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Poetry.

ONLY A SLING AND STONE.

I said, "Where shall I flee,
My foes encompass me?
Lord, keep me at thy side,
There may thy weakest hide."
But his dear voice replied—
"Fly not! I am thy shield,
Thou shalt not shrink nor yield,
Nor might nor prowess own;
Take thou thy sling and stone,
Trust in thy God alone."

"Lord, I am but a child—
So easily beguiled—
So swiftly overthrown;
I answered with a moan,
"I cannot go alone."

"Say not 'I am a child!'
And then he sweetly smiled,
And every fear was gone;
"Take thou thy sling and stone;
Thou shalt not go alone."

"Thine eye shall be on mine;
My hand upholding thee;
Though every friend were gone,
Behold thy faithful One;
Child, take thy sling and stone!"

"Believe and thou shalt see
My arm supporting thee;
My shield is o'er thee thrown;
Thou hast its shelter known;
Take now thy sling and stone."

I listened, and drew near,
Beneath the scorner's sneer
I heard the mocker's tone—
"Not thus are battles won,
By one weak child alone."

Ah! then I marked it well;
The giant reeled and fell;
Beneath my sling and stone,
As I stood there alone,
A bright smile on me shone.

Come doubt, come grief, come pain,
Let me not learn in vain
I have not stronger grown.
Nor warfare have I known.
Only my sling and stone.

Religious.

THE FORDING OF THE RIVER.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

"Jesus has forded the river." I caught these words while listening to the prayer of a Christian woman in one of our meetings. The subject of death had been in her thoughts, and grateful as a bridge swung from shore to shore were those words, "Jesus has forded the river."

The fording of the river! I looked, and I seemed to see a turbulent stream, shadowy with the night lowering upon it. There were frowning banks on this side, broken by wild gorges down through which raged the wind, throwing the river into still greater tumult. The banks on the other side sloped away from the waters in fields of the bright summer. I saw a timid, shivering multitude on the bank nearer to me, waiting to cross. But those waters, who would venture to pass through them? Then I noticed a Strong One coming over from the other side. The river seemed to rise about him and threatened to engulf him. He breasted the tide through, and stood at last in the midst of the frightened throng. I thought I heard his voice like the richness and sweetness of some instrument of music, and it said, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by my name. Thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

A little child went with him into the river. I thought the waters would cover the child, but they seemed to fall away on every side and lay all about the little form in such peace that I recalled those words, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Then an old man went across hand-in-hand with the Strong One. He trembled at first, the waters were so dark and rough. But suddenly they became so placid and such light lay upon them, that it

seemed as if one of the smooth golden streets that I could now see dividing the land beyond and stretching down to the shore, had been extended right across the river. And the light fell upon the old man, and as it touched the "hoary hairs" changed them to a "crown of gold."

But the little babes that weeping mothers brought down to the river, how would they get across? "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom," I heard a voice saying. And one by one, they disappeared over the river.

So I watch the waters and see the multitude going safely across, and as I look, my soul grows confident, and now I am saying, "Blessed be the name of our God, for Jesus has forded the river."—*Christian Weekly.*

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

If an angel were sent to find the most perfect man, he would probably not find him composing a body of divinity, but perhaps a cripple in a poor-house, whom the parish wish dead, and humbled before God, with far lower thoughts of himself than others have of him. Let us be satisfied with what we know, and be willing to leave the mysteries to be solved when, as scholars, we sit at his feet and learn from his lips the complete story of redeeming love. Many talk familiarly of sanctification in the lump, who know but little of it in the piece. The readiest way to know whether you are in Christ, is to know whether Christ be in you. Revenge hurts both offender and sufferer; as we see in a bee, which, in her anger, loathes her sting, and lives a drone ever after. A prudent man, is like a pin; his head prevents him from going too far. A promise should be given with caution, and kept with care. A promise should be made by the heart, and remembered by the head. A promise and its performance should, like the scales of a true balance, always present a mutual adjustment. A promise attended to is a debt settled. God crowns with mercy, but a swollen head is not fit to have that crown put upon it. A proud man is seldom a grateful man; for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves. When any mercy falls, he says, Yes; but it ought to be more. It is only manna as large as a coriander seed, whereas, it ought to be like a baker's loaf. "I am a home missionary," once observed a Christian mother: "six pairs of little eyes are daily watching my looks, as well as listening to my words; and I wish my children never to see in me that which they may not imitate." Live to be useful. Live to give light. Live to accomplish the end for which you were made, and quietly and steadily shine on, trying to do good. If we would have powerful minds, we must think; if we would have faithful hearts, we must love; if we would have strong muscles, we must labor. These include all that is valuable in life. A preached gospel by men whose life is such as to destroy all confidence in them, is like tendering water in a defiled cup, it disgusts rather than pleases.

