

**A SOUVENIR
PAMPHLET, BEING
SIX SERMONS**

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A Souvenir Pamphlet, Being Six Sermons by Herbert W. Lathe

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HERBERT W. LATHE

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SOUVENIR PAMPHLET

BEING

SIX SERMONS

—BY—

REV. HERBERT W. LATHE

*Preached in the First Congregational Church, Pasadena,
California.*

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST

"THY WORD IS TRUTH."

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1902.

THESE Sermons are selected and published by friends in the First Church, Pasadena, and I am asked to write a few words of introduction.

There is no gospel worth preaching but the Gospel of Divine Grace, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." That Gospel is clearly, fully and lovingly revealed in the Bible — "God its Author; truth without mixture its matter; and salvation its end."

Of that Gospel the Christian preacher is the herald. He has simply to preach the preaching that God has bid; and God's bidding is so plain that he may run who reads.

I have always aimed to preach a pure, simple and full Gospel; and in this endeavor one of my sweetest memories is of the beloved church in Pasadena, with which I labored seven happy years.

As I look over these Sermons, I am back again in that pulpit which I left so reluctantly. I see again the many dear faces; I feel once more the quick and sympathetic response of hearts made new by the Spirit of God.

God bless you all! What we so feebly preach now, we will gloriously sing together hereafter.

HERBERT W. LATHE.

I

A Thanksgiving Sermon.



A Thanksgiving Sermon.

Preached Sunday Morning, November 24th, 1901.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."—Ps. 116: 12, 13.

TRAVELERS in the East tell us, that when they make their way over the rough, rocky mountains, the guides sometimes stop and build little mounds of stone, and turn a moment to utter a word of praise for God's care thus far, and a prayer for their coming journey. Such a memory-spot as this is Thanksgiving Day. The springs of thanksgiving are deep down. True gratitude wells up from the depths of Christian faith and love. You say: "Anybody can give thanks; anybody can feel good because he has his way; anybody can praise the Lord when the Lord gives him what he wants." But genuine gratitude which takes the cup of salvation, with all that is in it, both sweet and bitter, and calls upon the name of the Lord in praise — that comes only from those who have companied with God and who have known the secret of His love.

Gratitude is an attitude, a condition of soul, not dependent at all upon what one receives from the Lord. One person has many things, and is dissatisfied and restless all his life; another has little, and

his life is full of praise and joy. It is what we are, not what we receive, which determines our gratitude. Is it claimed that a man may be grateful to God for material things, and not take account at all of spiritual things? That he can praise God for home, friends, business, health, and not praise Him for Jesus Christ, prayer and the church? He can use words; but direct, vital, glorifying thanksgiving comes only from one who has taken the cup of salvation.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." It is the "redeemed of the Lord" who are able to say so. David was redeemed; and therefore he spoke these words out of a redeemed experience. What does he say, in the text? He asks a question and answers it.

FIRST.—*The question:* "What shall I render unto the Lord, for all His benefits toward me?"

There are two facts evident in this question: one is, that David had been reckoning up his mercies; and the other is, that he feels that in view of them there are certain obligations. He had been impressed evidently by the multitude of God's mercies to him, by the good things which God had given him; and he was also impressed with the fact that these mercies did indeed come from God. Thanksgiving, then, is more, and rather, the grateful recognition of God in His gifts, than the special recognition of the gifts themselves. It is a personal relationship established between the recipient and the Giver. We are invited at this Thanksgiving season to reflect on what God has done for us. On the crest of a great philanthropist were the words "Think and thank." When

one does think, he does thank. Those two words, differing simply in one letter, are the same in root in the old Anglo-Saxon. Thinkfulness was thankfulness.

When we count up our mercies, where shall we begin, and where shall we end? A little child told her father she would count the stars, and the father told her to go on. By and by, he heard the tired child: "Eighty-seven, eighty-eight, eighty-nine — Oh, dear! I had no idea there were so many of them." Where shall we begin and where shall we end if we name the gifts of God? What have we received that has not come from Him? Many of us, looking over the past year — I know from what you have told me, and I know it would be so with many who have not told me — looking over the past year, can recall special clearly marked benefits which they have received from God, for which to be thankful at this time. If we have indeed committed our way to God, that way has been kept by Him. As our minds dwell upon the way in which God has led us through the shadow and through the sunshine, our hearts glow with gratitude. Life loses its spring and its hope if there is no gladness in it. All joyousness adds to our efficiency. If the arm is to do with vigor and success, it must be impelled by a glad heart. For strength, there must be joy. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." The Christian should vindicate his religion by his joyousness. Not by hilarity nor superficial gaiety, but by the peace and joy intermingled, which may be quiet, but which testify to the love and the goodness of God. We honor God when we recognize Him as the Giver of gifts. A joyful, glad Christian allures the world.

"What shall *I* render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward *me*?" David is not afraid of that first personal pronoun. He sees the benefits of God, and says: "I am the man; I am at once the argument for and the illustration of the goodness of God. I have not concealed His lovingkindness and truth from the great congregation." If we had a little more personality in our testimonies, and in our prayer-meetings, telling a little more what God has done for us, and in our conversation with one another as we go through the world, there would be a power in it. If all the people could be gathered in a great church on Thanksgiving Day, and before the great congregation one after another could stand up and tell in simple language the benefits which he has specially received from God, and is specially grateful for on Thanksgiving Day, it would be the most eloquent Thanksgiving sermon that we ever heard. "All His benefits toward *ME*."

SECOND.—*The answer:* "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord?"

It is the natural desire of the human heart to recognize and to requite benefits. We are not satisfied to be simply recipients, even when God is the giver. There is a longing to express gratitude, and in some way to make a return. When we read the answer that David makes here to his own question we are surprised; because he says, the way in which to return the mercies of God is to take more! The way by which we may show our gratitude to God for all His goodness is to lay hold of that goodness in even larger measure!

There are several features of this. There is, for