

Mission Field.

THE LORD'S PRAYER AND MISSIONS.

"Well! now I do not believe in giving to missions; I think that we need about all the money that we can get at home and in our own Parish," once said an average nominal Christian to his Rector. And there is no doubt but with that average nominal Christian, many other Christians, agree. "If that is your honest conviction then" said the rector, "how can you say the Lord's Prayer? For really the first petition in that Prayer makes you pray for the extension of the Kingdom. It is a Prayer for the extension of the Kingdom. It is a Prayer for the missionary work of the Church. Thy Kingdom come." Before we can pray for our daily bread, or the forgiveness of our sins, or deliverance in the hour of temptation, we must pray for the cause of missions. This work ranks above all other works; it is the essential work of the Church and the cause of her existence as a corporate Body. In the will of God, the first prayer and the first work of every Christian is for the extension of the Kingdom—the setting up upon earth of that divine Society that is to redeem the world with all its peoples and institutions."

Oh! how many they are who never think of the missionary work of the Church when they say, "Thy Kingdom come," nor put the least bit of conscious meaning into this petition! Do we not often say this prayer in about the same mechanical fashion that a Persian works his praying machine? So many times; so many prayers; formal repetition doing duty for spiritual entreaty. It must be so or else so many professing Christians would not be disbelievers in the work of missions.

"Help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray."

It is perfectly true that man by instinct would never have taken for his first work the conversion of the heathens, nor have put as the first petition of his prayer, "Thy Kingdom come." For man naturally enters his works and prayers in self. But the gospel changes the direction of human energies, and exactly reverses the natural order that a man would adopt in drawing near to God in prayer. In fact it is the reversal of action and thought, as they have been determined by human selfishness, that characterizes the entire revelation of God in Christ. Love prompts works and prayers for others. If we are not supremely interested in missions, and do not put any conscious meaning into the petition, "Thy Kingdom come," proud selfishness has not abdicated the throne of our heart.

The Church of Christ would soon bring in over the earth the knowledge of God's truth, as the waters cover the sea, if her children would only get down and back to Bible fact and personal faith. First the Kingdom of God must come into our own hearts; and then we will be glad and

and cheerful agents to making known the Gospel of good news to sinning, sorrowing, struggling humanity; and the petition "Thy Kingdom come" will have a real meaning for us. For whoever has a real purpose in his prayers will get a real purpose in his life.—J. B. H. in *Church Helper*, Mich.

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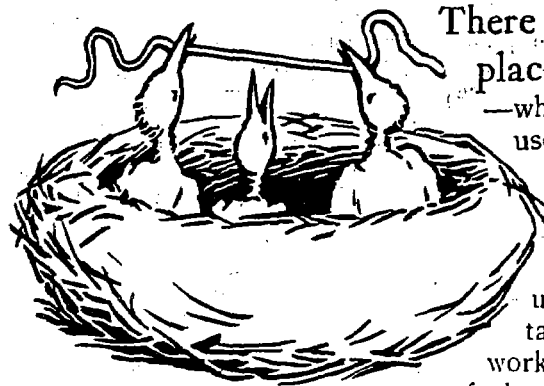


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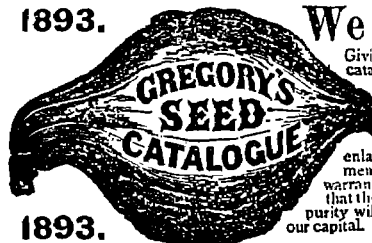
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