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PAPERS (3014)**

BOX 14

FOLDER 13

**GRATITUDE: ATTITUDE
OR PLATITUDE**

NOVEMBER 19, 1978

GRATITUDE: ATTITUDE OR PLATITUDE

(THE GRATEFUL CONSCIOUSNESS)

Wm. T. May 18, 1972

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PSALM 100: 'MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD,
ALL THE LANDS! SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS!
COME INTO HIS PRESENCE WITH SINGING! KNOW THAT
THE LORD IS GOD! IT IS HE THAT MADE US, AND WE ARE
HIS; WE ARE HIS PEOPLE, AND THE SHEEP OF HIS
PASTURE. ENTER HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING,
AND HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE! GIVE THANKS TO HIM,
BLESS HIS NAME! FOR THE LORD IS GOOD; HIS
STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER, AND HIS FAITH-
FULNESS TO ALL GENERATIONS.'

'OLD 100' WILL BE READ AND PREACHED ABOUT AND
SUNG IN CHURCHES THROUGH THE LAND ALL THIS WEEK
AND ON THANKSGIVING DAY. BUT I WONDER HOW OFTEN
IT WILL SUGGEST A TRUE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE,
OR IF THE PERSON INVOLVED IN THE RITUAL OF WORSHIP
MAY BE ENGAGING IN WHAT GILBERT AND SULLIVAN
CALLED, 'PLATITUDES IN STAINED GLASS ATTITUDES?'

IN OTHER WORDS IS THE HEART REALLY THANK-FULL,
OR ARE THE LINES MOUTHED WITH A HEART THAT IS
WORRY-FULL, LACK-FULL, FEAR-FULL, HATE-FULL?

A LITTLE GIRL WAS ONCE 'SLEEPING OVER' AT HER AUNTS
AND AT BEDTIME SHE KNELT DOWN BY THE BED AND SAID

HER PRAYERS. THE AUNT SAID, 'WHAT A JOY TO HEAR YOU SAYING YOUR PRAYERS SO WELL. YOU SPEAK SO EARNESTLY AND SERIOUSLY, AND YOU MEAN WHAT YOU SAY' THE LITTLE GIRL REPLIED, 'BUT/AUNTIE, YOU/SHOULD HEAR ME GARGLE.'

PRAYER WITH HER WAS AN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MEMORY AND IMITATION. IS THANKSGIVING MORE THAN MAKING A 'JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD' FOR YOU.

▶ DID YOU KNOW THAT A GREAT REVOLUTION HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE WORLD IN MODERN TIMES AND THAT YOU ARE A PART OF IT? AND IT HAS HAD A MORE PROFOUND EFFECT ON MANKIND THAN THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION, ~~OR EVEN THE MODERN COMMUNIST REVOLUTION~~. IT IS THAT IN WHICH MAN HAS DISCOVERED THAT HE CAN TRULY CHANGE HIS LIFE BY ALTERING HIS THOUGHTS. IT IS SAD, BUT TRUE, THAT SOMETIMES TRADITIONAL RELIGIONISTS ARE THE

LAST ONES TO RESPOND TO ITS INFLUENCE. ONE MAY ACCEPT THE DISCIPLINE TO BUY AND WEAR CEREMONIAL GARMENTS AND TO FOLLOW CERTAIN RITUALS OF WORSHIP, SUCH AS REPEATING PSALM 100 FOR ~~THANKSGIVING~~ DAY... BUT IT MAY WELL BE THAT ~~YOUR LIVES~~ ^{YOU} CANNOT CHANGE APPRECIABLY, IF TRULY ~~THE PERSON~~ ^{YOU} WANTS ~~TO CHANGE~~, UNLESS ~~WE~~ ^{YOU} CHANGES ~~HIS~~ ^{YOUR} THOUGHTS ABOUT ~~HIMSELF~~ ^{YOURSELVES}, ABOUT LIFE, ABOUT GOD.

PAUL SAYS, 'IN ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS.' THIS CALLS FOR A PERPETUAL STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS, AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE. BUT...LET'S BE REALISTIC! HOW CAN WE GIVE THANKS FOR EVERYTHING? CAN WE HONESTLY GIVE THANKS FOR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING, AND ITS THREATENED IMPACT ON OUR LIVES? CAN WE GIVE THANKS FOR WARS AND THREATS OF WARS? CAN WE GIVE THANKS FOR PERSONAL CHALLENGES AND AFFLICTIONS AND HUMAN RELATION PROBLEMS?

