

ERIC BUTTERWORTH PAPERS (3014)

BOX 18

FOLDER 36

**THE THERAPY OF
THANKFULNESS**

NOVEMBER 21, 1982

THE THERAPY OF THANKFULNESS

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THIS COMING THURSDAY IS THANKSGIVING DAY...A LEGAL HOLIDAY...TIME OFF WORK//BUT THERE IS NO SPECIAL LEGACY THAT ACCRUES TO US BY REASON OF BEING ALIVE ON NOVEMBER 25TH. IT WILL BE A DAY LIKE EVERY OTHER DAY. THE SUN WILL RISE AS USUAL...AND AS USUAL, WE MAY NOT EVEN NOTICE IT.

WE MAY GATHER WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN A FESTIVE EXPERIENCE OF WHAT ^{FROM} IRON S. COBB USED TO CALL, 'THE ROYAL GORGE.' BUT I WONDER, WILL THE TENOR OF CONVERSATION REVEAL ANYTHING SPECIAL IN HONOR OF THE HOLIDAYS.

A LITTLE GIRL ACCOMPANIED HER MOTHER ON AN AFTERNOON WITH THE LADIES OF THE SEWING CIRCLE...ON THE WAY HOME THE LITTLE GIRL SAID, 'MOMMIE, NEXT TIME WE GO SOMEWHERE, LET'S GO WHERE THEY ~~XXXXXX~~ TALK HAPPY'

BRIDGE CLUB CHATTER, CYNICAL CONVERSATION, CRITICAL GOSSIP, CAUSTIC COMMENTS...REFLECTING THE DREARIEST KIND OF THOUGHTS...AND IT ALL OFFENDED THE SENSIBILITIES OF THE LITTLE GIRL.

ONE PERSON SAID -& 'DON'T TELL ME I MUST SIT AROUND AND COUNT MY BLESSINGS...BECAUSE THERE ARE PALTRY FEW THIS YEAR.'

BUT YOU SEE THIS IS TO MISUNDERSTAND WHAT THANKSGIVING IS ALL ABOUT.

360 YEARS AGO, THE PILGRIMS SAT AT THE TABLE WITH THE INDIANS IN THAT FIRST AMERICAN THANKSGIVING FEAST. BUT THEY HAD LITTLE FOOD ON THE TABLE AND MEASURABLE LITTLE IN THEIR BARNS - WITH PROSPECTS OF A HARD WINTER AHEAD...AND THE MEMORY OF GREAT SUFFERING BEHIND THEM.

SO, IF YOU ARE WONDERING WHAT YOU HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FOR?, THE PILGRIMS HAD LITTLE TO GIVE THANKS FOR. TURN THE QUESTION AROUND; 'WHAT DID THEY HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FROM? ' THEY WERE GIVING THANKS FROM THE CONVICTION OF THE GOODNESS AND ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF GOD. THIS FAITH BROUGHT THEM TO AMERICA...AND WOULD SUSTAIN THEM IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FROM? IT IS THE CALL TO TURN WITHIN AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR ONENESS WITH THE DIVINE FLOW, NO MATTER WHAT APPEARANCES MAY SAY TO THE CONTRARY. THANKSGIVING IS A CALL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ALLNESS OF GOD AND THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF SUBSTANCE.

THANKSGIVING IS NOT A VIRTUE FOR WHICH YOU GET BROWNIE POINTS. IT IS AN ATTITUDE THAT LIFTS YOU TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS WHICH IN TURN ENABLES YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE HIGHEST KIND OF LIFE.

PLATO - 'HE ENJOYS MUCH WHO IS THANKFUL. A GRATEFUL MIND IS A GREAT MIND WHICH EVENTUALLY ATTRACTS TO ITSELF GREAT THINGS.'

YOU SEE, YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE THINGS FOR WHICH TO BE GRATEFUL. THE GRATEFUL PERSON IS GREAT BECAUSE HE HAS TURNED THE LIGHTS ON IN HIMSELF. WHEN WE DO GIVE THANKS WE RADIATE LIGHT TO SEE THINGS FOR WHICH WE CAN BE GRATEFUL. MAYBE THIS IS WHAT TRUE GREATNESS IS...THE ABILITY TO APPRECIATE THE GOOD IN PEOPLE AND EVENTS...AND TO EXACT THE BEST FROM LIFE.

