

Written for this Paper.

A BROAD THANKSGIVING.

In most of American homes at least, preparations are being contemplated or made, for the celebration of Thanksgiving Day in accordance with the Presidential proclamation of the 4th inst.

A somewhat similar observance comes down to us from Israelitish antiquity, and quite likely this was an adaptation of some form of festival antedating history, and perchance of divine origin as was that introduced into elaborate system of holy days, holidays, sabbaths and feast days insisted upon under what was called "the law of Moses."

The Harvest Home services of the mother country are equally of immemorial origin, however modified by modern culture and poetized by increased taste, yet as a religious celebration there are traces of it in Pagan history and association with the old mythologies which had their special duties to rule in and be responsible for abundance of fruit, grain and flowers.

There is no difficulty in connecting this with the first family of earth, for Cain and Abel (no doubt following parental example) brought the "first fruits" of their labor to the altar of the Lord in recognition of His blessing, and as the author of increase and the owner of the land itself.

During the Patriarchal era this feature was not so prominent as in the days of their predecessors, it seemed as if pastoral life was the method by which the sacred race while yet a family, was kept in comparative isolation and locally unattached even while in Egypt, but when grown into a nation and the set time had come for agriculture to be "the basis of the Mosaic commonwealth," through the law of inheritance every man and family had a stake in the soil, while that accepted dictum that "the land is mine," made recognition obligatory through "firstfruits, tithes and offerings," and so colored down to our day this living feature, which is recognized in part, or at least in spirit, by the chief magistrate of the prosperous republic.

The well-to-do and the religiously disposed will follow out the letter of official desire, and will no doubt "on that day forego their usual occupations and in their accustomed places of worship, join in rendering thanks to the giver of every good and perfect gift; for the bounteous returns that have rewarded our labors in the fields and to the busy marts of trade; for the peace and good order that have prevailed throughout the land; for our protection from pestilence and dire calamity, and for the blessings that have been showered upon us from an open heaven."

If this acknowledgement comes from the heart and finds expression only in November, and because of national or local authoritative suggestion, it is in line with right and religion, and therefore might be scrupulously observed, although the cases may be multitudinous where gratitude will perchance rejoice that "things are no worse than they are," rather than because they have the same reason which President Cleveland certainly enjoys."

The people of Utah, or the "Mormon" section rather, have never dignified a special day (save the Sabbath) by religious service, it having been impressed upon them continuously to "acknowledge the hand of the Lord in all things," supplementing this sentiment by the divine assertion that "He (the Lord) is displeased with none" save "those who fall" in this particular thing.

However this opens up a phase of Divine philosophy requiring more assurance and faith than is possessed by the world at large, while recognizing the Divine hand in prosperity, peace and plenty, sees not so clearly the same hand in things which appear to take upon them "questionable shape," such as trial, disappointment, affliction or death, and yet all the master minds whose faith has given recognition of the educational processes of life, have taken this view, "Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" Says one: "Can there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" says another. It was good for me that I was afflicted, because I went astray, for now I have kept thy word," cries out the Psalmist; all this implies a clearer vision, a more sublime faith, a grander conception of divine beneficence and ruler than the offerings of fruit, wine, corn or unleavened bread; it was more than the celebration of feasts, whether of the Passover or Pentecost, or of tabernacles, grand and suggestive though these were, for they were for temporal abundance, for the good things of the earth, while the spiritual results of sorrow and chastisement were working out for the recipients "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

Tithes were no doubt as acceptable from Melchisedek to Abraham as first fruits were to the Prophet Eleha, or offerings to the Church under the meridian dispensation, a ter all it was said "a broken and a contrite heart, oh God, thou wilt not despise," and the Prophets not infrequently intimated that gifts, oblations and fast offerings had to receive a higher sanction than that of formality, a more elevating impulse than that of duty, or of ostentation so as to be seen of men.

It would be a serious error, however, if while accepting this philosophy, men should fall of effort, become supine or indifferent, or yielding to a fundamental principle, allow it to run on a listless assumption of fatality; for some have thus lulled themselves into apathetic sleep, they have buried vigilant human effort under the dogma of a false faith, which, while recognizing an overruling hand, silently acquiesces in wrong, submitting without remonstrance or resistance because "He is able out of evil to bring forth good."

It is almost a libel on our plenty and on our wisdom, to have our President suggest that appreciative gratitude can be well shown, by administering to the poor and needy, probably it would have been too much to expect of him any such measure of reform in this age of trusts and speculation, as a return to that statesmanship for which such magnificent resources have been provided in this favored land, viz., that patriotism should rest upon the possession of an inheritance,

and that that should be inalienable beyond the year of jubilee, or in other words, "the land should not be sold forever," tenancy to be under the original owner—God; redemption and restoration being adequately provided for according to the distance from the year of jubilee; with a gradual restoration of that order of civil and religious liberty which was and is the foundation of all jurisprudence and a departure from which at the instigation of Gentileism or evil, has led the whole world astray.

This living abiding consciousness of divine sovereignty has been the sheet-anchor of the Latter-day Saints, it has been their stay in all the vicissitudes of their strange experiences, through persecution in all its forms, in travel and trial and death; to them, faith and assurance was given, that eventually, their cause would triumph, and that individual loss would be finally remunerative, by the fiat of justice and the action of unerring law.

Thus thanksgiving is perennial in their hearts, it needs no special day set apart for its manifestations, it must needs be the essential life of every believer, hence when striving, there is calm; in defeat there is reconciliation; in death the legacy of toil and trust is left to their successors, and the promise, if deferred like those made to Abraham concerning the land that was shown him, yet they will never fail!

Probably quite a few of the people would incline to religious observance on this day so as to be one with their countrymen in every state of the Union, the many will make social gathering the feature, without riotous excess, but in the spirit of those who in the storied past really did see the hand of Providence in their deliverance from tyranny, and from the aborigines who were around them.

Thanksgiving Day meant much to those old veterans and patriots, its spirit means much in these mountains where from a broader sense of divine supervision and the acceptance of a special mission, men's hearts are continuously led out imploringly for strength, bravery and wisdom, until rightness shall be established and Christ shall reign.

Then all the nations may join the disciples in expressions of gratitude and special services, not for corn and oil and wine alone, or for "those free institutions which have been given to us as our national heritage," (for these are largely unappreciated or abused) but for that coming authority which will guarantee equality, protection, security, justice, right, and a veritable because universal and appreciated Thanksgiving.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONFERENCE.

The Sunday school conference of the Bingham (Idaho) Stake of Zion convened at Iona Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 16 and 17, 1895. Owing to the inclemency of the weather and the long distance between the settlements but few of the schools turned out Saturday, but Sunday the meeting house was filled to its utmost capacity.

Elders Thos. C. Griggs and Levi W. Richards, of the Deseret Sunday School Union, were present. All the