

THANKSGIVING



GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon Earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Then shall the Earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the Earth shall fear him.

From the 67th Psalm.

PRAISE HIM for This Most Precious Gift

AN evening of this week it occurred to a man, sitting alone in an upper room, that Thanksgiving day was right at hand. So he bestirred his mind to consider those things for which an American might sensibly offer up gratitude to God.

He reflected that across the Atlantic millions of human beings were at that very moment engaged in the dreadful task of killing other human beings with every invention which ingenuity and skill could bring forth from the laboratories of science and the workshops of industry.

In other hands at that very moment tens of thousands upon tens of thousands of helpless folk—feeble, aged men and women, mothers with babes clinging convulsively to their breasts, little children sobbing in terror, a vast army of the innocent and the anguished—were enduring the extremities of exposure, of hunger, and of despair as they fled from their wasted farmsteads and burning villages, escaping from the pitiless cruelty of savage men only to lie down to suffer and die under the pitiless skies of God in the winter and the bitter storms.

At that very moment most dreadful war had half the world in the blackness of its darkness and from that horrid cloud rained destruction upon unhappy Europe—upon her ancient capitals, upon her pleasant cities, upon her villages, her fields, her temples, her treasures of art, upon all the accumulations of a thousand years of genius, of learning, of industry, of skill and of patient advancement of the happiness and the civilization of the race of man.

So he thought that all this wickedness that was being done under the sun, this drunken dance of death and hell above the feld corpses and the multitudinous graves, this awful nightmare of indescribable woe and wraith, said in the bitterness of his heart that no God ruled over such a maniac world and there was no thanksgiving due to the Giver of Gifts that were not good, but everyone altogether evil.

And when the man had made an end of his thinking, he went and stood in a window and looked out upon the evening, because it was fall to see.

He saw in vision at that instant the vastness of the republic and the multitude of the good and happy folk who live under the shelter of its strength. He reflected how brief a time had thus manifested the works of our pioneer fathers and our pioneer mothers, those brave and simple men and women whose names should never be mentioned with anything but profound gratitude.

And to this American, glad with a great pride in the deeds of his people and the story of his country, and grateful to the Goodness which has guided and sheltered his fathers and his folk, lifted up his eyes to the night, to the quiet stars, to the brooding immensity above, and said in his heart:

"Thank God that I am an American!"

And, citizens, that is the one outstanding, splendid fact for which each one of us should sobriety and most gratefully thank God on Thanksgiving day this year.

The finest thing you possess or ever can possess is just your American citizenship. It is neither necessary nor becoming, on this day or on any other day, to cheapen this birthright of ours by brag or spandangle declamation.

But it is highly becoming on this Thanksgiving day to feel a deep gratitude and a manly pride in this heritage.

And so we firmly believe you do feel. We all hear it repeated that patriotism is a thing of the past; that our people have become commercialized; that the masses have no deep-rooted loyalty to the country; that our rich men put dollars above the obligations of their citizenship; that our poor folk care little for the ideals of free government; that we Americans are decadent in the virtues and valor which marked our fathers.

That is not true.

If there be any power in the world which plots war against us Americans and promises itself victory over us on the assumption of our decadence in loyalty, that power will find how terrible was its mistake when our country calls her sons to battle in her defense.

We have, it is true, in our capacity as a collective people, left undone things that should have been done and done things which should have been left undone; and there is more truth than there should be in much that is jeeringly said by those who hate us.

We acknowledge that much of our politics offends common decency.

We see, here and there, painful evidence of corruption among lawmakers and even among the judges, who should know only justice and integrity.

We see rich men who do betray their country and foul their hands and soil their souls with the most infamous dealings and most shameful profits.

We see Americans who do put the dollar above every consideration of right and duty, above the claims of our common humanity.

But while these things are true, it is true also that the heart and conscience of the American people, take them as a nation, are sound and sane and wholesome.

The blood of our fathers still runs in the veins of their sons. The spirit of the nation may indeed seem to slumber in the soft bed of long-enjoyed peace and security. But let war come against the land and no man need doubt that that spirit will spring up instantly awake.

We can rightfully be grateful that it has fallen to our happy lot to live in this most wonderful of all ages and to be citizens of this most wonderful of all nations.

Let your hearts swell with just pride as you contemplate your country, so august, so splendid, so renowned in the earth.

Look upon your flag as it streams its bright folds yonder above your heads with proud and happy eyes. Remember how honorable is its story, and forget not how many thousands of brave and good men died that it might wave yonder, the ensign of a free people.

