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PAPERS (3014)**

BOX 24

FOLDER 15

THANKSGIVING,

RETROSPECT OR

FORECAST

NOVEMBER 22, 1987

PSALM 100 - 'MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO 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 HATH MADE US, WE ARE
HIS PEOPLE, AND THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE. ENTER
HIS GATES WITH PRAISE. GIVE THANKS TO HIM, BLESS
HIS NAME. FOR THE LORD IS GOOD, HIS STEADFAST
LOVE ENDURES FOREVER, AND HIS FAITHFULNESS TO
ALL GENERATIONS.'

'OLD 100' WILL BE READ AND PREACHED ABOUT AND
SUNG/IN CHURCHES THROUGH THE LAND/ALL THIS
WEEK AND ON THURSDAY,/THANKSGIVING DAY./ BUT I
WONDER HOW OFTEN THE INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION/
IN THE SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING/WILL REFLECT THE
TRUE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE,/OR IF THE ONE ~~MAN~~
INVOLVED IN THE RITUAL OF WORSHIP/MAY BE ENGA-
GING IN WHAT GILBERT AND SULLIVAN CALL/..
'PLATITUDES IN STAINED GLASS ATTITUDES.'

A LITTLE GIRL WAS 'SLEEPING OVER' AT HER AUNT'S/
AND AT BED-TIME 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 SINCERELY' / ~~THE~~ LITTLE GIRL
REPLIED, / 'BUT AUNTIE YOU SHOULD HEAR ME GARGLE!' /
/ PRAYER WAS AN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MEMORY AND
IMITATION.

THANKSGIVING IS NOT A VIRTUE FOR WHICH
YOU GET BROWNIE POINTS.

LET'S BE CERTAIN THAT IN OBSERVING THANKSGIVING, /
WE ARE ~~NOT~~ JUST PLAYING GAMES. / IT MUST BE MORE
THAN A MATTER OF TAKING ONE DAY / TO SING OUR
PRAISES TO GOD. / GOD ISN'T THE LEAST BIT MOVED
BY YOUR FLATTERY. / REALLY, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE
TO GOD / WHETHER YOU THANK HIM / OR NOT. / ^{BUT IT MAKES A LOT OF DIFFERENCE TO YOU.} IT WOULD BE
POSSIBLE TO SPEND ONE WHOLE DAY / OF CONSTANT PRAISE
AND THANKSGIVING TO GOD / OUT OF A SENSE OF OBLIGA-
TION. / .AND YET 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. /

{ IN THE PLAY, 'TWIGGS', / THE FEMALE LEAD IS PREPARING A THANKSGIVING DINNER / FOR A LOAD OF VISITING RELATIVES, / AND SIGHS, 'THIS HOLIDAY IS AN AWFUL LOT OF WORK. / . NO WONDER NO OTHER COUNTRY CELEBRATES IT.'

BUT DESPITE THE WORK IN PREPARING LAVISH FEASTS, / AND THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE PARTICIPANTS SETTLE INTO A LIGHT-HEARTED AND FESTIVE EXPERIENCE / OF WHAT IRWIN S. COBB USED TO CALL 'THE ROYAL GORGE'. / YET THANKSGIVING IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE PUREST HOLIDAY OF THE YEAR. / FOR MOST OTHER HOLIDAYS HAVE BEEN PERVERTED / BY MATERIALISTIC ENDS AND NATIONAL PRIDE OR ETHNIC VANITY. / . AND A GOOD FOR INSTANCE IS CHRISTMAS / WHICH HAS DETERIORATED FROM THE OBSERVANCE OF A BEAUTIFUL IDEA / TO A FRENZIED EXCHANGE OF NON-DURABLE GOODS. / THANKSGIVING ALONE HAS RETAINED ITS ORIGINAL CHARACTER. / EXCEPT FOR : A FEW TURKEY GROWERS AND CRANBERRY MERCHANTS. /

NOBODY IS DESPERATELY TRYING TO CAPITALIZE ON
THIS HOLIDAY. / THANKSGIVING STILL BELONGS TO THE
PEOPLE, / TO THE FAMILY. / OTHER HOLIDAYS TRUMPET
OUR VICTORIES, / OR FLATTER OUR CONCEITS. / .EVEN
MOTHER'S DAY ^{OFTEN} BECOMES A COMPETITION IN EXHIBITION-
ISTIC SENTIMENTALITY.

