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## Poetry.

### MY PRAYER.

I asked the Lord that I might worthier be,  
Might grow in faith and hope and charity;  
And straight "Go feed my lambs!" he answered me.

"Nay, Lord!" I cried. "Can outward deeds  
avail  
To cleanse my spirit? Heart and courage  
fail,  
And sins prevent, and foes and fears assail."

And still "Go, feed my lambs!" was all I heard.  
But should I rest upon that simple word?  
Was that, indeed, my message from my Lord?  
Behold, I thought that He His hand would lay  
On my sick soul, and words of healing say,  
And charm the plague-spot from my heart away,

Half wroth, I turned to go; but oh! the look  
He on me cast—a gaze I could not brook;  
With deep relents all my spirit shook.

"O! dearest Lord," I cried, I will obey,  
Say what Thou wilt! Only lead thou the way;  
For, following Thee, my footsteps shall not stray."

He took me at my Word. He went before;  
He led me to the dwellings of the poor,  
Where wolf-eyed Want keeps watch beside  
the door.

He beckoned me, and I essayed to go  
Were Sin and Crime, more sad than Want  
and Woe,  
Hold carnival, and Vice walks to and fro.

And when I faltered at the sight, he said,  
"Behold I died for such! These hands have  
bled  
This side for such has pierced been." He  
said:

"Is the disciple greater than his Lord?  
The servant than his Master?" Oh, that  
word!  
It smote me like a sharp, two-edged sword!

And since that hour, if any work of mine  
Has been accepted by my Lord as sign  
That I was following in His steps divine;  
If, serving others (though imperfectly),  
My own poor life has worthier come to be,  
And I have grown in faith and charity,

Dear Lord, be Thine the glory! Thou has  
wrought,  
All unaware, the blessing that I sought,  
Oh! that these lips might praise Thee as they  
ought.

## Religious.

### CHRISTIAN MISSIONS, OR PERPETUAL HEATHENISM THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE.

BY REV. A. R. CRAWLEY, BURMAH.

The following scholarly paper we copy from the *Missionary Magazine*, (September). The Editor suggests that "The position taken in the introductory paragraph in regard to 'Aggression' will allow a question," and asks "May we not mistake effect for cause?" adding "Nothing will so inspire an army as the bugle call of advance. Inaction or maintaining only a defensive position breeds demoralization. We must not wait till the armies of God are fired with a zeal for Christ and for missions before we move on Satan's works; we must move, and so fire the hosts of Israel."

The argument running through the essay is, we think, unanswerable, and touches many points in relation to Home evangelization as well as Foreign Missions. Our readers will do well to read it over carefully, and give close consideration and practical application to its sententious statements:

"No extension in our foreign work for twenty years," says the writer of "Aggression the Demand of the Hour." It is not "high time for our bugles to sound an advance," if we cannot reckon confidently upon a cheerful and vigorous response. That would be to court a mortifying defeat. All signs of treachery and supineness within the camp must first be removed. Be the cause of it what it may, the fact is too obvious to escape observation; there is a settled indifference in the Baptist army to the evangelization of the heathen. The cause of this may lie much deeper than has been thought. Anything like a doubt, how-

ever faint, of the necessity of the Foreign Missionary Enterprise, is a fatal paralysis. Does such a doubt exist? This question has suggested a consideration of the alternative as above stated.

Heathenism is not a result, but a nature. On this point the common phraseology is unreliable and misleading. By a popular metonymy the cause is put for the effect; heathenism, for the various forms of crime and shame of which it is the efficient cause.

There may be differences and modifications in the outward expression of heathenism; radically, it is one and identical the world over. So we speak of British Christianity, American Christianity,—and yet Christianity is identical in all climes, among all nations. Brahminism, Buddhism, Shintooism are recognized not as products of different and distinct roots, but as branches of one and the same root—Heathenism in Asia. Free Love, Spiritualism, Mormonism,—what are they but branches from the same root—Heathenism in America.

This nature, under different conditions, manifests itself variously, but essentially it never changes. The tiger, gorged with food, seems different, but is essentially the same as the tiger lashed by starvation into savage fury. Here is found the true explanation of an impression common to all superficial observers of Asiatic nations. They speak in high laudation of the "mildness" and general amiability of the Hindoo, the Burman, the Chinese, who are made to appear in most favourable contrast with the native of Christian America. In the former case the nature, heathenism, is passive, comparatively; in the latter it is stimulated by ceaseless opposition to exhibit its terrible proportions and its malevolent disposition. What, under the same conditions, the "mild-Hindoo" and other "amiable" heathen are capable of doing, history tells on many a page of blood and terror. And so the record of the American Civil War is, much of it, simply an exhibit—and a dreadful one—of heathenism in action. Pent-up, slumbering volcanic fire does not lose a single element of terrific power because it lies concealed beneath a smiling landscape. It is there. Education and all the combined appliances of civilization can never quench, or stay, or change the glowing fires of this nature. The best and the most it can do is to conceal its glare, and to temper, for a time, its baleful heat.

