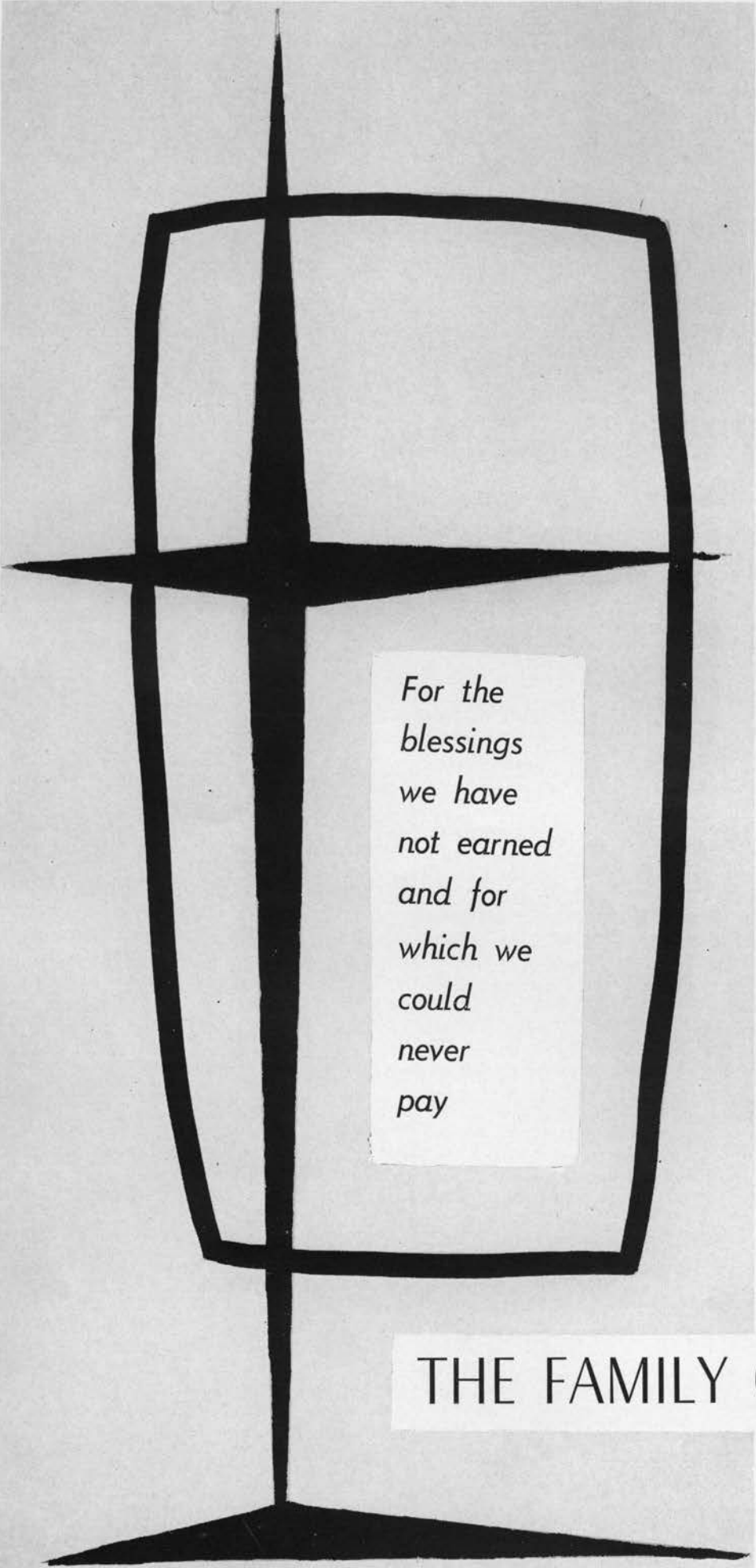


"It is good for the family to have a special holiday set aside for expressing thanks to God for national and personal blessings. There are so many things within the family circle for which to express gratitude to our God."

—Dr. E. W. Remley



*For the
blessings
we have
not earned
and for
which we
could
never
pay*

THE FAMILY GIVES THANKS

It is good for families to have a special holiday set aside for expressing thanks to Almighty God for national and personal blessings. Of course this is no substitute for daily thankfulness, but it is a way of reminding us impressively of the importance of being thankful. A spirit of true thankfulness is one of the marks of wholesome family life.

Thanklessness is a mark of immaturity of spirit. It is a badge of the unfinished character, the incomplete life. It is a mark of the person who is all wrapped up in himself and a person who is all wrapped up in himself makes a distressingly small package. The thankless person finds life closes in on him in increasing narrowness and restriction. His world becomes like the medieval torture cell that had contracting walls which gradually crushed its victim.

Let us then, as families, take time to be properly thankful as we enter the season of our national festival of Thanksgiving. We might begin by asking, "What are some of the blessings that invite a response of thankfulness within our family circle?"

For the Gift of Life

First of all each of us should be thankful for life itself. Life is a wonderful gift. It is an amazing privilege to be a self-conscious living being, capable of awareness of joy and beauty and satisfaction on one side of life's page, and of pain and danger on the other. To share with God the ability to be aware of oneself, to make choices, to live, to be capable of health and motion and thought and affection and pain and prayer is enough to be thankful for. Every member of the family should thank God that he is a living creature with a body and a mind and a soul . . . for the gift of life!

For Each Other

We should also thank God for each other. It is so easy for me to be thankful for the members of my family. My wife is a center of serenity and inspiration in my home. To say I love her is not enough unless I add to this that my love includes respect and reliance upon her strength, gratitude for her patient understanding, and for the strange mercy in her heart that enables her to know me so well and yet love me. My children are a gift of joy and privilege for which I can never thank God enough. Wonderful, mysterious, buoyant little people — they add immeasurable meaning and interest and challenge to my life. I thank God for my parents, for all of the love and care and forgiveness they gave me in years of my childhood and for my companionship with them now. We should thank God for each other.

For Today

And we should, as families, thank God for today. For opportunities to seek Him in prayer and worship this day. For today's family fellowship with the Spirit of Christ. For today's work and today's rest and today's disciplines and today's adventures. For the fact that life is not easy today, but that it can be radiant. For the fellowship and affection of this very hour.