OFTEN ON THANKSGIVING / OUR THOUGHTS TURN TO THAT
FIRST THANKSGIVING FEAST ~~365 YEARS AGO~~ / WHEN THE
PILGRIMS SAT AT THE TABLE / WITH THE INDIANS. / THERE
WAS LITTLE FOOD ON THE TABLE / AND PRECIOUS LITTLE
IN THEIR BARNS. / - - WITH THE PROSPECTS OF A HARD
WINTER AHEAD. / .AND THE MEMORY OF GREAT SUFFERING
BEHIND THEM.

IF YOU SHOULD ^{EVER} BE IN A POSITION / WHERE YOU THINK
YOU HAVE LITTLE OR NOTHING / TO GIVE THANKS FOR. .
^{REMEMBER} THE PILGRIMS HAD LITTLE TO GIVE THANKS FOR.
BUT WE CAN GET A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE / BY
TURNING 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. / IT WAS THIS FAITH THAT BROUGHT/THEM TO
~~SEE~~ AMERICA./..AND WOULD SUSTAIN THEM IN THE YEARS
AHEAD.

ONCE WHILE FLYING HOME FROM EUROPE/I FOUND
MYSELF MUSING ON THE PILGRIM CROSSING/IN THEIR
AWKWARD LITTLE WOODEN/SHIP/THAT WAS BUILT WITH NO
THOUGHT OF COMFORT./PROPELLED BY THE WIND AND THE
SET OF 155 SAILS. / - TAKING ABOUT/1580 HOURS TO
TRAVEL THE SAME DISTANCE/THAT WAS TAKING US ABOUT
6./I COULD VISUALIZE THE PILGRIMS DOWN THERE/
BEING TOSSED ABOUT BY THE PITCH OF THE SHIP,/THE
DASHING WAVES FLOODING OVER THE DECK,/NIGHTS AND
DAYS FILLED WITH ANXIETY./..AND I/THOUGHT OF HOW
INCREDULOUS THOSE FOLK WOULD HAVE BEEN/HAD THEY
BEEN TOLD THAT WITHIN 365 YEARS/SO MANY WOULD
CROSS THE ATLANTIC IN THIS WAY.

AND I RECALL THE STORY OF THE CATERPILLAR/LOOKING UP AND WATCHING WITH AWE/A LARGE BUTTERFLY FLITTING AROUND,/AND SAYING,, 'THEY'LL NEVER GET ME UP IN ONE OF THOSE CONTRACTIONS.'

BUT THE ~~P~~PILGRIMS WERE LOOKING UP./..AND SETTING IN TO OPERATION A VITAL ENERGY/THROUGH THANKSGIVING/ IT WAS A CONSCIOUS CHOICE TO TURN FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT,/TO LOOK UP BEYOND APPEARANCES./ AND IT WAS THIS LOOKING UP/THAT PREPARED THE WAY FOR THE RICH BLESSINGS OF OUR MODERN WORLD/MORE THAN THEY KNEW/OR THAT WE MAY ACKNOWLEDGE.

OBVIOUSLY THANKSGIVING IS NOT JUST A DAY/ON WHICH YOU DO CERTAIN THINGS,/BUT A CERTAIN WAY/YOU DEAL WITH ALL THINGS EVERY DAY./ AS WITH EVERYTHING WE DEAL WITH IN TRUTH,/IT BOILS DOWN TO ATTITUDES/

THE BIBLE DOES NOT CALL FOR A SPECIAL DAY OF

THANKSGIVING./ WE ~~A~~RE TOLD, 'IN ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS.' /IN OTHER WORDS THE GOAL IS TO LIVE IN

A PERPETUAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THANKFULNESS./..AND
THAT IS NOT EASY.

WE HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF THANKSGIVING/AS A
RETROSPECTIVE PROCESS./..LOOKING BACK AND COUNT-
ING THE MANY BLESSINGS THAT HAVE COME TO US./
ANDS IT IS HERE THAT SOMETIMES WE GET BOGGED
DOWN,/WITH THE FEELING,/ 'WHAT DO WE HAVE TO
TO GIVE THANKS FOR?'

BUT YOU SEE, WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE
INVOLVED,/WE SEE THAT THANKSGIVING IS NOT A REAC-
TIONARY EMOTION,/ BUT A CAUSATIVE FORCE./ ACTU-
ALLY PLATO HAD THIS AMAZING INSIGHT 2500 YEARS AGO
/HE SAID, 'A GRAEFUL MIND/IS A GREAT MIND/WHICH
EVENTUALLY ATTRACTS TO ITSELF GREAT THINGS./
AGAIN, THANKSGIVING IS NOT SO MUCH/WHAT IS ON THE
TABLE/OR WHAT IS IN THE BANK./..BUT WHAT IS IN OUR
HEARTS./..OUR FAITH./..OUR CONSCIOUSNESS.