

The Bible Student

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 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
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CONTINUING

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Our Saviour's work seems to have been largely personal, chiefly individual. The disciples were selected singly and called individually; after having chosen and called them, his chief care seemed to be their development by personal association and teaching; the paramount object of his earthly ministry was to train them into instruments fit to carry on the work to be committed to their care when he should leave the world; this was the essential feature of his ministry, all else, however important, was incidental to this.

The first accessions to discipleship were made by individual, personal appeal; Christ calls Andrew and Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon, Christ enlists Philip and Philip brings Nathaniel; thus the gracious call through personal influence is passed on, transmitted as it were through individual contact.

We have record of more than one public address delivered to a large audience, but what may have been the result of such addresses we are left to conjecture alone to deter-

mine, the presumption is that the immediate, visible fruit was small; the fact that three years' work by both Christ and his disciples shows only one hundred and twenty adherents gained, indicates an absence of anything like great gatherings. Wherever there is any certain knowledge of a disciple secured, it was through individual influence, by personal appeal. We find in business a distinction recognized between goods hand-made and machine-made, preference and price being always in favor of the former as presumption of greater care in selection and greater fidelity in construction. The terms are not the choicest in spiritual connections, yet inasmuch as the word "machinery" has won recognition as descriptive of revival measures, it may not be inept to say that Christ's own method is against it, and to note that the individualism that marked his work is strong indication that in the spiritual husbandry, as in the natural, "hand picked fruit" is likely to be sounder and less subject to speedy deterioration than the other sort.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE LAMB.

We of the West associate gentleness and innocence with the lamb. Did the Hebrews, an eastern people, of other race from us and other modes of thought, see the same beautiful qualities emblemized in the lamb? Perhaps on inquiry we shall find ourselves largely indebted to them for the association. The sheep, to speak of it before the lamb, was an emblem of innocence, "I have sinned; but these sheep, what have they done?" (2 Sam. xxiv. 17); of gentleness and guilelessness, in contrast to the wolfish nature, "False prophets . . . come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mat. vii. 15); of meek, uncomplaining, unresisting submission to violence, "As a sheep that is led to the slaughter, and as a ewe that before her shearers is dumb" (Is. liii. 7, literally rendered, the first word meaning any animal of the flock); of tractableness, and peculiar nearness to man, "The sheep hear [the shepherd's] voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out, . . . and they follow him, for they know his voice" (John x. 3, 4; cp. 14). The thoughts which clustered about the lamb were the same in kind, but more tender; for frequently the lamb was made a pet in the family, and was an object of fond affection (2 Sam. xii. 3). The house lamb yields a figure for innocent, confiding, unsuspecting nature, "I was like a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me" (Jer. xi. 19, R. V.) Through the influence of the Septuagint, by its translation of Is. liii. 7, the lamb dumb before her shearers represented to a wide circle of readers meek, uncomplaining, unresisting submission to violence.

The lamb, more than any other sacrificial animal, was the representative offering in Israel. It availed for burnt, peace and trespass offerings, for the sin offering of the common people, and for the passover. It was used for the daily morning and evening sacrifice, for the special offerings of the Sabbath, for the release of the Nazirite, the purification of women, the cleansing of the leper. In calling Jesus the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, John the Baptist distinctly proclaimed Jesus to be the atoning sacrifice which God had provided for sin; he implicitly

ascribed to Jesus the faultlessness and spotlessness of the sacrificial victim; and with fine sense of propriety he chose for his metaphor from among all available sacrificial animals that one which was hallowed by the most varied and the most tender associations, and that one which in the poetry of popular thought suggested gentleness, guilelessness, submissiveness, and affectionate attachment to man.

JOHN D. DAVIS.

THE SIN OFFERING.

The sin offering made atonement (Lev. iv. 20; xvi. 11). It must be an animal; in extreme poverty an ephah of fine flour might be substituted (v. 11), but then the offering was incomplete.* Cost did not enter into the idea of the sin offering. Whether the sacrifice was intended to make atonement for the great and populous nation or to atone for an individual, it consisted of one victim only. Numbers did not count. When the tabernacle was dedicated, the prince of each of the twelve tribes brought a rich burnt offering, consisting of a bullock, a ram, and a lamb; and a richer peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs; but for a sin offering he brought one kid only. And so always. He who would testify his gratitude to God, and freely dedicate his substance to the Lord, might sacrifice a hecatomb of burnt offerings. He who would make peace offerings, and hold fellowship with God and God's ministers in a feast before the Lord, might drive a herd of cattle to the sanctuary for the purpose. But he who came to seek atonement for sin brought one victim only. Number had no place. The commercial value of the sacrifice counted for nothing.† The importance lay in what was peculiar to the animal in itself alone. The sin offering was the gift

*In case of extreme poverty, a complete sin offering was not demanded. God dispensed with that part which pertained to him, and required only that part of it which corresponded to the fat in the normal sin offering, and which sacramentally, through the acceptance of the meal by God, to whom it ascended in the fire of the altar, assured the offerer of his forgiveness. In going on the altar, the offering shared also in the benefits secured by the blood shed at that altar.

†In the opinion of Schultz, the guilt offering was a gift, ransom or payment made to God to "smooth his countenance," exactly as before a human tribunal a ransom was given under certain circumstances to the offended party; and the