

**THE BEATITUDES:
AN ORATORIO**

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The Beatitudes: an Oratorio by Colomb & César Franck & Catherine M. Bradley

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COLOMB & CÉSAR FRANCK & CATHERINE M. BRADLEY

THE BEATITUDES: AN ORATORIO



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EATITUDES



AN ORATORIO

WORDS (After the Gospel)

BY

LADY COLOMB



TRANSLATED BY

CATHERINE M. BRADLEY



MUSIC BY

CÉSAR FRANCK



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CÉSAR FRANCK

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PROLOGUE.

(Tenor Solo and Chorus.)

Tenor Solo.

Dark brooded fear o'er the land,
Oppression's pitiless hand
Crushed and degraded the weak ;
Full of horror and woe, the old world
was expiring,
Justice and mercy desiring ;
Hope had fled from the meek :
When, far above the cries of hate and
desperation,
Rose a voice full of power, strong,
clear and silver-sweet ;
And there the Saviour stands, 'mid
the earth's desolation,
His words draw all men to his feet.
Hov'ring around the Master,
In heav'n's blue vault are soaring
The angels, chanting loud and
clear
Their sweet song :

Tenor and Celestial Chorus.

O blessed be He, who now is pouring
Sweet hope into hearts dark with fear!

FIRST BEATITUDE.

(Chorus and Baritone Solo.)

Terrestrial Chorus.

All the wealth of the earth
Is our desire !
We worship pleasure; of joy and mirth
We never tire !

For us no dark to-morrow
Shall arise ;
Withdraw all pain and sorrow
From our eyes ;
And from our gladness
Away with sadness,
All tears and sighs !

Celestial Chorus.

When our hearts are oppressed in the
midst of our pleasure,
And despair without measure
Has filled us with dread,
Say, where has gladness fled ?

The Voice of Christ.

Blessed he, who, from Earth's dreams
awaking,
Turns his heart from worldly pride,
Who, ev'ry other joy forsaking,
Of wealth the golden fetters breaking,
Treasures of heaven spreads around
on ev'ry side.
Then, when the awful trumpet sound-
eth,
Let him rejoice !
Blessed is he, in whom God's grace
aboundeth,
Angels for him heav'n's gates fling
open wide.

Celestial Chorus.

Blessed is he, in whom God's grace
and love aboundeth,
Angels for him heav'n's gates fling
open wide.

SECOND BEATITUDE.

(Chorus, *Soli and Baritone Solo.*)

Terrestrial Chorus.

The earth is dark, heav'n's light has faded,
Shedding no bright ray ;
Ev'ry hope with sorrow is shaded,
And passeth away.
Swift by life's tempest we're driven,
Trembling our hearts shrink with fear ;
Storm-tossed vessels far from haven,
Wayside dust whirled far and near.
Against its ills the soul indignant
Vainly seeks a shield ;
Cruel Fate, with glance malignant,
Sternly bids it yield.

Celestial Chorus.

Poor human souls, thus striving
For the fitful joys of earth !
Whom deadly sin is driving !
Give holy Meekness birth.
Her sacred lamp burns ever brightly,
She, only, can allay your care,
She, only, maketh hang more lightly
Those chains, which goad you to despair.

The Voice of Christ.

O ! blessed are the meek !
For them Earth's treasures all are gathered.

THIRD BEATITUDE.

(Chorus, *Soli and Baritone Solo.*)

Terrestrial Chorus.

Grief o'er all creatures reigns supreme,
Her terrible features haunt every dream ;
Our sad cries unavailing,
Each she claims as her slave ;
Each with rigor unavailing
Drives to the grave.

A Mother.

Death, cruel tyrant ! Thou hast bereft me !
Hear me now ! since all joy hath left me,
Only let me weep, and die !

An Orphan.

Father and mother now bewailing,
With fear and dread my spirit quailing,
Ah ! for me ev'ry breath's a sigh !

The Wife and the Husband.

Loved companion of the happy morning,
O thou whom I adore,
Before to-morrow's light is dawning
Thou'lt have fled for evermore !

The Mother.

Sweet child, whom I adore,
Farewell for evermore !

An Orphan.

Thou whom I adore,
Farewell for evermore !

Terrestrial Chorus.

Grief o'er all creatures reigns supreme,
Her terrible features haunt every dream.

Slaves.

Sore oppressed, for mercy praying,
None to heed the slave's appeal !

Philosophers.

To souls all dark with doubts dimming,
O blessed Truth, thy light reveal !

Slaves.

For home and country yearning,
How we vainly weep and sigh !

The Voice of Christ.

Blessed are the mourners, for they shall be consoled !

