

Thanksgiving Day in Washington

The readers of *The Commoner* may be interested in knowing how Thanksgiving day was celebrated in Washington.

Since the inauguration of the custom the day has been observed in the national capital as faithfully as in any other part of the country, and certainly nowhere does the observance take on so international a character.

Some five years ago Monsignor Russell conceived the idea of bringing together at this celebration the representatives of the Catholic countries represented at Washington. In all of the Latin-American countries the Catholic religion is the prevailing religion and a number of the representatives of the European countries are also Catholics. To this Thanksgiving mass the president and cabinet are invited. The president has attended on several occasions and there are always present a number of members of the cabinet and other officials — the secretary of state has attended, probably with more regularity than other members, because of his intimate official relationship with the diplomatic representatives.

This year the Catholic services were at ten o'clock and, as the Protestant services were at eleven, it was possible for those desiring to do so to attend services in two places.

Secretary Bryan availed himself of this opportunity, attending first the Catholic services at ten o'clock and at eleven o'clock the services in the First Presbyterian church. Below will be found the sermons to which he listened.

At the Catholic services the Reverend Father John Cavanaugh, president of Notre Dame university, South Bend, Indiana, delivered the address which, as the reader will see, was an eloquent plea for peace.

Rev. Doctor John Brittan Clark, pastor of the First Presbyterian church, drew a beautiful parallel between the stones used by Joshua for an altar when the Children of Israel crossed the Jordan, and Plymouth Rock, made famous by the landing of those who came in the Mayflower.

At the luncheon which followed the Catholic services, the health of the president was proposed by His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons, who, in the course of his remarks, strongly emphasized the distinction which is drawn in this country between church and state, declaring that while they run on parallel lines, each is independent of the other and has its separate work to do.

The souvenir prepared by Monsignor Russell for those who attended the luncheon was a medal representing the "Christ of the Andes"—the celebrated peace monument erected by Argentine and Chile on the boundary line between the two countries.

A PLEA FOR PEACE

Following is the address delivered by Reverend Father John Cavanaugh:

Your Excellency, Your Eminence, Right Reverend Fathers and Beloved Brethren:

Today, at the invitation of their president, the people of this republic kneel in worship before ten thousand altars, with united hearts and minds giving thanks to God for the blessings of the past year. In exquisite cathedral and massive basilica they have assembled, in country conventicle and in missionary hut; and where even the missionary hut has not yet lifted its rude walls, simple frontier folk have made an altar of the family hearth to send up this day the prayer of thanksgiving for the good things the Lord has sent. There is gratitude for the preservation of those national institutions which assure political and religious liberty to every citizen of the republic; for the patriotic spirit of the people, without which those institutions could not survive; for the perennial life and vigor of those lofty ideals at whose bidding this republic leaped into being; for the prosperity of our cities seated on a thousand hills and the happiness of the multitudes dwelling together in their fertile valleys; for the wholesome moral condition of our people; for the sublime example of American zeal for education; for the spirit of unity between North and South, and East and West; for the wisdom of our rulers and the patience of our people everywhere. Oh,

it is good to see a mighty nation bowed in adoration before the Creator, making this great act of faith, returning thanks this day to the bountiful Giver of all good things!

But amid all these solemn scenes may we not say that the particular assembly that gathers under the peace of this consecrated roof is one of singular interest and importance. Here in this Christian temple are gathered about the altar representatives of many peoples, folk of many nations, brethren of many families, differing in origin, in race, in tongue, in custom, in historic memory, but united in worship of the one true God, in obedience to the same moral law, in aspiration after the best traditions of government and the highest ideals of civilization. Separated from each other by natural barriers, by mountains and waters, by national limits and honorable commercial rivalries, we have met here to chant a hymn of Thanksgiving to the God of Hosts, to the Lord of Mercies, to the Master of Republics and Principalities and Kingdoms for the blessings of the year that is passed. Our hearts are full of gratitude for the peace that has reigned over us and about us; for the tranquility that has rested on our borders; for the genial spirit of co-operation that has marked our commerce; for the harmony that has hovered like a spirit of beneficence over all our dealings. Most of all we are grateful for the ever growing friendship among the republics of the American continent. Without any abridgment of individual independence and initiative, without any relinquishment of the rights and prerogatives of the separate nations, without encroachment by any on the dignity of another and without abandonment of her own duty or destiny, each sovereign republic on the American continent has drawn closer to her neighbor, closer in sympathy and in understanding, closer in the sublime hope that this friendship may never be lost or diminished but rather that it may grow and strengthen under conditions equally honorable, advantageous and pleasing to all. Is it too much to hope that here in this new world, aloof from inherited animosities and ancient grudges, there may arise a new civilization whose watchword shall be brotherhood, whose ideal shall be service, and whose dream shall be the reign of peace and universal good-will?

