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The Modern Pioneer

Earl Clement Davis

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3 Lewons I. the Thodew Prover. • , ` .

Muritten to gove conce and inclufenclonce and faith to foogle just recomming fur a feriod of discongement. Subject; The worden firee. Pert; John 6 35: mine our nives, with will glim that senting. Scrifture, Lev. 2334-36, 39-41, Sent. 1613-12 Ser. Buchwothin, Rev. 211-7 Nor are looking forward this worning to one of the great fertirol dogs of the year. Hifly wor the thought which inspired Hov. Brackful to a harvest festivol dry of thanksgiving and joy. Is it toffens that your after year me woke wort aloberate and extensive flams to make this day, a day of great juy and fleasure. By the very exchance of of our delight we try to show our thankful: ver, and our good feelings towards each other and the world, of me me feagle of deef feeling and devotions we try to alkow =

edge om defendonce ufor Jorl. and affer our frager of Shorth and fraise water him for whetever her befoller us during the year. With this whole hearted juy and glochen and reverance we join in woking this dry, a dry of great meaning to all. But why is it that we can this ful on me do.? There whose life for the fort year has been filled to orienflowing by every desire and alwart every wish being satisfied, such dry way well for the the jop of such a day, but some * of them day do not. alther, where life for been one continuol feriod of hardship disoffontwent, suffering, and sour. such ferfle seen to look found to a

day like this with a far greater sense of affection, and expectancy then Thre who has been wort favored. Even thre who havely torn what a hivery is, flor and some so that on this one day of the year. They way shut out the forenty and wont of charly life and give themselves over to one day of com: farative luxery and confort. "ho, it count be that the real signif = score of throkigining day rests in our feeling of thorhigining for the obundance of good things that have some to us chining the year, for it seems that three who have hoch the worst, care the least, and thre who have had the

least, save the wort. Then too Iwonder if me toachy eleleste as sincere a festivol of Shriksgining as diel the early filgins. It seems that and of the very needs of their life, rather the out of its abunchance, some this day of throhquing, how it is not so much out of the fast with its accem flishwents, as out of the future with its bofen armes this feeling which fromfts us to a ferical of thuksgiving. the a Time such as This your feelings are feeling of tofe, eather this exholtation of forward looking rother than behuvel looking, hot what for been done though us avel for us

in the fast so much as what we hope to have done though us and for in in the future. not what we tare, or what we have done, or what we are is the basis of our thank sgiving, but what through god's grace and an own effort we hope to have, and doofe to cho, and hope to become in that wigit even alluning. but un kirm fature which shetches and before us. It is a conservation to the things undere rather three an exhaltation over the things dime. For day we face, wat the fast, but the future.

In solving the firstens of the forth we often avoid wany foolish wintoker and embaraning blancles by going back to the fort for help and misdow of a often try to fiture to myself the kind of were they were, there fionen who first settled in this country, and held their thruksgiving festivols on The sknes of an unknown certinent thereking goel for the things that had been virchedrofe to them, and consecrating themselves to the unsolved problems of a new world with all its hard = ship. I try to get serve enception of the mental and word equif = went of three were who in the

undelle of the 18th Century ficked Their way though the Housac wountains, leaving behind the confuts of the settlements near the coast, and res = olutely faced the thest withour and mexplored. They begin that great wowenent westand which in a centuries time had wored the continent and worker the settlement of thre far away theatim caties on the Porific Coort. Fion our ease and sofety and quiet we con look back to thredays of hardship and clorger, and reach in the the stories of their achieventures, and try to glean from them something of the spirit something of the character which lead

them though days of discours generat and clarkness, to shop of nictury and regining We can read there the elements of character which we erow to them are, and which sustained them in oll their ad= nenterors fireen work. Us con look at the lives of men who have been the fireur in folitical, whole, and sociol advouces, there we read the serve stary, and understand that the serve type of mon in one cose as in the other. It is all very fourtably bright out in this hit from Patts field history, the more important because it speaks of the usual rather the the musual. By the summer of 1752

so the story Tell us "which is usvely accounted the buth year of Pitts field, some of the settlers had log = cobins reachy to receive their foruileis. and frist come Solowon being fun Metherfield, with his wife Sarah behind him on The fillion. She wor a maiden of seventeen when Solomon first ennyed to fromicle Them a chueching flace in the mildemen of the Green wountains. Two a trave young good wife of twenty six, she entred boontrouck, the first white warm who even collect it have " Thre were the kind of forfle who were fireer in all

The ken bold werenents. Such as they held their festivols of threshquing and fraised good for whit had been accomplished tomards the realization of their lifes, and consecrated themselves to work of the future in whit they hoped to have , and che and become. The great achorence in civilization which distinguisher the country to day from the country of two hundred years ago wel were, refresents the holf defined, hayy cheans that thited the flitted across the misin of their chean tiles, and filled their beauts with gry and fearse as they officed their frager of thether.