Celestial Chorus.

O blessed for ever, they who suffer pain !
Heaven to the exile gives again
The dear home he cherished ;
The orphan sees once more
The mother who perished !
Clear and bright, in Heav'n's endless day,
Truth shines out with glittering ray ;
Of Earth's dark woes and fair hopes blighted
God shall make for those He loves
Crowns of gold with glory lighted.
There the poor slave in freedom roves.
O blessed for ever, they who suffer pain !

FOURTH BEATITUDE.
(*Tenor and Baritone Soli.*)
Tenor Solo.

Where'er we stray, stern Fate enthral
us,
And Evil reigns ;
Darkly brooding, Destiny appals us,
Mocking our pains.
Each imprisoned soul, its wings un-
folding,
Would soar on high ;
Heavy chains of sin its flight with-
holding,
We sink and die.
Yet, since a chaste desire, a sacred
flame still burning,
Illumines our night,
Cheering the soul to wisdom return-
ing,
Shedding its light :
Purity ! Holiness ! and Justice !
Unveil thy face !
Hear us, we pray ! Vice for its service
Demands our race.
Ah, come ! Truth, to our pleading
now hearken !
Hide not thy ray !
With thy light dispel the clouds which
darken
True Wisdom's day !

The Voice of Christ.
O happy he, athirst for God's salva-
tion !
In heaven pure streams of living
waters flow ;
And happy he, whose life is one ob-
lation :
He shall in heav'n receive all which
he gave below.

FIFTH BEATITUDE.
(*Tenor Solo, Chorus, and Soli for Bari-
tone and Soprano.*)
Tenor Solo.

Like beaten corn-sheaves lying
Upon the threshing-floor,
The weak, all crushed and dying,
Helpless their ills deplore.
No strong arm their cause defending,
Galled by th' oppressor's chain,
They mourn with grief unending,
Of vengeance dream in vain.
Their souls with hatred burning,
They groan and sigh,
And for pity are turning
To the Master on high.

Terrestrial Chorus.
King all-glorious ! Rise victorious !
Smite the oppressor and transgressor !
We shrink and die 'neath their
blows :
Mighty God ! avenge our woes !
Tyrants vaunt their power unrelent-
ing,
Scorning all our bitter lamenting :
Shield us, Lord, in our distress !
Strike, till our foes Thy might con-
fess !

But if our tears are unavailing,
If God be deaf to all our cries,
Then, armed by need with strength
unfailing,
Fearless one and all arise !
Tremble, then ! Oppressors, tremble !
Vengeance points the sword !
Ye tyrants and foes, in wrath we
assemble,
In deadly accord !

We, who were slaves, now command-
ing,
Dire retribution demanding,
Crushed lies the foe at our feet ;
Vengeance we take for each scornful
reviling,
Tears of the past, insults defiling,
All have made our revenge more
sweet !

The Voice of Christ.
"Vengeance belongeth to me alone !"
'Tis God speaks the word ;
For all his sins the wicked shall atone :
Wait ye on the Lord !

Cease, sons of men, from your angry
pursuing,
With impious hatred your ills but re-
newing ;
For verily I say to you, that blessed
are they
Who in mercy fear to slay !

Celestial Chorus.
Ever blessed are they
Who in mercy fear to slay !
'Tis God who calls to man from
heav'n :
Forgive, that ye may be forgiven.

The Angel of Forgiveness.
Holy love, sweet pardon
And mercy show ;
Bear your brother's burden
Here on earth below.

And when, with dreadful majesty,
God in wrath appeareth,
Each soul in terror his judgment
feareth,
Save ye, who humbly cry :

"Our guilty souls preserve !
No pardon we deserve !
Bow Thine ear from heav'n :
Mercy we have shown
When the rude oppressor,
Trembling, stood alone,
We've spared the vile transgressor ;
Forgive, dear Lord, as we've for-
given !"

SIXTH BEATITUDE.

(*Double Chorus [S. and A.], Quartet
[T. and B.], Baritone Solo.*)

Heathen Women.

The gods, from us their faces turning,
Heed nor tear nor sigh ;
Our gifts and sacrifices spurning,
Leave us now to die.
O absent gods, hear us imploring !
And as of yore
See us kneeling, trembling, adoring ;
Bow down once more !

Jewish Women.

Thou, who once to our sires appeared,
Show now Thy face !
Thou, Lord, who from Horeb judg-
ment declared,
Save Israel's race !
God of mercy, hear us imploring,
And as of yore,
Now we are trembling and adoring,
Bow down once more !

The Pharisees.

