

MISSION FIELD.

THE SUPREME QUESTION OF THE HOUR.

The supreme question of the hour, in respect to Missions both at home and abroad, is, How can Missions be supported generously and systematically?

We deliberately say, after much thought and prayer over this matter, that something is radically wrong in this matter of the financial support of missions. Our methods are either unscriptural and unspiritual, or else they are defective in their application. God certainly does not need our money; it is for our sake that he uses us for almoners of his gifts. We need the discipline of unselfish giving, and the Church will never grow in the grace of giving until she recognizes the fact that no believer ever puts God under any obligation by the most "munificent donation," as though "he needed anything." We must from the bottom rebuild both the science and the art of giving. We must learn for ourselves and teach others, that

1. It is a privilege to give, rather than a duty. To scatter is to increase, to give is to get. The richest growth comes by the most heroic pruning. It makes one comparatively omnipotent and omnipresent to use money aright—multiplying his power and his presence a thousand-fold.

2. The giver can sanctify the gift, however small or insignificant, by his unselfishness and magnanimity of motive. A cup of cold water in the name of a disciple cannot lose its reward. It becomes a great gift by a great motive and

spirit in the giver. Whatever is done in His name is divine. Give what you can, when you can, where you can, but give it cheerfully; give a cup of water, a mite, a kiss, a word, a smile, grandly, nobly, as His disciple. The way of giving swells the gift, and God will use it grandly.

3. The altar sanctifies the gift. Put on God's altar as such, the humblest offering acquires dignity. We should study to give discriminatingly, to the worthiest objects, not carelessly or indiscriminately. Money may be thrown away and lavishly wasted on nothings, while the greatest objects appeal in vain for our aid. Where can be found any altar so sacred as that of missions? The Lord Himself laid himself on that same altar, the first grand whole burnt-offering, and any gift laid there is made divinely sacred by his sacrifice.

4. God values the little gifts from the many more than the greater gifts from the few. For the Church to depend upon large donations from a comparatively few is not God's way. It is bad alike for the many and for the few. The many learn to lean on the few, and the few become self-complacent and self-righteous as though the progress of the Church depended on their munificence. God's way is not that other men be eased and a few burdened, but that there be equality *i. e.* a sharing of responsibility according to ability. "Organize the little," make many little rills unite in one great river. The Women's Boards both teach and illustrate this lesson; they have gone straight on, giving more and more, and yet the immense sums they gather are all the aggregate of small and regular gifts.

5. Giving does us little good until it comes to the point of down-

right self-denial. The tithe system may answer for the minimum, but never for the maximum of our gifts. It is obvious that one hundred dollars from a man whose income is a thousand is a very much larger proportion than is one thousand for him who gets ten thousand, or ten thousand for him who gets one hundred thousand a year. In one case the man has 900, in the next 9 000, and in the last 90 000 dollars left for his own expenses. The fact is that all these mathematics of giving are sadly, radically misleading. The ethics of giving reach higher, but we need some higher plane than either. Shall we call it the æsthetics of giving? We need to apprehend the beauty of giving. It is the highest of the fine arts. We ought to be enamored of it as of the most æsthetic productions of the artist, the sculptor, the architect, the musician. Then giving will not need to be urged; there will be rather need of restraining the people from bringing, as Moses did. The man or woman who learns to give in the right spirit forgets all about the duty, in the privilege, and the absence of life's necessities would bring no such distress as to be cut off from this luxury. To illustrate and enforce this truth, we add to this article a few facts from history and biography.

(To be Continued.)

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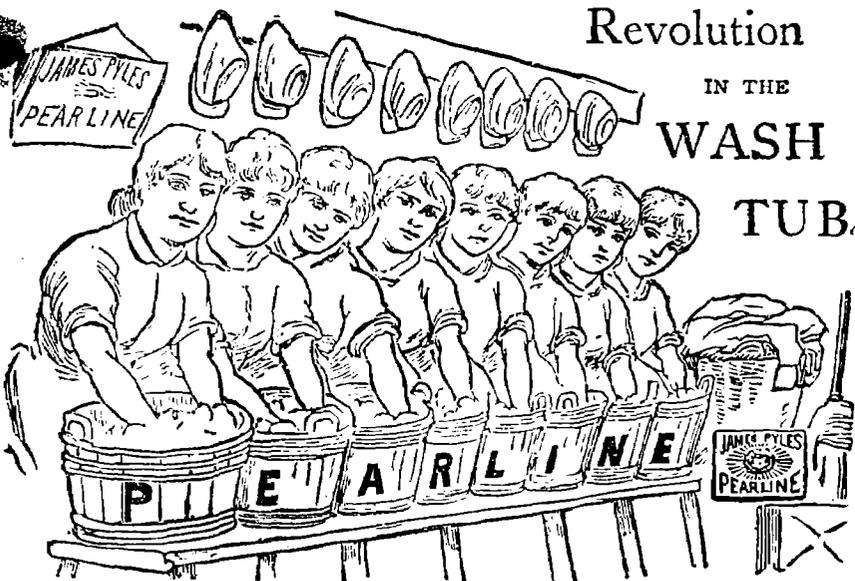
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