PERHAPS WE CAN REPEAT THE PRAYERS AND SLOGANS AND AFFIRMATIONS IN A PARROTT-LIKE MANNER, BUT CAN WE REALLY ENTER INTO THE GATES WITH PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS?

▶ WHAT IS THE BASIS OF THANKSGIVING? DOES GOD DEMAND IT? WILL HIS FEELINGS ABOUT US BE LESSENER IF WE DO NOT THANK HIM FOR OUR GOOD? IT IS MY FEELING -THAT MAY SHOCK YOU- THAT IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO GOD WHETHER OR NOT YOU GIVE HIM THANKS, OR WHETHER YOU HAVE A DAY OF THANKSGIVING. BUT IT MAKES A LOT OF DIFFERENCE TO YOU. AS ECKHART SAYS, 'I NEVER GIVE GOD THANKS FOR LOVING ME, BECAUSE HE CAN'T HELP HIMSELF: WHETHER HE WOULD OR NOT, IT IS HIS NATURE TO.'

THANKSGIVING IS NOT FOR GOD. GOD DOESN'T NEED IT. AS LONG AS WE HAVE THE OLD IDEA OF GOD 'UP THERE' AND TO WHOM WE BOW DOWN, OUR THANKSGIVING IS VERY LIKELY TO BE A RITUAL OF WORSHIP, 'A LITTLE HABIT WE'VE ACQUIRED.'

GRATITUDE IS NOT JUST A VIRTUE, SOMETHING YOU DO TO EARN GOD'S 'BROWNIE POINTS'. IT IS A STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN WHICH YOU ARE LIFTED TO A NEW EXPERIENCE OF LIFE. GOD DOESN'T NEED YOUR GRATITUDE, BUT YOU DO, AND VERY MUCH SO.

LONG BEFORE THE TIME OF JESUS, PLATO WROTE: 'HE ENJOYS MUCH WHO IS THANKFUL. A GRATEFUL MIND IS A GREAT MIND WHICH EVENTUALLY ATTRACTS TO ITSELF GREAT THINGS.'

A GRATEFUL PERSON IS GREAT BECAUSE HE HAS TURNED ON ALL THE LIGHTS IN HIMSELF. WE MAY HAVE THOUGHT OF GRATITUDE AND ~~THANK~~FULNESS IN TERMS OF SOMETHING TO GIVE THANKS FOR. BUT THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE IS NOT JUST A REACTION TO GOOD THINGS. IT MAY WELL BE THE CAUSE OF THEM.

WHEN WE ~~ARE~~ GRATEFUL WE RADIATE A LIGHT THAT ENABLES US TO SEE THINGS FOR WHICH TO BE GRATEFUL. MORE THAN THIS, IT ACTUALLY ATTRACTS GOOD THINGS TO US.

MAYBE THIS IS WHAT TRUE GREATNESS IS - THE ABILITY TO APPRECIATE THE GOOD IN PEOPLE AND EVENTS, AND THUS TO EXACT THE VERY BEST FROM LIFE AND THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE.

G.B.S. SAID, 'GOD HAS GIVEN US A WORLD THAT NOTHING BUT OUR OWN FOLLY KEEPS FROM BEING A PARADISE.'

GOD HAS GIVEN EACH OF US THE POTENTIAL OF ABUNDANT LIFE, BUT OUR OWN LACK OF PERCEPTION AND OUR OWN FOLLY KEEPS US FROM FINDING IT AND EXPERIENCING IT. THE FOLLY IS IN OUR THOUGHTS. WE HAVE THE CHOICE TO BE GREAT OR SMALL. WHEN WE ARE GRATEFUL WE ARE GREAT. WHEN WE LOSE SIGHT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ^{GRATITUDE} ~~THANKSGIVING~~, WE BECOME LITTLE PEOPLE, WITH LITTLE MINDS, LEADING LITTLE, INCONSEQUENTIAL LIVES.