Tell to your children the story of their forebears, of those men and women who, amid the wilderness and forests that stood where now stand mighty cities and stretch cultivated farms, erected, with hardships and endurance and most heroic faith and valor, the noble edifice of our republican liberties.

Speak to them of Bunker Hill and Valley Forge and Saratoga and Yorktown, and of the great Declaration—that most famous Charter of Human Freedom.

Tell them to thank God for their fathers' and mothers' hardihood and courage, for the wars they fought, for the victories they won.

Tell them to salute their flag with high and proud hearts.

Tell them to thank God this Thanksgiving day that they are Americans.

And then do you soberly, gratefully, proudly thank God yourself that you are an American.

Oh, dear and mighty motherland, what better gift or more to be desired could God give than to be born and to die, strong Daughter of Liberty, between thy shining feet!—From the Chicago American.

U. S. TROOPS MAY USE CACTUS FOR WATER

In the pursuit of Villa and his bandits through the arid regions of northern Mexico the United States troops traversed a region whose only vegetation is the barbed and forbidding cactus. To any but a cowboy or a trained plainsman of the Southwest, inhabitants themselves of the "cactus belt," this plant seemingly has no more value than the veriest weed, but it may well be that it may prove of great value to the troops in the absence of water, fodder, or even food for human beings.

In the punitive expedition there are many cow punchers of the "cactus belt" serving as scouts, and in the cowboy and the Indian of the Southwest the lowly cactus has its greatest admirer, for they know what a game struggle for life this plant has to make against an unrelenting desert soil. Even their ponies and cattle and the poor beasts of the desert know of these uses of the cactus for water and fodder, says the New York Herald.

There are some thousand varieties of this monstrous vegetable family, not counting the 300 varieties of the agave, or century plant—incorrectly included by many—in northern Mexico. The varieties of the yucca palm and all other forms of vegetation known to the arid region have the same faculty of sucking up from the soil every drop of the all too little moisture in it and storing it up in their tough and leathery leaves and roots.

Of the many varieties perhaps the most remarkable is that member of the family known to those schooled in desert craft as the "water barrel." This plant is shaped somewhat like a beer keg and is about the same size. Through all the years of its growth it has been sopping up what moisture the parched earth contained and retaining it. It is the sole reliance of desert dwellers in time of drought, and the troops, far from water holes and with water scarce, may yet be obliged to drink from it.

The "water barrel" is tapped by slicing off the top with a sword or machete and pounding the pulp until the water contained in it wells up into

the saucer thus formed. The pulp itself is pure and the water stored in it is likewise pure and refreshing.

Not all the water-bearing cacti are as gracious to famishing man, however, as the "water barrel," for most of them have protected themselves against the maraudings of those who would drink and live by imparting a bitter taste to the water they contain. The "peyote," especially, which abounds in the plains and deserts of Arizona, has a trick of discouraging deprecations upon it, for its plump and juicy pulp secretes a bitter and poisonous juice.

In the last dozen years scientists have interested themselves in the study of the cactus for its possibilities as food, fodder and economic by-products. Dr. Leon E. Landone, foremost in the study of this desert plant, several years ago conducted extensive experiments in Los Angeles to ascertain the value of the thornless cactus as an article of food for human beings. In an effort to prove his contention that it contains food properties sufficient to enable a man to work 18 hours a day, he had his two secretaries for two weeks lived on a daily diet of the leaves and fruit of the cactus, the former being served green or fried and the latter either raw or cooked. While the "cactus squad" survived the experience and professor to have enjoyed their novel diet, it is a fact that the cactus never has attained the popularity of a flet mignon.

In the whole vegetable kingdom probably there is not another plant family having so many differentiations of form as the cacti. For it is possible to find among them species that crawl and creep like vines, other than stand erect in a single unbending stalk, like a green living monument of the desert; still others that are rooted to the spot with their highest growth close to the ground and bearing almost no resemblance to usual forms of vegetation, and others, again, that branch out in thick unblooming branches.

"Come to this," he says. "Thanks!" says I. "What's your name?" "It's Schwab," says he. "Charlie Schwab!" . . . An' faith, he'd give me a match today as quick as he was after givin' it to me this."

THE BRUTE.

