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Poetry.

THE PRAYER OF THE DESTITUTE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE OLD, OLD STORY."
"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."—Ps. cxl. 17.

Give me a song, and I will sing it!
Give me an offering; I will bring it!
Give me Thyself, and I will take Thee;
Withdraw Thyself, and I forsake Thee!

My land lies fallow; Master, till me!
My heart lies empty; Master, fill me!
It plays the traitor; Master, win me!
It faints; it dies! Put new life in me!
It goes astray; good Shepherd, lead me!
It sighs for hunger; come and feed me!
It is so poor! Give riches to me!
It is corrupt; O Lord, renew me!
So ignorant! O! wilt Thou teach me?
Has wandered far. But thou canst reach me!
Is sore diseased; Physician, heal me!
Exposed to danger; O! conceal me!
It trembles! In Thine arms, O, fold me!
Begins to sink! O Saviour, hold me!
Is sinking fast! Lord, look upon me!
So cold and dark! O, shine upon me!
A poor, lost sinner! Come and find me!
A rebel! May thy love now bind me!
A prodigal! Wilt Thou receive me?
A beggar! O, wilt Thou relieve me?
A backslider! Wilt Thou restore me?
Unholy! May thy presence awe me!
Unfit to die! O God, prepare me!
So weak! On eagles' wings, O, bear me!
So comfortless! Lord Jesus, cheer me!
So lonely! God of love, draw near me!
By sin accused! Good Lord, acquit me!
Unfit for heaven's pure service! Fit me!
Unfit for work on earth! But use me!
A suppliant! Do not Thou refuse me!

Jesus! to Thee I call!
Jesus! be Thou my all!
Thine opportunity
Is mine extremity!

O! come and fill the hungry with good things;
For Thou hast all I need, thou King of kings!
Sunday at Home.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

A CALL TO PREACH.

Not a few discard the idea, and fact, of a divine call to the ministry. Among such, may be numbered those who believe they are Christians. They do not altogether reject the doctrine of a certain "call" to preach. But they affirm, that the call may consist in natural gifts of language, self-reliance, readiness and clearness of imparting acceptable instruction, with a diligent love of study. Besides these, they include a physical expression, well-pleasing if not commending. If they go so far as to confess, that there may be certain supernatural impressions, they will cover their defense with the notion that such is not an indispensable qualification. Hence, if a young man, upon conversion, evince those natural qualities, which are essential to pleasing, public address, he is beset, by admiring friends, to devote himself to the ministry. If early taught that a divine call is necessary, he will doubtless, hesitate, at first, before committing himself to such an endeavor. But, too often, he yields to undue pressure brought upon him, from over-anxious, if not too ambitious friends. And, when he has fairly launched into the ministry, he realizes that something besides natural qualifications, and acquired attainments, are requisite. The truth is, there is a necessity—a Bible requirement, demanding the waiting for a positive, direct call from God, to preach. There is but little said about it, in God's Word; but enough to make it certain, that God, by His Spirit, does speak to those whom He sees fit to choose, for the great work of declaring His Gospel to sinners. And very many, though believing thoroughly in the doctrine and fact of such a call, are, however, utterly ignorant, as to what it consists of. They would like to know how men are divinely called—how they feel, when wrought upon, by God's Spirit. But, it is quite certain, that no real justice can be done, in the matter of telling others, how—in what manner, and

measure, such an experience is realized. A regenerated person, might as well attempt to express in words, what he has felt in his heart, of the work and worth, of renewing, sanctifying grace. The half cannot be told. This much, however, may be told; the subject of such a call, will have his mind and heart unmistakably turned towards the ministry, without the least natural effort, on his part. That is, a pure current of holy constraint, will start its persuasive flow, from within, and conduct the emotions, desires and anxieties, of the soul, towards an unselfish consecration for the ministry. Day and night, the word of the Lord, giving such a bidding, will stand at the heart-door, advising—yea, commanding the glorious duty. As plain as were Nathan's words to David, will the force of divine persuasion come, saying, "Thou art the man!" Hence, we believe there need be no mistake, about the kind of call, one has, to preach. It will prove itself, invariably, the voice of God. There may be strong opposers to this view. But, suppose you, that God desiring obedience to a specific duty, will leave the individual in doubt and darkness, concerning that duty? Nay! There cannot be found in the whole range of inspired writ, an instance, where a person called of God, to the performance of some kind of labor, failed to apprehend the call. Every specific obligation, had its corresponding clearness of divine instruction, as to personality and procedure. Every true prophet, became at once cognizant of his Lord's will, in reference to his being Israel's seer. Concerning them, we read, that "the word of the Lord came" to them. It never failed to apprise every one of them, of the divine requirement. Hence, the weight of personal obligation, was at once felt, and, where the conditions of obedience and fidelity were true and healthy, the obligation was promptly assumed, and faithfully discharged. Now, the ministry of the present day, in order to be the most efficient, the most prosperous and happy, should, in all cases, be a divinely-called ministry, everything else, being equal. This, is a prime essential. Nothing can take the place of it. The churches should rigidly insist upon it. This done, then let them exercise a proper respect—I will not say, reverence—and charity, towards such. And when one is called by them, as a "candidate" for their suffrages (!), they should not cast improper criticism and censure, upon them; for they are the Lord's anointed. The candidate may not be the man God has then designed for them. But by all means, respect—kindly treat, those upon whom God's hand and Spirit have been laid, in holy calling. Remember King David's jealous respect, even for his wicked enemy Saul, because, as he said, he was "the Lord's anointed." But, a higher consideration compensates a God-called ministry. Prosperity must, necessarily, to considerable extent, and in some given direction, attend its efforts. The divine idea and purpose, take into consideration, something vastly greater, than filling vacancies, merely. The modern ministry, is God's earthly priesthood—his representatives and living witnesses. They are to declare, throughout all nations, the testimony of their Lord. And, having faithfully testified of his grace and requirements, their ministry is a success, though they may not have the privilege of gathering into the visible church, a single soul. Howbeit, unknown to them, souls may, through their work, pass into the invisible kingdom. Furthermore, God will keep in the vineyard, those whom He has called. They may, it is true, be kept out of the active ministry, long whiles, occasionally; but, the divine design, is not defeated; God is thus sharpening his tools, whereby they are fitted to do better work—executions which reflect his highest honor and praise.

