

Nations and Their Rulers.*

I Tim. 2, 1.

Introduction:—A great subject for prayer to-night is thanksgiving that we are what we are, and that we are where we are. If we take into consideration the natural dispositions and tendencies of human nature, we are compelled to admit that there is an unseen power, somewhere, waving the nations on to a higher life. The piling centuries of the early history of the race, have fashioned their history slowly and painfully. Progress can be marked only by comparing one age with another, and now we find that a decade of modern life is greater than a cycle of mediævalism. The dynamics of modern life are mighty. Anyone who is as old as the nineteenth century, has seen a very large proportion of the progress of the human race. When seven years old he might have seen the first steam boat on her trial trip up the Hudson. At 20 he could not find an iron plough in all the world. At 30 he might have travelled on the first passenger train. At 35 he was still using his tinder-box. He was 38 before the first steamboat crossed the Atlantic, and 44 when the first telegram was sent, while to-day a million miles of telegraph line is in operation.

At the close of the 18th century, slavery was practiced in one form or another, in nearly every portion of the world. But to-day we find that slavery among the nations is wiped off the list of modern practices. But perhaps the one thing, which next to Modern Missions, reveals the greatest progress of the day, is the emancipation of woman. So late as 1815, 39 wives were exposed for sale in one year in Smithfield, England. How changed is all this to-day. In the short space of 88 years we have advanced millenniums beyond the possibility of the repetition of such a thing.

To-night we stand in the light of all this, and what a record it is! When Napoleon drew up his soldiers before the Mamelukes he said, pointing to the pyramids, 40 centuries look down upon you! But a greater assemblage than that is here. We have all the records of all time before us, and in the light of all that these records stand for we have met to pray.

"Heaped and pent,

Friend, foe, rider and horse"

We pray for them all. For nations and their rulers.

I. Pray for the Rulers.—Little do we realize the peculiar needs of our rulers. If we did we would pray for them oftener.

Their position is unique. They dwell alone. They are compelled to do this, since they are at once the envy and jealousy of high and low. They have few that will lend them a hand to hold them up; less that they can consult with; and none they dare confide in, lest that confidence should be betrayed. They need our prayers, yes, they need our tears, too. While you are basking in the light and love and solid comfort of your modest homes; think of that broken-hearted, half-frozen wretch up there in his royal palace. He is seared in heart and conscience until his blood is frozen. He is scorched by criticism, and his manhood is withered by relentless partizanism, until the man is no longer a man. Pray for him? Yes, we will pray that heaven may open and that some fair angel of peace may comfort him; since man and hell are both conspired against him.

I am not so sure whether is the happier, the ruler, that is an aristocrat, or the one that is a democrat. In democracy the man that rules comes up from the common people. In a measure he forsakes his home and his friends. To the happiness and peace of a quiet citizen he bids adieu. Henceforth these will be to him like the haunting memory of a lost love, or a disappointed hope. He leaves behind the sphere where he can be himself, and act the man without restraint. He must assume a mask, and fight all men. Henceforth his friends are leeches. Few care that he shall succeed, and great delight is shown on every side if he fail. Pray for democratic rulers, and let us so pray that God will quicken in them the consciousness that they are men.

On the other hand the aristocrat "born to the purple," has born with him the conscience of an aristocrat. He knows naught of the luxury of being poor, and free, untrammelled by artificial ties. He lives in an artificial world. He thinks in a cypher code. He eats, sleeps, rides, shoots, and dances diplomatically. In time he will develop a nose like a pointer's and a conscience like a street car indicator. I know not whether to pity more the man who has never experienced the joy of living near to nature's heart on one of our Canadian hills, wild and free, or the man who has gone out from a humble sphere, leaving it all behind, to climb the ladder of fame. Each needs our prayers, and we gladly give it to them to-night.

