

* PALM BRANCH *

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JANUARY, 1897.



HAPPY New Year to all our readers! In China, where New Year's day is a great national holiday, it is expected that all debts shall be paid before the close of December.

The idea is a good one—to take a fresh start with the new year! We believe in reciprocity, and think, that while the Chinese have a great deal to learn, much of which we can teach them, they are in advance of us in this respect, and we, in our turn, can learn of them. What an ideal world this would be, if nations and individuals, and churches, could present a clean financial record at the close of the year!

The Chinese recognize also, their moral obligations, but think their duty done when they worship at the shrines of their ancestors, and lay their offerings, prompted by fear, not love, before their gods of wood and stone.

But the enlightened members of the "Woman's Missionary Society," both old and young, realize that there is one great, sacred obligation resting upon us, which cannot be paid up at any given period of our lives, but must go on with the years—on and on, through all the ages of eternity! It is the obligation of love, not fear; the obligation to love Him, because He first loved us, and because of that love, to extend His Kingdom to earth's remotest bound.

In Chinese, Christ's own saying, "She hath done what she could," is literally translated, "This woman in what she has done, has exerted all her strength." Dear Missionary workers, can He say this of us regarding the past? Shall it not be true of us in this new year, on whose threshold we stand? When one exerts all one's strength, allied with God, success is sure.

I am only one, but I am one;

I cannot do everything.

But I can do something;

What I can do, I ought to do.

And what I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do.

MISSIONARY RECORD.

SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

IN 1887 we decided to set aside our tithe each month, or as often as we received our salary or income. Whenever the money came to hand we put the tenth in a separate drawer. The money in that drawer is the Lord's, not ours. We do not even borrow it, except under very exceptional circumstances, and never for more than a few days. Most of this money goes to regular objects, but we like to keep a little for incidentals. This plan gives peace and rest and great comfort. But there is something sweeter and better than even this, and that is what we give after we have paid our tithe. This, of course, varies from year to year, and with the occasions. There is no regularity about this. Here we let the heart run riot. When the call comes and the tithe drawer is empty, then we draw on the family purse. I may say here, that, for the larger part of our married life, my wife has carried the family purse, and I am fully content with the result.

I wish all our people could know the peace and joy of giving in this way. Some people tell us that they hold all their property for the Lord. That is only juggling with words, so long as they spend that all on themselves. What the Lord wants us to do, is to dispossess ourselves of one tenth for his service. I believe the tithe is as old as man, as old as the Sabbath. It was in existence long before Moses or the ritual law. I believe that when God set aside one seventh of time and called it Sabbath, a rest, for his worship, he set aside one tenth of property and called it tithe, for his worship and service. Both are obligatory on all men, on man as man. That men have become idolaters, or ungodly, does not, in my opinion, absolve them from this obligation.

God requires this of man as an acknowledgement of his sovereignty over time and the earth. Man has no inherent right to the fruitful earth or the prolific sea, the flowers, the beasts and the birds, the sunshine and the rain. These are all God's gifts, and the tithe and the Sabbath are the tribute which men should pay to God for these.

The New Testament introduces a higher principle of giving, but does not abrogate the old: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' because love is more blessed than duty. Duty gives the minimum, the tithe; love gives the maximum. 'These things ought ye to have done and not left the other undone.'

It is objected that some incomes are so small, that, if one-tenth were given, the remainder would not be a support for a family. It is true that some salaries are very small, yet I fully believe that the nine-tenths with the smile of the Lord, will go much further in supporting a family than the whole without it. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

JOHN McLaurin.

Seize upon Truth, wherever it is found,
 Amongst your friends, amongst your foes,
 On Christian or on heathen ground—
 The flower's divine where'er it grows.

ISAAC WATTS.