Priest Power and Baptismal Regeneration Judged by their Results.

BY REV. E. M. SAUNDERS, D. D.

REPLY TO REV. MR. PARKINSON, EPISCOPAL Frederiction Gleaner.

I am happy to state, that, in the character and spirit of Mr. Parkinson, I see nothing but the best results of the purest orthodoxy. It is not an uncommon thing for natural excellency and divine grace to produce fine Christian characters in spite of wrong beliefs held by their possessors. We look not, however, to that which is exceptional, but to that which is general, when we judge doctrine by their fruits. Were we to try Romanism by Thomas a Kempis, Pascal, Fenelon and others like them, we would be obliged to say the world was enriched by possessing papacy. But we must look at the outcome of Romanism in the general and not in the particular. I feel happy in believing and in saying naught but good of the writer of the letter to whom I am now replying.

His letter contains many points to which I would like to reply; but newspaper space is not sufficient for this.

As to whether the doctrine of priest power and baptismal regeneration are Roman Catholic doctrines; whether rejecting infant baptism would put Christians' infants in a position inferior to that of Jewish babes; whether John 3: 5 teaches baptismal regeneration; whether the people of England were Roman Catholics up to the time of King Henry the VIII; whether the church of England is from a schism of the Roman Catholic church; whether the Scriptures teach that there are two or three orders in the ministry; whether the doctrines of the High Church party prepare the way to Rome or not—these and other points raised in the letter in question would be interesting subjects for examination, but neither time nor space will admit of it. I therefore pass them over reluctantly, and hold closely to the contention of my first letter, which is, that priest power and baptismal regeneration, judged by results, have, after more than a thousand years of trial on a large scale,

BEEN FALPABLE FAILURES.

I am not not now discussing the question as to whether sprinkling, pouring or immersion is the scriptural mode of baptism; nor even whether infant baptism is a doctrine of the Bible. I am arraigning priest power and the dogma of baptismal regeneration, as taught by the High Church party of the English Episcopate, the Roman Catholic and Greek churches. Successors of the apostles, so called, baptized each generation of the Italians for fourteen hundred years. That is to say, by exercising priest power in baptism, the babes of every generation of this nation have been made members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." Spain, Portugal and France also have had their successive generations for more than a thousand years, manufactured into saints by the same means.

These precious priests who held in their keeping the welfare of their respective generations took much pains not to let opposers hinder their good work of making their fellow men Christians. They of course adopted special Christian methods to keep the world free from the hurtful work of those who did not think that priest power and baptismal regeneration were essential in saving the souls of the people from perdition.

THEY EMPLOYED

the thumbscrew, the rack, the gibbet, dark, dark prisons, the stake with fire about it, and many other kindred Christian agencies, so that they, the successors of the apostles, should not be interfered with in this benevolent work of fitting the people of their day and generation for the service of Christ on earth, and for heaven and its blessedness in the world to come. Who were these opponents of priest power and regeneration by the priest's baptism? What were their beliefs? They were heretics of course, bad heretics, and they taught heresy, deadly heresy; the following were some of the doctrines of those bad people, which priest power could not endure. They believed that there was only one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus; that He bore the sins of the world in His own body on the cross, making a perfect atonement for them; that the Holy Spirit regenerates the soul, applying to it the work of Christ; that the soul is saved by grace through faith; that infants are saved by the atoning sacrifice of Christ without the aid of priestly baptism, and that believers only are qualified for baptism.

The heart of "black prelacy" that enraged Janet Geddes so that she made her cuttie stool a weapon of defence for the Solemn League and Covenant, was priest power, that delusion which the Rev. Mr. Parkinson cherished; but his excessive human and Christian kindness would render its tyrannical use impossible so far as he is concerned.

By the employment of these means, priestism had its full sway, or nearly so, for more than a

DECADE OF CENTURIES

over the nations of Europe. With what result? He that runs may read it on the plain pages of history. Priest power, exercised through the sacraments, the confessional and through means social and civil, held for many dark centuries the people of the old world in illiteracy, poverty, superstition, corruption and general national effeminency. From this condition England and Germany were delivered by the Reformation, and France, in part, by her revolution.

On this side of the Atlantic, priest power, which essays to make nations Christians, by regenerating each generation of infants in the waters of baptism, has produced results that prove its work the same under all skies. Here it is before us—South America, Central America, Mexico and Quebec.

Orthodox Episcopacy sends missionaries to Christianize those made saints by means dear to her High Church contingent. Are there no Episcopal missions in Quebec? These are the fruits of priestism and sacramental regeneration, whose blight is the blight of frost and mildew. They have been a heavy curse on the face of the earth.

