

of Jesus for you. What debt of gratitude do you owe him for it all?

BENEFITS OF HIS SACRIFICE.

1. "That ye through his poverty might become rich." How has Jesus enriched all life, as far as the human mind can understand God? Jesus represents him for us. He shows us what truth, beauty, love, sympathy, and brotherhood are, and what they can accomplish. In the effort to develop industry, art, love, liberty, and all that man holds dearest the nineteenth century has been a great advance over every other century, mainly because Jesus has been the inspiration of these things as in no other era. The influence of Jesus has been the chief factor in purifying and establishing the modern home with all its blessed influences; of emancipating woman and giving her a free field to the lasting good of the race; of regaining childhood and making it a hallowed ministry; has been the chief inspiration of the conflicts for liberty and for popular government; has been the handmaid of education, science, art, literature, music, and a thousand other things, which have helped to make life sweeter and nobler and which have made earth more heavenly.

2. *Jesus has given us a great example.* The heart is always affected by the object of its regard. Homer pictured an ideal hero, Achilles, and this character became the inspiration of Greek life for a thousand years. Alexander the Great carried his Homer with him on all his campaigns, and much of his life can be explained by his incarnation of the ideals of Homer as set forth in Achilles. So Jesus has been the inspiration of righteousness and of noble character. Before this power barbarism has melted away, marble rocks have turned into noble buildings, forests have been transformed into cities, the powers of nature have come to man's aid, his wants have been supplied but over supplied, until he finds himself more and more transformed into the full-orbed character of God himself.

3. *He has turned us from wickedness into holiness.* "Ye were as sheep going astray." A striking picture of the ignorant, innocent lamb, wandering aimlessly about, not knowing whither its way led, brought into the comfortable fold. So Jesus has drawn us back, has saved us by his death, and has pointed us to the heavenly fold.

OUR DEBT OF GRATITUDE.

1. *Who can tell what we owe to Jesus? Certainly, we owe him our love.* What does that mean? Pharaoh's daughter found Moses, and took him to her palace, but his mother consented to become a hireling to the wages for nursing her own child, because she loved him. So love can deny itself and take up the cross. The great question underlying all service is a question of love, of heart devotion. Should we not show our gratitude to Jesus by a love which will gladly serve him?

2. *Paul makes the self-improvement of Christ a motive for Christian liberality.* By giving money we can often illustrate in the lower sphere of material good the self-sacrifice of Christ for our enrichment. He, therefore, uses this great sacrifice of Christ as the basis of an appeal for a good collection from the Corinthians. So we ought to show our gratitude by giving liberally of our means "according as the Lord hath prospered us" to the various benevolent enterprises of the Church.

3. *God is love; his purpose is love.* He sent his Son to seek and to save his lost. Why? Because he grieves over human sin and pities human misery. And, therefore, to remedy evil, to strive for good—not to neglect the little duties and beneficences of life, the gracious acts, the tender courtesies, the tolerant appreciations, the public mag-

nanities, the social efforts, the rational aims of a nobler manhood, either in selfish absorption in the effort to save our own souls or in fury against others because they will not save their souls in our way—in one word, to love God and our neighbor, and to love one another as he gave us commandment—this is to live as Christ lived on earth. The carrying out of this love in our lives is one of the best ways of showing our gratitude to Jesus for his kindness toward us.

FLASHLIGHTS.

1. Christ asks first for our wills; he wants them for his tools.
2. He asks next for our bodies; he wants them for his home.
3. Then he asks for our possessions; he wants to give them back to us multiplied by the enjoyment that comes from self-denial.
4. He asks for our time, that he may magnify it into eternity.
5. He asks for our desires, that he may be able to grant them all.
6. He asks for our whole heart, that he may give himself wholly to us, with all the kingdoms of the universe.
7. Christ has made us rich in contentment, opening up for us an account in that bank where thieves do not break through nor steal.
8. Christ has made us rich in achievement, for if we let him lay plans for us, we shall never fail.
9. Christ has made us rich in knowledge, for he opens to us the only library whose books do not crumble to dust.
10. Christ has made us rich in happiness, for there is no good cheer until one is good.—*Wells.*

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Here are a few culled hints to secure variety and attractiveness in your meetings:

1. Change the arrangements of the chairs, putting them in a semi-circle, or in groups.
2. Vary the order often—now begin with prayers, now with your leader's talk, now with the recitation of scripture verses.
3. A single novelty in a meeting helps it greatly—a diagram on the blackboard, a hymn read in concert, prayers offered in unison, and the like. One new plan is enough, but try to introduce one.
4. Committee leadership is a good method, each committee being made responsible in turn for a meeting and dividing up among their members the work of leading, one offering prayer, one commenting on the lesson, one reading the scripture, one leading the singing, one planning how to bring out the other members to take part.

