

Sacrifices of Thanksgiving

“What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? . . . I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.”

—Psalm 116:12,17

THE BEST WAY TO LIVE A

life of thanksgiving to God is to lay down our lives in showing forth his praises. When we consider that all we have, and all we hope for, are ours by God's grace, then we will know that our debt of gratitude calls for nothing less than the devoting of our all to him, no longer living unto ourselves, but unto him. It is this thought that is expressed by David in the words of our opening text. The context of these words conveys a similar sentiment: “I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. . . . O LORD, truly I am thy servant, . . . and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds [of Adamic condemnation].”—Ps. 116:13-16

“Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the

children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." (Ps. 107:21,22) How clearly does David here associate thanksgiving with the declaring the works of God. This is a very practical arrangement. Had we received special favors from an earthly friend and wanted to show our appreciation by letting others know of his goodness, there would be no better way to do it than to tell of his works—of what he did for us.

The Lord has favored us wonderfully, and bestowed rich blessings upon us. Grand are the promises he has yet to carry out for us, and not only for us, but also for the whole world. To tell of all his works it is necessary to publish the truth of his plan. It is in appreciation of what God has done for us, and because his love calls forth our love in return, that we are to become the "light of the world," and a "city that is set on a hill [and] cannot be hid."—Matt. 5:14

TRIALS ARE BLESSINGS

As we count our blessings we should not overlook trials which the Heavenly Father has permitted to come to us. If we had the choice of our own experiences, we might avoid the things which annoy and try us. God in his wisdom, however, sees that we need trials, and in his love permits them. If our wills are resigned to him, then we will be thankful that he is providing for all our needs, even trials that are necessary for the rounding out of our Christian characters.

Some trials may be permitted by God to test our faith and confidence in him. Others are to develop

patience and longsuffering. At times these may be in the form of chastening from the Lord. In all cases, they are permitted by our Heavenly Father who is too wise to err, and too loving to be unkind. Even though he may correct us, it is in love, and our hearts should respond in grateful appreciation for this evidence that he is not withholding necessary experiences.

The Apostle Paul exhorts us, “In every thing give thanks.” (I Thess. 5:18) None but fully consecrated Christians can do this wholeheartedly. These know that nothing can come into their lives except that which is for their good. (Rom. 8:28) They know that they are the children of a loving Heavenly Father who is watching over their every interest. They have the assurance that even the most minute affairs of their lives—illustrated by the hairs of their head—are known by him, and directed according to his wisdom and love.—Matt. 10:30

THE LORD GUIDES OUR STEPS

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD.” (Ps. 37:23) This is a promise which every Christian should apply to himself, and should believe with all his heart. If we are truly thankful for the manner in which the Lord is guiding our lives, we will not try to resist or to go contrary to his will. Instead, with a prayer in our hearts and a song on our lips, we will continue to pay our vows unto him, keeping our sacrifice on the altar until it is wholly consumed.

“He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10) God is trying us as gold is tried. This means that he

puts us through the fires of affliction so that the gold of our character might be refined. How precious is the thought, however, that the Great Refiner tempers the heat. He will not permit us to be tested above what we are able to bear. If he sees that the heat is becoming so intense that we are apt to be injured, he provides a way of escape. (I Cor. 10:13) May this blessed assurance become so thoroughly fixed in our minds and hearts that nothing will be able to disturb our inner peace and rest in him and in his promises.

We have been blessed with the light of the knowledge of God. His wondrous works and the glorious doctrines of his plan have enlightened us. We have a hope for the world and for ourselves. We have the assurance of God's divine care, forgiveness, help, and discipline. All of these evidences convince us of the Heavenly Father's love. We know that he cares, and that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."—Ps. 84:11

We enjoy this knowledge because "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light." Shall we not then respond with rejoicing, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord and sounding forth his praises throughout the land? Let us thus offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving continually, and "bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar."—Ps. 118:27 ■

*"I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart;
I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.
I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise
to thy name, O thou most High."
—Psalm 9:1,2*