OBVIOUSLY, THANKSGIVING IS NOT A DAY ON WHICH YOU DO CERTAIN THINGS, BUT A CERTAIN WAY YOU DEAL WITH ALL THINGS ON EVERY DAY. AS WITH EVERYTHING ~~AS HAS~~ WE CONSIDER IN TRUTH, ITS BOILS DOWN TO 'ATTITUDES'.

CARLYLE 'EVERY DAY BORN INTO THE WORLD COMES LIKE A BURST OF MUSIC AND RINGS ITSELF ALL DAY THROUGH - AND THOU SHALT MAKE OF IT A DANCE, A DIRGE, OR A LIFE-MARCH, AS THOU WILT.'

WE ALWAYS HAVE THAT CHOICE! WE CAN ENGAGE IN THANK-THINKING...OR IN LAMENTATION. HOW WE THINK WILL DETERMINE HOW THINGS WILL UNFOLD FOR US. WITHOUT THANK-THINKING WE BECOME LITTLE PEOPLE, WITH LITTLE MINDS, LEADING LITTLE, INCONSEQUENTIAL LIVES.

IT HAS BEEN SAID, 'NOTHING FORETELLS THE FUTURE LIKE THE THOUGHTS OVER WHICH WE BROOD'. TO BROOD OVER IS TO HATCH OUT. THUS, BE CAREFUL ^{TO} THINK ONLY THOSE ~~XXXXXX~~ THOUGHTS THAT YOU WANT ~~TO~~ SEE MANIFEST IN YOUR LIFE. WHAT FEARS AND ~~WORRIES~~ ARE YOU ~~BROODING~~ OVER? HOW MUCH BETTER TO ENGAGE IN ~~THANK~~-THINKING.

WOMAN ~~FOREVER~~ COMMISERATING OVER HER TROUBLES.

'I DON'T SEE IT THAT WAY, WHEN THE LORD SENDS ME ^{TRIBULATIONS} ~~TROUBLES~~, IT IS MY DUTY TO TRIBULATE.'

SO MANY PERSONS GET ON THE TRIBULATION ROLLER-COASTER, ACTING FOR ALL THE WORLD AS IF WE ARE LIVING IN THE WORST PERIOD IN HISTORY.

WHENEVER SOMEONE REMARKS, 'WHAT A TERRIBLE WORLD THIS IS!' I LIKE TO REPLY, 'COMPARED TO WHAT?' IT IS OUR WORLD, THE ONLY ONE WE HAVE. OH, IT IS A CHANGING WORLD, BUT SO IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN. OH, THERE ARE ~~CHALLENGES~~ CHALLENGES EVERYWHERE, BUT EACH OF US MUST DECIDE IF WE ARE GOING ~~TOO~~ BE ON ~~THE~~ SIDE OF THE ~~PROBLEMS~~, OR ON THE SIDE ~~OF~~ THE SOLUTIONS.

NOW, LET'S BE CERTAIN THAT IN OBSERVING THANKS-GIVING, WE ~~ARE~~ NOT ~~JUST~~ PLAYING GAMES, IT IS NOT A MATTER OF TAKING ONE DAY TO SING OUR PRAISES TO GOD. GOD ISN'T THE LEAST BIT MOVED BY YOUR FLATTERY. BEALLY, ITS MAKES NO DIFFERENCE

TO GOD WHETHER YOU THANK HIM OR NOT. WHY SHOULD WE GIVE OUR THANKS TO GOD AT ALL? ECKHARTS - 'I NEVER THANK GOD FOR LOVING ME. HE CAN'T HELP HIMSELF.' YOU COULD SPEND ONE WHOLE DAY OF CONSTANT PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING TO GOD OUT OF A SENSE OF OBLIGATION...AND NEVER EXPERIENCE A THANK-FILLED CONSCIOUSNESS. GOD IS NOT A PERSON TO THANK AND PRAISE, BUT A PRESENCE IN WHICH YOU LIVE AND ON WHICH TO BUILD A POSITIVE AND CREATIVE LIFE.

THANKSGIVING IS NOT A REACTIONARY EMOTION, BUT A CAUSATIVE FORCE. IT IS A WAY OF GETTING ALTITUDE IN YOUR THOUGHT PROCESS.

