

ing round its branches.

Some of his followers heard David's wish, and three of them took their waterskins and went toward Bethlehem. We are not told what struggles they had with the Philistine guards. But David knew the risks they ran. It was not the offering of a soldier for dangerous duty. It was the voluntary risk assumed to gratify the wish of a man they loved. If successful, there would be no promotion in rank; no extra stripes on their coats; no Carnegie medal for heroism; their names would not even be in the paper. It was a service of love and only their hero would know.

They get water, and come back to David, with a smile on their lips, with joy shining in their faces. He doesn't accept it as a matter of course, and say, "Thank you, boys. 'This is good.'" He takes the water, but pours it out on the ground as an act of worship, and says, "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: Shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" It is a reverent recognition of the fact that the gift meant danger and sacrifice. This made it sacred.

Do we realize how much of sacrifice and of blood enters into even the common things of life? If we could know the cost of life's common blessings, the daily life would be richer and holier. We may not see the heroes or know their names, but always somebody's sacrifice, somebody's labor, somebody's sweat of blood has bought the gift for us.

I want to commend to you today such an attitude toward life as David shows us in this story.

When we consider the riches of our heritage, purchased by sacrifice, we think first of our country and the privileges that come to us in America. We can not understand American history until we see that there is a divine purpose running through it all, fitting us for some great end which yet we do not clearly see. But each step in our upward progress has been won by blood and sacrifice. Out of the struggles have come a greater freedom and a greater national life. It is a great and sacred privilege to live in such a land, in such an age.

The few words that Abraham Lincoln spoke on the battlefield of Gettysburg are remembered as the most eloquent speech of our history. But it was Lincoln's recognition of sacredness of sacrifice that touches the hearts of the people and makes the speech memorable. You recall the words:

"But in a larger sense we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be consecrated here to the unfinished work which they have thus far so nobly