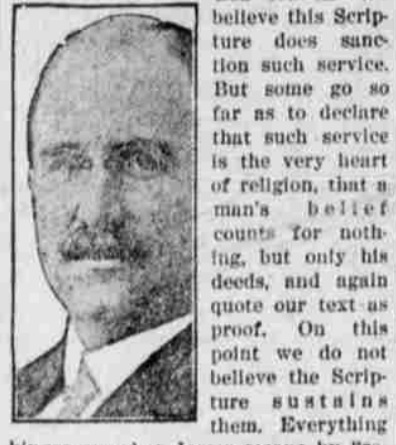
Mrs. Willis—Wake up, John! Wake up!
Mr. Willis—What's the matter?
Mrs. Willis—I hear a harsh, grating noise. I think someone is trying the door.
Mr. Willis—Nonsense. It's some rat trying to take you made today.—Life.

Pure Religion

By REV. L. W. GOSNELL
Superintendent of Men, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago

TEXT—Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.—James 1:27.

We hear much of social service today and men quote our text as a sanction for it. We believe this Scripture does sanction such service. But some go so far as to declare that such service is the very heart of religion, that a man's belief counts for nothing, but only his deeds, and again quote our text as proof. On this point we do not believe the Scripture sustains them. Everything hinges on what James means by "religion." The word he uses is really equivalent to worship. As Coleridge says: "The outward service of ancient religion, the rites, ceremonies, and ceremonial vestments of the law, had morality for their substance. They were the letter of which morality was the spirit; the enigma of which morality was the meaning. But morality itself is the service and ceremonial of the Christian religion." James is not to be understood as putting the outward aspect of the divine life against its inward aspect. To make him say that benevolence and personal purity are religion, in the present-day sense of the word, would be like saying that a mother's love is washing and feeding her child! These deeds are only the fruit of her love, just as the "religion" of the text is the fruit of religion in the soul. And while James states that true worship consists in benevolence and purity, he would not discourage the worship of the sanctuary; only, he would insist that what we do outside the sanctuary is the actual test of us.



The men who especially appeal to this age are such as Chinese Gordon, the "soldier saint," who put down the T'ai-ping rebellion, saving thousands of lives; who opposed slavery in the Sudan, gave to the fatherless and widows all he had, and died a martyr of Khartoum; yet he was a member of no church, but communed as opportunity served in Greek and Roman Catholic churches; moreover, did not accept the orthodox view as to future punishment. Or, such men as the seventh earl of Shaftesbury, who cared for the interests of factory hands, chimney sweeps, costermongers and the imbecile; Doctor Barnardo, the builder of homes for the waifs of London; or Doctor Grenfell, working among the deep-sea fishermen of Labrador, spending himself to relieve their sufferings, opening hospitals, cooperative stores and other agencies for good.

Relation to Others.

These men really "visited" the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, caring for them personally. Gordon taught the ragged schools and was not content till he had placed the boys where they might hope for success in life; many were sent to sea and he had a chart on his wall stuck with pins, showing where the vessels containing his "kings" were. He would sit down at the bedside of old women in the almshouse and read to them. The earl of Shaftesbury would take a lantern of nights and seek out the lowly on London bridge to help them.

Relation to Self.

Our text also requires that one be "unspotted from the world." Dean Alford defines the world as "the whole earthly creation, separated from God and lying in sin, which, whether as consisting in the men who serve it, or the enticements which it holds out to evil lusts, is to Christians a source of continual defilement." It is human society in its ungodly bias. To refer to Gordon alone, he refused honors from the Chinese government because it had broken faith with rebels in the T'ai-ping rebellion, murdering some who had been promised immunity. An African boy said Gordon could see in the dark because he had the light in him.

Moreover, all this service must be done as "before our God and Father." It must please him, and it is not strictly true to say the service of humanity is the service of God, for it is not always so. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." The first requirement for service is life; "ye must be born again." Even the deacons who served tables in the New Testament must be men "full of the Holy Ghost."

We are not disturbed by Gordon's views on church fellowship and future punishment, for he was not inflexible. We are more interested to learn that, as a result of his early training, the divine life came into his soul while he was in China. The earl of Shaftesbury was a deeply devoted evangelical Christian. Doctor Barnardo was a fruit of the revival in Ireland in 1859-1861, and cared for the souls of the waifs of London as well as for their bodies. Doctor Grenfell traces all the good in his life to D. L. Moody and especially to a service he attended where he found a faith and reality which he coveted and at last obtained. He says, "I am a brick in the superstructure which has grown up through Mr. Moody on the foundation of Jesus Christ, and I am out in Labrador working." While giving praise even to humanitarian work conducted without reference to the Gospel, he says, "I can only say still, I have found faith in Jesus Christ as Son of God makes men do that which nothing else did, and bear and suffer with equanimity that which nothing else would."

