

## COME, LET US GIVE THANKS.

It is good to give thanks. It makes men feel richer, and happier, and braver to find that they have many reasons for gratitude. And this is what they do find when they consider God's dealings with them. For the good we have received, for the ills we have escaped, for the right things we have done, for the wrong things we have not done, we are thankful; for it is the Lord who has led us, and love and wisdom, goodness and mercy, are in His hand. Forget not all His benefits, who giveth bountifully, forgiveth cheerfully, and upbraideth not at all.

The individual owes the first duty of thanks for innumerable gifts and mercies. For the good things that minister to bodily health and comfort; for all the restful, helpful, and instructive thoughts brought to the mind; for the cheer which a firm faith imparts through all vicissitudes and experiences; for the sympathy and help, and encouragement of unselfish friendship; for the thousand and one beneficent influences which make for a life of righteousness—all these touch the springs of gratitude which well up in praise and thanksgiving.

Then there is the household, with its intimate and loving relationships. Morning and evening the mercies of God are dwelt upon. Whether its comforts be few or many, it is a home, and a home is the dearest and most heavenly thing on earth. It speaks of a father's providence, a mother's tender ministries, and the delightful society of innocent children. Is the circle still complete? Let the heart overflow with praise to God. Is some one missing? Then the beautiful sympathy of those who remain is a balm. Cares and trials and afflictions we cannot escape—but we bear them better in homes where hearts are drawn together in love, and where the spirit of Christ prevails.

Love of country is next to love of God, and we have a country worthy our deepest love. No fairer or richer lies beneath the sun, and with all the frailties of man it is governed so that there is the minimum of oppression with the maximum of liberty and opportunity. We are at peace. We are coming more and more to hate and fear war.

Finally, we have the Church. Not more sacred than the household, not more necessary than the State, not altogether perfect nor fully united, it is yet a precious and gracious institution. It is both divine and human; divine in its aim and spirit, human in its character and composition. Its doors are ever open, and all are welcome to its altars. Its ministries are broad as human needs; its influences pure and unselfish. Whatever is good it inculcates, whatever is helpful it approves, whatever is true it confirms, and whatever is humane it promotes. Faith in God, hope of a glorious immortality, right living and triumphant dying are the privileges it declares to all. The Church is of God's founding, and no other institution so fully illustrates His beneficence. As men and women shall gather in their sanctuaries to give thanks for the blessings of the year, they cannot be unmindful of what the Church has done for them and is doing for the world. Its Psalms and hymns inspire true hearts, its organ harmonies smooth ruffled spirits, its prayers lift up the timid and disheartened, its sermons open the way before the perplexed, its fellowship gives courage and direction to faltering steps, and its sympathy is inexpressibly sweet to the afflicted and sorrowful.

The State could not be what it is without the home, the home could not be what it is without the Church. The magnitude of God's mercy is shown in providing these institutions for our comfort and happiness. We have failed Him often and at many points, but He has never failed us.

Bless the Lord O my soul,  
And forget not all His benefits;  
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;  
Who healeth all thy diseases;  
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;  
Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies,  
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things;  
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.

## THE BLESSEDNESS OF MINISTERING.

Service is a badge of Christian discipleship, and only those who wear that badge can come into a full appreciation of the richness and completeness of the compensations that accrue to those who deny themselves, take

up their cross, and follow the divine Lord. In many ways the work of ministering was dignified and magnified by Jesus. When certain of His disciples were carried away with an inordinate ambition to sit, one on His right hand and the other on His left hand, in His glory, He not only administered a deserved rebuke to them, but made it clear that greatness in the kingdom of God is dependent upon the principle of service; not the formal service demanded in the exercise of religious duties, but rather the larger service demanded by the need of humanity, and springing out of the intense love manifested by Jesus for mankind, and instilled by Him into the hearts and minds of His followers. Where, therefore, He said, "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all (for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many)," He not only rebuked His thoughtless disciples, but set His seal of approval upon and glorified the service rendered by even His humblest follower.

A deed of loving kindness sends out its beneficent influence in at least three directions. It blesses the doer, it blesses the recipient, and it is well-pleasing in the eyes of the Master. In Lowell's vision of Sir Launfal, the leper, transformed into the Christ, says to Sir Launfal in a "voice that was softer than silence,"

"Lo it is I, be not afraid!  
In many climes, without avail,  
Thou has spent thy life for the Holy Grail;  
Behold, it is here,—this cup which thou  
Didst fill at the streamlet for me now;  
This crust is My body broken for thee,  
This water His blood that died on the tree;  
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,  
In whatso we share with another's need;  
Not what we give, but what we share,  
For the gift without the giver is bare;  
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,  
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

The world is rich in people who are making its waste and desert places to blossom as the rose through the blessedness of their quiet ministering. Not much is said of their gracious labors, because they are performed without ostentation, or desire for public recognition of any kind. The satisfaction that comes from doing good and the consciousness that their labors of love meet the approval of their Lord is all the reward they desire for their devotion to the needs of others. It was no desire for public praise that led the wife of a minister in New York to take a sick child from a poor family, into her own home, and nurse it through an illness which proved contagious, resulting from a malignant disease with which the noble woman is now herself prostrated. Nor was it any other than her love for her Saviour and for humanity that recently induced a good woman of another church to separate herself for three weeks from the duties and comforts of her own home to serve as nurse for a poor stricken woman in the neighborhood, who had no special claim upon her.

A great many similar instances might be cited of the sincere devotion of men and women to the needs of their fellows, where there is no other impelling motive than that arising from the love they bear to Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." The reflex action of such ministering is one of the greatest compensations. No one can do a good deed without reaping some substantial benefit therefrom. To alleviate the suffering, to assuage the sorrowing, to encourage the disheartened, to share the burden of the overburdened, to relieve the distressed, to nurse the sick, to counsel the wayward, to sympathize with the tempted, to ameliorate the condition of the poor—to minister to God's needy ones in any way, is to accomplish in some measure the work performed by Him who went about doing good, and who, in comforting His disciples shortly before He was offered up as "a ransom for many," uttered these prophetic words: "He that believeth on Me the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."

On every hand there are opportunities to perform deeds of loving-kindness. There is never any drought in this field. It is always inviting. Here indeed the harvest is always plenteous, and the laborers in it are too few. If all those who name the name of Jesus were to imitate His holy example toward those who needed His sympathy and love, what a gracious and wide-