Mr. Parkinson suggests that the slums of our large cities are filled with people just as demoralized as those who have been regenerated in baptism. Just so! that is exactly the point for which I am contending. Those regenerated by water are as bad as the unregenerated. Let the church authorities make a note of this, and use it when making arrangements for burying their dead; and not assume that an unconscious unbaptized babe is too vile to sleep in ground side by side with some people whom Mr. Parkinson admits are not better than the denizens of the slums of London, Chicago and New York.

I am afraid that even this poor consolation must be denied to Mr. Parkinson. Were he to

TAKE THE RELIGIOUS CENSUS

of the lapsed quarters in the great cities named, he would find that nine out of ten of the people there had been made saints by baptismal regeneration—"made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

If in reading the religious history of Ireland, Scotland and the north of England from the third to the sixth centuries, and of England and Scotland from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries, Mr. Parkinson sees priestism and baptismal regeneration to be the forces that wrought for liberty and righteousness, he finds what no impartial historian has ever found. Every writer of the history of these times, in these lands who has had any regard for facts, plain facts, tell us that priest power and salvation by water have been the special and efficient cause of ignorance, superstition and tyranny. They have opposed an open Bible and soul liberty taught therein. St. Patrick, Columba and men of like faith and spirit who came after them in the first period, were not priestly tyrants; neither were Luther, Calvin, Knox and those who prepared the way for them, priestly Lords over God's heritage. High church clergymen seek to perpetrate this principle of priest power, the blight and curse of the Christian era. God appointed priests under the dispensation that closed with the birth of Christ. He also ordained a sign of saintship for male infants.

BUT THEY WERE FAILURES.

The Jews were sometimes more demoralized than their heathen neighbors. Priestism and circumcision were shaken off the superstructure of religion when the Lord "shook not the earth only, but also heaven." Priests had their day and their robes. Now for preachers, heralds of glad tidings of great joy. Now for believers and believers' baptism and churches composed of believers, deacons and bishops. Priest power and ritualism before regeneration were buried in the ruins of the temple. The world has had enough of priests and salvation by circumcision and baptism. Now the world needs an open Bible and heralds of the cross and not the mummeries of ritualism.

But the indictment against priestism and regeneration in baptism is not only for what it has brought forth, but also for what it has hindered. Besides blighting and enslaving peoples, it has proved a more successful opposer of Bible religion than either Brahmanism or Buddhism. Evangelical missionaries of every name have had more success among the peoples of these faiths and even among savages, in leading them to Christ, than they have had among peoples held and bound in the superstition that they were regenerated in their baptism. Take away the

DOGMAS OF PRIEST POWER

and sacramental grace, and Mexico, Central and South America, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Ireland would soon be free, would have their open Bibles, and blossom like the garden of the Lord by the labors of Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Evangelical Episcopalians. What a farce would High Church priests be among these people. It would be like offering plated spoons for spoons of solid silver. Sad to relate, priestism and salvation in sacrament are upon and around these peoples, and they give them a resisting power, like that of the armour of a modern iron clad ship.

I must not neglect to refer to the ugly exhibition of priestism and baptismal regeneration in connection with the burial of the unbaptized babe at Gibson—the matter which gave rise to this letter writing. The little infant was denied a place of rest for its body in consecrated ground, and the use of the Episcopal burial service at its funeral. The sin it had committed was that it died before the priest reached the house.

IT MISSED BEING BAPTIZED.

It went into the presence of his Maker and Saviour to find, according to the teachings of the priest, that it was not prepared for the exchange of worlds, but, if it had only remained a few moments more on this mundane sphere, till the priest had arrived, then he would have fitted its soul for heaven, and its body for Christian burial and a place among the saints in ground consecrated for the flesh and bones of the holy. What a misfortune that the little one could not have kept up the battle of life against disease till the priest could have had one minute to prepare its soul for heaven and its body for a Christian grave! How sad that little babes here and there expire too soon and well—are not made "members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

Away with this heathenish rubbish, worthy of a fetish worshipper in the heart of darkest Africa.

To say, for instance, that the body of an infant, dying when but a few hours old, should not be buried beside the newly made grave of its father; that it should not have the authorized service for Christian burial; that, because it expired just as the priest rang the door bell, it must be buried under some fence or in some pasture, alone, like a pet spaniel; and to say that this is the will of Jesus of Nazareth, found in holy writings, the will of that loving Jesus, who, when on earth, laid his hands on unbaptized babes, and folded them in his arms and blessed them, and said, of such is the kingdom of heaven; to say such cruel trash as this to a widowed young mother, when her heart is bleeding for the loss of her husband and her first born son—to say it to a mother when her soul, burning with maternal love, born and crucified by the birth and death of her babe, is to inflict a heart torturing cruelty on the agonized mother, as foreign to the spirit and doctrines of Jesus of Nazareth, as it is irrational and inhuman. It is an outrage for which it would be difficult to find a parallel within the bounds of civilization, and

AN INSULT TO CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCE.