4. *Phar.* Lord God ! praise and thanks
I'm bringing ;
Firmly Thy sacred laws
I've kept ;
With fast and vigil prayed
While all the wicked slept.
1. *Phar.* With righteous anger from
my path now I'm flinging
All the weak, erring souls
who from wisdom have
turned.
3. *Phar.* By my justice and righteous
dealing
I've freed my soul from
Satan's wiles.

2. *Phar.* O God ! a murd'rous thought
or feeling

Ne'er my heart defiles.
All 4. Great God ! from early youth
with all Thy laws com-
plying,
I await, on Thy faith relying.
Eternal joys, pleasures di-
vine ;
With all the just united,
I trust in heav'n to shine.

The Angel of Death.

I gather in each soul immortal,
Death's dark angel I ;
Widely opens heav'n's flaming portal :
See the Throne on high !
And which of you, frail sons ter-
restrial,
Can view undismayed
God enthroned in light celestial,
All His might displayed ?

Celestial Chorus.

Earthly knowledge, wisdom and
merit,
Ne'er make the gates of heav'n un-
roll ;
Only the meek and childlike soul,
Pure in heart and humble in spirit,
May enter this bright, holy place.

The Voice of Christ.

O blest are the pure ! They shall see
God's face.

Celestial Chorus.

Then purge from your hearts sins de-
grading,
Purify by prayer each crimson
stain,
That the Lord may hearken again,
And, when earthly desires are fading,
Enter ye into this holy place.
Pardoned and cleansed by Christ's
endeavor,
Come, dear brethren, join us on
high ;
Soaring ever, upward we fly,
Heav'nly portals open for ever :
Enter ye this holy place
Come hither, and with the saintly
commingle,
With seraphs and angels your songs
intermingle :
O enter ye this holy place !
Blessed are the pure ; they shall see
God !

SEVENTH BEATITUDE.

(*Bass Solo, Chorus, Baritone Solo, Quintet.*)

Satan.

'Tis I whose baneful spell
Spreads strife and bitter hatred,
To all ye slaves of Hell
My evil laws are sacred.
Now gather, ye murderous
throng!

To my kingdom belong!
Ye, whom evil passions guiding,
Paths of guilt and darkness tread;
Ye who, stern justice deriding,
By hatred and wrath are led:
Hearts all stained by sins corroding,
Souls aghast with dark foreboding,
All ye enemies of peace,
I am your king!
Behold my banner unroll'd!

Chorus of Tyrants.

Implacable foes, how deadly our
power!
Now low at our feet lie the shud-
dering crowd.

Pagan Priests.

On altars of blood we serve every
hour
False gods, who for victims and
gifts cry aloud!

The Multitude.

Now perish all laws and delusion!
On earth shall reign confusion!
A day of wrath and judgment dire,
Our day, at length appeareth!
Rising in a dawn of fire,
Our power the mighty feareth!

Satan and the Multitude.

Now with fury and rage,
Vowing slaughter and death,
Hate burns in every breath,
Sparing neither youth nor age.
Let our fierce shouts of hate
Drown the cries of the slain;
Tyrants are taught, too late,
All we've borne of grief and pain!

With scorn stifle Virtue's teaching;
Strength alone can win the fight!

The Voice of Christ.

Blessed are they who, with voice be-
seching,
Turn aside wrath and vengeance;
they shall win eternal light.

Satan.

Ah! that voice! striking terror
Into my heart!
Causing darkness and error
To depart.
How all my splendor vanished
When that voice gave decree,
I from God's courts was banished,
Forced in terror to flee.

The Peacemakers.

(*S., A., T., and B. I. and II. Soli.*)

Evil cannot stay, naught but good
remaineth,
Be faithful and pure;
In vain Satan strives to conquer, he
gaineth
Naught that shall endure.
Seed that's sown in faith, on God's
grace relying
Nursed with tears and prayer,
Springs forth into flower; blossoms
never dying
Shed a perfume rare.
With steadfast hearts and Christian
graces
Strong in faith we work,
Struggling ever, where in Earth's
dark places
Satan's myriads lurk.
Peace sheds her light, Earth's face
renewing;
Gentle showers of love,
Every blighted heart bedewing,
Fall from heaven above.
Satan rageth, battle wageth
'Gainst the bonds of love divine;
Dawn is breaking, hope is waking,
Sweet charity benign.

The light of true wisdom we follow,
With eager hands the tomb we hollow;
Of want and poverty accursed
See all clouds and darkness dis-
persed!

EIGHTH BEATITUDE.

(*Bass Solo; Chorus; Soli for M.-Sopr.
and Baritone.*)

Satan.

Not yet defeated,
Still my godlike power survives!
For salvation completed
See how God with Satan strives!