HOPE OF THE CHURCH.—The hope of the church is in revivals; and the fairest hope of revivals is in teaching and preaching the gospel to the young. If I were to turn evangelist, I would enter the field. Let every pastor who desponds over the effect of his ministry upon the world-hardened minds turn to the lambs of the flock. Pentecost will begin for him there. Let our Sunday School teachers seek immediately and explicitly, not the entertainment or the instruction of their charge, but their conversion; and the question of the spiritual state of the church, the sanctity of home-life, the peace and order of society, and the supply of Christian ministers and Christian missionaries, are all answered in words of hope and promise.—*A. L. Stone. D. D.*

For the Christian Messenger.

"BAPTISM AND COMMUNION."

IV.

AN EXERGESIS ON ACTS II. 42, 46.

By Rev. George Armstrong, A. M.

1st. The institution of baptism preceded that of the Supper by some years. The fact is certainly very suggestive and significant as to the order in which these ordinances stand to each other. This order, it is not too much to say is divine,—is from God,—the expression of his purpose and will. Some indeed doubt or question the priority of baptism, alleging that Christianity did not commence until the day of Pentecost, and that therefore no Christian baptism existed previous to that day. Even if this were so, we could still maintain the priority of baptism. But we perceive no ground for accepting this view of the matter, and cannot but regard it as inconsistent with what is stated, or implied in connection with baptism in the Gospels. John, the Harbinger of our blessed Lord was sent by God to preach repentance for the remission of sins, and to baptize the penitent; and he baptized many. An important part of his mission was to baptize Jesus, and on administering this ordinance to the Redeemer, he received the promised sign and attestation from Heaven to the Messiahship of Jesus. Our Lord was baptized before his manifestation to Israel and entrance on his public ministry. Surely baptism was not more sacred, significant, or Christian, even on the day of Pentecost than when Jesus submitted to that ordinance in the river Jordan. No law of the old dispensation required Jesus, or the people to be baptized in Jordan or elsewhere. This requirement was first revealed to John the Baptist when commissioned from above on his great work to announce the Messiah and prepare his way. Not only did Jesus submit to baptism, but through his disciples he administered baptism, and thus set his signature and seal to this ordinance. It is said (John iv: 1-2) "that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples;"—no doubt, as his agents, and with his direct authority and sanction. The disciples knew that Jesus had been baptized, and they were called and required to follow him;—and they themselves declared in the presence of Jesus, and without rebuke from him, that they had left all and followed him. (Matt. xix: 27.) There is therefore every reason to believe that the Apostles and other disciples followed the example of Jesus in baptism as well as in other things required of them. Besides, that those who by the authority and command of Christ baptized disciples to him, would themselves neglect, or omit baptism, under the very eye of Jesus, is altogether incredible. I therefore entertain the belief that the apostles and others who became avowed disciples of Christ previous to his death, were baptized during the lifetime of our Lord; and that such baptism is entitled to be regarded as Christian baptism. It cannot rightly be called Judaic baptism, nor Johanneic baptism;—for it formed no part of Judaism, and originated neither with John, nor the Jews;—but was from God and Heaven in a peculiar sense. (Matt. 21: 23-27.) It was the baptism that Jesus received, the baptism which he authorized, and which his apostles administered with his approval, the baptism which as to essence he embodied in his last Communion and was the baptism which had the manifest approval of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, at the Jordan. Baptism "in the Spirit" was a new thing indeed on the day of Pentecost, but baptism "in water" was not. A few days before Pentecost, Jesus reminded them of the fact that John had "baptized with (v=in) water," "but," he added, "ye shall be baptized with (in) the Holy Spirit not many days hence." And baptizing the thousands in Jerusalem, the apostles

and their co-adjutors only administered, under new and much clearer light indeed, (as was the case in regard to everything else which they taught and did,) the same ordinance they had seen administered from the beginning, and which from its frequent occurrence, and from the example and approval of Christ, could not fail to be regarded as worthy of special attention, and exact imitation.

2nd. Look now at the Institution of the Sacred Supper the night before Jesus suffered on the cross.

