

"Giving and receiving" is equivalent to "debit and credit." The Philippians had "opened an account" of generosity with him, of which their giving is the "credit" and his receiving the "debit" side respectively. "Paul had bestowed on them priceless spiritual gifts. It was only squaring the account that he should receive material blessings from them. *In Thessalonica*. See Acts 17:1-9.

Vs. 17, 18. *Not . . . desire a gift*. It was Paul's ordinary practice to refuse support for preaching the gospel, lest he should be accused of preaching for gain (see 2 Cor. 11:7-9). *Fruit . . . to your account*; "interest that accumulates in this way to your divine credit" (Moffatt). The terms used are from the money market. *I have all*; the usual form of a receipt. It is as if Paul had written: "I give you a receipt for what you owed me." *I . . . abound*. "Who is rich? He that is contented with his lot" (Jewish saying). *I am full*; "amply supplied." *From Epaphroditus*; the messenger who brought the gifts of the Philippian church (compare ch. 2:25). *A sacrifice*. In the early church a gift to an apostle or teacher seems to have been regarded as an offering to God.

Vs. 19, 20. *My God . . . supply all your needs*. The Philippians had ministered to Paul's need so that he could say: "I am full." That is the side of the reckoning which stood to their credit. Here is the other side. God will repay what has been done to his servant for the gospel's sake. He, in turn will satisfy every need of theirs. *According to his riches in glory*; "from his wealth in glory" (Moffatt).

*In Christ Jesus* (Rev. Ver.); in whom all this wealth is contained.

### Light from the East

DEEDS OF FELLOWSHIP—Paul's heart was touched by the Philippian Christians' deeds of fellowship, v. 16. He was a poor man and they ministered to his necessity. There were many poor in the early church, and it was no small task to help them. Many of the Lord's sayings about the poor were recalled. (See Matt., chs. 6, 19, 20; 10:9, 10; 19:21-24.) Some of his disciples thought that salvation was to be won by giving away their property, Luke 6:34, 35; 12:21, 33. Most of the Master's disciples seem to have been quite poor. It was natural that the spirit of the early church should seek to check the pursuit of wealth; especially as nearly every Christian believed that the end of the world was just at hand. The church did not require the abandonment of wealth but it strongly approved of the generosity of Barnabas. Acts 4:34 to 5:1 sets an ideal before Christian men.

The Jerusalem church seems to have been particularly rich in poor members. There were so many of them and they were so poor that they stood in sore need of help from the outside, and that help Paul looked for from the rich commercial centres of Greece and Macedonia, 2 Cor., ch. 9. In the same way the thousands of destitute Jews who have found their way to Jerusalem in recent times that their lives may be laid on the sacred slopes of Mount Zion are fed from the bounty of the Jews in Europe and America.

### THE LESSON APPLIED

Fellowship is one of the deep words of our language, and carries a much richer meaning than we sometimes give to it. There is the fellowship, which is in word and tongue, and that which is in deed and in truth. The former is easy and superficial, and can be expressed in a mere formal code of etiquette; the latter is genuine and practical and involves the principles of character and conduct. Men are born with a strong social instinct, which must find expression in some way. When young fellows loaf around the country store, sharing their experiences and jokes, when men unite in clubs and secret societies, with

their common interests and benefits, when society organizes itself in any one of its thousand forms, they each and all manifest this love for fellowship. Yet this natural instinct has never found a perfect expression, and so we have endless suggestions, telling us the true basis of human brotherhood. Some of these are social, some political, and some economic. The fellowship of the New Testament has its centre in Christ and heads up into God, the Universal Spirit.

The first law of Christianity, so far as our fellow man is concerned, is to love our neighbor as ourselves. All the principles of Chris-