Heathenism is a nature. Philanthropists have failed to recognize this truth,—have failed, consequently, to reach the consummation of their projects for the amelioration of the "people that sit in darkness." The inauguration of these schemes, and their hopeless failure, are recorded in the same chapter. But their lesson is still unlearned. The same old methods are still embraced and applied with as much vigor and confidence as if they were wholly untried. Does history teach nothing? Is there no lesson in the record of the mighty nations of antiquity, reaching a height of civilization, a point of culture, never since attained, and at the same time sunk to a depth of corruption too gross, too foul, to allow description? The annals of those nations afford no more valuable lesson than that contained in their own confirmation of the inspired words, "The world by wisdom knew not God." If the successors of those nations differ; if they have a greater degree of that civilization which insures the enjoyment of practical freedom, and multiplied social comforts, that difference is certainly not due to an intellectual enlightenment superior to that of their predecessors. Can there be anything more clear than that, had it been possible for Rome to continue till now with unaltered conditions, her heathenism, too, must have been perpetuated and unaltered, except, indeed, by a greater intensity of corruption? The verdict of history is,—intellectual culture is powerless to effect any change

for the better in man's moral condition. Centuries of fruitless experiment ought to be enough to make this truth an axiom. And yet the experiments do not cease. At this very hour the "heirs of all the ages," acting precisely as if those ages were barren of all teaching or significance, are striving, with earnest zeal and at enormous cost, to destroy heathenism by means which have a thousand times proved futile and impotent. This very persistence is an evidence of the ineradicable, self-perpetuating heathenism of the race. It is human wisdom asserting itself against God. For all the time during which these efforts have been prosecuted, there has existed a distinct divine plan, especially provided to effect this very purpose. Unlike human schemes, this is not tentative, is not inaugurated as an experiment, but with authority as the one only possible method by which the end can be reached. Like all the purposes of God, its origin and its grandeur are revealed in its simplicity, its adaptedness, and its achievements. Ignoring the last, or declaring them insignificant, man's wisdom has dared to correct or to supplement the Divine plan. It willingly forgets that an inspired pen wrote centuries ago—and for all the centuries—"The gospel is the power of God unto salvation;" words of which those at the head of this article are scarcely more than a paraphrase,—not more, certainly, than a just inference.

One thing is systematically forgotten by the advocates of general enlightenment as, at least, a necessary preparative for the gospel, namely, that this very enlightenment, as possessed by Christian nations, is largely the product of the gospel, diffused through Christian missions. In itself alone there is not moral power enough to constitute a conservative element; that is furnished by the gospel of Jesus Christ. It has been well said, withdraw from modern civilization everything that is a product of the gospel and—what is left? The soul stands awed and horrified as the segregation proceeds, and there is revealed a naked and loathsome heathenism, more perfect, more hideously symmetrical in corruption than that of any former age.

It is evident, then, that any advances which have been made in overturning heathenism, are due, not to civilization, not to any or all the appliances of intellectual enlightenment, but to "the power of God"—the gospel of Christ, diffused by Christian missions.

The inferences are obvious and momentous. The deliverance of the world from this curse and thralldom depends absolutely upon the establishment and support of Christian missions; and that, again, upon the zeal and faithfulness of those already rescued from heathenism,—God's people, the Church of Christ. In the gospel of Christ lies the only hope, as well of America as of the whole world. The former, bereft of it even now, would assuredly relapse speedily into heathenism; while the latter, without the gospel, must continue in perpetual and hopeless subjection.

### A PRESBYTERIAN ON CLOSE COMMUNION.

After speaking of the able and candid article by Prof. Hovey, in a late number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, giving the reasons why Baptists invite only Christians of their own faith and order to the Lord's table, the *New York Observer* says:

"It is not a want of charity which compels the Baptist to restrict his invitation. He has no hesitation in admitting the personal piety of his unimmersed brethren. Presbyterians do not invite the unbaptized, however pious they may be. It is not uncharitable. It is not bigotry on the part of Baptists, to confine their communion to those whom they consider the baptized."

The following is from a correspon-

dent of the *American Presbyterian*, who, in writing of Christian union, uses the following language:

"Open communion is an absurdity when it means communion with the unbaptized. I would not for a moment consider a proposal to admit an unbaptized person to the communion, and can I ask a Baptist so to stultify himself, and ignore his own doctrine as to invite me to commune with him, while he believes I am unbaptized? I want no sham union and no sham unity; and, if I held the Baptist notion about immersion, I would no more receive a Presbyterian to the communion than I would now receive a Quaker.

"Let us have unity indeed, but not at the expense of principle, and let us not ask the Baptist to ignore or be inconsistent with his own doctrine. Let us not either make an outcry at his 'close communion,' which is but faithfulness to principle, until we are prepared to be 'open communists' ourselves, from which stupidity may be forever preserved! Let us war not with his close communion, but with his doctrine that immersion is baptism."