I. How wo relinary unege that led thre was and women actors The un= there to establish have, a new government, a new society. It was rother the service of a fear who were milling to follow The unused come, and commit themselves to all the darger and uncertainties of an untranched word. as som on the fractical sofety of thre shoe town book herewe arrived, wer of the some consigeres watere began to ture their focus too the west. Leaving behind them the sofety and security of the well settled tours, they revolutely found the uncertainties, the danger which the

inexplued country book in star for them. The advancing worr of civilization wheel across the curity carrying mits seent the havest and wort surgeous of our race, They were men of knowed thre fimeus of an early day. But it requires scruetling work there surveyes to toke such a step. Thany a wer of course vere goes outsich of The relinary, simply because be acts accirching to the dictutes of other people. For a were to free himself fin trachiting, to break with the bobits and customs of the feefle awong whom he lives, to resolve to do a Thing in the doing of which he unit act above, such conduct seguies courage, hit it also requies indefendance

to weaking who follows along in the woke of the wajority, and quietly assuts to the will of everyme around him, con ever claim The indefendance which the world is colling for, what where for because of the genus of liberal seligion is her Engloved book Change and Leaders Parken lacked That indefendence of spirit which thust them who the voi quand of the advorce in religions thread of that day, some weld the slame footlen have been handled bod vot a few wer had the indefendant spirit sufficient to tope the intiduce and raise the usive, These early fromeen who branky took the actuaince step

enching the hardship that others night Enjoy the confort, they were men of indefendance, vot that incle = fendance born of concert-and anogone but that indefendance born of a sobhine conception of abouty and obecheine to goods mill. But hereath convoge and indefendance There is the still work for formal clarac: teristics which is the basis ofm which all the sert that is faith. It is not without season that so much aufheris too alwoop been fut upon failt. Failt in the integrity of life, in the thingh of goodness, in the volichity of girl's truth. -it is This That is at the bottom of every woncement and act of life. We are

follow one facts just on for as they lead, we are follow exact howledge so far as exact howledge is obtainable, but heynd that we must around runelier to faith, and act inaccordance with what we believe too be time. It was a deef unquesting faith - faith in the integrity of notives trus, of wave faith in the mind of work, and in the mindur of books that sufferted the firecers on they correct the occurs To this new world, and took up their slow but steady warch acurs across the mountains and frame to the pacific coast, Such Som were the characteristics of thre early

fioneers - The men and women who laid the foundations of our Devericon

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But we turn from the fast to the fresent and future, and what is one onthout. It is twe that nearly all the linds of the world for heev explored, it is The that our country is quite thorough settled. It is twe that the dangers and heroising early cloup ou longer offer themselves to us as fielde face on envoge, inclefercline and faith. But thre are the beginnings of civilizations, he was can fore the chutes of life to : day, as a worker, as a citizen as a won, who closes wot feel that he is chollenged to toke the flare of a fioneer in solving the footlens of fered by conditions which are as geat

a menace to us on even the linking sange was to on white aucestors. I am July amore of the hervendors gains That for hear wade, I know that there is no warent for a key of desfair, and an restain that This works as it is this minute is a very genice competable sort of a flare in which to hive, But gost because so much has been done will her and There are Things vor which every one can see needs to to done, just because of this day, every when who lives at all seriously work fell the challenge to his our fersond affort and consecration. She very

hinitations of our physical safety call for about infinite labor to destry the invacts of crine, conclusion and disease you the sofety of life. In folitical ligh from one and off this country to the other, in town, state or cost try, men of fovor and fublic spinit are culling about in vain for helfers in their efforts to revone the foliticol interests of the country from the meshes of comptin. Hot call is to every man that son sait a vole, ho less urgent and freezing is the coll which is corning to us every day from the warfare between lobor and cyfital. The great fity

of it all is that wo one, secon who is in the tottle can seem to get above the flair of dollars and centr, luly now and then does there affer a ferson who seen that it is not a question of wages, or the voucher of forms of bobor that is at the bottom of all the trouble, but it is alle word fincifle of the recognition of ferroughty. Closely converted with this lobor forthern is the forther of the icle classer. The vogcants, the criminals, the defertures, the idle rich, WE convot office to suffart such a wars of useless usaterial

