

careless of their duties, there are some, on the other hand, faithful and conscientious, who always, as in duty bound, maintain a watchful interest over the religious well-being of their godchildren, and commend them daily in their prayers to God's continued grace and blessing.

Mr. N.—It seems to me, Sir, in this view, that the sponsor's office is a very weighty one. I would hardly like to undertake it for the child of another, and therefore I would shrink from asking another to undertake it for mine.

Clergyman—God forbid, my friend, that you should underestimate the office of the sponsorship. It is a useful and important one; but is it too weighty to be undertaken? Some person, in case of the parents' death or inability, should care for the child's spiritual interests; and why should you decline so charitable a work? If the orphan's temporal affairs required a guardian, there would be no lack of friends or relatives to look after his temporal interests, and is it not as necessary that some one should look after his spiritual and eternal interests? Is the child's soul to be exposed to danger because no one will care for it? Shame on those professing Christians who would willingly be guardians for a child in temporal matters, but will not be guardians for it in spiritual things!

Mr. N.—But the promises, as I understand them, are beyond my ability. I cannot answer for any child renouncing sin, believing God, and keeping His commandments. I can hardly answer for myself, much less for another.

Clergyman—That objection arises from a misunderstanding of the sponsor's duty. The sponsor is only the child's mouthpiece in making the engagement. The transaction is between Christ and the infant, the minister being Christ's agent, and the sponsor the infant's. And as what the minister says, he says on behalf of Christ, so what the sponsor says, he says on behalf of the child. In every baptism it is the child, and not the sponsor that is bound by the promises.

Mr. N.—But what, then, is the use of the sponsor's answers?

Clergyman—As every man is bound to believe and to do as God directs, whether he promise it or not, the answers do not add anything to the child's obligations. But their use is to express the nature of the Christian covenant, God in that covenant promising certain blessings on condition of certain duties to be performed by man. It is to do for the unconscious child what you would do for a dumb adult, who, being unable to