C. H. WETTERBE.

There is no true learning of humility but in the school of Christ.

THE CONVERTED ACTRESS.

An actress, passing through a street in one of the large cities in England, overheard in a little unpretending house, the sound of sacred music. The door stood open. Moved by curiosity she went in. A few poor people were assembled together. One of them was just reading aloud the first verse of the hymn to be sung. It was:—

Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?"

The melody was sweet and simple. The actress, however, did not take much notice of this. Her whole soul was occupied with the words of the hymn. Lost in thought, she remained standing till the mistress of the house invited her to go farther in and take a seat. She accepted the invitation and remained during the prayer which followed. However defective and ungrammatical it might appear, it impressed her deeply with its directness and earnestness.

In due time she left the house, but the first lines of the hymn did not pass out of her mind. She could not forget them. Her ears were filled without ceasing with the words:—

Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?"

At last she resolved to purchase the little book which contained the hymn. The more she read it, the more serious and decided she became. She began to attend the preaching of the gospel, to read her long-neglected Bible and to bow the knee in prayer before him who is revealed as the God of mercy, and who dwells with him who is humble and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at his word.

At the same time she resolved to give up forever her employment of an actress; for she saw that the theatre and religion cannot be reconciled with each other. For a long time she endeavoured to apologize for her non-appearance on the stage; but her mind was not changed, nor her resolution altered to disclose her purpose, in due season, to abandon the stage forever.

One morning the manager of the theater visited her, and begged her to take the principal part in a piece which was to be brought out the next week at his benefit. She had often performed this part with the greatest applause. But she now assured the manager that she was resolved never to appear again on the stage. She also disclosed to him her reasons. He ridiculed her new views, and attempted to change her purpose. When he found that this availed nothing, he represented to her the damage it would be to him, if she with her talents did not appear in the piece. He also promised her, that, unwilling as he was to lose her, still it should be the last time he would trouble her. Unable to resist his persuasion, she promised to undertake the part, and on the appointed evening went to the theater. The performance of the occasion required her to make her appearance on the stage at the beginning, and to open the evening with a song. As soon as the curtain rose, the orchestra began to play the accompaniment. But she stood still, like one lost in thought, and seemed as if she had forgotten everything around her. The music proceeded, but she did not sing. When the suspicion arose that she was perhaps overcome by excitement, for the moment, the music began the tune again. Again it proceeded, but she remained silent as before. The third time the music began, and now, with folded hands and streaming tears, she began to sing; not, however, the words of the song, but the hymn,

Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?"

It is scarcely necessary to say that the performance was confounded and immediately brought to a close. Many indulged in ridicule; but many others were deeply impressed, and admired the power of the gospel, which had so completely changed the heart and life of a votary of the stage.

The change proved to be as genuine

as it was remarkable. The actress led a new life, in conformity with the gospel, and some years afterwards became the happy wife of a Christian minister.

Dear reader, have you ever experienced so entire a change? If not, you are not fit for the kingdom of God. For Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "In Christ—Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Perhaps you say, "I will not change my religion." Yes, but the question is has the religion, which you think you have, changed you? If not it is good for nothing. It will never save you. True religion, religion which consists in faith in Christ, changes a man, and new creates him in the image of God. It produces a change of heart, love to Christ, and hatred of sin. All men, even those who are nominally Christians, regular church goers and men of integrity as to this world, must be born again and saved as poor sinners through faith in Jesus Christ, or they will never be saved at all.—Translated from the German.

