

Thanksgiving 1918

A. S. J. Duncan Clark

O God, we thank Thee for the broken sleep,
The passing of the self-complacent dream,
For opened eyes, for hearts aroused that leap
To follow Freedom's gleam!

We thank Thee we no longer stand aside
In neutral safety, while earth's highways run
Red with the blood of those who fought and died
To save us from the Hun.

We thank Thee for our women, who refrain
From sob and tear, and smile a brave farewell!
We thank Thee for our lads, who, not in vain,
Shall march, eyes front, through hell!

We thank Thee for the hope—O Lord, how long?—
The faith that we shall yet rebuild our peace
In larger comradeship, and greet with song
The day when wars shall cease!

But, 'til that day, O God, make stout our heart,
Quicken its flame, grant wisdom and control,
And take our thanks that we may play our part,
That we have saved our soul!

Our Nation's Greatness Founded on Fatherhood of Man and Brotherhood of God.

WITH the growth of the nation there has been corresponding growth in responsibility. The raw experiment of a nation framed from the skeleton colonies of the eastern seaboard has proved the greatest success in government the world has ever known. Democracy sits at the tables of the land today. Brotherhood asks its helping from the amply filled boards of the American home. These two attributes of the American people fully express the secret of America's success as a nation. The growth of the nation has been in accord with the extension of these ideas. They are both home ideas, and therefore they are both ideas that express the inner spirit of the day of thanksgiving.

The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man—these were the leading conceptions of the Pilgrim Fathers. They are the leading conceptions of the sons of those fathers today. They are the conceptions that can never be made hackneyed by hypocritical use or by designing abuse. They will stand forth in the genius and action of the American people until each year shall add praise to praise in the measure of the fullness of reasons for the giving of thanks.

Peace, provision, protection—these are the prized possessions of a nation whose one aim is to exalt the ends of human liberty, to extend human democracy and to exalt the ideals of human equality. As this nation touches the world at large it does so through its leading national conceptions, and only when these are vitally assailed can it take up arms for its own defense. It has the obligation resting upon it to conserve the true needs of liberty, and this can be done only by insisting upon the sacredness of human rights and human opportunities. Hence the day set aside for thanks is a day of pure and unadulterated Americanism, into which no alien sentiment can possibly enter. Hence it is that every head of the family in acting in his capacity at the head of the family board becomes the priest of the things made precious in the life of the country and of which mention is made as thanksgiving themes of the day. No more can the nation depart from its lofty mission and progressive ideals than can the earth swing away from the solar attraction. The day of home happiness, the day of praise, the day of felicity is a sacred and singular day in the annals of American progress and American world influence.

This Year the Spirit of Thanksgiving Should Properly Be Filled With Praise.

WHO that views the universe in its orderly movements and sees the mind of the Almighty in the fixed blessings of existence can doubt that out from the cataclysms of the world war the choice of blessing or cursing will work out in the victory of the good? The old cry, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" needs no longer be voiced. God has not forgotten to be gracious. So that, as the Americans assemble in their churches on the day set apart for expressing national gratitude, they will rejoice above all else that the nation of freemen has adopted as its motto: "Whom the Lord makes free is free indeed." Let them rejoice that America is bent upon proclaiming liberty to the entire bounds of the earth. The curse of autocracy, the curse of a blasphemous assumption that God is on the side of the strongest battalions, the curse of debauchery of human ideals and human aspirations, the curse of the establishment of force in the place of purity; of power in the place of peace—this is the cursing that is being wiped out in blood. The blessing of world peace and the prevalence of the spirit of brotherhood and of mutual advancement for the peoples—such is the peace that is being wrought out. The United States has placed its all on the altar, realizing that sacrifice is the noblest virtue of a nation. Hence, while exuberance may not abound, the spirit of thanksgiving is filled with praise over the mighty manner in which the mind of the Almighty is being made clear in the movements of the times; with the United States playing a leading part in its impressive unfolding.

Much More Than Material Are the Blessings for Which We Now Give Thanks.

IT IS to be hoped that this Thanksgiving will not be a pagan holiday, and that those who do render thanks will do so not as a heathen philosopher, boasting that he is not as other men, but in greater humility because he has perhaps been more greatly blessed than others.

Outside of the many material blessings that have come to the American people during the past year, which are good in so much as they contribute to wholesome human happiness, there is reason for the people of this country upon this Thanksgiving day to be un-

usually thoughtful concerning their place in the world, and to remember how this eminence has been obtained. Who can look back and not see the hand of Providence shaping the destiny of America? This liberty which is the marvel and the hope of the world today was set up on these shores by Godfearing men—the pioneers who inaugurated this very Thanksgiving holiday. It was for the love of the service of God that liberty was established in America, and it was this liberty that has been the basis of our national greatness and which is to be the political salvation of the world.

America cannot look back upon its history without seeing God, and by taking thought cannot fail to acknowledge its gratitude for all his benefits. With that stage of our development passed we are now permitted to enter upon that new era when America participates in abolishing tyranny and injustice, ever hateful to God, and to carry to the oppressed nations of the world those principles of liberty through which our own chief blessings have come.

This is the supreme service that one nation can render to another—to safeguard the liberties of its people. In this momentous time the burden of our Thanksgiving this year it seems should be that we are to be chief among the ministers in working out the Divine purpose to have all men—Greek and Barbarian—free.



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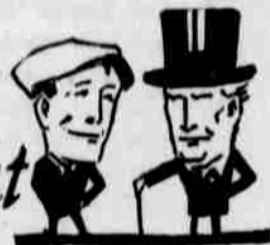
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