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Self-Denial Among Christians.

EMMA R. WHARTON.

The gospel should be to each Christian a treasure of such priceless value that he would give all the wealth of this world to gain it for himself, or to give it to others.

Every true missionary who goes out to preach the gospel among the idolaters of the nations, literally gives his life for the work. It is perhaps not necessary that every Christian at home should practice self-denial in the same degree that the whole world should be evangelized.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the church of Christ has not experimentally learned the meaning of self-denial. It is defined "the denial of personal gratification," but how few there are in the great body of those who profess to be followers of Christ who have ever denied themselves a single personal gratification to send the gospel which has done so much for them to those who have it not!

Mention has been made of the fact that \$100,000 was raised by the Salvation Army by two weeks of self-denial. We ought all to know how the Ceylon and Indian Contingents raised their portion of it. In India and Ceylon the officers of the Salvation Army (who are

all Europeans) receive each the enormous wages of \$25 a year. Common soldiers receive nothing but what they can solicit. Officers and soldiers alike wear the simple native dress, go without shoes or stockings, and live on the native food consisting mostly of rice and coarse wheat cakes, officers alone enjoying the luxury of tea and coffee. Often have we seen Mrs. Mayor Tucker, a refined English lady, Dr. Oran, a man of culture, and hundreds of their "lads" and "lassies," treading the burning streets of Bombay with bare, white feet, selling the "War Cry" to the passer-by. No one but God knows how these heroic people, however much mistaken in other respects, have suffered from exposure and want of proper food, for their belief, in that deadly climate. It would seem that they were already practising self-immolation to the extent almost of human endurance, when, suddenly, came from headquarters the call for two weeks of self-denial for missions. Cheerfully, and without a murmur, the officers gave up their tea and coffee; the soldiers found some way of giving up something, and at the end of the time they had raised \$100,000.

One hundred thousand dollars from the bare-footed, starving Salvation Army in two weeks, and we, a body 600,000 strong, living in luxury and comfort cannot raise it in one year! Cannot? God helping us, we will, and this will be only the beginning of greater things. What wonder, if the Salvation Army could do this, that the Wesleyans in England have called for an offering this year of \$50,000 from their ministers alone. To think of these and of many other instances of real self-denial among native Christians in heathen lands that others might hear the gospel, to say nothing of the example of Christ and the apostles and martyrs, makes one doubt if the Disciples of Christ are as yet a missionary people at all. It should be a startling fact to Christians that to-day, eighteen hundred, nearly nineteen hundred years after Jesus commanded his church to preach the gospel to the whole creation instead of a universal belief in the One Great Sacrifice for sin, in many places human sacrifices are being offered to idols in the heathen world.

No, before we learn the meaning of self-denial we must first learn to give. It is no longer a question whether the heathen will have the gospel or not. There are other peoples who are awakening on this point, and God has given his immutable promise that "This gospel shall be preached unto all nations," and that "He shall gather his elect from the uttermost parts of the earth." But it is a question whether we will be saved if we do not awake from our sleep and respond to the battle-cry of the Lord. Behold, what grace he has manifested, what encouragement he has given us!

Lexington, Ky., Jan. 31, 1891.

Methods of Raising Money.

There are some rather questionable methods of raising money adopted by the churches. These have been severely criticized and condemned, as inconsistent with the Christian religion. The Roman Catholics organize lotteries, which involve systematic gambling, for church purposes. But the Protestant churches are not blameless. We hear of charity balls, church fairs, festivals, bazaars, fan-festivals, apron-parties, tableaux, grab-bags, and other devices which are practised as ways and means of getting money for church enterprises, because the people cannot be induced to give directly the amount needed.

We are often written to by correspondents asking whether we approve

of certain things which they describe. We do not undertake to answer such questions, partly because we do not assume to supply a standard of right and wrong in all things for other people, and partly because it is necessary to have a full and impartial knowledge of the facts in every case before pronouncing judgment. Everything must be judged on its own character and tendency. The main question to be settled is, Is it contrary to any scriptural rule of life and duty? We see nothing wrong in charging an admission fee for a lecture or a tea-meeting, even though it be admitted that the necessity of having recourse to this method of obtaining money may not be a sign of a high state of spiritual prosperity.

But whatever may be said in defence of these indirect and ingenious ways of getting money, they are adopted as a substitute for the direct gifts of the people. If the members of the church gave liberally and systematically to sustain every department of church work, these things would not be needed. With the wealth that is now in the hands of those who belong to the churches, if there was a just sense of obligation in regard to giving, there could be no necessity for adopting any questionable method of getting the money required. That some of these devices are wholly out of keeping with the sacredness of the place where they are practised and the dignity of the object, must be frankly admitted. They are injurious, because they prevent the proper training of the people in liberality, even where they may not do direct harm. Let us have a genuine revival of liberality, and these doubtful catch-penny expedients will disappear. At the same time, those who withhold their gifts and do not give what they ought, are very much to blame for the adoption of these unscriptural methods. We have no sympathy for people who grumble and complain about these contrivances, but who do nothing to render them unnecessary. The ladies of our churches are not so anxious to take upon themselves the trouble of providing for tea-meetings and bazaars. Let every man give according as God hath prospered him, and there will be no cause to complain about questionable ways of raising money.—Christian Guardian.

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