and it is our froblem to turn them to some advantage to the frequen of the world, There are problems of a word nature that are very freesing. It is useles To refeat the eines that derivend the efforts of every earrest war and out wown in retieving the strain and rewring the temptations to min, which are or offarent in douby life. then and above all else, does not the conditions of thimps in the objects offairs of this commenting demand wort freezing service. "hot alive the fofle, but the minsty as well for feared to

face the potlence of religion which the conditions of the verwoold for for of a them, the revolt is that the chuch, the ministry, the feyle, and the cause of religion stalf hor suffered, and at this woment dewond comoge, indefendance and faith as no other follow in woden life demands their. Is all the work dure, Con me sit back and fold on hands glorying in the deech of a forwar geverations, and offering our frager of thanksgiving for the things which though god grave hove been accomptabled and woke fonitle one ease,

23 God forbicl' of even there wer a Time when fimeers were needed, that Time is ver, in whitever duection are my ture there is the devored for a fireen with correge, inclufenchouse and faith everyth to lauch out into the unknown, and unchiconned, leaving behind the hack time and an accumulations of custime which his because too much of a hindrauce to the norwol quinth of won. Shis is the cold of this Thompsing festivol not so much the joy over what have dere, or the rejoicing hope over the waligation of deaus any bot half- outlived " that fiels on

24 swe with joy and type. but of our source, out of our fleasure, out of our failure. art of our success we del join in this hope of the harvest season, - The life of things to hore, and things to the, and Things to do souls to 12 in The realization of the fature terrande which we look with knogs and faith. The satisfaction with which me reags the heavent is vot in the havest itself . but in the volue of the harvest for the coming year, and the type in the fertile seeds which give fromse of still greater harnests, as the

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day comes and goes let one hearts be filled with thorhsgiving for the five thoughts, the workle ideals the Divine asfirations which lead us into the future consecrated to their realization of Ivel's Knigden, Shere, too, me count control enhiely the working of things which bring about our own harvest, whitere it way be that we flast. So if it toffens that one crops are a failine, we stoll come to another haven't with sach and heavy hearts, but me con control the high thought, the volle ideals of service, the right : minded hopes of doys to came.

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and vo disasters bomever and any toke from us our hopes of dop to come. For our own comfort this let us fills our minds with volle hopes as me four this festive day, and let our thanksgining be a thonks giving of consecration to the fimen service in Gods thigdon, For I come down from Neaner, not to do mine own mile, but the will of him that sent me"

Pittsfreld Ton, mi. 20. 1904 -

The Modern Pioneer¹

Earl Clement Davis

Pittsfield, MA

November 20, 1904

Text: John 6:38, "For I came down from Heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Scripture: Lev. 23:34-36, 39-41; Deut. 16:13-15; Gov. Proclamation; Rev. 21:1-7.

We are looking forward this morning to one of the great festive days of the year. Happy was the thought which inspired Gov. Bradford² to establish a harvest festival day of thanksgiving and joy. So it happens that year after year we make most elaborate and extensive plans to make this day a day of great joy and pleasure. By the very exuberance of our delight we try to show our thankfulness, and our good feelings towards each other and the world. If we are people of deep feeling and devotion we try to acknowledge our dependence upon God, and offer our prayer of thanks and praise unto him for whatever has befallen us during the year. With this whole-hearted joy and gladness and reverence we join in making this day, a day of great meaning to all.

But why is it that we can thus feel as we do? Those whose life for the past year has been filled to overflowing by every desire and about every wish being satisfied, such, I say, may well join the joys of such a day. But some of them do not. Others, whose life has been one continual period of hardship disappointment, suffering, and sorrow, such people seem to look forward to a day like this with a far greater sense of appreciation and expectancy than those who have been most favored. Even those who hardly know what a luxury is, plan and save so that on this one day of the year, they may shut out the poverty and want of daily life and give

¹ Note written before the text: "Written to give courage and independence and faith to people just recovering from a period of discouragement."

² Governor William Bradford, Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1621-1633.

themselves over to one day of comparative luxury and comfort.

No, it cannot be that the real significance of Thanksqiving day rests in our feeling of thanksqiving for the abundance of good things that have come to us during the year, for it seems that those who have had the most, care the least, and those who have had the least care the most. Then too I wonder if we of today celebrate as sincere a festival of Thanksgiving as did those early Pilgrims. It seems that out of the very needs of their life, rather than out of its abundance came this day of thanksgiving. No! It is not so much out of the past with its accomplishments, as out of the future with its hopes comes this feeling which prompts us to a period of Thanksgiving. At a time such as this, your feelings are feelings of hope, rather than exaltation, of forward looking rather than backward looking. Not what has been done through us and for us in the past so much as what we hope to have done through us and for us in the future. Not what we love, or what we have done, or what we are is the basis of our thanksgiving, but what through God's grace and our own effort we hope to have, and hope to do, and hope to become in the magic ever alluring, but unknown future which stretches out before us. It is a consecration to the things undone rather than an exaltation over the things done. Today we face, not the past but the future.

