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...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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Come, Ye Thankful People, Come *H. Alford*

Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song
of harvest home;
All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms
begin.
God our Maker doth provide for our wants to be
supplied;
Come to God's own temple, come, raise the
song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field, fruit unto His
praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown unto joy or sor-
row grown.
First the blade and then the ear, then the full
corn shall appear;
Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain
and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come, and shall take
His harvest home;
From His field shall in that day all offenses
purge away,
Giving angels charge at last in the fire the tares
to cast;
But the fruitful ears to store in His garner ever-
more.

Even so, Lord, quickly come, bring Thy final
harvest home;
Gather Thou Thy people in, free from sorrow,
free from sin,
There, forever purified, in Thy garner to abide;
Come, with all Thine angels come, raise the glo-
rious harvest home.

•t&dw

Thought of the Week.

The blessing enjoyed, the gift employed,
The treasure that serves, not hoarding re-
serves...

These are the acts of thanksgiving.

•ejr3

Feature Article:

Thanksgiving Lost... and Found

*I will praise the name of God with a song, and will mag-
nify him with thanksgiving. Psalm 69:30*

*Say not, "What is the cause that the former days were bet-
ter than these?" You do not inquire wisely concerning this.
Eccl 7:10*

Gone are the idyllic *Norman Rockwell* Thanksgiv-
ings of my youth. But how present are the memories!
Each year, rising before daybreak, we'd roam the frosty
woods of my grandparents farm, relishing our last few
hours of small game hunting for the year. My Dad and
grandfather, our dog, Mickey, the crunching leaves be-
neath our feet, the cackling of a startled ring-necked
pheasant, the haunting perfume of spent gunpowder
wafting on the crisp autumn air... The nostalgia is palpa-
ble.

As midday approached we would gather by the old
foot-bridge to clean our game; then it was time to clean
ourselves up for the greatly anticipated Thanksgiving
feast. Down the winding wooded dirt road we paraded
from my grandparents' "forty acres" to my *great-*
grandparents' farm. As we gathered round the long, lav-
ishly decked dining table for a time of truly sanctified
gluttony, the old farmhouse seemed to embrace us in the
warm glow of familial love. In the eyes of youth it
seemed that tangible joy flowed among the turkey and
stuffing, dishes of pheasant, squirrel, rabbit, and veni-
son, mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberry, lima beans,
pumpkin pie and fresh cookies.

Afterward, everyone would collapse themselves into
the rustic living room chairs and sofas, the fire place
roaring. I would curl up in a time of delightful eaves-
dropping upon the conversations and banter of the three
elder *Eds*: "Dad", "Pop-Pop", and "Gramps". Most of
the stories had all been rehearsed many times before,
but their telling was part of a tradition that never grew
old, and never ceased to bring some warm sense of se-
curity to my childhood.

The inseparable appendage of Thanksgiving Day was
Christmas Tree Friday - no *Black Fridays* back then.
On some years there was snow, some years not - but
every year was crisp and magical to me. Like mighty
warriors off to battle, my Dad, my two brothers, and I
mounted the wooded hillside behind my great-

grandparents farmhouse on a quest for the holy grail of Christmas. Then, having ceased the prize, we strapped our trophy to the top of the old Pontiac and headed home to proudly present the Queen with the glorious spoils of our battle. Mom never seemed appropriately impressed, but she did her best to play along.

Soon, mounting the stairs to the old attic, we began the great celebrative transport of boxes of lights, ornaments, garland, icicles, manger scenes, nutcrackers. Of course, we saved the ultimate accessory of Christmas till last: my Dad's *American Flyer* train set.

As evening settled upon us, the tree all magnificent, my brothers and I placed the last train track with a celebration that rivaled that of the *Golden Spike of Promontory Point* (Google it, if you must). The construction complete, we launched into a magical night of railroading adventure, complete with train robbers and damsels in distress tied to the tracks. The finale was the greatest! We would throw the metallic icicles across the train tracks to witness the array of sparks flying from the shorted rails. As the old black transformer responded, the pop and glow of the large red warning light next to the bright green power light signaled the end of another wonderful Thanksgiving, and the beginning of the long-awaited Christmas season.

Those Thanksgivings have long passed, along with the ring-necked pheasant, the old farmhouse, and that old train set. How easy it would be to drown in a sea of paralyzing nostalgia - a sinful longing for *Thanksgiving Past*. But I have found a much better way.

I gather these precious memories together like priceless gold, and review them on the lap of my Father, whose paternal love bestowed them upon my childhood in the first place. There, in the warmth of His love, a spontaneous *Thanksgiving Present* emerges; and from its glow, so many current blessings are illuminated and redound to the glory of God, as I contemplate the myriad of miraculous gifts I receive from His hand each day.

Often, in those moments, He holds before me the sure promise of *Thanksgiving Future*, when with my Brother, we shall mount the wooded hillside beyond this old house, and lay hold of the one true Christmas tree: the eternally green, *Tree of Life*. ●ejr3

Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute.

Only Little Children Need Apply

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes... Luke 10:21-22

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Luke 18:2-3

Have you become a *little child*? The question is not frivolous. Jesus sets this as the qualifying standard for His kingdom, and we dare not trifle with it. It is in the simplicity of a child, with wide-eyed wonder, that we receive the great treasures of His storehouse. Yet there is in us a perennial tendency to intellectualize and complicate our walk with God.

Most of the consternations and anxieties of life come from "responsible adults" trying to maintain the comfort of some prescribed "norm" in an ever-changing world. The child simply trusts. In sunshine and rain he sings and skips to the sound of the timbrel and dance emanating from his Father's house. He does have a great responsibility, though. His responsibility is to always rejoice in his Father's love, and to be extending that love to others. So doing, he fulfills all the law and the prophets. Seeking first his Father's kingdom, all things necessary are provided him. His great wisdom is in letting go of the world and its anxieties.

I have known individuals who have put me to shame in this regard. A ten year old *downs syndrome* girl, whose spontaneous love for Jesus flowed forth in pure delight, captivating all who knew her. An incapacitated elderly lady, whose joy and kindness ministered to all who came to "comfort" her. These, and many others I've known, could not engage me in deep theological discussions. But they enveloped me in the very presence of God.

Life is hard. But little children find its serendipitous treasures even amidst the rubble. We are called to perpetually be God's little children. Only then can we lighten up and enjoy the ride, safe in the arms of Jesus. ●ejr3

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