

- Be acceptable, in thy sight, oh Lord our strength and our redeemer, Amen. There are, two valid approaches, to the observation of, thanks giving day. One is to see in it, a high day, in our national history. An opportunity to appreciate the religious point of view of our forefathers, in new England and Virginia. They believed that it was God, who had brought them to this good land, where they might live as, freemen. We might have sung about it. Oh God, beneath thy guiding hand, our exiled father, crossed the sea, laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God, came with those exiles or the waves, and hear thy name oh God of love. Their children's children, still adore. This is, one, authentic, evaluation, of Thanksgiving day. A second approach is to recognize in this annual holiday and holy day. The continuance of the ancient festival, of the harvest. Rooted for us in the old Testament and maintained by the Christian Church, through the century. Seed time and harvest have not failed. Hallelujah, (foreign language) Thanks be to God. Thus, there is a legitimate double emphasis, one acknowledged by president Johnson in his proclamation of Thanksgiving day. But today we shall concentrate on the second aspect, the harvest home accent. Nothing new will be said in this sermon. It will be an endeavor to recall a note that some of us, many of us, have loved long since and lost awhile. Now, because of the impact of urban and suburban living, some of us have become strangers, to nature. That is to the physical universe as contrasted with man's creation. God made the country and man, made the town. That's no new reflection, it was said by William Cooper, in the 18th century. The country is often a foreign country, strange and unappreciated, despite, our dependence, upon it. We echo, in adult tones, the despairing cry of the city urchin, writing from a summer camp, "Take me home, our milk comes from dirty old cows instead of from clean new bottles." Now, the adjectives we associate with milk are, pasteurized, homogenized. We're almost lulled into a sense of safe security by the ignorant milk man's confident statement, "All our milk has been paralyzed, by a government anarchist." We are a generation of the ANP, the colonial store, the piggly wiggly, and yet I recall our Polish made in Massachusetts, walking in her bare feet, across the newly ploughed fields, throwing renewed strength, from the soil. She was a contemporary female, Antaeus. Do you remember Antaeus? He was a giant, the son of Poseidon, the God of the Mediterranean sea and of Gaea, Ge, the personification of the earth, whose strength was invincible, so long as he remained in contact, with his mother earth. Hercules discovered this. He lifted, Antaeus, from the earth and crushed him, in the air. Some of us are in mid air. Out contact with the soil. Therefore, we are vulnerable. Which of us like Robert Burns, would think of writing poems to a Daisy? To a mouse, or a mirabile dicto, to a louse Don't look so disgusted. It's quite appropriate to mention a Louse, in a sermon, because Burns, saw that viste, on a lady's bonnet, in church, that's the subtitle of the poem. Maybe Wordsworth was right when he wrote, Little we see in Nature, that is ours. The Hebrew who composed the Psalm 104, our morning lesson, loved nature. He talks of Springs, gushing forth from, in the valleys and wild asses, quenching their thirst. He delights that grass grows for the cattle and that birds build their nests in the cedars of Lebanon. He is in raptures about wine, which gladdens the heart of man, and bread which strengthens him, and behind all this provision for beasts, as well as for man. He sees God, in action. These all look to thee, to give them their food in due season. Clean thou give us to them, they gather it up. When thou open us thy hand, they are filled with good things. When thou send us through out thy spirit, they are created, and thou reneweth the face of the ground. And you know how he finished his psalm?