In solving the problems of the future we often avoid many foolish mistakes and embarrassing blunders by going back to the past for help and wisdom. I often try to picture to myself the kind of men they were, those pioneers who first settled in this country, and held their thanksgiving festivals on the shores of an unknown continent thanking God for the things that had been vouchsafed to them, and consecrating themselves to the unsolved problems of a new world with all its hardship. I try to get some conception of the mental and moral equivalent of those men who in the middle of the 18th century picked their way through the Hoosac mountains³ leaving behind the comforts of the settlements near the coast, and resolutely faced the vast unknown and unexplored. They began that great movement westward which in a century's time had crossed the continent and made the settlements of those far away

³ The Hoosac mountains form the western edge of the northwest Berkshire plateau of western Massachusetts.

western cities on the Pacific coast. From our ease and safety and quiet we can look back to those days of hardship and danger, and read the stories of their adventures, and try to glean from them something of the spirit, something of the character which led them through days of discouragement and darkness, to days of victory and rejoicing. We can read there the elements of character which were common to them all, and which sustained them in all their adventurous pioneer work. We can look at the lives of men who have been the pioneers in political, moral, and social advances. There we read the same story, and understand that the same type of man is pioneer in one case as in the other. It is all very pointedly brought out in this bit from Pittsfield history, the more important because it speaks of the usual rather than the unusual. "By the summer of 1752," so the story tells us, "which is usually accounted the birth-year of Pittsfield, some of the settlers had log cabins ready to receive their families. And first came Solomon Deming, from Wethersfield with his wife Sarah behind him on the pillion. She was a maiden of seventeen when Solomon first essayed to provide them a dwelling place in the wilderness of the Green Mountains. Now a brave young good wife of twenty-six, she entered Poontoosuck, the first white woman who ever called it home."4 These were the kind of people who were pioneers in all the new world movements. Such as they held their festivals of thanksgiving and praised God for what had been accomplished towards the realization of their hopes, and consecrated themselves to work of the future in what they hoped to have, and do and become. The great advance in civilization which distinguishes the country today from the country of two hundred years ago and more represents the half-defined, hazy dreams that flitted across the vision of their dream life, and filled their hearts with joy and praise as they offered their prayer of thanksgiving.

It was no ordinary courage that led those men and women across the unknown ocean into an unknown land, and there to establish a new home, a new government, a new society. It was rather the courage of a few who were willing to following the unusual course, and commit themselves to all

⁴ Earl Davis is taking this material from *The History of Pittsfield (Berkshire County) Massachusetts, From the Year 1734 to the year 1800.* Compiled and written, under the general direction of a committee, by J. E. A. Smith. Boston: Lee and Shepard. 1869.

the dangers and uncertainties of an untrammeled land. As soon as the practical safety of those shore towns had become assured, men of the same courageous nature began to turn their faces to the west. Leaving behind them the safety and security of the well-settled towns. They resolutely faced the uncertainties, the dangers, which the unexplored country had in store for them. The advancing wave of civilization rolled across the country carrying on its crest the bravest and most courageous of our race. They were men of courage, those pioneers of an early day.

But it requires something more than courage to take such a step. Many a man of courage never goes outside of the ordinary, simply because he acts according to the dictates of other people. For a man to free himself from tradition, to break with the habits and customs of the people among whom he lives, to resolve to do a thing in the doing of which he must act alone, such conduct requires courage, but it also requires independence. No weakling who follows along in the wake of the majority, and quietly assents to the will of everyone around him can ever claim that independence which the world is calling for. What would have become of the germs of liberal religion in New England had Channing and Theodore Parker lacked that independence of spirit which thrust them into the vanguard of the advance in religious thought of that day. How could the slave problem have been handled had not a few men had the independent spirit sufficient to take the initiative and raise the issue. These early pioneers who bravely took the advance step enduring the hardship that others might enjoy the comfort, they were men of independence, not that independence born of conceit and arrogance, but that independence born of a sublime conception of duty and obedience to God's will.