EMERSON DEFINES PRAYER AS 'THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE FACTS OF LIFE FROM THE HIGHEST POINT OF VIEW.' IF YOU CAN GET A VIEW FROM HIGH ENOUGH UP AND SEE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WHOLENESS, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL EASILY AND EFFICIENTLY WITH LIFE.

A WONDERFUL MAN I ONCE KNEW, WHO LIVED AT THE FOOT OF A HILL. AT THE CLOSE OF EVERY DAY HE WOULD CLIMB UP TO HIS FAVORITE PERCH, OSTENSIBLY FOR EXERCISE AND TO SEE THE SUNSET...BUT REALLY TO DO SOME THANK-THINKING, TO GET HIS THOUGHTS SORTED OUT. HE WOULD HAVE A CRITIQUE OF HIS DAY - IN THE ARISTOTELEAN SENSE OF

OF 'CRITICISM' - LOOKING FOR THE GOOD. LITERALLY,
'LET THE SUN NOT GO DOWN ON YOUR WRATH' - ROOT
OUT HURTS, WORRY, NEGATIVITY - RESOLVE THEM ALL
INTO GOOD BY 'THANK-THINKING.'

THANK-THINKING IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL
OF HEALING THERAPIES.'

A. J. CRONIN TELLS OF A DOCTOR IN SOUTH WALES
WHO PRESCRIBED WHAT HE CALLED A 'THANK-YOU'
CURE IN CERTAIN CASES. WHEN A PATIENT CAME
TO HIM DISCOURAGED, BLUE, AND FULL OF WOES,
AND YET WITHOUT SYMPTOMS OF ANYTHING PHYSICALLY
WRONG, THE DOCTOR WOULD WRITE OUT ON A
PRESCRIPTION PADS--

FOR SIX WEEKS SAY 'THANK-YOU' WHENEVER ANYONE
DOES YOU A FAVOR. AND TO SHOW YOU MEAN IT,
EMPHASIZE THE WORDS WITH A SMILE.

THE PATIENT WOULD INVARIABLY RETURN IN SIX WEEKS
WITH A NEW OUTLOOK, FREE FROM THE SENSE OF UN-
HAPPINESS THAT STEMMED FROM A CONVICTION THAT
PEOPLE WERE OPPOSED TO HIM...AND INCIDENTALLY,
WITH THE MYSTERIOUS PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS GONE, TOO.

NOW, LET'S GET ONE POINT CLEAR - WE ARE NOT
SAYING THAT YOU SHOULD SIMPLY TRY TO BE GRATEFUL.
TO TRY TO BE IS NOT TO BE. IT IS A RECENTERING
YOURSELF AT THE ROOT OF YOUR BEING, WHERE YOU
ARE FILLED WITH THE ESSENCE OF GREATNESS.

AT THIS 'STILL POINT' WITHIN YOU THANKSGIVING IS THE LANGUAGE OF ~~THE~~ SOUL. ANYTHING LESS ~~THAN~~ AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE IS A FRUSTRATION OF THE CREATIVE FLOW.

M SHAKESPEARE SINGS THAT THE 'WINTER'S WIND IS NOT AS UNKIND AS MAN'S INGRATITUDE.'

N ONE WHO HAS A THANKLESS HEART IS USUALLY ~~A~~ COLD, ~~UN~~HAPPY, AND DISLIKED ~~PERSON~~.

X THERE IS SOMETHING UGLY ABOUT INGRATITUDE.

X A BUSINESS MAN, ON HIS WAY TO HIS OFFICE, ALWAYS ~~GRATEX~~ GREETED AN OLD MAN WHO ~~ST~~OOD ON THE CORNER SELLING SHOE LACES. ONCE OR ~~TW~~ICE A WEEK ~~FOR~~ MANY YEARS THE MAN WOULD STOP AND GIVE THE OLD FELLOW A QUARTER, BUT WOULD NEVER TAKE THE SHOE LACES. ONE DAY HE MADE HIS USUAL GIFT OF A QUARTER, AND THE SHOE-LACE SALESMAN SAID, 'I'M SORRY SIR, THE PRICE OF SHOELACES HAS GONE UP TO 40 CENTS.'

THERE IS AN INTERESTING ACCOUNT IN JOHN 7...

