

“*Thanksgiving.*”

BY MISS FLORENCE E. OUSHING.

Again, this afternoon, the old familiar word, Thanksgiving presses forward and demands a hearing.

This word is so easy of utterance that very few stop to think what it means and where it originated. Might it not be profitable to spend a few moments in considering its origin and significance.

To find this we have to travel a long way back, to almost the beginning of the ages. The earliest information is found in the Bible. In fact, the Bible contains more varied accounts of Thanksgiving services and gifts than time will permit us to take up to-day, but it might be interesting to speak of a few of them.

In Exodus xxxv., 20-22, we have the account of the first great thank-offering meeting, when all the people were asked to bring a willing offering according to their means to aid in the building of the tabernacle and thus help in the carrying on of the work of the Lord. Would that we could say of our thank-offering meeting what was said of this first offering, for we read in Exodus xxxvi. “The people brought much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded them to make.” “For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work and too much.” By their gifts showing that the old idea of thanksgiving was that of offering something to the Lord as well as of thanking Him.

In Leviticus xxiii. we find that the yearly thank-offering was placed among the laws of the people, and was called “the Feast of Tabernacles.” It was kept after they had gathered in the harvest for the purpose of showing their gratitude to the Lord for what He had done for them, thus keeping alive the memory of His mercies to them.

Then we pass to the great Thanksgiving meeting held by David on the occasion of the bringing of the ark from Kirjath-jearim, I. Chron. xvi. We find in nearly all of David's Psalms a constant exhortation to give thanks to the Lord.

When Solomon had completed the building of the temple he proclaimed a thanksgiving of all the people, thereby acknowledging that the power to perform this work had been given by God.

We might mention numerous other instances of public thanksgiving in the time of Hezekiah, Nehemiah and others; nearly all these were connected largely with the work of the Lord. In looking through the New Testament we find continuing references to giving thanks not only with our lips but in a most practical way.