But beneath courage and independence there is the still more profound characteristic which is the basis upon which all else rests, that is faith. It is not without reason that so much emphasis has always been put upon faith. Faith in the integrity of life, in the triumph of goodness, in the validity of God's truth. It is this that is at the bottom of every movement and act of life. We can follow our facts just as far as they lead, we can follow exact knowledge so far as exact knowledge is obtainable, but beyond that we must commit ourselves to faith, and act in accordance with what we believe to be true. It was a deep unquestioning faith, faith in the integrity of nature's laws, faith in the mind of man, and in the wisdom of God that supported the pioneers as they crossed the ocean to this new world, and took up their slow but steady march across the mountains and prairies to the Pacific coast. Such I saw were the characteristics of those early pioneers, the men and women who laid the foundations of our American life.

But we turn from the past to the present and future, and what is our outlook? It is true that nearly all the lands of the world have been explored. It is true that our country is quite thoroughly settled. It is true that the dangers and heroisms of early days no longer offer themselves as fields for our courage, independence and faith. But those are but the beginnings of civilizations. No man can face the duties of life today, as a worker, as a citizen, as a man, who does not feel that he is challenged to take the place of a pioneer in solving the problems offered by conditions which are as great a menace to us as ever the lurking savage war to our white ancestors. I am fully aware of the tremendous gains that have been made. I know that there is no warrant for a cup of despair, and I am certain that this world as it is this minute is a very genial comfortable sort of a place in which to live. But just because so much has been done and because there are things now which everyone can see need to be done, just because of this, I say, everyone who lives at all seriously must feel the challenge to his own personal effort and consecration. The very limitations of our physical safety call for almost infinite labor to destroy the inroads of crime, carelessness and disease upon the safety of life. In political life, from one end of this country to the other, in towns, state or city, men of honor and public spirit are calling almost in vain for helpers in their effort to remove the political interests of the country from the meshes of corruption. That call is to every man that can cast a vote. No less urgent and pressing is the call which is coming to us every day from the warfare between labor and capital. The great pity of it all is that no one who is in the battle can seem to get above the plain of dollars and cents. Only now and then does there appear a person who sees that it is not a question of wages, or the number of hours of labor that is at the bottom of all the trouble, but it is the moral principle of the recognition of personality.

Closely connected with this labor problem is the problem of the idle classes. The vagrants, the criminals, the defectives, the idle rich, we cannot afford to support such a mass of useless material and it is our problem to turn them to some advantage to the progress of the world.

There are problems of a moral nature that are very pressing. It is useless to repent the evils that demand the efforts of every earnest man and woman in relieving the strain and re{???} the temptations to sin, which are so apparent in daily life.

Over and above all else, does not the conditions of things in the religious affairs of this country demand most pressing service. Not alone the people, but the ministry as well have feared to face the problems of religion which the conditions of the new world have put upon them. The results is that the church, the ministry, the people, and the cause of religion itself have suffered, and at this moment demand courage, independence and faith as no other problem in modern life demands them.

Is all the work done? Can we sit back and fold our hands glorying in the deeds of a former generation, and offering our prayer of thanksgiving for the things which through God's grace have been accomplished and made possible our ease?

God forbid! If ever there was a time when pioneers were needed, that time is now. In whatever direction one may turn there is the demand for a pioneer with courage, independence and faith enough to launch out into the unknown, and undiscovered, leaving behind the traditions and accumulations of custom which have become too much of a hinderance to the normal growth of man. This is the call of this Thanksgiving festival. No so much the joy over what has been done, as the rejoicing hope over the distant realization of dreams as yet but half-outlived, a hope that fills our soul with joy and buoyancy. Out of our sorrow, out of our pleasure, out of our failure, out of our success, we all join in this hope of the harvest season, the hope of things to have and things to do, and souls to be in the realization of the future towards which we look with courage and faith. The satisfaction with which one reaps the harvest is not in the harvest itself but in the value of the harvest for the coming year, and the hope in the fertile seeds which give promise of still greater

harvests. As the day comes and goes let our hearts be filled with thanksgiving for the fine thoughts, the noble ideals, the Divine aspirations which lead us into the future consecrated to the realization of God's Kingdom.

There, too, we cannot control entirely the working of things which bring about our own harvest, whatever it may be that we plant. So if it happens that our crops are a failure, we shall come to another harvest with sad and heavy hearts. But we can control the high thoughts, the noble ideals of service, the right-minded hopes of days to come. And no disasters however cruel can take from us our hopes of days to come. For our own comfort then, let us fill our minds with noble hopes as we pass this festival day, and let our thanksgiving be a Thanksgiving of consecration to the pioneer service in God's Kingdom. "For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."