'AND ~~THEY~~ WENT EVERY MAN INTO HIS OWN HOUSE, BUT JESUS WENT UNTO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.' I USED TO READ THIS WITH PITY. SEEING THE DISCIPLES GREETED BY THEIR FAMILIES AFTER A HARD DAY DISCIPLING, HAVING A SAVORY MEAL, A RELAXED EVENING FOLLOWED BY A NIGHT OF REST IN A COMFORTABLE ~~BE~~D. JESUS ~~AL~~ONE...NO PLACE TO GO.

HOW ~~WRONG~~! THE DISCIPLES MAY ~~B~~AE TOSSING
FITFULLY ~~//~~ BUT JESUS ^{HAD} ~~W~~ A MOUNTAIN FOR A
PILLOW, GETTING HIS 'THANKSGIVING' PERSPECTIVE.
LATER ~~WHEN~~ HE DEMONSTRATED MIRACLE-WORKING
POWER, IT DIDN'T JUST HAPPEN ~~//~~ LIKE A GREAT
MUSICAL ARTIST ON THIS STAGE, THE VIRTUOSO
PERFORMANCE IS THE RESULT OF A LIFE-TIME OF
COMMITMENT AND PRACTICE AND DISCIPLINE.

WE NEED TO KEEP THIS IN MIND WHEN READING THE
STORY OF RAISING LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD, AND
THE FEEDING OF 5,000 PEOPLE FROM ONE BOY'S LUNCH
'HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND GAVE THANKS.'
THE PEOPLE PROBABLY WONDERED WHAT THERE WAS TO
GIVE THANKS FOR? HE WAS GIVING THANKS FROM
AN AWARENESS OF THE DIVINE FLOW - GIVING WAY
TO ITS EXPRESSION.

THERE IS AN OLD SAYING - A DONKEY MAY CARRY A
LOAD OF PRECIOUS SANDALWOOD AND NEVER KNOW ITS
PRECIOUSNESS... ONLY ITS WEIGHT. IN THE SAME
SENSE, MANY PERSONS GO THROUGH LIFE UNDER THE
HEAVY WEIGHT OF DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, NEVER
KNOWING THE PRECIOUS NATURE OF LIFE, OR THE
GREAT HIDDEN POTENTIAL WITH THEM. NOT KNOWING
THEIR ILLNESS IS OBSCURING AN INNATE ALLNESS,
THEY GO ALONG IN A CHRONIC NEGATIVE ATTITUDE..
HEADS BOWED DOWN, EYES ON THE GROUND... THEY
NEED TO LOOK UP.

SOME PERSONS MAY DO GREAT THINGS, OTHERS MAY HAVE GOOD HEALTH OR RICH POSSESSIONS. AND THEY MAY SEEM TO HAVE GOOD REASON FOR THANKSGIVING. BUT IF YOU CAN GET A HIGH-LEVEL PERSPECTIVE, YOU CAN APPRECIATE GREAT THINGS...AND BECOME GREAT BY BEING GRATEFUL. YOU CAN CELEBRATE THE ABUNDANCE THAT IS EVERYWHERE, NO MATTER WHOSE LIFE IT MAY APPEAR IN.

PERHAPS YOU CAN'T PAINT OR CARVE OR SEW OR COMPOSE MUSIC OR PLAY AN INSTRUMENT. BUT YOU CAN CELEBRATE IT WHEREVER YOU SEE IT, AND BECOME GREAT BY BEING GRATEFUL. IT IS MY CONVICTION THAT IT IS EQUALLY CREATIVE TO APPRECIATE A GREAT WORK AS TO CREATE THE WORK YOURSELF.

HAVE AN EXPERIENCE OF CREATIVE UPLIFT. WALK THROUGH A GALLERY OF ART AND LET IT ALL HAPPEN TO YOU IN DEEP APPRECIATION. BE THANKFUL...AND IT WILL BE A HEALING EXPERIENCE TO YOU.

WHENEVER YOU GET THE THANKSGIVING PERSPECTIVE, THE VIEW FROM THE TOP, YOU WILL BE FILLED WITH A SENSE OF THE GREATNESS OF GOD THAT IS PRESENT. AND IN THAT ATTITUDE YOU BECOME GREAT. AND GREAT THINGS FOLLOW GREAT THOUGHTS THAT COME FROM A GRATEFUL HEART.

BECOME A DEDICATED THANK-THINKER. IT WILL CERTAINLY GIVE YOU MEANING TO YOUR THANKSGIVING.