

## SOME THOUGHTS . . .

*“Our corn did prove well, and God be praised, we had a good increase of Indian corn, and our barley indifferent good, but our peas not worth the gathering, for we feared they were too late sown. They came very well, and blossomed, but the sun parched them in the blossom. Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, amongst our recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.”*

-Edward Winslow, December 12, 1621 (a presumed leader of the Pilgrim colony, giving an account of the Pilgrims' 1621 Thanksgiving; source: *Mayflower*, Caleb Johnson, 1999)

“True thanksgiving is the voluntary expression of heartfelt gratitude for benefit received. Its effectiveness depends upon its sincerity, as its intensity depends upon the value which is placed upon the benefit received. Thanksgiving is peculiarly personal . . . Thanksgiving is in no way a payment for the benefit received; it is rather a gracious acknowledgment of the fact that the one who had received the benefit is indebted to the giver. Since no payment can be made to God for His unmeasured and uncounted benefits, the obligation to be thankful to Him is stated throughout the Scriptures . . .”

-Lewis Sperry Chafer

“Once again we find ourselves confronted by Christmas, and if you're anything like me, you have mixed emotions about a season that brings hope to so many while at the same time being mocked by so many others. Indeed, it seems that Christmas is being methodically stripped of Christ.

“But for those of us whose lives have been transformed by the indescribable power wrapped up in those swaddling clothes some two thousand years ago, celebrating anything other than the birth of Jesus makes about as much sense as exchanging all that we have gained in Christ for a mouthful of cotton candy.

“For us, Christmas means new birth. This season speaks of a living hope for a time when all of our pains and sorrows will be swept away by unrelenting waves of joy and

bliss. During the coming weeks I urge you to fix your minds on the greatest gift ever conceived by man or God, the gift of life and power and laughter and pleasure and peace offered freely by a Savior born in Bethlehem.

“Isn't that why we give others gifts? Don't we mean to say, 'Accept this token of God's goodness to you from me, and remember that it's only a dim reflection of the gift that Christ has given you in rebirth and just a foretaste of the incomparable gift that awaits you in heaven.'”

“And whatever else you do during this time of celebration, remember that when you give a gift it has rich, uncompromising meaning, because in its own small way it represents a gift that, however misunderstood by the world, is life itself to those of us who believe.”

-Ted Dekker