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of the Sunday School Course in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
(Copyright, 1914, Western Newspaper Union.)

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 3

JESUS CHRIST THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

LESSON TEXT—Rev. 1.
GOLDEN TEXT—Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one, and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.—Rev. 1:17, 18.

The lesson committee have departed, seemingly, a long way from anything like chronological order. Paul had nothing to do with the writing of the Revelation, yet this lesson illustrates the pre-eminence which Jesus Christ had in the mind and labors of the great apostle (Col. 1:18).

I. Introduction. (vv. 1-3.) We would suggest that all Bible students and teachers, if possible, read the introduction to the Book of Revelation in Scofield's Reference Bible. The book proper is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," John, the beloved disciple, who wrote the Gospel and Epistles, was the one who saw the visions recorded therein. Many of the things are historical, others are prophetically set forth. The latter are "shortly to come to pass." (See also II Peter 3:8.) John tells not only what God said but what he himself saw. The late Doctor Brooks of St. Louis omitted this book from his study for many years until he saw the comments recorded in verse 3. The time of the writing of this book has variously been stated as from A. D. 60 to A. D. 96; the writer was certainly John the Beloved. The place of writing was the island of Patmos in the Aegean sea, not far from Ephesus. The real author, however, is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

II. Salutation. (vv. 4-8.) "The servant of Jesus who records his message was John, and the message was to be to the seven churches which are in Asia;" that is, the western portion of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus on the Aegean sea was the principal city. These churches are definitely named in verse 11. There is good reason to think that these churches represented the seven successive epochs of church history. If so, no age is exclusively Ephesian, or Philadelphia, or Laodicean. The grace, favor, loving kindness, is a free gift from Christ, who is here giving a threefold title, namely: First begotten from the dead, witness and prince. He it is, which is love, and which is to come. (Eternal I am.—Ex. 3:14.) His work is also set forth in verse 5, and the results in our lives in verse 8. We have here the real humanity and the certain deity of our Lord and Saviour.

III. Vision. (vv. 9-18.) What John saw on the isle of Patmos he was to write upon a parchment roll and send it to the seven churches, each of which needed a message. Under the figure of seven candlesticks are enumerated seven churches. Into the midst of these churches, actually present in them, is one like unto the Son of Man. (See also Matthew 18:20.) Like a human being, Jesus was, but now clothed with the garment of his eternal glory, girded about with the gristle worn by priests and kings, a symbol of his power and strength (Isaiah 11:5; Eph. 6:14). His head and his hands, his feet and his eyes are all referred to, each having its symbolical significance. In his right hand are the seven stars (v. 16), the angels of the churches, pastors or leaders, possibly guardian angels (v. 20). They are held in his right hand, signifying that they are protected, upheld and controlled by his wisdom and power. (See Jeremiah 22:24.) From his mouth goes a sharp, two-edged sword; the spirit of the Word of God sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). And his countenance was as the sun shining in its strength, the glory, such as was manifested in the transfiguration, such as Paul saw near Damascus, is here referred to. It is the symbol of the glorious nature of our Savior King, eclipsing all other beings, as the sun eclipses the stars. He who is victory over the darkness of ignorance and sin and who is the prince of all powers. Is it to be wondered at that John fell at his feet as one dead after having seen such an overwhelming vision? The greater the discoveries we have of the glory of Christ, the more we shall be humbled in the dust before him. Jesus laid his right hand upon John, a gentle, brotherly touch, which aroused him to consciousness and encouraged him by the words, "Fear not; I am the first and the last." The same divine Jesus, whom he had known on earth and whom he had seen crucified and risen from the dead, ever liveth. (v. 18) And he also has the keys of power and the control of death; has the power to preserve from death and to raise to immortal life, even as when he raised the body of Lazarus.

IV. The Command. John had enjoyed a tender intimacy with the Lord during his earthly life and yet he was stricken down with the overpowering majesty and glory which had been revealed. Now he realized, as perhaps never before, the significance of the ever-living Christ, and he is hereby specifically commanded to record this vision as he had seen it and the messages which the Lord had for the churches. The word mystery (v. 20) has reference to something which has hitherto been hidden to men and which is now about to be revealed. The revelation was to these churches, and it is to us also.

Jesus is not a mere vision but he is a living reality, unveiled for the time from the unseen.