It is as much, and no more like Christ, than is the persecutions of Christians for conscience sake; and it has the same parentage, priestism and sacramental salvation. Christ shed His precious blood to atone for infants. They pass from their brief lives on earth to their eternal life in glory. That priests can prepare them for this exchange of worlds is a figment of popery that should be buried with the rubbish of the dark ages. This dogma says as plainly as anything can be said in a negative way, that the unbaptized child is lost.

But why deny them burial corresponding to their state in the presence of Christ? Why deny them a place in ground consecrated, since their souls, washed white in the blood of the Lamb, are before the white throne? The priest did not put any water on them before death! Here is a place for righteous indignation to vent itself upon the head of this mediæval dogmatic nonsence. What should an intelligent Christian public say of this doctrine? What should they do with it? If Christ made a whip of small cords to drive traffickers from the old Hebrew temple, the Christian public should make a whip of large cords and drive this folly beyond the bounds of Christendom into outer darkness—the place whence it came—its own place, and let all the people say, Amen!

It is not to be wondered at that the Rev. Mr. Parkinson shrinks from the results of his own teaching and practice. Let him do his best to pour balm upon such a mother's tortured heart, but his balm will turn to gall on his lips. The mother, writhing in her agony of grief, will say to all priestly consolers, you will not let my precious babe lie beside the father that begot it; you will not give it the Christian's burial service. And like Job she could say, "miserable comforters are ye all."

I have nothing to say of the responsibility of the men who pose as priests, and believe and practice those dogmas. To their own master they stand or fall. But I do appeal to an enlightened, Christian public, and entreat them to make an end of this hurtful delusion which has already lived far too long.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS IN INDIA

For Boys and Girls in Canada.

DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS:

This is Saturday morning. Ever since Tuesday night my mind has been fixed on one boy, about eleven years old. I expected this letter would be about our good conference, and the next about this bright, honest boy, who would have been baptized to-morrow. If I were an artist I could paint now that dear face, upon which we shall never look again in this world. I see him now. His sparkling eyes made more radiant by the shining out of a new heart. About two months ago, early one morning, I found him standing in the door with beaming countenance. His face almost black was glossy with joy. He said that for several days he had been sorely troubled about his sins, and that yesterday while Miss Gray was praying with him, peace broke into his soul, and that he was now rejoicing in Jesus. From that hour he seemed to grow, daily, in grace. We did not baptize him at once, because we wanted him to give evidence to all of the genuineness of his conversion. His name was David.

He went on tour with me in April. His presence was sunshine. Many a good talk we had on the way to and from the villages. I wish you could have seen him standing up like a man, telling the gospel to a crowd under a tree. He had a mixture of gentleness and fire that any preacher might thank God for. He had all the energy of a mountain brook, and everybody loved the gentle little man, who loved us all. My heart bounded with joy as I stood at his back in the listening crowd, and my cup ran over when I thought of his future.

Part of his training consisted in learning to work with his hands. The high-caste Hindus look down upon those who do manual labor. But we taught him that a Christian must work, and if any man would not work, neither should he eat. This was his vocation, and one of his daily duties was to drive the ducks to water. He used to drive them along the street to a public tank near the toll gate. But after the rain of last Saturday night, our own tank at the back of the compound close under the hill, had about seven feet or more of water. As this was so much nearer, David asked and obtained permission to take the ducks to water here. On that day he drove the ducks into the water, but they would not come out again. He came and told Mrs. Morse, and she sent the punkah-man to help him. The punkah-man is of the washerman caste and is a good swimmer. He swam in and drove the ducks ashore.

Last Tuesday—the fatal day—seemed to commence like any other day. The sun rose. The hot winds blew. David came with New Testament and Hymn Book to Telugu Prayers at noon. At two o'clock he came to the Boarding Children's Bible Class, and was one of those who prayed, when opportunity was given at the close.

At four o'clock he was waiting for me on the front verandah. I brought out a Telugu Life of Christ which I had promised him. It was about as large as a second Royal Reader and was full of pictures. He said he had never seen the book before, and was delighted with it. I looked down into his overflowing eyes, and it seemed that I never loved him so much before. Involuntarily I laid my hand on his shoulder and said, "David, this book is to help you understand Christ. Read it, pray over it, live by it, and ask God to hide it deep in your heart." Words like these were not lost upon him. More than once he had been called into a private room and rebuked, and never so much as once did he harden his heart against my counsel or reproof; but he went out like a man, and tried to do better. I never knew him to tell me a lie. He would confess his fault even if he knew he should be punished. In the midst of a nation of natural liars he was growing up to speak the truth. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Yes!

