

rite. In fact if the children of Christian parents may not be baptized they are worse off than were the Jewish children, who could enter into covenant with God from their very infancy. When our Lord was upon earth He was a member of this Jewish Church, from which was to spring the Christian Church as the flower springs from the root. He found children having a recognized place in this Church; in forming His own Church, he never said that children were to be excluded from it; on the contrary He often implies that the state of unconscious childhood is nearer to his Father's kingdom than any other (St. Matt. xviii: 3, 4; xxi: 16; St. Mark x: 14). Would not His Apostles have gathered from this that infants might at least claim as much share in the new covenant as they had in the old? It is for those who object to infant baptism to show that it is *forbidden*, rather than for us to point to any particular text where it is *commanded*.

The real question is whether unconscious infants are capable of receiving the Grace of God and of entering into covenant with Him. We must remember that they inherit evil unconsciously; they are born in sin without any fault of theirs; it is simply the result of the fallen state of human nature. If we believe this, is it any harder to believe that they can receive the *new birth* unconsciously? We are not conscious of our first birth, why should not God—Who gives freely through the merits of Jesus Christ—also give immediately on our new birth a spiritual gift to make up, in some measure, for that which we lost by the fall? He gave Adam the gift of original righteousness, when He first created him from the dust of the earth. He filled St. John the Baptist with the Holy Ghost from the day of his birth (St. Luke i: 15); why then should we find it hard to believe that by the simple act of Baptism Jesus unites a new born infant to Himself, and makes him a partaker of His Holy Spirit? The account of our Lord blessing little children is worth considering in connection with this question. These children did not come to be instructed, but to receive a blessing by His touch. "He laid his hands on them and blessed them." They received this blessing unconsciously; it was sacramental in its nature; there was the outward sign, *the touch*, and the inward grace, *the blessing*. He did not require any conscious faith from them, as he always did from adults when they sought His blessing; He accepted the faith of those who brought them to Him. Is it not that we are getting so slow to believe in his power and love, that so many may think that there can be no blessing for children in His touch in Holy Baptism? Surely He will be as ready to accept the faith of Christian parents as He was to accept these Jewish mothers, and our children are not less dear to Him than were those whom He would not allow his disciples to thrust away.

There are one or two difficulties which many good people feel about the baptism of infants which we must not pass by. The first is that a person ought not to be baptized without faith, and that infants cannot have faith. It is quite true that in the case of grown up people faith must come first; but the instance just referred to shows that Christ was willing to accept little children and to bless them when brought to Him by the faith of their parents. So when infants are brought to Holy Baptism there are sponsors to answer for them that they will have the required faith when they are old enough, and it is the duty of these sponsors to see that they are taught the blessings which were bestowed upon it in Baptism and to encourage it to fulfill the required promises. Unfortunately the system of sponsors has become with many people a mere form, and nothing has done more harm to the Church's doctrine of Baptism than this. Still it must always be remembered that because some people use a thing wrongly this does not take away its right use. * * *

Another strong objection brought against in-

fant baptism is that there cannot possibly be any good in it, because so many in it who are baptized as infants never shows any signs of grace at all. To this it may be answered that Baptism does not profess to convey a change of heart or an alteration of human will, but it is the implanting of the *seed* of a new life which requires nourishing and tending if it is to bring forth fruit. Out of every hundred children who are born alive, numbers die before they are many days old. This does not show that they never had life, but that from some cause, neglect or disease, the life given soon faded away. So if a baptized child fails to show any sign of grace, it is not that the Baptism was not efficient; but that those whose duty it was to nourish that spiritual *seed* that had been sown, to teach and train the child in the use of its baptismal privileges have neglected to do so, and hence the result.

Some people have thought that the phrase in St. John iii: 3—"Except a man be born again"—must imply a full grown man, and cannot be applied to an infant. But the real meaning of the word is "a person," "any one." In St. John xvi: 21, we read that when a woman is delivered of a child she has joy "that a man is born into the world." Does it mean a *full grown man* in this text?

All Christian parents, therefore, are advised by the Church to bring their infants to Holy Baptism, but not to think that their duty ends there; for the Baptism will have done them no good unless they are taught to recognize their baptismal privileges and to undertake for themselves the promises that have been made for them. We must not separate the two texts: "Suffer little children to come unto Me," and "Train up a child in the way he should go."

