Notes on Bible Words.

No. XV.—"HAPPY."

The word "Blessed" in the Sermon on the Mount is μακάριος. Vulg. beati. Jeremy Taylor says:

Our excellent and gracious Lawgiver, knowing that the great argument in all practical disciplines is the proposal of the end, which is their crown and reward, begins His sermon, as David began his most divine collection of hymns, with "blessedness." And having enumerated eight duties... He begins every duty with a beatitude, and concludes it with a reward; to manifest the reasonableness, and to invite and determine our choice to such graces which are circumscribed with felicities...

In Ps. i. 1, μακάριος (beatus¹; heureux); "Blessed is the man," R.V. marg., "happy."

μακάριος, says Gesenius, is upright, or straight on; to be successful, to be fortunate; happy: to be congratulated. See Gen. xxx. 13, Asher. "Happy am I; for the daughters will call me happy."

The same word, μακάριος, in St. John xiii. 17, is rendered happy: "Happy are ye if ye do them!" R.V. "blessed."

For μακάριος, also, see 1 Tim. i. 11; "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God." Tit. ii. 13, "that blessed hope." 1 Pet. iii. 14, "but and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye"; iv. 14. Prov. iii. 13, "Happy is the man," literally "blessings of the man." In 1 Cor. vii. 40, R.V., as well as A.V., has "she is happier."

In Acts xxvi. 2, "I think myself happy," is ἡγημαί εὐπνεόντο μακάριον; but in St. James v. 11, "we count them happy" (R.V., blessed) is μακαρισμός: Vulg., beatificamus. This verb—to pronounce blessed (Luke i. 48)—is the Sept. for ἡγημαί.

In Rom. iv. 9, declaration of blessedness is μακαρισμός: Gal. iv. 15. The New Testament use of this word, μακάριος, throws light upon Christian happiness, and will help to understand such songs of trust² as that which closes thus:

There are briars besetting every path
That call for patient care;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer.
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy anywhere.

¹ For beatus, the student may compare Hor. Od. iv. 9, recte beatum, and Ep. ii, beatus ille, "Happy the man..."
² Prov. xvi. 20, "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."