

of ceremonies, which is made in a loud, ceremonious voice. The emperor bows first before the tablet to Heaven with three kneelings and nine knockings of the head on the floor; then all the retinue goes through the same to the tablet of Heaven; and so successively the emperor and the whole retinue of officers and grandees worship each one of the eight ancestors. Then follows the formal presentation of the offerings that are before the respective tablets. The appointed music is interspersed between the different ceremonies. Then comes the reading of the prayer to Heaven by the emperor. When these ceremonies are completed, the offerings of silk and meats are carried away by the attendants and burned in the iron urns; then the tablets are reverentially conveyed back with music to their respective shrines in the depository. The emperor retires to his robing tent and then proceeds to his chair and returns to the palace, accompanied by his retinue.

When any one considers the various parts of the scene presented on the morning of December 21st, he cannot but be impressed with its grandeur. The emperor of these four hundred millions, as the high-priest of the nation, offers a great sacrifice to Heaven and his ancestors. The great retinue of high officers and a vast multitude of attendants are grouped around in the attitude of profound reverence and adoration. As the dim light is shed abroad upon this vast crowd from the suspended lanterns, and the lurid glare from the sacrificial furnace ascends in the distance, and the fragrance of incense and the peals of music fill the air under the open vault of the sky in the early morning, the scene has all the elements of an imposing ceremony. It is a most depressing consideration that this impressive worship is an idolatrous service. All Christian hearts will join in the prayer that the time may soon come when the ruler of this numerous people shall come to know the great God who made heaven and earth, and worship the Creator as the Lord of all.

THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD.—II.

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Modern ideas of government find their common meeting-ground in constitutional monarchy and in republics. Both may be said to be the outgrowth of the critical spirit, and to be based on the recognized principle that the people themselves should be adequately represented in the councils of the nation. The freest and, as it is generally believed, the most stable form of constitutional monarchy, is that attaching to the British crown. This is not, however, owing so much to anything in the constitution itself as to the staying power of religion in the land and to the comparative disinclination of the people for sweeping change. The moderating influence of the House of Lords is also to be recognized here; for though the House of Lords has sometimes fretted the nation by an undue