My heart also goes out to our statesmen diplomats. What wonders are wrought by these patient men, in the far east, in South Africa, and in near-by South America. What are not far-sighted men accomplishing, as they sit in their offices in London, Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Pekin, Capetown, Cairo and Washington. How much of the bungling of the Eastern Question is chargeable to

diplomats, who at each successive failure have consoled themselves that at the next move they would be more adroit. Who blundered a Balacava? They saw that some one did. Did any one blunder at London, Pretoria, or Capetown? so that our Canadian boys had to go 8000 miles around the earth, to lay down their lives on the South African veldt! Were there on couches, made soft by the home love of Canadian mothers on which to lay their dead, the pride of their own hearts, and the hope of their fatherland? Must our boys die in that manner? God knows; but we shall pray for our statesman diplomats, lest through blundering, as they cast up a highway for civilization they lay not down our boys as ties for the rails of commerce. We prefer, if it should be ours to choose, to give our boys for freedom, for right and for God, but, O God! we cannot barter them for gold; neither can we give them as the price for political vanity, personal pique, revenge or intrigue; but as I read history, that is its record. There are statesmen, like Lincoln, who have led a nation in a struggle of right against wrong. In that awful civil war, half a million of the best sons of America laid down their lives, but was it for right? Was it not rather, to pay the price of half a million wrongs? For the law says, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." It has always been so. Was it not that in the crucifixion of freedom, wrong was slain, and in her resurrection from the grave, life from the dead has been given to us again? Look, and you will see that it was so at Ararat, at Calvary and on St. Bartholemus', it was so at Gettysburg and at Paardeburg; and the victims for the altar was the best of the flock, without spot or blemish." This was all the harder because these were my own mother's sons. For these reasons let us pray for the diplomat, and the statesman to-night.

Again we may pray for the rulers, since if they would the people will not let them rule in righteousness. There are times when the minister must decline to lead the nation. These occasions are few. There are times when statesmen choose to take a certain course but the people thinking differently, lag behind and decline to be convinced. It is then that the statesman needs grace. He must bide his time lest he lose his opportunity to guide, and lead them in the path of righteousness. At times such as these the statesman must sacrifice himself, but not his principles. He must go on straight through, until the nation catch up, if they ever do; but he need do this only when great principles are at stake. In legislation the government should keep just a little in advance of the people, but if in their enactments they swing away from the people, then the nation as a mob will arise and smite them. And so these men are in trying positions, and in the midst of great temptations. It is so easy for them to go wrong. Let us pray for them now.

II. Let us pray for the Nations. Wise rulers can be said to make the people happy and prosperous. A wise man in authority in Mexico, makes that people prosperous and contented. At present the condition of that country is an improvement on many of her South American neighbors. A Roosevelt in the capitol at Washington in the stead of a Cleveland gives a different aspect to the Venezuelan question. But the people are the same. No amount of wisdom in the palace can always insure the same in the cottage. In the cottage lies the real power. The great power back of the Britain of the last decade, was not a Salisbury, it was not a Chamberlain. It was mightier than these, sometimes controlling them and sometimes controlled by them. The common people are the power of England, and the power within the people is that of the governing ideas of the race; it is the permanent feeling within the breast of peasant and baron, it is the 100,000 great personalities of the people; it is their habit of thinking and praying. Together these form the mighty force potentially and dynamically in the people. It is this which seizes new situations and master them, creates new positions and fills them. It is by the law of this might, that her empire is created, extended and maintained.

Standing one day on the shore of the basin of Annapolis I watched the tide gradually fill the basin, the creeks and the estuary of the river, until it had filled the dykes to their very brim. In a few places where the dyke was a little lower than other parts the sea came pouring over. It poured over in a thousand places at Windsor, and soon the dykes were swept away and valuable property was destroyed. Some one might say could it not be stopped, and easily shut out again? They have been trying to for years in places and have not succeeded in doing so yet. Here was power, but it was not in the wavelet that laved the shore it was in the bulk and character of the mighty tide overbrimming from the great ocean. To have dipped it dry one would have balled out the ocean. That cannot be done until the day when God shall say "there shall be no more sea." There is only one hand that can dry up the sluiceways of the tide, and that is the only one that can control the thoughts of men. These ideals and feelings, these personalities and moral and religious habits of Britain, are world forces and "come not forth except by prayer and fasting?" To-night we are praying in the

face of world forces and how shall we pray for the nations.

