

## Some Thoughts About My Eightieth Birthday

As my eightieth birthday approached I heard about a man who was soon to reach his seventieth birthday. I was told that he was very upset and disturbed about it, feeling how terrible it would be to become seventy years old. When I reached my eightieth birthday I said, "Isn't it wonderful that I am no longer in my seventies? That is all past me."

A great deal depends on how you look at things. Personally I have never felt like paying much attention to birthdays and would have been happier if my eightieth birthday could have been simply disregarded. However, many people pay a great deal of attention to birthdays and it gives them pleasure to do so, and I cannot simply cut myself off from this though I rarely <sup>do</sup> pay much attention to anyone's birthday and am generally happy when mine passes with little attention paid to it.

I do not recall, after I became an adult, attention being ~~paid~~ paid to my birthdays to any great extent, at least for many years. I had a birthday when I was in Berlin and I happened to mention it to someone, and I was surprised during the day to have a number of people step up to me--a number of German students--step up to me and say, "Congratulations on your birthday!" I did not, however, make any effort to learn when their birthdays were or to congratulate them on them. I have an impression that I remember my fiftieth birthday passing with no attention being paid to it except that I quite incidentally made a reference in a chapel talk to the end of my first half century. I do not believe there was any other attention paid to that birthday, and I do not recall any earlier ones, at least since I became an adult. Come to think of it, I do remember rather definitely ~~in~~ my seventh birthday when I received some rather nice presents.

When I reached my sixtieth birthday I was told that a birthday dinner was to be held at the seminary. This was attended by the members of the faculty, many of whom ~~are~~ are ~~w~~ with us today. Dr. Steel had been one of the prime movers in planning that affair. We met in the entrance hall of the building where we lived in Elkins Park. All the faculty and their wives, I believe, ~~were~~ were there, and also Arthur Steel and his wife. They presented me then with a pair of binoculars. I do not care anything special about getting these because when I hike I try to keep what I carry to a minimum