CONVERSION AND DEATH OF PADRE ROJANO, A MEXICAN PRIEST.

BY THE REV. THOMAS CARTER, D. D.

On a Sunday morning, some months ago, as we came out of our chapel in the city of Mexico, after concluding the service, we saw standing in the *saguan*, or entry, a gentleman who, by his broad-brimmed black hat and cloak, it was easy to see was a Roman Catholic priest. Had he come to create a disturbance? Had he come, if it were only by his presence; to show the people that they were watched, and that he was able to report them to the church? What was his object in presenting himself in such a place? He saluted us respectfully, as is the Mexican custom, and asked that he might have a private interview. Conducting him to one of our rooms, we sat down together and had a long and earnest conversation. He was an old man, over seventy years of age, had his church in a part of the city of Mexico, which he named, where he regularly said mass—a statement which on subsequent inquiry we found to be correct—and had come on purpose to converse, in a friendly manner, on the subject of our respective religious views. He was convinced, he said, of the corruptions of the church of Rome, and his soul was not at rest. He who had for so many years, professed to administer forgiveness to others, confessing to a Protestant minister that he was without it himself! What a spectacle! We laid aside every other subject of conversation in that moment, except his own personal salvation, and pointed out to him the shortness of life, the few days he might yet have to give the great question of his salvation, and urged him to believe in Christ at once, and in Christ alone. His tears frequently flowed as we spoke thus together, and at last we proposed to pray. We were both prostrated before God in a moment, and we offered up earnest supplications in the Spanish language, in which we had been conversing, that God would bless him with peace and His converting grace. Asking him to pray, also, while we continued on our knees at the close of the petition, he repeated, as had been the custom of his life, a Latin composition. But it was the last time, as it was the first in connection with our intercourse together, in which he used that tongue. In every prayer that we subsequently heard from him, he used the language of the country.

There seems to us, on looking back, as if there was a heavenly influence resting upon us that Sunday morning. We have no doubt the Saviour was very present, fulfilling his promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

He came again and again. One

evening we invited him to accompany us to the prayer meeting.

"I dare not go. It would be the price of my church and living."

"Do just as you think your conscience dictates."

"Perhaps the archbishop may not hear of it. I will go once."

We went together, and on entering he took a seat close by the open door, as if he wished to be in a position where he would be able to retire at any time during the course of the meeting.

We went into the desk, and after the preliminary exercises, read and explained a few verses from the epistle to the Romans. He remained silent and attentive during the service, and, with great apparent warmth in his manner, shook hands with us as he departed at its close. Not many days afterward he came half an hour before the commencement of another social meeting, which we had previously invited him to attend, and remarked,

"The very words that you read at the prayer meeting the other evening, and the very ideas which you expressed, I preached to my own congregation, and in my own chapel."

Again we went together, and during the course of the service he rose and spoke. What he said we cannot now recollect, but it was most touching to behold that Roman Catholic priest, in such an assembly, seeking the way of life. When he called again he stated that one of his superior officers had heard of his attendance on a Protestant service, and had reproved him for it.

As we talked, the hour of the prayer meeting arrived; and saying that we must go, we asked him if he thought it best to accompany us.

"I think not; my superiors will hear of it again, and my church will be taken from me."

"Follow your conscience; do what it prompts," we remarked.

"I think I had better not go."

"We both rose to leave the room. He lingered as we stood at the door. We had told him, plainly and distinctly, that if he left the Roman Church we could assume no responsibility as to his future support; that, directly, or indirectly, we could promise him no church, no congregation, no pecuniary help, and that he must consider all this in every step which he took. He waited at the open door, as if unwilling to part with us, and then he spoke again. It seemed a final decision to give all for Christ.

"I will go; I will run the risk."

It was not, perhaps, two weeks afterwards that he stated to us, that his chapel had been taken away from him by the archbishop, adding, with flowing tears, the touching words,

"But God will take care of me. He has said he would; he has assured me, that if I seek first the kingdom of heaven, I shall have everything else I need. He has blessed me and forgiven my sins, and I love him."

About this time we invited him to preach a sermon. It was not one of great ability; but that which was most affecting about the service was the sincerity and humble reverence of his opening prayer. Being accustomed always to offer up public prayers in Latin, in a form previously prepared, it was a new thing to him to pray publicly and extemporaneously in his native Spanish; and after the congregation had risen from a kneeling posture, he remained long bowed before God, wiping the tears from his eyes. The Saviour, do doubt, had blessed him, as he thus appeared for the first time in a Protestant pulpit, more than any of us supposed. Only twice more, if we remember correctly, we heard his voice in the social meetings. He had said that God would take care of him, and his trust was honored, but honored in a way he did not anticipate. He was about to leave us for a land where they hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Being taken sick, he addressed us an affectionate letter, now lying on the table, dated Dec. 19, 1873, which commences, "Dearest brother in our Lord Jesus Christ," and ends, "It is