Pouring in successive cataracts down the side of the hills is a beautiful mountain stream. Man has dammed and harnessed that for milling purposes. It has all been done in accordance with a law to which water is everywhere subject, viz., "Water runs down hill." There is power in the mountain stream, but it needs to be caught, held and utilized for the most perfect use. No human hand can hold or stay the nations. There is only one hand that can do that, and it has been somehow arranged that human prayers can control that. Therefore we pray.

Before the nations there is the question of the far East, of the nearer East, of the distant Africa, and the nearby America. Interwoven with all of these is the still greater question of the voodoo of man, the salvation of the race, the solution of which is entrusted to the nations, therefore let us pray.

We ought to pray, "Thy kingdom come." The Jew was praying that prayer on that starry night at Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, the same night on which that young tradesman and his wife, soon to be a mother, were turned away from that eastern caravansary to herd in the stable with the cattle. Later Herod tried to crowd Him out of the world by the slaughter of the innocents. The Jew, as a nation, rejected Him and hung him on a cross, but was that the end to His Kingdom? That Cross, O that Cross! As its beam was upreared on Calvary, its topmost end pierced the black canopy of superstition, and through the rift the earth was deluged with glory. That cross' lower end as it was dropped into its place on that hill, overturned every throne and shrine on earth. It shattered every heathen sceptre, and shivered every pagan chalice, and low every prince and potentate trembles as the Gospel net riddles, and separates the nations as with a sieve. But that kingdom did not remain with the Jews. Across the pages of their history let us write "Ichabod"—the glory of the Lord has departed. But the kingdom was cosmopolitan, and its rejection by Israel did not prevent its coming to others.

One of the world's great religious leaders, as if sent providentially grasped the universal idea, and carried it as far and as high, as it could be carried. He presented to the nations and rulers of the Roman Empire. It took quick root. Thus He came pressing in. Paul was but the first of a long succession of illustrious ones of whom the world is not worthy who withstood persecution bore the shame for his namesake. And still he comes pressing in. Let us pray that none shall crowd him out.

Pray for them. Yes for every monarch on earth who has the grace to know that there is one king and Lord over all. Let us pray for every ungracious Herod though he be eaten with the worms of remorse or envy. We shall pray for the peoples for this is the Day of the Lord and Christ comes pressing in. We shall pray with thanksgiving for He has blessed them.

Progress in Palestine.

BY REV. GEORGE H. RAGER, D. D.

Jerusalem and Joppa are now connected by railroad, and for some years the scream of the locomotive has been daily heard awaking the echoes in the Holy Land. One of our religious newspapers is "too previous," however, in announcing that telephones and electric cars are in use in the Holy Land. The whole land, east and west of the Jordan, is connected with Constantinople and the outside world by a telegraph system, owned and operated by the Government, but the Sultan is too wily and suspicious to consent to a telephone system, which might prove the nursing mother of the promoter of all sorts of conspiracies and rebellions. In Egypt, under English auspices, electric car lines are in full use, and I had the pleasure of riding, not only about the crowded streets of Cairo, but, unromantically enough, even to the foot of the Great Pyramid, on a full-fledged, up-to-date electric car. Of course, it is only a question of time—and of the will of the Sultan—when both of these innovations also will be found in Palestine on roads and in places deemed suitable for their use.

At Beyrout, one of the most progressive cities of the East, as well as the greatest centre of Christian education and missions in the Levant, not only the locomotive and the modern rubber-tired carriage are in use, but the automobile, too. Our consul there told me last May that he had placed orders for five automobiles to be put in use at once—two of them to be used by native physicians who do a large practice in the country of the Lebanon district. There was even talk, he said, of introducing the McCormick reaper for use in the Buka's, the rich and splendid plain lying between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. The Beyrout and Damascus railroad, a superb piece of engineering and road-building skill, running through seventy-four miles of country as picturesque in parts as the Swiss Alps, scaling the heights of the snow-capped Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains, has been doing a fine business for years, and branches have been extended, one through the Buka's, or Coele-Syria plain, from Malaka to Baalbek, in operation since last June; one from Damascus direct to Baal-

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