Immediately after the Paschal meal Jesus celebrated the Supper with his disciples, and looking forward to and providing for the wants of his church to the end of time, he commanded them to celebrate this ordinance from time to time in the same manner, and in remembrance of Him. At this first celebration of the most solemn and touching ordinance of Christianity, there was gathered the most interesting and hallowed company ever assembled on earth. There was Jesus, and his beloved, faithful apostles; his acts are solemn and deeply impressive;—his utterances inexpressibly solemn and tender, and the immediate future perfectly known to Christ, was infinitely solemn and momentous. Gethsemane was near,—the hall of judgment, the crown of thorns, and Calvary with all its terrors and agonies were in full view. But beyond these stood out most distinctly and vividly to the pure and enraptured vision of Jesus the splendours of a divine conquest and the glories of a redeemed church. Our Lord spoke, acted and prayed as never before, his utterances, actions, and prayers, made the most solemn and wonderful disclosures ever communicated to man. Here in an upper room at Jerusalem Jesus instituted the ordinance of the Christian church in the presence of the company of the disciples who were to be foremost in the great work of gathering men to Christ by the Gospel, and building them up in faith and holiness. Here is the good Shepherd, and the little flock he loved so well,—the Shepherd soon to be smitten for his own, and the flock soon to be dispersed for a season. Now in contemplating this solemn scene and this sacred company, we may reverently enquire—it seems to me—whether all who reclined at that table had been baptized? We know to a certainty that Jesus, the Lord and Master of the house hold, was baptized; for the baptism of Jesus stands prominent in the opening pages of those grand inspired witnesses for Christ—the four Gospels;—as if to remind disciples in every age that our Lord requires in addition to pure faith in Him a confession of devotion and submission to Him in the solemn and holy rite of baptism. And for reasons already given we regard it as about equally certain that the disciples with Him at that solemn hour and ordinance had been previously baptized, even as the Lord had been. Is any other position tenable, or credible. We think not. And for reasons already given we take that baptism to be Christian baptism—just as we take the Supper celebrated in Jerusalem by Jesus and his disciples, the night before he suffered on the cross, to be the Christian Communion—the Supper of the Christian church, whose observance is obligatory to the end of time. And if it be not the Christian Communion, where shall we look for it. If that be not the Christian Communion, then no such ordinance has been instituted at all. Thus a wrong view and position in respect to baptism will necessitate a similar view and position as to the communion. The way to escape this, is to accept and hold both on the same authority and sanction—that of Jesus, and in the order established by Him. Both baptism and the Lord's Supper originated before the death of Christ, and both are Christian ordinances, and equally so, though the former had the precedence by about three years. Both indeed are referred to in the last commission, are re-appointed, and extended; baptism directly and in express terms, communion indirectly and

by implication, but with none the less certainty and force on that account.

TALKING IT OVER.

"How I wish we had talked it over when we were sitting here by the fire!"

So said a mother to me as we stepped from the death-chamber of her only daughter.

"But you have hope for Emma?" I said.

"Oh, yes," she answered, "she was all goodness and gentleness, and very seriously inclined; but I wish we had talked it over."

Thinking to comfort her stricken heart, I said: "I had a sweet little talk with her a few weeks since, as we came out from prayer-meeting. When I said, 'I am very glad to see you here,' she replied, 'I love to come; and when I pointed to the precious, ever-present Friend and Saviour, she responded with a pressure of the hand and fast-flowing tears.'"

"Yes," said the mother, "she did love to go, and went many times when scarcely able."

"Do you think she realized the approach of death?" I inquired.

"I think she did not expect to live; and a little while before she died, she gave me such a look, as if she longed to tell me something. Oh, if we had only talked it over when we sat here sewing!" said the sorrowing mother; "but I shall soon be with her."

"Then you have a hope yourself?" I added, interrogatively.

"Yes;—one week ago I gave up all, Emma and all, if I know my own heart."

"Did your daughter know this?" "Yes, and seemed happier since I told her," was the reply.

"I am rejoiced to hear it, and hope you will be spared long to serve your Saviour."

"No," she answered, "I cannot live over a year at the longest, so a skilful physician has told me."

"Indeed; when did you ascertain this?"

"Since I found Christ; and I am so thankful it was not before, for then I should have thought I was frightened into a surrender."

"Did Emma know of the incurability of your disease?" I questioned.

"No, I kept it from her; but that is all right. The doctor says I cannot suffer long; only while I stay it would be such a comfort to know just how she felt about her dying," mourned the still regretful mother.

Mothers, we are familiar and confidential with our children on most topics, how is it about this sweet heavenly hope? Should it not be conversed upon cheerfully, while we are in health and happiness? Let us not wait till our darlings, with unutterable longings, are mutely struggling in the embrace of death; but "let us talk it over" while we are sitting by the fire.—*Mrs. L. R. James, in Christian at Work.*

BUNYAN'S WIFE.

A correspondent of an English paper expresses the opinion that while honors are paid to the memory of Bunyan, some mention ought to be made of his heroic wife, who used persistent efforts to procure her husband's release from jail. He says, "Three times she made the attempt, twice to Lord Chief Justice Hale, and nothing could daunt her; she would obtain a hearing. This young woman—without a creature to befriend or sustain her, entered the court room and stood before the Judges. She addressed herself with a trembling heart directly to Lord Chief Justice Hale, who wore in his countenance so clearly the lines of that gentleness and goodness for which he was illustrious. How eloquently does she plead on her husband's behalf! 'My lord, I make bold to come once again to your lordship to know what may be done to my husband. He is kept unlawfully in prison. They clapped him up before there were any proclamations against the meetings. He desires to live peace-