ON THAT FIRST THANKSGIVING MORE THAN 350 YEARS AGO, THE PILGRIMS PAUSED TO GIVE THANKS. IT

EVIDENCED THE KIND OF GREATNESS THAT ULTIMATELY ENABLED THEM TO SURVIVE AND LEAVE SUCH A RICH HERITAGE ON WHICH THE WHOLE NATION HAS BEEN BUILT. FOR HOW COULD THEY GIVE THANKS, WHEN THEY HAD SO VERY LITTLE, AND WHEN PROSPECTS FOR MERE SURVIVAL WERE SO VERY SLIM?. BUT YOU SEE, THEY WERE NOT THANKING GOD FOR WHAT WAS ON THEIR TABLE OR IN THEIR BARNS, FOR IT WAS MEAGER INDEED. THEY WERE THANKING GOD FOR WHAT WAS IN THEIR HEARTS. IT WAS A CONSCIOUS CHOICE TO TURN FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT, TO GET IN TUNE WITH ~~THE~~ THE DIVINE FLOW BY CHANGING THEIR THOUGHTS TO THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE. THAT GRATEFUL MIND IDENTIFIED THEM WITH THE GREAT MIND, AND THEY DID ATTRACT GREAT THINGS.

I READ SOMEWHERE AN ACCOUNT OF A MISSIONARY TO AFRICA WHO TELLS OF A STRANGE TRIBE THAT HE HAD STUDIED...A STRANGELY POVERTY-STRICKEN TRIBE THAT LIVED IN THE SAME REGION WITH OTHER TRIBES THAT WERE RELATIVELY PROSPEROUS. HE WAS CURIOUS WHY?

AFTER MONTHS OF RESEARCH WITH THIS TRIBE, HE FOUND THAT IN THEIR LANGUAGE THEY HAD NO WORD BY WHICH TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE OR APPRECIATION. THEY HAD FORGOTTEN HOW TO SAY 'THANK YOU.' HE COULD ONLY ASK THE QUESTION: 'COULD THIS LOSS OF THE ^{ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE} ~~SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING~~ HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR POVERTY?'

IT IS AN INTERESTING THOUGHT, ISN'T? IT WOULD INDICATE THAT WE GROW RICH BY THANKSGIVING, AND WE GROW IMPOVERISHED BY LOSING THE SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE.

BUT WE MUST EMPHASIZE THAT THE REAL ESSENCE OF THANKSGIVING IS NOT HAVING SOME EXCITING THING ABOUT WHICH WE CAN BE THANKFUL. THE OLD 'COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS' IDEA... IS A FINE PRACTICE. BUT IT IS SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT.

THANKSGIVING IS NOT REALLY DEPENDENT ON OUTER THINGS. IT DEPENDS ONLY ON AN AWARENESS OF THE GREATNESS OF GOD WITHIN.

RECALL THAT CLASSIC INSTANCE WHEN JESUS WAS FACED WITH THE THRONG OF 5,000 HUNGRY PEOPLE. IT IS WRITTEN, 'HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND GAVE THANKS'. THEN HE PROCEEDED TO FEED THE HUNGERING MULTITUDE WITH WHAT WAS AVAILABLE.

IT WAS NOT A THANKS FOR FOOD ON THE TABLE - FOR THERE WAS BUT FIVE SMALL LOAVES AND ^{TWO} ~~SIX~~ LITTLE FISHES. IT WAS A TECHNIQUE BY WHICH JESUS ATTUNED HIMSELF TO THE MORE INFINITE POSSIBILITIES - TO THE OPULENCE OF THE UNIVERSE THAT IS ALWAYS AT HAND. AND IN THAT ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE HE BECAME GREAT...AND THUS DID GREAT THINGS.

IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE THAT IS JUST AS APPLICABLE IN YOUR WORLD TODAY:

GREAT ACTS FOLLOW GREAT THOUGHTS WHICH COME FROM GRATEFUL HEARTS.

REMEMBER WE SAID, "BUT HOW CAN WE GIVE THANKS FOR EVERYTHING? FOR OUR ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND OUR PERSONAL CHALLENGES?"

WHY DOES PAUL SAY 'IN ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS'?

HOW DO WE GIVE THANKS FOR PAIN? FOR SORROW? FOR AFFLICTION? WE DON'T! ACCORDING TO THE LAW, THESE THINGS HAVE COME INTO OUR LIVES BECAUSE, IN SOME SUBTLE OR SUBCONSCIOUS WAY, WE HAVE NOT BEEN THINKING AT THE LEVEL OF OUR GREATNESS.