After a little more conversation he asked a question which seems to have been for several days upon his mind. He had been talking with Somalingam about the same thing on Sunday. He said, "When a man dies, does he go straight to heaven or hell, or does his spirit stay on the earth till the judgment day?" I said "David, what good is my opinion about a question like this? What do I know about it, except what I have learned from the Bible? Open the Bible and see for yourself." Then we turned to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (and to Phil. 1: 23, where Paul shows that he expected to be with Christ immediately after his death.). I told him to think over these two passages, we would look at some more tomorrow. Tomorrow! How little we know of tomorrow!

That evening we thought of taking David with us to the sea shore, but we could not see him him anywhere, and as we were late getting off we went without him. That night the breezes blew as refreshingly as ever. The billows rolled in with their accustomed majesty and foam. Enid played in the sand and the surf with her usual laughter, and when the dusk began to fall we turned our steps toward home. But that such a dark night was setting in we little knew.

We hurried back for we expected to find the home mail on the table. Out from under the banyan trees, between the bungalow and the schoolhouse, Miss Gray's Bible woman, Jessie, came running to meet us. "O! Sir! Atchamma says that David's clothes are on the bank of the tank but David is not to be seen!" Behind her came Atchamma, Preacher Appiaswamy's wife crying, "O! Sir! David's clothes are on the bank of the tank, but David is nowhere to be seen!" These words cut our hearts like swords. In an instant Mr. Higgins and I, followed by the punkah man and half a dozen others, were rushing down the steps of the tank to a platform, or plateau, on the inside near the bottom. There were his coat and all his clothes laid up close to the wall and there was the muddy water, disturbed only by the four frightened ducks, which glared at us and cowered into a corner.

I was never so weak before in my life as I have been this hot season. The walk up from the shore had exhausted me, and the run to the tank had put me into a perfect bath of perspiration. So I said to the punkah man, "Quick! Jump in! See if he is in here anywhere! If I go in I shall get fever and die!" He went down the steps into the water and sprang back with a groan. "O! Sir! I felt something! I cannot go in!" In the presence of death the cowardice of a heathen Telugu is something indescribable. I tore off my coat and shoes, and plunging in swam out a little way, feeling around with my hands and feet I soon found that I could touch bottom and the water was just up around my neck. Thus after wading over all the tank and in every corner nothing was to be found except the, ducks which dived down at my appearance and struck my knees as they passed under water. With great joy I called out that he was not to be found. Although I could not imagine what had become of him, I almost expected to see him returning down the steps to see what was the matter.

I started to come out, but a long stick which I had brought in with me to help in the search had floated away to the other side. I swam out for that, and half way across—horror!—my left hand struck a human body. The excruciating truth shuddered through my being like a stroke of lightening that our dear little David was drowned in this turbid merciless water. I lifted him out of the water, and when I saw his face the awful certainty was made more certain. Mr. Higgins called out for me to bring him ashore, and I remember no more until we were bending over him on the bank, trying to put in practice what we had read in books about the resurcitation of the apparently drowned. Then Mr. Higgins ran and brought the apothecary, who put his ear trumpet to the breast and said the heart was still.

That was an awful night. We tried to sleep till morning; but there was no sleep. All night, Mrs. Higgins says, she heard the groan I gave when I came upon the body. All night I heard Atchamma crying and saying, "Davidu agapadudu! Davidu agapadudu!" "David is not to be seen! David is not to be seen!" All night I saw his bright face and thought of all he would have been. All night I was finding his cold form in the dark water; all night I saw the terror on his face when he found himself out of his depth I saw him struggling in the water and heard his choked cries for help, only echoed back by the heartless walls of the tank. Then I saw the look of surprised joy on his countenance as he was met by the Saviour in whom he had so recently learned to believe. Morning dawned. It was the day of Acadia's anniversary. We dug a grave to which we bore the house he lived in and laid it away in a fold of the hills.

Had it not been for the mission for which you pray, where would this boy have heard of a Saviour? May all the youth who hear of his death be prepared through faith in the same Jesus to stand before the judgment seat! Pray that God may raise up more laborers for the harvest.

"There's not a child so small and weak
"But has his little cross to take,
"His little work of love and praise
"That he may do for Jesus' sake."

Very truly yours,
L. D. MORSE.

Bimlipatam, India, June 9th, '94.

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When our graves shall close above us,
And the funeral rites are o'er,
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