MARCH 31—"MISSIONS—LOVE OF SOULS."

Rom. 10: 1.

HOME READINGS.

- Mon., Mar. 25. Christianity's mission..... Ps. 60: 4; Phil. 2: 12-16.
 Tues., Mar. 26. The chains of the world..... John 11: 47-52; 1 John 2: 1, 2.
 Wed., Mar. 27. Badges of discipleship..... Luke 9: 23-26
 Thu., Mar. 28. Jesus' example..... Isa. 61: 1-3
 Fri., Mar. 29. The secret of beneficence..... Matt. 6: 1-4
 Sat., Mar. 30. The inspiring motive. Acts 17: 23-31 Rev. 7: 9-17

The great missionary motives are love for Christ, and love of souls. Success is not far off when we desire to save men more than we desire anything else in the world. In carrying out our desires, however, we must remember that we are powerless without God's help. "Without me ye can do nothing." It is an inspiration to bear in mind that God is relying upon us for his help. He has always carried on his work by

human instrumentality. "By man shall man be saved." It is likely the spirit of fear will come upon some—but let the fear of God drive out the fear of man; and keep the fact in view, that success, with the fulfilment of the divine conditions is as certain as the promise of a faithful God canake it.

THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT.

In previous chapters Paul had described the sad condition of his countrymen. And in our topic chapter, he pours forth the ardent longings of his soul: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved." This is the utterance of the Christian patriot. Spiritual salvation is the highest good for the individual, the community, and the nation. This secured, other needful good will follow in its train. Earth's patriots begin at the surface and work downwards; the Christian patriot against the root and work upward. Spiritual truth is the true civilizing force. Christianize, and you have already begun to civilize.

KINSHIP A STRONG TIE.

Israelites were Paul's kinsmen. Love of kin is a sure basis for love of kind. The man who does not care for his relatives is not likely to care for the world beyond. Seek, and generally speaking, seek first to tell the gospel message to those near to us by the ties of nature. We have peculiar obligations to do this. Love, relationship, contiguity, opportunity, all urge it.

1. *Israel was unwared.* Many of Paul's kinsmen were in this condition. Brethren after the flesh, aliens after the spirit, remarks Burrows. "That they might be saved" opens up a wide field of thought and hope to the anxious apostle. Paul was desirous, not for the restoration of David's throne to an earthly monarch, but for the establishment of the supremacy of David's greater Son, and Lord. "That they might be saved" is the apostle's great goal for the human race. He not only desired the salvation of his kinsmen, but of the millions of the human race. He was the apostle of the gentiles; his love and labor went out for all, as usually he could reach by his prayers and work and influence. So with us. The limit of our Christian labor should not be our family circle, but our holy ambition should include our community, our country, the world.

2. *Israel had a false zeal.* Paul knew something of the zeal of the Jews. He himself had been one of them—and one of the most zealous. The Jews had zeal for the ceremonies. They tithed even smallest things, as mint, anise and sumin; they were punctilious about the letter of the Sabbath, about postures, about washings, about the shape of garments. It was a misplaced zeal. It was zeal with a wrong motive. It spent itself on formalities; and had its root in pride. It was not a zeal from God. Zeal in the Lord's work, however, we must have, or the cause will languish. The zeal of the Jew with a different motive, and a different application, is needed now. Men with enthusiasm are the men the world needs. lofty ideals stirring the nature become a mighty power for good. Religious ideals are the loftiest, and let us cultivate and utilize them, young people, with love to God and man, for the betterment of the world. Let us have zeal, but let it be a zeal of God according to knowledge.

PRAYER AND ACTION.

Paul prayed that Israel might be saved. But he did not remove himself from the struggles of sinful humanity. He did not retire into a monastery and there lament the condition of the world. He was strong in prayer, and used that strength in action. He obtained divine light and teaching at the throne of the heavenly grace, and used the blessings possessed for the good of his fellows. A lesson to learn! In our endeavors