YOU SEE PAUL DOES NOT SAY, 'FOR ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS' --- BUT 'IN ALL THINGS'. IN OTHER WORDS WE NEED TO GET OURSELVES ^{INTO} AND KEEP OURSELVES ~~INTO~~ THE GREATNESS OF MIND BY WHICH WE CAN ATTRACT THE GREAT THINGS WE DESIRE.

JESUS 'LIFTED UP HIS EYES...AND GAVE THANKS.'

IT WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF TURNING ON THE LIGHT IN A SITUATION THAT CALLED FOR ILLUMINATION...ALL THAT COULD BE CALLED INTO MANIFESTATION.

REMEMBER, 'THE KINGDOM OF ALL POTENTIALITY IS ALWAYS WITHIN, NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTER APPEARANCES MAY BE.' AND THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE IS A VITAL KEY TO TUNING IN AND TURNING ON

IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH WHAT YOU HAVE, OR OF WHAT YOU HAVE NOT, INSTEAD OF COMPLAINING ABOUT IT, OPEN THE DOOR TO RELEASE MORE OF THAT INFINITE POTENTIAL THAT IS WITHIN.

NOW, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT ONE CAN NEVER GET SOME-THING FROM NOTHING. IT IS WHAT YOU HAVE THAT IS THE STARTING PLACE FROM WHICH THE GREAT ABUNDANCE MAY BE ACQUIRED. WHATEVER YOU BEGIN WITH-DETERMINES TO A LARGE EXTENT WHAT COMES FROM IT.

IF YOU PORE OVER ALL THE THINGS YOU HAVE NOT, YOU START FROM LESS THAN NOTHING. FOR TO WHAT YOU HAVE NOT, YOU HAVE ADDED A SPIRIT OF COMPLAINT.

NO INTELLIGENT PERSON WILL BELIEVE THAT A ~~F~~OCUS OF ATTENTION ON WHAT HE HAS NOT IS THE WAY TO GET WHAT HE WANTS. YOU MUST TURN YOUR THOUGHT ON HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT - TURN FROM THE CONCERN OF WHAT YOU HAVE NOT TO THE ANTICIPATION OF WHAT YOU WANT.

THIS WOULD SEEM SO LOGICAL AS TO BE A UNIVERSAL PRACTICE. BUT IT ISN'T. FAR MORE PEOPLE SUBMERGE THEMSELVES IN DISPLEASED CONCERN FOR THEIR LACKS. THEY MAY BE MORBID AND DISCOURAGED...AND THEY MAY BE ANGRY AT PEOPLE, AT LIFE, AND AT GOD BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE WHAT THEY WANT. YET AT ANY TIME THEY CAN TURN FROM LACK, LIFT UP THEIR EYES, AND GIVE THANKS, AND ~~DO~~ OPEN THE WAY TO ABUNDANCE.

IT IMPLIES A TURNING AWAY, A TURNING WITHIN... AND THE PIVOT OF THE TURNING IS THE SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING, THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE...WHERE YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE GOOD YOU DO HAVE, NO MATTER HOW LITTLE IT MAY SEEM AT THE TIME. EVEN MORE YOU ARE SIMPLY GRATEFUL, FOR THAT IS WHAT YOU WANT TO BE.

⑤ THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING, HOWEVER SMALL, FOR WHICH YOU CAN AND SHOULD BE GRATEFUL. LET THAT GOOD BE A SYMBOL OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD. LET THE

DOLLAR BILL {EVEN YOUR LAST ONE} BE A SYMBOL OF THE CURRENCY OF DIVINE SUBSTANCE. THEN LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND GIVE THANKS - FOR THE INEXHAUSTIBLE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF GOD.

AND REMEMBER...THE GRATITUDE ISN'T FOR GOD.
IT IS THE KEY TO GETTING YOU TUNED IN TO THE TRANSCENDENT FORCES OF YOUR BEING THAT ARE CONSTANT.

EMILIE CADY, IN 'LESSONS IN TRUTH':
'YOU DO NOT CHANGE GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD YOU ONE IOTA BY EITHER IMPORTUNING OR AFFIRMING. YOU ONLY CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD HIM. BY THUS AFFIRMING, YOU PUT YOURSELF IN HARMONY WITH DIVINE LAW, WHICH IS ALWAYS WORKING TOWARD YOUR GOOD.'

