

being intelligently done." At the conclusion of the quotations the *Cynosure* remarks:

"For the present this will suffice. We hope, however, to be able to give more details of this heathenish custom in an early number, from the pen of an intelligent correspondent."

The custom referred to as being "heathenish" is that of being baptized for the dead. Webster defines "heathenish" as "belonging or pertaining to the heathen; rude, uncivilized, savage, cruel, inhuman." Of the "heathen" he says they are "the Pagan or unbelieving nations, or those which worship idols and do not worship the true God;" while "Christian" is defined as "pertaining to Christ and His religion."

Under these definitions it should not be difficult to determine how near baptism for the dead is to being a "heathenish custom," or how little it deserves the appellation. For a full understanding of the ordinance it may be stated that it is the receiving of baptism by those who are living, in behalf of those who have died without partaking of the ordinance. It is not esteemed as affecting any in the spirit world except as they voluntarily accept of the work vicariously performed in their behalf. There is nothing compulsory in its application. Nor does it relate to the baptism of persons who have not reached the age of accountability; for infant baptism is not a part of the Gospel of Christ.

For the consideration of the subject, baptism for the dead may be classed under three subjective headings: (1) The ordinance of baptism and its essentiality as a saving principle; (2) Its universality in being applicable to all men, living or dead; and (3) Its vicarious nature in that it can be received by those in the flesh in behalf of those who have passed to the spirit world.

So far as the first element is concerned, no one acquainted with the history of paganism and Christianity can for a moment concede that there is anything "heathenish" in the ordinance of baptism. It is so essentially Christian that the Divine Master Himself insisted upon receiving it at the hands of the great Prophet, John the Baptist; and when it was administered there was given that glorious manifestation of approval by the Father that is without parallel, for the heavens were opened unto Jesus, "and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." When Jesus went forth in His ministry He declared that those who received baptism "justified God," but that they who refused to obey that ordinance "rejected the counsel of God." In a further emphatic announcement of the essentiality of this principle as a saving ordinance, He declared, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

This was the Gospel of Christ that came from the lips of the Great Teacher Himself; and after He had been "put to death in the flesh" He was "quickened by the Spirit," by which also He went and reached to those in the spirit world. He informed His disciples that the dead should hear

the voice of the Son of God, and by Him "was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead." It was not another Gospel, but that of Christ Himself, which was taught to those beyond the grave, and which provides for all. There are millions of the human family who in the flesh have never even heard the name of Jesus; but in the spirit world, and there alone, could they be reached by the Gospel message. A plan of salvation that is adapted to the few, that does not open the door to every being within the brotherhood of man, is unworthy of the Creator and God of the universe. The Gospel of the Lord is not such a plan, but it is perfect even as He is perfect, and reaches to all humanity. In this application the doctrine of baptism as a saving principle to those who are dead as well as to the living is an important part of the glorious Gospel that is broad as the universe, and from everlasting to everlasting. Some may, through ignorance, denominate it as "heathenish," but its very inclusion in bringing within its embrace all mankind, is emblematic of the perfect love of Christ, which finds no exemplification in anything less illimitable or universal.

As to the third and final subdivision of the subject, its vicarious nature, the doctrine of the living being baptized for the dead was an essential feature in the early Christian Church. So well were its effects known and understood that the Apostle Paul taught that it could be wanting in efficacy only when the resurrection itself should fail. If the dead rise not at all, said he, why are they baptized for the dead? The logic of this is that since the dead rise in the resurrection they have need of the efficacy of baptism as a saving ordinance, and therefore they were baptized for by those who had through that ordinance "put on Christ." But another point in regard to the performing by one, under the Gospel law, of work necessary for another: Upon what principle does true Christianity, the Gospel plan taught in the Scriptures, wholly rest? It is not upon the vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ? "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." It was by the Gospel baptism that He came unto the Father. To the dead as well as to the living He preached the Gospel, requiring of all men, whether they were in the flesh or in the spirit world, that they should be born of water and of the Spirit—the baptism He received. And in His great sacrifice wherein He was ransom for the many He taught that there could be done by proxy work which men were unable to do for themselves. These are all the features of baptism for the dead; instead of "belonging or pertaining to the heathen," they are wholly "pertaining to Christ and His religion." The bigot and the egoist may call them heathenish, but the meek and lowly Nazarene by precept and example proclaims them otherwise.

On the other hand, he who says a Gospel law is insufficient to apply to all men, whether in the body or out of it; who denies to millions who, through the misfortune of their birth

or the age in which they lived, never knew the Gospel of Christ in the flesh, the right to come to the Father by the way in which He came; does he not announce himself an anti-Christian, "rude, uncivilized, savage, cruel, inhuman"—a heathen in very deed? In truth and justice there can be but one reply.

LET'S BE DIRECT OR QUIT.

That a straight line is the shortest distance between two points is as true as regards the actions of individuals as relating to geometry; and it is as true when applied to nations as to individuals. For a long time past there has been open and at times riotous opposition to Chinese in the United States, but more particularly on the Pacific slope; and the means sought to rid the country of their presence have been devious, shifting and uncertain whereby difficulties multiplied and dangers not previously existing were brought into existence. We are now confronted with a situation, through such methods of doing business, which is not only irksome and hazardous, but has already subjected us as a nation to no small degree of ridicule.

The Geary exclusion act may be properly defined as the crystallization of the extreme anti-Chinese sentiment on the Pacific coast; but while the sentiment is direct enough, the measure itself is a strange union of indirectness and vindictiveness. It seems to have been the author's design to subject the heathen to a line of technical procedure to which, not being familiar and being totally ignorant except when guided by a citizen, the great majority of them must become victims and be deported to China. The object is a plain thing and the procedure a kind of apology for the object. Now it is right to exclude the Chinese, why not frame a law providing for such purpose in so many words, giving them of course a reasonable time in which to settle, or perhaps in most cases to unsettle, their affairs and then to go without more ado? I we think that by such means as now obtain we are hoodwinking the Chinese here or at their flowery home and thus averting retaliatory measures, we are only deceiving ourselves without sufficient cause; while the bungling, halting and hesitation characterizing the whole business are slowly but surely making us the laughing stock of the nations.

[COMMUNICATED.]

THE "SILVER LINING!"

From the Atlantic to the Pacific it is conceded that the turning point of the latest craze on financial matters has been assuredly rebuked, and that every day adds to the irrepressible activities of the most favored nation of the earth.

That a great people should be subject to such aberration, should be the victims of scare and panic, and that this should include all classes and professions, including every grade of intelligence, is surely a phenomenon! It some sudden catastrophe had occurred in the nation, destroying a large per-