And while we kneel with bowed head before the Almighty Father, our gratitude is enlarged and quickened by the sorrows and misfortunes of our brothers in other lands. On the continent which holds those venerable mother countries from whose loins all American governments have sprung, the gaunt and blood-dripping wolf of war has made his terrible appearance. Millions of men rise up against other millions, their brothers; every day there is holocaust of countless lives; every day wives are bereft of husbands, mothers of sons; every day homes are desolated and property destroyed and uncounted treasure squandered; every day comes again sorrow, the one unbidden but inevitable guest at every fireside and in every home. No more does the populous factory send up its plume of sable smoke, black witness of a nation's prosperity; no more do the wheels of commerce hum the song of a nation's industry; no more does the ebullient earth sprout richness and fruit and fertility; no more is heard the gentle shepherds piping on the hillside nor the farmer singing among his vineyards. Death has settled like a pall over the ancient world, and famine and disease and despair have entered in the wake of war. And while we bow in stupefied wonder that these monstrous evils should be possible among Christian peoples in this modern day, we bend in deeper gratitude to the Father of Nations who has spared us this pitiless crucifixion, and given us the gift of peace.

A few months ago and men comforted themselves with the radiant hope that never again should the wolves of war be let loose upon the world. Men thought that the fires of passion had burned low; that the blood of anger had cooled; that the savagery in the hearts of men had been softened; that never again would man rise up to take his brother's life with the approval and applause of government; that the blushing dawn of universal peace was clearly discernible in the heavens. Men had used noble gifts to persuade the world that war was an ancient and worn out device; that whatever they may have been in earlier ages, wars of conquest

are today as futile as they are indefensible; that whoever seems to win in war, in reality everybody loses; that neither for the expansion of commerce nor the support of overflowing populations nor for the colonization of new lands is war either necessary or desirable. On the other hand from the camps of the militarists in every land came thundering back as from the cannon's throat, the century-old argument that war is an economic necessity and that nations will grow poor and barren without it; that war is a biologic necessity and that nations will grow weak and anaemic and moribund without it; that war is a moral necessity and that nations will grow corrupt and flabby and unheroic without it. The hour of destiny struck and the most monstrous war of human history began.

The truth is that the day of perfect peace will come only with the complete and perfect triumph of the principles of the Christian religion. Our Lord declared that He came to bring the sword and not peace upon the earth, but the sword that He came to bring was the sword of the spirit and not the weapons of material warfare. He announced everlasting conflict between His principles and the philosophy of indulgence and of Paganism which held the world in thralldom at His coming. Between His principles and the maxims of the world there could be no peace; but wherever His principles were accepted and worked out into complete and perfect action, there could be no conflict. The world looks on this raging struggle between Christian nations today and sends up a shout of horror at what it calls the failure of Christianity; it should rather be appalled at the failure of men to give Christianity its fair chance to work out universal peace. Comparatively few men and women since the time of Christ have really adopted Christianity as a guide of life and a rule of morals. The saints alone practiced Christianity consistently. When Our Lord said "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent bear it away," they took His words literally and they scourged evil impulses and appetites into subjection; today men have lost the very sense of sin. When He said "Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish," they wrought through fasting and labor the purification and refinement of their souls; today men have forgotten even the processes of penance. When He set up as the standard of conduct the question "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" they frankly accepted soul-making and soul-saving as the chief business of life, considering no other failure as real failure if they succeeded and no other success as real success if they failed. When He said "Blessed are the meek" and "Blessed are the poor in spirit," they accepted joyfully and literally these sublime beatitudes at which the world has only been amused or puzzled. If the primitive discipline of Christianity could still be enforced and if each follower of Christ shared with a needy brother his surplus of the goods of life, what a multitude of economic questions would be swept out of the world in the instant of the world's conversion. The dazzling vision that the socialist dangles before the eyes of humanity would seem dull and tawdry compared with a world in which the Christmas spirit prevailed every day; the iridescent dream of a Utopia where the richest are poor and the poor live in abundance, would cease to be a dream if the love of Christ dominated commerce and industry; the tyranny of monopoly, the marauding of legalized bandits and the brutality of unrestrained capitalism alike would vanish if the Christian law of justice and right governed men.

So too would the Christian law of love transform the world. The flag separates, the Cross unites. It is the business of a flag, because it is a flag to assemble about it only its own people and to separate them from all the world beside; it is the mission of the Cross to summon all the nations to the feet of Christ, to exalt Him as the common Saviour of mankind, the centre of the faith and hope and love of men. No more may men indulge that most brutal and diabolical passion which makes them hate one another for the love of God; Christianity can never truly live till bigotry dies. No more may men harbor racial animosities; the love of God can never truly thrive beside hatred of men. The Angel of Patriotism guarding with flaming sword the gates of the nation, demands brotherhood and love only for the men of our own tribe; but Christianity supplements patriotism; Christianity is universal charity. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." (John xiii. 35). Christ even