Prayers for Anniversary of Baptism.

Glory be to Thee, O my Saviour, for Thy love to me in making me (as on this day) in my Baptism a Child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

I do gratefully commemorate that happy day, and renew that sacred vow which was thus made in my name to forsake this wicked world, and to live in obedience to Thy command. May the Holy Spirit always dwell in my heart, to help me to love Thee and keep the promises made in my Baptism, that I may grow better and better until I come to dwell with Thee in Heaven. Amen.—*Selected*.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON ON SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHING.

The Bishop of London, speaking at a meeting of the Church of England S. S. Institute, said:—He would, however, take the opportunity of speaking to them about the work in which they were engaged, because it was a work which was of the highest importance in itself, and becoming of still greater importance because of the place which education was taking in the general work of the world. The education of the people was steadily growing, and they were placing greater stress upon and taking greater care to provide everywhere that the children within their reach should be the means of obtaining cultivation of the faculties which God had given them in their station of life. But from the circumstances of the case it had not been possible that there should have the same sort of provision for what was in itself of far greater importance, the cultivation of those faculties which ought to be directed to the work of their Heavenly Father, and which ought to be cultivated with a view to His service. And, of course, if that was left on one side it became more than ever the duty of those who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ to see that what had been left aside, as it were, by the authorities of the State should, nevertheless, be provided by the true followers of the Lord. They could wish, of course, for a different state of things. They could not help feeling that there was something not quite right in the present arrange-

ment. They could not help feeling that there was this thing which must always stand in the foreground of all work of that kind, and which, in a certain degree, condemned the present system, namely, that their Lord had told them in the most emphatic language, that they had to seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness and then all other things should follow: whereas if they had a system of education in which religious instruction was either thrust aside altogether, or was relegated to a *secondary* place, they were departing from that great fundamental rule. They could not help that it arose out of the circumstances of the present day, but all the more were they bound to show in teaching, as much as in anything else, nay, more than in anything else, that the *first thing* to be sought was the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and that this, at any rate, should not be neglected. Now, Sunday School teachers were filling that position. They were securing as far as they could do, that the Kingdom of God and His righteousness should stand *first* in the education of Christ's little ones. That was the purpose that all of them should have constantly before their minds. They wished to make religious instruction the *primary* feature in their education of the young, and if there were provision made for secular education elsewhere all the more must they exert themselves to give the *religious instruction which they undertook to give*. How important the task of educating, how blessed the undertaking, because it was fulfilling one of the fundamental precepts which their Lord had given them, because they were there doing what they knew would please God. *The Lord created His Church for the purpose of communicating His truth to man*, and they were fulfilling one of the special functions of the Church in thus teaching the little children in their classes. It was a most important work that they had undertaken. He wished to say a few words to them about the *necessary conditions* on which that work could be well done, and first he would say this, that if they were to be really efficient as teachers, they must be animated by *love*. Now, he wished to impress upon them the ascending scale in this requisition, for in the first place, would they let him urge upon them that the really good teacher was always marked by a *love of the subject he was teaching*? He loved the truth for its own sake—he was not speaking of religious instruction only, but of all instruction—a man could not teach a subject well unless he loved the subject he was teaching. He should study it and having made himself master of it, he would be in a fit condition to impart instruction to others. He should not simply learn as much as he thought was necessary to teach others, but he should be a learner as long as he lived. Let him assure them on the evidence of one who had had great experience in teaching, that the man who did not care enough about his subject to be constantly learning, would make but a poor teacher. A man could not teach either arithmetic, geometry, or Latin, or Greek well, if he were not fond of his subject. It was the necessary qualification of teaching. And so when they came to the highest of all subjects, a man could not teach the Word of God unless he *loved* the Word of God. He must be perpetually seeking for more light; he must love the Word of God in such a sense that he was at all times delighted to get to the study of it. It was the man who, though he had read his Bible a thousand times, always found something fresh in it, who was fit to inculcate in others who were placed under his teaching the same love of God which he felt himself. He begged each and all of them to make the study of God's Holy Word their perpetual delight. In the next place, there must not only be a love of the *subject* but a love of the *learners*. They must love the children; they must delight to be in the company of children; they must take pleasure in their little innocent ways, even in their naughtiness. (Laughter). The good teacher was always marked by that characteristic, and it was in