an heirloom that descended for generations. Only the intimate subdivision of the land permitted them to live.

The Jewish church claimed its tenth of all produce; the Roman collected that most infamous of all taxes, head-money, or poll-tax; and out of what was left the court of the patriarch had to be maintained.

Probably, no people were ever before  
so heavily taxed for their means  
of payment. What did the Galilean  
have to say to this impoverished as-  
sembly.

The proclamation which he  
made was almost ~~the~~ wholly con-  
cerned with the earth — Man's  
obligation to man — his duty  
to his fellows — was the theme  
of the Gospel he proclaimed.

We do not know his words. He is sup-  
posed to have spoken in Aramaic, but  
the record was made up in Greek. It  
is not impossible that he used it.  
Why should he not be familiar with  
it as well as the evangelists and  
why not the people as well as he?

At least the record we have is in Greek  
and when we seek to know the  
meaning of his words, we must  
look to the Greek of that time for them.

Among the words used is that translated  
"righteousness". Except that translated "the  
Kingdom" it is the most important word  
in the proclamation. It is evident that all the  
beatitudes are expressions of conditions - in "the Kingdom".

"Blessed is he that hungers and  
thirsts after righteousness - for he shall  
be filled."

Except you righteousness exceed the  
righteousness of the scribes and phari-  
sues, you shall in no case enter the  
Kingdom of Heaven.

Seek ye first, the Kingdom of God and  
his righteousness, and all these things,  
that is food, raiment, &c, shall be added  
unto you.

Righteousness in our modern sense means the doing of that which is pleasing to God. Prayers, fasting and other religious observances were elements of righteousness as now defined. But what did the word used by the evangelists then mean? Four years ago, Greek philosophy had dealt with the word here used in an invariable sense. Dikaïousin — the love of justice. It was a favorite with Aristotle and had long been used to signify the impulse of justice towards one's fellows — Dikaiousin — what love of justice required one to do.

God's love of justice — is the one thing needful to earthly happiness.

The love of justice <sup>signs</sup> much exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Blessed is he who hungers and thirsts for love of justice for he shall be filled — in the Kingdom

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This view of the true sig-  
nificance of the term trans-  
lated righteousness is con-  
firmed by that utterance  
which constitutes the <sup>one</sup> ~~one~~  
distinctive feature <sup>of the</sup> ~~between~~  
Gospel which the Galilean  
proclaimed.

Other religious teachers  
have promised heavenly  
rewards; others have pres-  
cribed the things to be done  
and left undone. Others  
have established rites, func-  
tions, organization, ranks  
and orders, the observance  
of which ~~was~~ were  
essential to the reward  
provided. The Christ did

of these things, His commands  
were three —

Love thy fellow — not  
materially, nor pitifully,  
Agape — nourishingly and  
protectingly as if he were  
your guest — the most  
sacred relation the orient  
could know; — "as thyself"  
its true and eternal measure  
are.

Seek the ~~father's~~ righteousness  
of God — that is the love of jus-  
tice which animates him —

What is <sup>the measure of</sup> ~~its measure~~? "What is  
such justice? What shall we  
do to our fellow to exemplify it?  
He does not tell us. He com-  
mends few acts and prohibits  
fewer still. But he gives  
one universal rule by which

the true solution can always  
be obtained. Whatever you would  
that others should do to you, do  
you even so to them.

Applied to any situation it  
gives the true result. Public or  
private individual or collection,  
high or low rich or poor,  
black or white, — this is the  
one test of conduct.

It is not a rule of Christian  
life but the Christ = rule of  
all life.