Bless the Lord, oh my soul, praise the Lord. He saw God, in action. God who made and who makes, the wattle. It was because of God that these, the men are fed, and sustained and maintained. That theme permeates the Old Testament, and it is sang, to a pastoral accompaniment. The Lord is my shepherd. He shall feed his flock, like a Shephard, will hear that song, by our cry in two weeks, and the Messiah. We are the people of his pasture and the New Testament says, amen. Listen to Jesus. Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value, than they? His analogies and teaching regularly drawn from nature, a lost sheep. The lilies of the field, two sparrows, the benison of rain and the benediction of the sun. God, for Jesus, was creator and sustainer. Now, the emphasis on God as Redeemer, never an old, never superseded, never displaced his prior confidence in God, as creator and sustainer. This is what Jews and Christians remember in the harvest festival, and this is what Thanksgiving day is primarily about. We hear so much these days about, God, in history. God, in history, it's a valid affirmation and enthusiasm. The Bible is full of it, and Christian theology is actively dependent on it. The secular historian may shake his head at this and over this, but (indistint) holy history or literally the history of salvation, attempts to see God, at work, in the world, for man's welfare, in the ongoing of life. And yet, let it be noted, underlying, and undergirding the God in history, is the God of nature. No nature, no history, and the Thanksgiving festival gives us a set chance, to ruminate on our birth and growth, on our coming here and on our being here. Now, we've seen that a theology of nature is of importance in the Bible, especially for some of the psalmist and for our Lord, but it's not absent from men's reflecting, in the resulting Judeo Christian heritage. Listing to Francis of Assisi, the Troubadour, saint, in his song of the creature, praised be my Lord God, with all his creatures, and especially our brother, the sun, who brings us the day and who brings us the light. Fair is he and shines with great splendor. Oh Lord, he signifies to us, thee. Praised be my Lord, for our sister, the moon, and for the stars, that which he has set, clear and lovely, in heaven. Praised be my Lord, for our brother the wind and for air and plought, calms and all weathers, by which they uphold this life, in all creatures. For missing to words with, probably more, pantheist, than Christian. Listen to them trying to figure out what nature means to him. A few miles, above 10 to Mabee. And I have felt the presence, that disturbs me. With the joy of elevated crops, a sense of blim, of something far more deeply inter fused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns on the round ocean and the living air and the blue sky and in the mind of man. A motion and the spirit, that impels all thinking things, all objects of all thought and rolls through all things. Therefore, I'm I still, a lover of the Meadows, and the woods and mountains, or listen to path of the confession of faith of one, who was both president of our country and a fisherman. Life is not comprised entirely of making a living, or of arguing about the future, or defaming the past. Life, is the break of waves, in the sun, the contemplation of the eternal flow of the stream, the stretch of forest and mountain and their manifestation of the maker. It has all these that sooth our troubles, shame our wickedness, and inspire us to esteem our fellow men, especially other fishermen. That was, Herbert Hoover. These men breathe, what Lawrence Houseman has called, the music of sympathy, between nature and man. They look into and through nature, to sense the God of nature, and their reaction is one of gratitude of Thanksgiving. They know what Queen Elizabeth meant. In that private prayer, which he wrote, about, 1596, which has become the basis of the general Thanksgiving. We bless thee for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life. Now this is not the whole gospel. Just as it is not the whole content of the prayer of Thanksgiving. It is brought to completion, in redemption, but redemption is not the emphasis of Thanksgiving day. We are concerned with something more widespread, more primitive, more basic than redemption. One cannot be redeemed, if he hasn't been created and

preserved. This is the festival of happy creatures, saying, thank you, to him who made them and who continues to care for them. The God of Thanksgiving day is the creator and preserver. Now, how can we show our thanks? All that our various interwoven ways, we have already shown our thanks, by coming, to, church, and sharing in this public service of Thanksgiving in anticipation of Thursday. Perhaps we shall go again, on Thanksgiving morning. I hope the communion table, will be flanked with sheaves of wheat, and that the congregation will bring loaves and vegetables and fruits and jars of jam and bottles of preserves, to be stacked on and around the altar, as our sacrifice, of Thanksgiving, Perhaps we shall go to a service of holy communion. If we do, let us remember two things, in founding that feast, our Lord used, ordinary food, bread, and wine, to symbolize the sustenance of heaven, and remember this also, in the prayer, which he taught his disciples, he asked for bread before he asked, for the forgiveness, of sins. First, give us this day, our daily bread, then, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and remember too, that one name for the Lord's supper, is Eucharist. You know what that means?, Thanksgiving. The giving of thanks, And perhaps for some of us, our Thanksgiving will be shown by, distributing the food stacked around the altar to the poor folk in our community. Maybe we shall send a care package, overseas. Jesus said that if in love, we gave food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, we gave it to him, and we would find ourselves with visas for the kingdom of God. In as much, as you have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, he have done it unto me, therefore, come ye blessed of my father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world. That perhaps, some of us this Thursday, will, make plans for the future, that we shall move, say into the whole realm, of conservation. You know how reckless we have been with our natural resources. The despoiling of our forest, the ugliness of strip mining, river pollution, the man made, smog. Do you know, the prayer of intercession, which asks that, beauty may be given to our towns and left, to our countryside. Did Ogden Nash, have that in mind when he wrote, I think that I shall never see, a billboard, lovely as a tree. Perhaps unless the billboards fall, I'll never see a tree at all. Reverence for the God of nature, may lead some of us into legislatures, to fight, so that the beauty, may be left, to our countryside. Well, whatever we do on Thursday, let it be done with, joy, With the joy, which the smile, on the face of gratitude. Let it be done with laughter. With laughter which is the effervescence, of appreciation. Let it be done with fun, with fun, which is the spontaneous reaction, to the happy acknowledgment of the care of God. Our creator, and, our preserver, Amen. Let us pray. Oh, most merciful father who has blessed the laborers of the husband, man, in the return of the fruits of the earth. We give the humble and hearty thanks, for this thy bounty. Beseeching thee to continue by loving kindness to us. That our land may still yield hard increase, to thy glory, and our comfort, and may the blessing of God, come upon you abundantly. May it keep you, strong and tranquil, in the truth of his promises, through Jesus Christ. Our Lord.