Jesus is a living fact which we are to communicate to men. The seven stars (v. 20) are messages in his own right hand.

The churches are the lamp-stands, Christ himself is the light, the sure (v. 10).

Temperance Notes

"PERSONAL LIBERTY" EXHIBIT.

An antialcohol exhibit in a certain town faced several saloons located just across the street, the proprietors of which were reported to bitterly resent the prohibition facts presented. Threats were said to have been made by them, so that the special night watchman employed gave much of the time to careful guarding of this exhibit. The town appears to be something of a rendezvous for personal liberty agitators. These people were the first to "size up" the exhibit, and continually some of them were circulating among the people ready for a discussion.

One day a foreign-born citizen stood at the W. C. T. U. booth and fell into conversation. He professed to believe in temperance all right, but he had a right to do as he pleased in his own home, etc. Presently he was joined by another man who talked loudly after the same fashion. Soon quite a little company had gathered to listen and occasionally take part in the "free for all." Suddenly right into their midst lurched a man who immediately began to take part in the discussion. He was drunk and said so, but informed them that liquor was the worst curse in the world; that though he was a drinking man he meant to vote dry every time. He was allowed to talk until everyone present realized the situation, then the director of the exhibit turned to the two defenders of personal liberty and remarked, "Gentlemen, here is a sample of the product of what you are advocating and defending. How do you like the exhibit?" There was no reply and soon they had disappeared, seeming to just melt away in silence.

BAD JOKE.

"Alcohol as a food is a joke, and rather a bad joke at that," affirms Dr. Woods Hutchinson.

"Alcohol does not do for us a single one of the things we think it does, and it does a score of other things which we have no idea of when we drink it."

"Thirty years ago we were blantly confident that alcohol was a food because it could be burned in the body. Now, we know that the total amount of alcohol which can be burned in the body in 24 hours is only two ounces, which would be about the same amount of energy as one good slice of bread and butter; that is to say, about one-tenth of the fuel required to keep us alive."

"If we were to attempt to use alcohol as a serious source of nourishment we should be blind drunk before we had taken more than one fifth of the amount needed for a day's rations."

"Moreover, even in the small amount which can be daily consumed and burned up in the body, its poisonous effects are at least 50 per cent greater than its food value."

It throws the body engine out of gear almost twice as much as it puts fuel into its fire-box. The amount of meat taken with it in beer and fruit-sugars in wine are so trifling as to be not worth counting in our day's food supply."

WORK FOR EVERYBODY.

"I saw not a single man who was looking for a job as the result of the closing of the saloons, breweries and distilleries," said a former resident of Seattle, after a visit to that city. "On the contrary, I heard on every hand that there was more work than laborers to do it. I was told by someone from the Industrial Brotherhood, a refuge for 'down and outs,' that there was actually nobody without employment who was able to work. You know that for two winters preceding the going into effect of the prohibitory law, we had in Seattle what they called 'Hotel Liberty,' at which, during the last winter there were housed about 2,500 men out of employment. That has now ceased to exist; in fact I am told by those who know, that last winter there was no bread line in the city at any point."

EVEN PENNSYLVANIA.

That supposedly impregnable stronghold of liquorism, the state of Pennsylvania, is like every other state of the Union, giving way before advancing prohibition sentiment. Five years ago it had two dry counties; today it has eleven. In 1911 there was one saloon for every 681 persons; today there is one for every 737. In 1911 there were about 700 square miles of dry territory; today there are 12,900. In 1911, 60,000 people of the state lived in no-license territory; today there are 1,500,000, nearly one-fifth of the total population. It is stated that of the 1,700 saloons in Philadelphia, 200 are on the market. One broker advertises that he has 100 for sale.

WHAT SALOON SAYS.

Today the saloon says to the government, "Don't bother me. The wage-workers of this country have \$2,000,000 in their pocketbooks that I want to pick. You let me get at it and I'll divide the swag with you."—Billy Sunday.

UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT.

"I have a boy (or girl) at home" ought to be the unanswerable argument against the legalized liquor traffic for every man who is privileged to be a father.

IMPROVE CONDITIONS.

Labor unions of California sent representatives to Seattle and Portland to investigate conditions under prohibition. They returned enthusiastic for a law that is doing so much to improve the conditions of the working-man.

CALL THEM SKUNKS.

"Why 'blind pigs' if they are to be called after any animal call them skunks. That is the only animal that dispenses strong liquor without a license."—Clarence True Wilson.