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Poetry.

Be Strong.

Be strong to hope, O heart!
Though day is bright,
The star can only shine
In the dark night.
Be strong O heart of mine,
Look toward the light!
Be strong to bear, O heart!
Nothing is vain;
Strive not for life is care,
And God sends pain;
Heaven is above, and there
Rest will remain!
Be strong to love, O heart!
Love knows not wrong;
Didst thou love creatures even,
Life were not long,
Didst thou love God in heaven,
Thou wouldst be strong.

Sunday Rain.

This is a subject that urgently requires to be looked into. A little consideration may discover, if not the means to remove it from among the adverse circumstances of the Church, at least the remedy to reduce the evil to a minimum. At the present time it is a grievance. The effects of Sunday rain are most extraordinary. It is like no other rain. It is so penetrating, so awe-inspiring. The Destroying Angel himself could not more effectually blockade many robust professors of religion within their houses.

It makes a wonderful impression on ministers. Take any one of them who is concerned in the glory of God, the salvation of souls, the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom. You might see the good man, first thing on Sunday morning, making for the window. You might observe him anxiously peeping from behind the curtain to see whether the morning promised a fair or rainy day. But what ails the poor man? He looks so clouded and downcast; and, if you noticed he heaved a deep sigh. Have his dreams and visions of the night troubled him? Or have his anxieties for the morrow kept him awake all night? Or was he so distracted with a thousand and one things last week that his preparation for Sunday was driven into Saturday? And has he had to work all night long, while his people have been sweetly resting from the week's cares and labors? Or does he feel that the texts were slow in coming, and the ideas sluggish in their flow through a wearied brain, or other disturbing causes and that in consequence his meagre preparation for the work distresses his spirit? Is that the reason, or any one of those mentioned, why he looks troubled and careworn? Not at all. The fact is, last week was singularly free from tea meetings, special lectures, committees, etc., and he got his texts in good time, and the sermons came by inspiration, and on Saturday night he felt the restful luxury of being prepared; and the moon brightly shining, and the stars and clear blue sky sent him to rest in the cheerful hope of a bright Sabbath day, and of meeting his people with a message

from God to them. Alas! the visions of the morning have been dispelled. The Sunday rain makes his very heart faint and fail. He knows that the message received from God will be delivered to empty pews, and he had hoped that it would be a word of life to some, of quickening to others, and a blessing to all.

Well, the message will be delivered rain or no rain; and the Judgment Day will come, rain or no rain; and the people will be called to account for the messages delivered, whether present or absent to hear it, rain or no rain. Still, these reflections do not bring any comfort to a minister's heart on a rainy Sunday morning, because he earnestly desires blessings for all his people, and would fain avert judgment from all of them.

And this Sunday's rain has a wonderful effect on the people,—not all of them—but most of them. Some faithful souls seem to mind it less than the rain of other days. But for the majority it seems to be charged with all the elements of judgment. It brings with it the germ of all the diseases to which human nature is exposed, such as bronchitis, diphtheria, asthma, neuralgia, consumption, and a score or more of other dreadful things. It is, in fact, a plague to be avoided by all possible means. Others again do not seem to mind it at all. They never catch any harm from it. And this discrimination of Sunday rain is not the least wonderful feature of it. Strange to say, it does not threaten with its terrors poor old bodies, poorly clad, many of them, godly old men and women do not seem to suffer from them at all, many of them rather seem to enjoy it. One would think by their happy contented faces in the house of God on a wet Sabbath, that they feel it a kind of privilege to make a little sacrifice to wait on the Lord. No, the people who are attacked by this Sunday rain with remorseless fury, are comfortable middle aged gentlemen, and not unfrequently the young men of not very delicate constitutions, and if there are any professors of religion given to attend concerts and evening parties, and stealthy visits to the theatre, the unsparing effects of this Sunday rain is quite distressing. On the other days of the week our streets are crowded with these people when showers are falling without intermission. They are full of daring of vivacity, of energy; but the Sunday rain shuts them all up in their castles—home is the Englishman's castle—and makes prisoners of them all, unless they have made previous engagements to visit friends at a distance or in the country. The deacons of the church have also reason to look grave on a rainy Sunday morning. It is a barren time for the treasury, and for arrangements like our own, by which the ordinances of God's house and his work among us are sustained by voluntary contributions, it is a serious matter indeed. Look over the voluntary daily contributions for the past years and you can clearly mark off the rainy Sundays. Now it does strike one that if people attended to what God says to them on this subject, every Sunday rain would make very little difference to the treasury. "On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." People say they can worship God at home when it rains, but here is one part of divine worship which seems to be omitted on those very frequent occasions, and it is the only part of home worship that we have the means of testing.—*Buds and Blossoms.*

Church Membership.

