

Greeting: To Man the Builder

THERE are always Caesar and the Scribes and the Pharisees, the priests and the elders. Let us at this time of the year renew our loyalty to Man.

Not man in the abstract, for such does not exist. Nor man in the laboratory, where the vain search with scalpel and with microscope reveals only the minutiae, but leaves him still in the image of his God. Let us then turn from rendering oblation to the Sanhedrin and renew our faith in the consummate divine creation that is man whose allotted span on earth is devoted to the dream of an elusive happiness.

For man, who builds houses and inhabits them, who plants vineyards and eats the fruits of them, is the sum total of the world in which we live. Beyond him all is chaos born of fancy. In him is the reality of existence. His hopes, his desires, his toil toward gratifications delimit all knowable life.

The goodness that is life is therefore the goodness that is man. To desecrate the dignity of man is to infringe upon his God-given heritage. When one inhabits what another builds, or eats what another plants, when they who labor do so in vain, then is man like unto a beast of burden.

The dignity that distinguishes man is the possession of the fruits of his labor. For with such possession comes the desire to build more and to plant more, to seek in the bosom of nature and in the fathomless depths of imagination the fullness of life.

Man falls when the loyalty that should be his is diverted to Caesar. For Caesar demands not only the pennies graven with his countenance, tokens of the fruits of man's toil, but also the subservience and the servility which demean those who are deprived. The State is insatiable in its demands. It takes all, gives nothing. And, lest its rapacity be questioned, it sets itself up a golden calf to which craven obeisance must be made.

That is the loyalty—the loyalty to Caesar and

to the Scribes and the Pharisees who serve Caesar—which has brought man to his lowly estate. That is the loyalty which Jesus of Nazareth repudiated when He said: "The Kingdom of God is within you."

For if the Kingdom of God is within man then the rendering of tithes to a secular sovereign is neither God-like nor manly. In man himself lies the spark of life, and neither chicanery nor wit can devise its transference to the incorporeal State.

All the State can do is to try to stamp this spark out of existence. In this it cannot quite succeed. Ever the still small voice cries out "I am!" and every new-born babe rekindles the ember. Man will not be denied. His is the Kingdom of God, inherited at birth. His is the untransferable sceptre of life.

And now comes that season of the year when, in spite of the tribute exacted by Caesar, our thoughts are drawn to the Bethlehem of old and its meaning to all mankind, to the meek and lowly, the powerful and the affluent. No pride of ancestry or tenacity of creed can obscure the vision of the emergence of man from darkness into light.

Then it was that man came into his inheritance to be known evermore as the fulfilment of creation, the only sound concrete existence in this world.

He serves that he may be served, and that is the rule of justice. If he stumbles, it is because of the human frailty which he always strives to overcome, and in this very striving lies his grandeur. Every error of judgment, every failure of achievement is but the spur to higher attempt and greater knowledge. Man alone can bring the Kingdom of God on earth for only in him is the Kingdom of God.

So as we remember Him who brought to earth the timeless message of human dignity, let us renew our loyalty to man. For that is reverence to the God of us all.