

of Israel," was he bound. Did he cry "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Then he could do none otherwise, "because . . . for the hope of Israel" and the world was he bound.

For what hope are you bound? For what worthy cause have you renounced your freedom and become enslaved? Men talk of personal liberty and personal freedom to-day but there is no such thing in a world like ours. Fathers are bound for the sake of their families and mothers for the hope of their children; patriots are bound for the love of their country and martyrs for the hope of the gospel and the kingdom of God. Hundreds and

thousands are bound to-day for the hope of freedom and justice and truth, while millions are sitting "between the . . . gates" bound by anxiety and fear for the same great cause. The man who is not bound to-day in sacrificial service for the hope of some great cause is not worthy of the name.

And there is no one bound in the hope of a greater cause than the Sunday School teacher. For the one who realizes his opportunities, as week by week he comes into contact with these lives of great promise, the work means sacrifice. But who would not willingly be bound for the hope of so great a cause?

Quebec

## THE APPEAL OF BAPTISM

By Rev. George C. Pidgeon, D.D.

What is the significance of infant baptism as administered in our form of worship? Sprinkling or pouring water symbolizes the imparting of something to the child. This action must represent a real spiritual blessing. In the symbolism of scripture, water signifies cleansing, primarily from sin's guilt, but also from its stains (see 1 John 1:7). With the cleansing there goes spiritual renewal as is shown in John 3:5. The question then arises,—How can such spiritual blessings as these be conveyed to the child who is wholly unconscious of what is being done in his behalf?

The answer is,—through the parents. Their faith accepts the blessings of the covenant for their child. The ability of godly parents to mould the character of their children before these children can choose for themselves is one of the clearest realities of the Christian life. There is a profound truth under St. Francois Xavier's remark: "Give me the first seven years of a child's life, and I care not who has the remainder." The average member of the church was made what he is before he could choose for himself. His decision for Christ and the confession of his faith simply gave expression to a spiritual condition into which he had been brought by the influences of his early years.

When, therefore, the father and mother bring their child to the church for baptism they dedicate him to God. When a young student told his mother that he had volunteered for service in the foreign field, she answered: "I gave you up to God in baptism, and I have no desire to take you back now." So complete is the surrender of our best to God. And the parents consecrate themselves anew to God that they may become the channels through which God's grace may reach the child's heart.

The church, also, accepts the child in God's name, and pledges herself to cooperate with the home to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He belongs to the church, although not yet a member in full communion. He is entitled to this high privilege whenever he accepts for himself Christ as his Saviour and so ratifies the covenant made by his parents in his behalf. He is thus a child of the covenant and is entitled to all that the church can do for him.

If her baptized members have a claim on the church, the church has a claim on them. They belong to her by a sacred right, and she should assume that they are hers until they repudiate her claim. Our church makes a serious mistake when she fails to assert her claim on all those whom she baptized in