Baptists hold that, as faith precedes baptism, so baptism precedes communion. First faith, then baptism, then communion. Whenever any order is stated in the New Testament, it is that converts were baptized, and after that "continued in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread." This order has been adopted in nearly all churches. In the Catholic Church baptism is always antecedent to confession, confirmation and communion. In the Episcopal Church, "those only that by baptism have been grafted into the church," are treated as members of the church. The Presbyter-

ian standards declare that "baptism is a sacrament for the sole admission of the party baptized into the church." The discipline of the Methodist Church contains this sentence: "Let none be received into the church until they have met on trial at least six months and have been baptized." The idea of all in this respect, that baptism entitles one to the privileges of the church relation.

This is precisely our position on the communion question; baptism is the door into the church, and so to the Lord's Supper which is an ordinance of the church. Why then taunt baptists with the term "Close Communion?" We are no more close communionists than any other denomination that puts baptism before the communion. In what, then, consists the difference on this point between other churches and our own? In this, and in this alone—that we practise immersion only as Christian baptism. We are "close Baptists," if you please; but not "close communionists." Were other denominations to administer baptism by the mode which their best scholars assert was the original rite, and to believers only, they would be restricted communists in the same sense in which we are. All admit that baptism precedes communion. We believe that baptism is immersion. If you will allow me to refer to myself, I may make this point the clearer. When I was connected with the Congregational Church which I still love very much, I believed that no one should go to the Lord's table unless he had submitted to baptism. In my present relations in the Baptist Church, I hold precisely the same view. Where, then, was the change in my convictions? Not in regard to communion, but in regard to the mode of baptism. Formerly sprinkling satisfied my conscience; now immersion is to me Christian baptism. Baptism precedes communion in all churches. Why, then, is that principle which is thought valid in other churches, so unchristian in ours?

The scriptural order is also the natural order. Baptism is the symbol of the new birth; communion, the symbol of growth. In baptism we declare the new life begun; in communion we feed by faith upon Christ. Ought not the symbol of birth precede the symbol of growth? A candid examination of our true position would remove from every fair minded man any prejudice he might entertain concerning this feature of Baptist polity.

Cultured to Death.

Men who have had a very obscure origin, but who by dint of energy and industry have amassed wealth, but who have never had the advantages of a common school education, who probably could not parse a sentence if their life depended upon it, to be perpetually crying out for a cultured minister, looks somewhat ridiculous. They have been elevated by reason of their wealth, it may be, to the trusteeship of some important church in one of our large cities. They must needs magnify their official position. And, as they hear others around them crying for culture, the eloquent and learned preacher, to keep up our congregation, and to keep our young from running off to the Episcopalians or Presbyterians, and so he unites with them and calls lustily for culture. And when the doctor come well armed with Hebrew, Greek and abuse philosophy, not to say literary nonsense, what does Brother Money-bag, the trustee, understand of his learned discourses? Why it is indeed all Greek to him.

Congregations of which I happen to have some knowledge, get sadly overdosed with the intellectual sometimes. Let me give a case in point.

Not long since a learned doctor was occupying a pulpit of a prominent church of which he was pastor, in a large city. On Sabbath morning he was discoursing very learnedly, profoundly so, entirely beyond the comprehension of nine out of ten of his hearers. He had occasion to speak of the Bible fact of Elijah being fed by the ravens. He told the congregation that it was not to be understood literally; that Elijah was not fed by birds known as

ravens. The original word translated ravens signifies "Arab traders," that some of that class passing that way fell in with poor Elijah, and under the common promptings of humanity, relieved his necessity. Wonderful!

As he came out of the church one of the leading brethren met him and thus addressed him:

"Brother I wish you had not said what you did in your sermon this morning. You have unsettled the faith of my whole life. Ever since I was a child I have read the story of Elijah being fed by the birds, the ravens, and now you have disturbed my faith. I would rather have given you a hundred dollars than hear you say it."

This is only a sample of the kind of nonsense that is dealt out to many of our churches under the name of culture. Good men are wounded. Really intelligent men are disgusted, and absent themselves from church, and thus the congregations are being depleted on every hand, and no wonder.—*Banner of Holiness.*

Only in Jesus.

I remember hearing a sermon once, in which the speaker made this remark: "Some hearers are like strainers. Nothing is retained save the dregs." I thought of the fearful responsibility of such a sermon, and wondered in my heart why it had not been strained in the closet.

