

The Christian.

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EDITORIAL.

ON THE SALVATION OF DYING INFANTS.

Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.—JOHN i. 29.

Because infants have a sinful nature it is argued that they cannot enter heaven without a moral regeneration.

The seeds of sin are in infants because they are related to Adam who was a sinner. Where seed grows and ripens it produces a crop of its own kind, but if it is cut down before it ripens it is as nothing. Mow down a field of wheat in the blade and it is as if no wheat were sown. The same is true of any seed, good or bad, and so it is of sin. Infants have the seed of sin. In some it ripens earlier than in others. But it grows in all, and will in due time become a crop of sin. But when its growth is stopped by death, it is as if no seed were sown. If the child lives till sin ripens into a crop, it must be born again or it cannot see the kingdom of God; but not so when cut down by premature death.

The Lord and His apostles describe sin, or what the things are that defile the man. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile the man." Mark vii. 20. Here Jesus tells what things defile a man. But who can tell what are the things that defile an infant?

In Gal. v. 19, Paul calls the same things which defile a man, the works of the flesh, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness," etc., etc., but says nothing of what defiles an infant.

James tells us (i. 14) how a man is led into sin "But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed, then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." This is quite intelligible. For example: A poor man thinks his neighbor so rich that he could give him cash to relieve him, and desires the money. But the neighbor sees differently, and holds on to his own. The man still fosters that desire, until it overcomes his sense of right, and he seeks an opportunity to steal the cash. He at length finds one, and although his neighbor's life stands in the way, yet it has gone so far with him that he takes that life and grasps the money. He is then tried, convicted, and suffers the penalty of the law. James gives the process of crimes both great and small. If a man resists the temptation to do wrong, he is not only innocent but blessed (v. 12), but if he yields to it, an unlawful desire is begotten and encouraged which leads to sin and death. No such process can go on in infants; and where, then, is their sin and need of regeneration?

"But," says one, "some persons were regenerated from the womb." We know of no such word or hint in the Bible. Jeremiah was sanctified before his birth or set apart to be a prophet. It was said of John the Baptist that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb, but nothing is said in either case of regeneration, which is altogether different from sanctification. To sanctify is to set apart men or things for a divine purpose. Thus God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, but He did not regenerate it. The Jewish priests and altars were sanctified, and even the Son of God was sanctified. "Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the

Son of God? For their sakes I sanctify Myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 19). Both Jesus and His Father set Him apart to redeem mankind, but who will say He was morally regenerated?

Some contend that the malicious and unlovely spirit often seen in children unfit them for heaven without moral regeneration. Do not Christians often show more of that spirit than children? Who can plead not guilty in this? While Christians know this is wrong infants do not. How, then, will Christians gain heaven? Not because they are perfect, but through the blood of the Lamb. "Jesus died for me," is the Christian's only plea. He also died for infants, and on that account they will gain a release from a sinful suffering body, and a happy home with their Redeemer.

The Supreme Judge gives no uncertain sound on the morality of children. He and His apostles always hold them up as models for His disciples. In 1 Cor. xiv. 20, Paul says to regenerated persons, "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." Jesus says, "Suffer little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." He did not say this of any particular class, but of little children in general. Nor did He say it of these little children after He had laid His hands on them and blessed them, but He said it before they came to Him. He broke down forever that unjust and man-made distinction between the children of believers and others; teaching us that the children thrown into the Ganges and those who die by the neglect or violence of cruel parents, are as dear to His heart as the children of enlightened Christians. The final resurrection is neither the time nor place for the children to bear the iniquities of the fathers.

When the Saviour says, "Except ye be converted and become [] as little children, &c.," there is an ellipsis, indicating quality, between the words *become* and *as*. If little children are *totally depraved*, then these words in italics fill the ellipsis. If little children are *pure*, then *pure* fills the ellipsis. Let the intelligent reader try both and choose for himself. Either except ye become converted and become [totally depraved] as little children, &c., or except ye be converted and become [pure] as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

We are permitted to behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Not the sins of the world but the sin. A certain sin effects every man that comes into the world. Not that every man has actually committed that sin, but that every man is a child of Adam, who ate the forbidden fruit, and brought death upon all his children, as well as upon himself. Eating the forbidden fruit in Eden is the sin of the world, and death is its penalty. But the Lamb of God taketh away that sin and its penalty. Original sin is not yet taken away, but is felt and feared still. All feel it, even infants that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, feel it. They sicken, suffer, and die. But infants are also related to the second Adam, and through Him they will rise again. By Adam the first, without their own action or volition, they sink into the grave, and by Jesus the Lord, from heaven, they will rise again without their act or volition, to share the blessing of His love forever. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," after which they, and all such, shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. When Jesus was on earth, children loved Him because of His kindness and love to them. When they see Him in heaven they will love Him more, and as they know Him better, that love will grow for ever and ever.

We know of no biography of the same length so much devoted to children as the history of Jesus' mission to earth. You meet them on almost every page. It opens with the martyrdom of all the children in Bethlehem under two years, and draws to a close with children singing in the temple, hosanna to the son of David. When Jesus enters for the last time, His Father's house, His bosom still heaving with His lament over Jerusalem's rejection of His last offer to gather and shield them; worldlings driving hard bargains in the temple; priests demanding His authority and watching His every word with intent to destroy Him; when His own twelve were engaged in an insane wrangle, as to which of them should be the greatest, and every sign betokened the near approach of the enemy's hour and the power of darkness, it was then that the Redeemer drew strength from infants' songs "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He perfected praise."

The more we examine the work of Christ, the more we see Him to be a Saviour. He came not to condemn the world, but to save it by His death. He will save all that can be saved in justice to the throne and government of God. He who determinedly rejects all the love of Christ, and despises the Spirit of Grace, it would be unjust to save, and he will feel that he has been his own destroyer. The sin of the world will be forever taken away by Jesus Christ in the general resurrection, and then will men be judged according to their *own works, the deeds done* in the flesh.

It will be just in Christ to save infants, because He died for them, and they have done nothing in the flesh to condemn them. They have not rejected the Saviour. Christian parents are often called to part with children when they seem most lovely and attractive. How sweet the thought that He who died for your dear ones has taken them home, and that they are safe in the arms of Jesus, waiting and watching till you join the happy number. It makes Jesus more precious to have in safe-keeping our children.

Perhaps some readers of this have lost dear children, but have not yet given their own hearts and lives to Christ. Do you remember how eagerly you watched and wished for the recovery of your child, but when all failed, and you closed its eyes in death, how sad it was to part? But did it not bring gladness to think it had gone to Jesus and sweetly reposed on His bosom. That same Jesus that died for your child died for you. Why should you refuse to love Him who saved your child. This child will not come to you. Can you refuse to go to him, and make the terrible resolution that the Saviour of your child shall not be your Saviour? O, stop and think before you further go! D. C.

THE human race, according to recent statistics, is distributed religiously as follows: Heathen 872,000,000; Roman Catholic 190,000,000; Protestants 116,000,000; Greek Church 84,000,000; Jews 8,000,000; making a total of 1,440,000,000.

A MISSIONARY writes from China that the wife of Prince Chung, son of one Emperor and brother of another, has become a Christian. One of her lady attendants had procured a New Testament and some other Christian books, and these were seen by the wife of the Prince. She read them and became interested. The Gospel was talked about and discussed until now, not only the wife of the Prince, but no less than thirty-one inmates of the palace have renounced idolatry and professed their faith in Jesus as their Saviour. Thus the outlook of pressing into that idolatrous nation the glorious Gospel of the grace of God, is brightening every day. T. H. C.