

THE POSSIBILITIES OF PRAYER.

BY EDMUND VANCE COOKE.

(Sent to be read at Buffalo Conference.)

President Wilson is probably the most respected man in the world today, but with all due respect to him, one cannot contemplate but with a grievous smile his solemn setting aside of a day to pray for European peace. Such an emanation from Mr. Bryan is entirely conceivable, but it has neither the intelligent thought or the intellectual honesty that one associates with the offerings of the President.

We are to pray to Almighty God to bestow peace upon war-torn Europe. Let us not deny that it is quite within the powers of the Almighty to enforce peace, and that no one is estopped from praying Him so to do, but, on the other hand, is it reasonable to suppose that He is to wait for our advices till the fourth day of October before He takes any action, or, has He been absent or derelict that He allowed the war from the first of August?

If God is to intervene to accomplish peace, who was it that intervened to precipitate war?

Let no one say that these questions are flippant and impious! Is it not greater impiety to imply that God is responsible for this war by asking him to restore peace?

And why peace? To pray for peace and for peace per se, as the president requests us to do, is like asking God to please stop the explosion of kegs of gunpowder upon the heads of which we are engaged in cooking our daily meals, so to say. It might be desirable to ask Him to remove the gunpowder, or to put out the fires, but why, why in the name of all that is sensible, why ask Him merely to prevent the explosion!

Plain in the sight of every man are several fires burning upon the European powder kegs. There is the fire of autocracy! which allows a Czar or a Kaiser to say "I declare war!" There is the fire of militarism which must, absolutely must, burn through to the powder once every so often to justify those who have kindled

and fanned it. Why ask God to prevent the explosion of the powder and say nothing about the fires? If peace were to come tomorrow, the powder would explode again upon some early day, if we are to leave the fires. Are we going to make a fool of God?

Worse than either of those fires is the fire of economic injustice. The desires and aims and interests of all those warring peoples are identically the same. The people, whether they are laborers, tradesmen, or peasants, Latins, Slavs or Teutons, their interest is to dwell in security with the chance to earn a living, support their families, and achieve a little happiness.

It is all so simple. All they need is ready access to the resources of their own land, THEIR OWN!!! for they are buying it with their lives, as they have bought it before, and the chance to mingle freely through trade channels. But instead they are bound by false economic laws, foisted upon them from time immemorial by their masters, and bound by these chains they are hurled against each other, and use their chains to beat out each others' brains. And we are asked to pray to God for peace!!

Yes, we of America are to pray to God for peace, while the nations of Europe are praying to God not for peace but for victory.

Pray for victory. Victory in war. And what is God to do? What does Mr. Wilson think He ought to do? What would you do if you were God?

Would you listen to the prayers of Europe or the prayers of America, and then would you decide in favor of the crowd that prayed the loudest?

MRS. BERENS writes from London to the Australian Single Tax League, thanking the League for its expressions of sympathy on the death of her husband (Lewis Berens), and adds:—"My son is doing his best to follow in his father's footsteps. He understands the question and I think will also help to carry on the movement." So may it be.

ONLY a poor man can "afford" to tell the truth.