A WOMAN HAD AN ONLY SON WHO WAS INVOLVED IN DRUGS AND WAS LIVING THE KIND OF LIFE SHE COULD NEITHER ACCEPT NOR UNDERSTAND. FOR MONTHS SHE HAD PRAYED IN AGONY OF SOUL, 'OH GOD, SAVE MY BOY FROM DESTRUCTION, FROM WEAKNESS, FROM SIN.'

HOW COULD GOD HEAR THAT KIND OF PRAYER ANY MORE

THAN THE SUN COULD HEAR OR UNDERSTAND THE PRAYER OF THE MAN WITH HIS EYES SHUT: 'OH SUN, STOP SHEDDING~~GRAYS~~ OF DARKNESS, AND SEND ME ONE RAY OF LIGHT!' OF COURSE THE TROUBLE IS NOT IN THE SUN, BUT IN THE MAN'S UNWILLINGNESS TO OPEN HIS EYES.

THIS WOMAN WAS INTRODUCED~~ED~~ TO THE 'NEW INSIGHT IN TRUTH.' SHE WAS USHERED INTO THE REVOLUTION IN REALIZING THAT SHE COULD SHANGE HER LIFE BY ALTERING HER THOUGHTS. SHE COULDN'T CHANGE THE SON, BUT SHE COULD CHANGE HER THOUGHTS ABOUT HIM. SHE BEGAN TO BE GRATEFUL FOR THE GOOD IN HIM. SHE STOPPED BESEECHING GOD AND STARTED GIVING THANKS FOR THE GOOD INSTEAD.

SHE BEGAN TO AFFIRM: 'I GIVE THANKS THAT YOU ARE GOD'S PERFECT CHILD...I GIVE THNKS FOR THE GUIDANCE AND STRENGTH THAT IS WITHIN YOU..~~AND~~ FOR LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING POTENTIALLY IN ME.

THEN SHE BEGAN TO PRAISE THE BOY...SILENTLY AT FIRST...AND LATER OPENLY AS HE STARTED TO RESPOND. SHE CONTINUED TO DECLARE, 'I GIVE THANKS FOR FAITH TO SEE THE GOOD IN YOU...YOU ARE ~~ARE~~ GOD'S PERFECT CHILD.'

THE SON CONTINUED TO GO THE DRUG ROUTE, BUT SHE CHANGED. SHE NO LONGER REBUKED OR CRITICIZED HIM. SHE JUST HELD TO THE TRUTH AND KEPT THANKING GOD.

AFTER A NUMBER OF WEEKS WHEN THERE HAD BEEN NO APPARENT CHANGE AND DURING WHICH THE MOTHER NEVER SWERVED FROM THE COMMITMENT TO EXPRESS PRAISE AND GRATITUDE...ONE EVENING THE BOY CAME HOME AND SAID, 'MOTHER, I HAVE JUST REALIZED THAT THERE MUST BE A HIGHER WAY TO GET TURNED ON, AND I HAVE A FEELING THAT YOU KNOW THE WAY. I AM GOING TO TRY THAT WAY.' THAT ~~WAS~~ THE BEGINNING...AND IT TOOK SOME TIME. BUT IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL UNFOLDING MANIFESTATION OF TRANSFORMATION.

SO...TODAY...AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO A WEEK AND A DAY OF THANKSGIVING, LET US REMEMBER THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US A WORLD THAT NOTHING BUT OUR OWN FOLLY KEEPS FROM BEING A PARADISE...AND GOD HAS GIVEN US TREMENDOUS POWER WHICH NOTHING BUT OUR LIMITING THOUGHTS KEEPS FROM EXPRESSING THROUGH US.

LET US MAKE A ^{COVENANT} ~~AND~~ ^{with ourselves} ~~COVENANT~~

~~LET THIS THANKSGIVING DAY BE THE BEGINNING OF A~~
~~WHOLE NEW ^{THAT WE WILL} ~~THING~~ FOR US - ~~THE~~ REGULAR ^{LY} USE ~~OF~~ THE~~
SPIRIT OF THANKFULNESS AND THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE. INSTEAD OF FRETTING OVER DARKNESS, LET US GIVE THANKS FOR LIGHT.

REMEMBER...GIVING THANKS IS THE KEY TO TURNING ON THE LIFE AND LIGHT AND WISDOM AND SUBSTANCE AND LOVE...FROM WITHIN. AND THIS IS WHAT LIFE IS REALLY ALL ABOUT.