It has been quite the fashion of late years for commentators who were ambitious to be thought candid and liberal to concede to the Baptist that baptism is immersion. The volumes thus far issued of *Lange's Commentary* assume this, or assert it wherever the subject is presented. Dean Stanley, in his charming books, does the same, and so with others; and yet these men continue to practice both sprinkling and infant baptism. Such inconsistencies I am utterly unable to comprehend. If I believed what they teach I would be under water before a week should pass by. *My faith in such men is shaken—men who do not follow their belief.*

"No, let us have no unity, and strive to have none, that can not be in consistency with our doctrine. How can two walk together unless they are agreed? Let the unity stop where the agreement ends."

### BAPTISTERIES AND FONTS.

The greatest authority in France, and probably in Europe, on subjects of architectural and antiquarian interest is M. Viollet Le Duc, whose *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture Française du XIe au XVIIe Siècle* is a superb work, highly praised by the architects of England. In his fifth volume, under the title "Fonts," he says:

"Without entering into more details on this subject, we shall content ourselves with observing that during the course of the middle age, in the West baptism by immersion was always practised (*en occident le baptême par immersion fut toujours pratique*). The bas-reliefs, the pictures of manuscripts and of church windows, show us the catechumens baptized by immersion."—Page 533.

"The solemnity given to the sacrament of baptism explains why, in the neighborhood of the most ancient churches, there was a baptistery,—that is to say, an edifice sufficiently spacious to contain a certain number of catechumens coming the same day to receive baptism. These edifices were ordinarily circular, occupied at the centre by a somewhat deep (*peu profond*) basin into which they made to descend the persons whom they baptized by immersion."—Page 534.

This author explains the decline of baptisms and the introduction of fonts. Baptisteries for the immersion of adults or catechumens were no longer necessary when there were no longer adult pagans to be converted and no catechumens who had received instructions to be baptized. Now came the period of fonts, still large enough for immersing a new-born child (*à une cuve bien grande pour immerger un nouveau né*).

"As soon as the eleventh century we see that baptismal vessels (*cuves*) were placed in all churches, not in some special edifice. \* \* \* As it was

no longer in question to baptize pagan converts, but infants new-born, these fonts are of small dimensions, and not different except in form from those which are made to-day. There was indeed no necessity of a very large vessel (*cave*) for immersing a new-born babe." Pages 534, 535.

In all this we see means adapted to ends. The great baptisteries, with basins of suitable magnitude and depth, were built for the times when adults were to be immersed, and being spacious and costly buildings, were restricted to the great churches, and were not many in number. When baptism came to be universal, the baptism of infants, smaller fonts, still large enough for immersing infants, took their places, and became part of the furniture of all churches.

These citations, from the great work of this great French architect, furnish an intimation of the kind of historical proofs which may be found in art. Proofs like this establish the prevalence of immersion on the continent as indubitably as it is established by other proofs in England. The problem of the decline to sprinkling was equally certain to impress itself upon French Art, and the study of the art will as certainly at some time reveal the history.—*Freeman*.

### PAUL AS A COLLECTOR.

We generally take for granted that almost the only Scripture precedent for Christian liberality is found in 1 Cor. xvi: 2. This was the way Paul preferred, and he directed the Corinthians to make their contributions according to this plan.

By each one laying by him weekly as the Lord had prospered him, and afterwards uniting all their contributions into a fund there would be no collections when he came. The amount collected could be turned over without delay to the messengers who they should appoint to carry it to Jerusalem. And by laying by these amounts on the first day of the week, the Lord's day, they would be constantly reminded that they were "lending to the Lord."

Perhaps even those brethren who are so much afraid of talking about money, would not be frightened at this little speech on giving. They would advise us to imitate the apostle who said all about the collection in a few verses, and not be always making such a fuss about giving, but leave it to voluntary contributions. "There's none of your long-winded speeches and travelling agents about this collection." Now every one will admit that this is the best way when it can be made to succeed. But Paul feared that even the apostolic injunction would not arouse them to their full duty. So he does not stop with his little speech of a few verses. Let those who think our preachers waste too much time talking about money, remember that Paul devoted two whole chapters of an inspired epistle to this subject. Let them read an apostle's speech on benevolence in 11 Cor. viii, ix. And among other arguments to stir them up he even tells them how liberal the Macedonians have been, and that if the brethren from Macedonia come with him and find them unprepared he will be ashamed for them if they are not for themselves, after he has praised them so highly and told what great things they were going to do.

And he did not stop with writing appeals on the subject and sending them to the churches. For more than a year he spends much of this time in making a grand collection in Galatia, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. Some would say, perhaps, that he ought to have spent that time preaching the gospel. But we prefer to take the apostle's opinion on the subject and he thought it best to tell the people it was their duty to give a well as receive.

But he even did more than this. He employed agents. He not only made speeches on the subject and spent much time in making the collec-