

On further inquiry it appeared that the same church gave less than three hundred dollars that year for foreign missions. Upon a recent Easter Sunday it was estimated that the churches of New York expended one hundred thousand dollars on floral decorations for their sanctuaries. And all this in the face of a perishing world, with its thousand millions who have not yet heard the glad tidings that Christ is risen from the dead ; and in sound of the cry which comes up from the fainting laborers on every missionary field for immediate reinforcements, and the reinforcements not sent for lack of money to support them. Worship, is this ? We have an altar and a sanctuary. " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? " writes the Apostle to the Church of Christ. But what are the sacrifices prescribed for this temple ? " I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present *your bodies a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Does this seem to enjoin the sweet odors of rose, heliotrope, and lily, floral displays of wreaths and crosses, and garlands procured at extravagant cost to minister to our carnal senses ? As for the ecclesiastical music, hear the Scripture again : " By Him, therefore, let us offer *the sacrifice of praise* to God, continually—that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." Can the sacrifice of praise be interpreted to mean costly musical delicacies, dainties of song and sound in which art has the first place and the thought of what is pleasing to God the last ? We trow not. On the contrary, if it be true—as wise commentators suppose to be implied in 1 Cor. 11 : 10—that the angels are invisible spectators to the worship of the Church, we are constrained to wonder how they must be impressed by our sanctuary self-indulgences. Can we not easily imagine them shutting their ears to these voluptuous strains of sacred song, and holding their noses at these sickening odors of Easter flowers, and eagerly searching through the whole elaborate scene for the coveted opportunity of rejoicing " over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety-and-nine just persons that need no repentance ? " If, as some are telling us, there is a lamentable decline in the giving of our American churches, considering the vast and rapid increase in numbers and in wealth, the secret of the falling off is not difficult to discover. Ecclesiastical luxury is rapidly throttling missionary self-denial. It has come to be so generally accepted, for example, that paid singing of the highest quality within reach is absolutely indispensable to the success of a church, that many congregations have to lift to their utmost to meet this tax, and have comparatively little left for sending the Gospel to the heathen ; and we predict that, just in proportion as this costly style of worship increases, our missionary resources will dry up. In the beginning it was not so. The Reformed Sects, as they are called—Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist, and Baptist—all started out on the line of plainness and godly simplicity of Christian life and worship. But as wealth has increased, they have, one after another, yielded to the temptation of ecclesiastical extravagance, sumptuous churches, sumptuous furniture, sumptuous music, till their original Puritan-