

Would he use expressions of ridicule, or sneering, or mockery at the thought of doing such a thing? And if we can enter into a covenant with a fellow man, on behalf of our infant child, and for a temporal blessing, can we not enter into covenant with our faithful covenant-keeping God for His blessing upon our offspring?

Has not the Holy Ghost been given to infants? John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15); so also was Jeremiah (Jer 1:5). If then unconscious infants are thus capable of receiving the baptism of the Spirit, why should it be thought an unreasonable thing to administer to them the outward sign of that baptism?

In the days of his flesh, our Lord blessed little children (Luke 18:15), says they were "infants;" R. V. "babes." These "infants" or "babes" could understand no more than "infants" or "babes" can now understand; but yet Christ blessed them. Was that blessing "no good?" Will any Christian say that our Lord's blessing was "a mockery," a "meaningless form," "a farce," because of the unconsciousness of the children? We argue then that if Christ could bestow a blessing—a real spiritual blessing—on unconscious infants, in the days of His flesh, He can bestow a blessing—a real spiritual blessing—on unconscious infants still. And who can say that He will not do it, if they are dedicated to him in solemn ordinance by believing parents?

As the child grows up, it should be taught the nature and design of its baptism as a dedication to God. In every scriptural way it should be made to understand that God is its proprietor, and has supreme claims upon its love and obedience. A child, thus instructed with meekness and tenderness, will soon learn the nature and awful desert of sin, and its own lost condition as a sinner. It will learn something of the character of Jesus and of his work as a Saviour. The heart of that child will go out to the Saviour, and it will be a delight to submit to His yoke which is easy, and His burden which is light. Instead of remaining for years in the "far country" to be hardened by sin, he will never by bitter experience know what it is to wander from his Father's house, nor will he remember the time when he did not love the name of Jesus.

All this is but the carrying out, by the help of divine grace, the vows assumed by parents in baptism. Well might Philip Henry say, "If infant baptism were more improved, it would be less disputed." "If," says the saintly Richard Baxter, "parents were true to their vows in baptism, nineteen twentieths of those consecrated to God in infancy would grow up pious and dutiful, and when they came to mature years, would personally assume the vows of their baptism by an open profession of their faith at the table of the Lord."

Christian parents, bring your children to Jesus. Give them to Him in the solemn consecrating act of baptism. He will receive them and bless them, and you, and the whole Church. His promise is sure, and His covenant stands forever.

Woodstock, Ont.

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## Leading Preachers of Scotland.

REV. J. S. LYONS, D. D., IN CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.

It has been my privilege to hear some of the most prominent preachers in Scotland and a few words about them may not be amiss. Prof. George Adam Smith, of Glasgow, filled the pulpit of Free St. George in Edinburgh during the absence of Mr. Black in the United States. That is, he filled Mr. Black's portion of the pulpit, for he is only a co-pastor with Dr. Whyte. The latter is probably the most effective and popular preacher in Scotland. He is well advanced in years, but preaches with great power still. With these unusually able men, with styles as different as their names, Free St. George is probably the best furnished church in the matter of preaching to be found in the world.

But to come back to Prof. Smith. It was an unusual mingling of pleasure and pain to hear him preach. It is instructive and highly entertaining to hear a man of such signal ability speak upon a subject which has received his best thought for years, but it is distressing to see such exceptional talents devoted to the perilous task of trying to prove that the less inspired the Scriptures are the better off we are. It is a dismal and inverted kind of logic which attempts to persuade us that the less we have the more we possess.

I heard him preach two sermons, or I should say I heard him read two very carefully prepared lectures. One was based upon the words of Eph. 1:7, "The Forgiveness of Sins," and was an attempt to answer the question, "What is forgiveness?" He commenced by giving a very interesting and effective statement of the sense of sin, its universality, etc. But the main part of the sermon was a very emphatic statement that the great element in forgiveness is "God's new confidence or faith in man." He said God believes man will forsake his sin and turn to him. So he gives man a new opportunity and constantly cheers him with the declaration of the divine confidence in him and in his final victory over sin. \* \* \*

The second sermon was from the text, Psalm 19:8: "The commandment of the Lord is pure." His subject was, "The Purifying Influence of the Word of God." It was a lecture of great earnestness and ingenuity, in which he discarded the usual treatment of the purifying effects wrought by God's word on nations, laws, commerce, individuals, etc., and traced the effect of the gradual unfolding of divine truth, by a progressive revelation, upon the religious conceptions and morals of the Jews, and afterwards upon the gentile world. This afforded him a fine opportunity to state his views concerning the low state of religious life of the early Jews. It must be said in his behalf that he is candid, and is not afraid to say what he believes. He is a polished and effective speaker, and evidently has a strong hold on the confidence and affection of the Scotch people. But I was neither warmed nor fed by either sermon.

The sermon by Dr. Alexander Whyte, on "The Rich Man and Lazarus," heard in the same church, was of a very different kind. It was a most fearless and affectionate presentation of that wonderful passage in Luke 16. It reached the innermost soul, and when the great congregation passed silently out of the church, they were not praising some finely spun

theories of progressive revelation and worthless inspiration, but were pondering the condition of their lives before God, for they had felt the power of the world to come.

Dr. Stalker preaches with great clearness and simplicity. He uses very brief notes, and is more after the order of the best American preachers than the Scotch. His church, St. Matthew's, at Glasgow, was crowded, and everything indicated that he is doing a splendid work there.

During a recent visit to Ireland I had an opportunity to observe some features of the Irish Presbyterian Church. It is a well-equipped and vigorous body. Its great rallying point is Belfast. I attended a meeting of the Belfast Presbytery while the guest of Rev. Samuel Thompson, one of the most genial and efficient ministers in Belfast. The business of the Presbytery was conducted with great earnestness, and was filled with the sparkle and humor which mark the sons of Erin wherever found.

## Sparks From Other Anvils.

**The Interior:** To be above suspicion ought to mean not only that one is too pure to be suspected by his brother, but also that he is too pure to be suspicious of his brother.

**United Presbyterian:** If you are fulfilling the new commandment, "Love one another, as I have loved you," do you think that you would have repeated that damaging rumor about your fellow church-member, at least without more certain evidence of its truthfulness?

**Christian Observer:** In a word, Calvinism will bring the sense of God into civic life, and keep it regnant there. Only, this will cause rulers to fear God and to rule in righteousness. And if the people have the same sense of God in their lives that Calvinism teaches, they will be better citizens and exhibit righteousness in all the duties laid upon them.

**Canadian Baptist:** It is legitimate to accept gratefully a word of appreciation where a sermon has done good, but to think all the time of self-exaltation in presenting truth about God and death and judgment and heaven and hell must, in the end, eat as a canker into the very vitals of the inner life.

**Herald and Presbyter:** When Jesus Christ came to us, telling us of heaven, salvation and the way of eternal life, he made it all so plain that unbelief is sin and rejection is death. We do know, and we do assure our hearts before him. We are confident for ourselves and for others who believe in Jesus Christ that death is the gain which comes in going into the eternal presence of the Lord.

**Lutheran Observer:** The first duty of parents is character building. In effect the Lord says at the birth of each babe: "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." It is given not merely to be fed and cared for physically, and returned, safe from bodily harm, as Moses' mother was to render her charge to Pharaoh's daughter; but it is to be kept and trained for God, to be useful in his service and fit for place in the heavenly home as his child. Fundamental to all such training is a character in those who are to do the training which will command respect, which can be honored, and which emphasizes and gives force to every precept by living it, and showing that it is not only practical, but that it is really believed in.