To-day I have been reading another discourse of the same stamp. It was delivered by a popular minister, and I have no doubt it sounded well from the pulpit, but it takes a glorious good sermon to bear reading. Among other things that Jesus had taught us by coming into the world, he says: "Man knew not the beauty of his own countenance: the teachings of Jesus were a pool of pure, reflective truths. He took man by the hand, led him to the edge of the pool, directed his gaze into it; and man, looking, saw the beauty that was within him—saw the glory and the splendor of his own reflection." When I had read thus far, I paused—laid my paper down, rubbed my eyes, winked, then rubbed them again. What does my brother mean? I said to myself. Perhaps I have made a mistake. I will read it over. But no! I had made no mistake, and then in my haste I exclaimed, Is the man a Christian? and charity answered, Judge not, that ye be not judged. So now, lest some young Christian, who has seen a little of the plague of his own heart, should come across this sermon, and try in vain to discover any beauty in himself, or any glory or splendor of his own reflection, and turn away discouraged, I will give him a little bit of my own experience. Before the Spirit of God took me by the hand to lead me to that pool of which our brother speaks, I thought I was about as good as the average—in fact, a great deal better than some Christians that I knew of. Well, Jesus took pity upon me, and the moment He touched my hand, my self-righteousness vanished. I could not have told what was the matter, but a strange gloom settled down upon me, as if I was attending my own funeral. Being blind, I was led by a way which I knew not, and one Sabbath found myself in an old-fashioned Methodist chapel, our own church being closed on account of the sickness of the pastor.

The preacher was a stranger to me, but his text was, "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." And in that text, or pool, I saw my own heart, and oh, what terrors seized my soul! The sermon that followed only added to my distress, and before it closed, I was obliged to leave the house and go home. On my way I caught a little glimpse of Jesus, but my faith was too weak to believe that I was pardoned, so for years I wandered in darkness, trying to find something in my heart to recommend me to Christ. At last I was obliged to give up the search, and, glory be to God! I found, then, all the beauty, the glory, and the splendor, that I had been looking for. But it was in Jesus—in my precious Jesus—and I have never been able to find it anywhere else.—*Ver. Vous.*

Selections.

It is sometimes alleged by persons who draw more on their imagination for their facts than from actual observation, that the subject of baptism is a frequent theme of Baptist ministers. On the contrary, we do not believe they give it the prominence in their preaching that the New Testament gives it, as to frequency and its relation to other truths. Some evidently do not preach upon it enough. A correspondent of the London Baptist writes: "We have had a minister who for more than two years never baptized a soul, but then he never preached about it or even mentioned the subject. Our present minister has only been here three months, yet we have no less than fifteen candidates before the church." It is possible that the infrequency of baptism in some of our churches is due to a similar neglect. "Repent and be baptized every one of you." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." It is safe in preaching to follow the example of our Lord and his apostles.—*Ex.*

The *Watckman*, alluding to Dr. Loring's relinquishing the pastorate at Tremont Temple, and the success that attended his faithful and efficient labor there, says: "His administration as pastor has been conservative and skillful. His power in the pulpit has been conspicuous. His courtesy in private has been as marked as his eloquence in public. During the five years of his ministry in the Temple he has baptized nearly five hundred. The church has grown rapidly and is to-day in possession of facilities for work, such as it never before possessed. Its influence is recognized, not only by Baptists but by the leading minds of other denominations, and such men as Philips, Brooks, and Dr. Manning have expressed their great solicitude that nothing shall be done to dim its lights."

We clip from a recent issue of the *Siam Advertiser* the following, a portion of a Royal proclamation: "Whoever is of opinion that any particular religion is correct, let him hold to it as he pleases; the right or wrong will be to the person holding it. In the treaties and in the customs of Siam there is no prohibition against persons who shall hold to any particular religion. If any one is of opinion that the religion of the Lord Jesus is good let him hold to it freely."

The large contributions and encouragement given by the king to educational enterprises also indicate progress towards the time when the dominant false religion of Siam is to decline and perish.—*Ex.*

The *Missionary Magazine* announces that Mr. G. W. Corthell will publish early in May a volume entitled "Missionary Sketches," prepared by Rev. S. F. Smith, D. D. It is to be an epitomized history of the several missions of the Missionary Union, both European and Asiatic. This volume will meet a needed want. Since Gammell's history of our Missions, published thirty years ago, no such book has been accessible for ready reference. The name of Dr. Smith is a sufficient guarantee for the accuracy and style of the history. The price of the volume will be \$1.25.—*Ex.*

The Rev. J. T. Duryea, D.D., from the Classon Avenue Presbyterian church, in Brooklyn, N. Y. said in his examination for installation as pastor of the Central Congregational church, Boston; he was satisfied that every man should labor to develop the doctrine and readjust the system so that there should be at least a harmony of reason and revelation. In the Presbyterian church he should go to the very verge of the foremost among the progressive. In the atmosphere to which he now entered, rather thought he should back up among the conservatives. The Presbyterian church is not quite progressive enough, but in this neighborhood some people are going too fast.—*Christian See.*

The insolvency of another Roman Catholic prelate is announced in the English papers. The highly polished, talented, plausible and winning Monsignor Capel, who led more English fashionables into the church of Rome than any other man has got into trouble. His expenses have so far exceeded his resources that it is expected he will be withdrawn from England by the advice of Cardinal Manning, who will discharge Capel's liabilities on condition of his residing permanently at a distance from England.