

The PRESBYTERIAN

OF THE SOUTH
COMBINING
THE SOUTHWESTERN PRESBYTERIAN
THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN
THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN

VOL. LXXXVI.

RICHMOND, NEW ORLEANS,

Virginia State Library
"Comp" FEBRUARY 21, 1917.

No. 45

THANKSGIVING

RECEIVED
NOV 21 1917
VIRGINIA STATE
LIBRARY

Thanksgiving is the acknowledging of our obligation to another for favors received, and the expression of our appreciation of them.

When we realize how many blessings God is continually bestowing upon us, there ought to be a continual stream of thanksgiving going forth from our hearts to Him. It is hard to see how any true man can fail to thank God for His goodness to him. It is hard to see how any prayer can be offered, in which thanksgiving does not occupy an important place. We are apt to emphasize the petitions in our prayers to such an extent that we overlook other important parts. When we go to God to ask Him for something we ought to begin by thanking Him for what He has done for us already.

Thanksgiving should be our daily and hourly practice. Yet it is well to have special times in which our thoughts are particularly directed to the blessings that God has bestowed upon us.

The Jews had their thanksgiving feasts, especially the Feast of Tabernacles. This was celebrated at the close of the season of ingathering in the fall of the year. When the harvests were all reaped, and the olives and grapes and figs had all been gathered and stored away for winter's use, the people all journeyed up to Jerusalem to take part in their great feast of thanksgiving to God for the blessings He had bestowed upon them. So full of rejoicing and praise were they that it was often said: "He does not know joy who has not seen the rejoicing at the Feast of Tabernacles."

From the early days of the Pilgrim Fathers, certain times have been set apart for special public thanksgiving. But it has only been for a little more than fifty years that there has been any general celebration of a fixed day for all over the country.

Our beloved and much honored President has fixed the 29th of this month as the day in which he urges us to meet in our places of public worship to render to God the praise and thanksgiving for all of His goodness to us.

There are always pessimists, who profess to see nothing to be thankful for. But the vast majority of people do not feel in that way. There are others who say there is not much ground for thanksgiving at such a time as this. They look upon the war with all of its gloom and darkness, its sacrifice and its suffering, and

say they do not see that there is anything to be thankful for. Yet there are many blessings which God has bestowed upon us for which we ought to give Him thanks.

From a material standpoint God has been very good to us. This country has never had greater crops than during the past year. Other countries are suffering for the want of food while we have an abundance.

From a business standpoint the country was

Other nations have been called upon to sacrifice many of their brave sons. Thus far we have been spared. This should be a cause of great thankfulness.

Another and a greater cause of thanksgiving is the great opportunity that God has given us to serve Him and our fellowman. Every lover of humanity in this country must have felt some pride that as a nation we have been able to do something for the other nations that need-

our help in their great fight for liberty and righteousness. God has made us the richest nation in the world and we ought to be thankful to Him that He has in this way given us the opportunity of helping the countries that are now our allies in this great war. We have been able to lend hundreds of millions of dollars to England, France, Belgium, Italy and Russia.

To be able to supply their needs in such a case is a great privilege.

And now when the cause of righteousness among the nations demands that we should enter the war, we may well be thankful that we have the means and the men in such abundance to be used in so just a cause.

War is horrible from every standpoint, and we can be thankful that we have not entered this war from our own choice, but that we are in it because we have been forced into it. But since we have been forced into it, we are fortunate, indeed, to have the means of prosecuting it vigorously, with every hope of success.

We ought to be thankful for the internal condition of our country. It is doubtful whether any one of the other countries engaged in the war is as harmoniously united as is ours. There is probably no head of a government who has more generally the esteem and support of the people than has our President.

From all accounts no country has a finer, stronger, braver, more loyal set of men in its ranks than those who are marshaled under the Stars and Stripes, and there are millions more of them waiting to be called.

If we as a nation shall be used of God in putting down the spirit of oppression and the power of militarism, and in the establishment of righteousness and justice in the world, even though it be at a frightful cost, we may well be thankful that God is willing to use us in the carrying out of His purpose.

We may also be thankful for the feeling with which we as a people are imbued in connection

The President's Proclamation

By the President of the United States of America—A Proclamation:

It has long been the honored custom of our people to turn, in the fruitful autumn of the year, in praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His many blessings and mercies to us as a nation. That custom, we can follow even now, in the midst of the tragedy of a world shaken by war and immeasurable diaster, in the midst of sorrow and great peril, because, even amidst the darkness that has gathered about us, we can see the great blessings God has bestowed upon us—blessings that are better than mere peace of mind and prosperity of enterprise.

We have been given the opportunity to serve mankind as we once served ourselves in the great day of our Declaration of Independence, by taking up arms against a tyranny that threatened to master and debase men everywhere, and joining with other free people in demanding for all the nations of the world what we then demanded and obtained for ourselves. In this day of the revelation of our duty not only to defend our own rights as a nation, but to defend also the rights of free men throughout the world, there has been vouchsafed us in full and inspiring measure the resolution and spirit of united action. We have been brought to one mind and purpose. A new vigor of common counsel and common action has been revealed in us. We should especially thank God that in such circumstances, in the midst of the greatest enterprise the spirits of men have entered upon, we have, if we but observe a reasonable and practicable economy, abundance with which to supply the needs of those associated with us as well as our own. A new light shines about us. The great duties of a new day awakens a new and greater national spirit in us. We shall never again be divided or wonder what stuff we are made of.

And while we render thanks for those things, let us pray Almighty God that, in all humbleness of spirit, we may look always to Him for guidance: that we may be kept constant in the spirit and purpose of service: that by His grace our minds may be directed and our hands strengthened; and that in His good time, liberty and security and peace and the comradeship of a common justice may be vouchsafed all the nations of the earth.

Wherefore, I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate Thursday, the 29th day of November next, as a day of thanksgiving and prayer, and invite the people throughout the land to cease, upon that day, from their ordinary occupations, and in their several homes and places of worship, to render thanks to God, the great Ruler of nations.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done in the District of Columbia, this 7th day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, and of the independence of the United States of America the one hundred and forty-second.

WOODROW WILSON,

By the President:
Robert Lansing,
Secretary of State.

never before as prosperous as it is today. Men are accumulating wealth as they never did before. This is true not only of a few rich men, but there are large numbers of others who had never been able to accumulate anything before, who have opened savings accounts that are growing steadily.

Up to this time we have escaped the horrors of war almost entirely. No foreign foe has put his foot upon our soil. While many of our men have been called into the army and navy, very few have had to meet the enemy in battles, and few have suffered from the enemy's shells.