**3—16.**] THE DESCRIPTION OF the LORD’S DISCIPLES, THEIR BLESSEDNESS< AND DIGNITY.

**3. the poor in spirit**]  
“He said not, the poor in possessions, but ‘in spirit:’ i.e. the lowly in purpose and in soul.” Euthymius. “What is ‘the poor  
in spirit?’ the humble and contrite in  
heart.” Chrys.—The meaning of *voluntary poverty*, as that of the religious  
orders, given by some of the Fathers, and many; Romish interpreters, is *out of the question*. As little can the *bare literal*  
sense of the words, which Julian scoffed  
at, be understood: viz. those who are *ill-furnished in mind*, and uneducated. See  
Rev. iii. 17. The idea (De Wette) is not  
improbable, that our Lord may have had  
a reference to the poor and subjugated  
Jewish people around him, once members  
of the theocracy, and now expectants of  
the Messiah’s temporal kingdom; and,  
from their condition and hopes, taken  
occasion to preach to them the deeper  
spiritual truth.

**their’s is the kingdom of heaven**] See Luke iv. 17—21:  
James ii. 5. The kingdom must here be  
understood in its widest sense: as the  
combination of all rights of Christian  
citizenship in this world, and eternal  
blessedness in the next, ch. vi. 33. But  
Tholuck well observes, that all the senses  
of “*the kingdom of God,*” or “*of heaven,*”  
or “*of Christ,*” are only different sides of  
the same great idea—the *subjection of all  
things to God in Christ.*

**4.**] The spiritual qualification in the former verse  
must be carried on to this, and the mourning understood to mean not only that on  
account of sin, but *all such as happens to  
a man in the spiritual life*. All such  
mourners are blessed: for the Father of  
mercies and God of all consolation being  
their covenant God, His comfort shall  
overbear all their mourning, and taste the  
sweeter for it. In Luke ii. 25, the Messiah’s coming is called “*the consolation of Israel.*”—This beatitude is by many editors placed after ver. 5. But the authority is by no means decisive, and I cannot  
see how the logical coherence of the sentence is improved by it.—In placing these two beatitudes first, the Lord follows the  
order in Isa. lxi. 1, which He proclaimed  
in the synagogue at Nazareth, Luke iv. 18.

**5. the meek**] A citation from Ps.  
xxxvii. 11. The usual dividers and allotters of the earth being mighty and  
proud conquerors, and the Messiah being  
expected as such a conqueror, this announcement that the meek should inherit  
the earth, struck at the root of the temporal expectations of power and wealth  
in the Messiah’s kingdom. This meekness is not mere outward lowliness of demeanour, but that true *meekness* of Eph.  
iv. 2, whose active side is love, and its  
passive side long-suffering. On the promise, compare Isa. lvii. 13–15; lx. 21;  
1 Cor. iii. 22. That kingdom of God  
which begins in the hearts of the disciples  
of Christ, and is not “of (sprung from)  
*this world,*” shall work onwards till it  
shall become *actually a kingdom over this  
earth*, and its subjects shall *inherit the  
earth*: first in its millennial, and finally  
in its renewed and blessed state for ever.

**6.**] See Ps. cvii. 9; lxv. 4; xxii.  
26: Isa. xli. 17. This *hunger and thirst*  
is the true sign of that new life on which  
those born of the Spirit (John iii. 3, 5)  
have entered; and it is after *righteousness*,  
i.e. *perfect conformity to the holy will of  
God*. This was *His* meat, John iv. 34,  
They shall be *satisfied—in the new heaven  
and new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness*, 2 Pet. iii. 13. Compare the  
remarkable parallel Ps. xvii. 15. This  
hunger and thirst after righteousness, is  
admirably set forth in the three first  
petitions of the Lord’s prayer,—‘Hallowed  
be Thy name—Thy kingdom come—Thy  
will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.’

**7. merciful**] “We may shew  
mercy, not by alms only, but by words:  
and if we have no other way, by tears.  
For manifold is the form of mercy, and  
wide is this command: They shall obtain  
mercy, here, from men; and there, from  
God,” Euthymius, expanding Chrysostom.  
This beatitude comprises every degree of  
sympathy and mutual love and help; from  
that fulness of it which is shed abroad in  
those who have been forgiven much, and  
therefore love much,—down to those  
first beginnings of the new birth, even  
among those who know not the Lord,