

and find that, if the failure to become in subsequent life a mature Christian proves that the individual never was born again, then also, by the same reasoning, in the natural life the individual who fails to reach the mature age of manhood never was born at all. The argument is just as good in the one case as in the other, and no man has ever yet had the hardihood to assert that because a child dies in infancy it therefore was not really born; though hundreds of earnest Christians assert the same absurdity in regard to the spiritual life, and certain theologies seem to feel that the truth of God requires its defence.

And so, returning to the line of the subject again, it is this initial justification of which baptism is the perpetual testimonial. This is the universal salvation of the Gospel; strictly speaking, the universal redemption. The truth which underlies the error of Universalism is the fact that Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man, and that the offer of salvation is as universal as the race of man. But it is only *Christ's work* that is universal—the redemption. The *salvation* is limited by the operation of the human will, and salvation is only universal so far as men accept the offer of the Gospel. Now it is the underlying truth of which our Savior said, in regard to the unconscious babes of His family, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," and it is the formal and authoritative recognition of the wide embrace of God's mercy that is stated in the fact that Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man.

But when we come to the second definition of this word justification, as St. Paul uses it here, and the more limited one, we find that, just as the first justification, which is the free gift of God to every man, and which is his divine birth-right until he forfeits it by actual sin, gives to man the full covenant of God's mercy and the power of co-operating with God for his salvation, so the very first exercise of this bestowed power must be faith in the reality and sufficiency of the provisions of salvation as offered in the Gospel. This sec-

ond justification, which is possibly only to voluntary and intelligent moral agents, which is not possible to unconscious infants, is offered to men upon the condition of their accepting it and thus becoming voluntary parties to the covenant of God's mercy—and in this respect faith becomes not an arbitrary requirement, but an actual necessity. In the very nature of things there can be no salvation without it. When the terms of the Gospel are fully proposed to men, when we hear the glorious Gospel of the Son of God and with conscious minds believe and trust in the way of life it reveals, expressing our faith in the instituted sacrament appointed for that purpose, our formal adoption into the family of God, the remission of our sins, and our being accounted righteous for the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, are all accomplished; and this is called justification, and this is the justification by faith only which St. Paul so emphasizes here, though not in any part of his argument does he omit the importance of the outward expression of that faith, either in obedience to positive commands or in obedience to positive ordinances. But the one essential thing here is faith, and in one sense it is the only thing that is essential. It is the only grace that is here required, or that can be exercised in appropriating the merits of Christ to ourselves, as our personal Savior. Faith is the hand we put forth to take the mercy of God which is offered to us. All personal merit is disowned and worthless. The tender of any righteousness of our own would be presumptuous and vain. One of the greatest difficulties that men have in settling this question with themselves, is the difficulty that we all have—the disposition to remember how good we have tried to be—honest in our business, upright in our conduct, observing the Lord's day and public worship. All these go for nothing in the settlement of this question, which first accepts the salvation that is offered in Jesus Christ.

And this justification by faith only stands opposed alike to the heathen