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THANKSGIVING SERMON
CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Following is the sermon delivered by Rev. A. A. Beery, pastor of the Valley Christian church, Thanksgiving day, November 26, 1903:

The day set apart for Thanksgiving is not on account of legislation but because of public pressure or sentiment. It was and is so fitting for a Christian nation, after the harvest has been gathered, to thank Him who is the giver of all good for blessings showered upon us during the past year. Remembering that every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of Light. Perhaps it is not then that the one in authority is religious nor desirous of offering praise to God, nor even a believer. It is the outburst of Christians throughout the land praising God from whom all blessings flow.

Shall I enumerate today some of the things, the larger blessings, that we as a nation should be thankful for, and "sing unto the Lord a new song and His praise in the congregation of the saints?"

I speak of liberty, and liberty as only a free and independent people have it. The Roman lawyers said: "Liberty is

the power (authority) of doing that which is not forbidden by law, and that whatever may please the ruler has the force of law." The French say: "Liberty is equality, and equality is liberty." The Germans say: "Liberty or justice, for where there is justice there is liberty, and liberty is nothing else than justice." But the Roman simply meant that man is not a slave. The French equality may mean stagnation and death. The German makes equivalent two things which no definition can reconcile. But American liberty means the enjoyment of high civil privileges and rights. It means a government of the people, by the people, for the people. Liberty abused is a curse even among a free and independent people. There must be a limit then to even religious liberty. Chief Justice Waite, in rendering the decision of the supreme court of the United States in the only case in which the government has undertaken to defile the limits of religious liberty, where congress prohibited polygamy in the territory of Utah, said: "Laws are made for the government of actions, and while they can not interfere with religious belief and opinions, they may with practices. As a law of the organization of society under the exclusive dominion of the United States, it is provided that plural marriages shall not be allowed. Can a man exercise his practices to the contrary because of his religious belief? To permit this would be to make the professed doctrine of religious belief superior to the law of the land, and in effect

to permit every citizen to become a law unto himself. Governments could exist only in name under such circumstances." Liberty not based upon morality is tyranny. Not only then must we have laws whose deepest roots spring from morality, but those laws must be obeyed. The obedience to law and the punishment of the lawbreaker is divine.

Education, morality and religion have given us a code of laws that are perhaps not equaled on the globe. If we have a government by the people and at the same time have laws that are not what they ought to be, it is prima facie evidence that the people are at fault. In the hands of the people our legislation has been restricted until liberty and protection have come to bless a God-loving people; and for this do we give thanks unto the God of glory and praise the Almighty Father. We thank Him for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This we can not have under the Greek idea, which is to defy person; neither under the Roman, which is law of individual. The Greeks worshipped wisdom without seeing the truth and then created civil jurisprudence. But the American, purely American, born on American soil, begotten by the principles of Christianity, gave the law of liberty to man as man; not named the ultimate authority of both state and man; liberty, the gift of divine will.

God by inspiration seems to have made Paul the constitutional law writer, because of which Christianity has become historically, and by judicial precedent, the common law of our nation. Hence we have our boasted republican form of government, where law is liberty and citizenship is independence. A government where only the people make it possible for its existence. A government which can be traced to Scandinavian origin, with the principles deepening, broadening and lengthening in the English—or, if you please, the Saxon—commonwealth of England. A country where the state was the commonwealth, a country where its system of jurisprudence was the common law, where the general tribunal its common pleas; and where finally in religious succession we find the common prayer. A country with constitution unwritten. But we praise God today for our written constitution. We thank Him for the Declaration of Independence. We thank Him for the genius, the design and the form of our government. We thank him that the three departments, legislative, judicial and executive, are essentially Christian. We thank Him that we recognize the fact that "all men are created equal."

Some one has said: "Education is the only sure foundation that can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness." With that idea, the American free-school system soon began to grow in favor with the people. The common school, as we understand it and have it, unknown to the ancients, is a power for our development and protection. And rapidly are we learning that the cultivation of the head to the neglect of the heart is a mistake. Studying the question carefully, we find that education and Christianity go hand in hand. The origin of the common school was in the Christian church. The leaders in the reformation saw its importance. Martin Luther established a free-school system. It was no stranger to the Scotch reform. It was in Switzerland and not unknown in Prussia. But in these United States we have the complete and most successful free school

on the globe. We praise God, then, today for the principles of education in the Book. We thank Him for the opportunity of a Christian education. And may we understand more and more that without a Christian education our learning is in vain. May God speed the day when the Book, the Bible, will again take its place in the school room. Education has taught us to understand more deeply Jesus' words when he said: "No man can serve two masters."

The picture I now draw may be a dark one, and some may think it out of place on a Thanksgiving day. But the sweet is sweeter after tasting of the sour. The light seems lighter after passing through the dark. No one can be so stirred as he who sees the facts. A young man upon his return from the Klondike, in reporting his trip, in part said: "When we landed off the steamer we found only a sandbar for ten miles back, with no prospect for a settlement, but when we returned, 18 months later, we found a city of 10,000 inhabitants. It sprung up as if in a night. We also found that that always follows civilization—the saloon; and three-fourths of the business houses in that city were saloons." We recall our landing of civilized men in the Philippines. Among the first cargo to be carried ashore was that which carries with it discord, disease and death—intoxicating liquors. But we thank God that the principles laid down in the Book are opposed to such. We thank Him for some advancement in the good cause, and do this day pray for more success, more courage, more determination, more victories. We pray that the time will come when souls of men will not be sent to a drunkard's grave from a Christian nation.

Let us look at the picture again. Go this time into our almshouses, into our reformatories, into our prisons, into our great asylums where numbers of children are being reared, and we must conclude, with a sad heart, that in their helplessness, they cry unto God and humanity. Go next into the crowded tenements of the cities, into the lowest dens and dives, see the misery, shame and degradation there. Men and women low and besotted, children dying in the fetid air or growing up to bring a curse and shame upon our nation. In these abodes of shame, of poverty, of misery and of crime ask for the reasons of all this, and the answer comes in trumpet tones; Drink, drink! Shall we thank God for all this? No. But thank Him for a gospel that tells of Christ's redeeming love, whose all-atoning blood will wash all guilt away. Thank Him for calling us to Himself. Thank him for the spirit of temperance. Thank him for the sweet story and the privilege of telling it. If the religion of Christ is voluntary, His church can not exist without Him.

(Continued on Page 5.)

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