

Sacrifices of Thanksgiving

*“I will offer to thee
the sacrifice of
thanksgiving, and
will call upon
the name of
the LORD.”
—Psalm 116:17*

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 life to him, and no

longer living unto ourselves. 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.”—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 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 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 [which] 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 such difficulties 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, including 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 instruction 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. 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. Nothing can come into their lives except that which the Heavenly Father allows for their good. (Rom. 8:28) 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 all Christians should apply to themselves, and should believe with all their heart. If we are truly thankful for the manner in which God 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 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

We have been blessed with the light of the knowledge of God. His wondrous works and the glorious

doctrine 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 ■