

African Prelate,—and apparently Infant-life-preserver in Africa—who having no precedent to guide him, requested to know *how soon babes might be baptized?*

Here is a clue to the introduction of *infant baptism*. This was about 40 or 50 years after Tertullian's reply to that wealthy lady Quintilla. What did Cyprian reply to Fidus? Had Cyprian any precedent to guide him in answering Fidus? No. So he called a council of 66 Bishops to deliberate and decide *when a babe might be baptized*. And what do you think these men did? They decided that a *babe might be baptized as soon as it could be kissed*. Behold this Cyprian, who was a scholar at the feet of Tertullian,—and who had declared with Tertullian and Origen, *that in Apostolic days none were baptized but those who obeyed Christ*,—Cyprian the man who originated Prelacy,—who, we are told dealt in wonders not only foolish but gross,—who talked of angelic visions and extraordinary legends, who wrote a long essay on the discovery of John the Baptist's head,—who worked on the public mind, almost magically by means of relics,—this Cyprian who spoke of the Lord's Supper as a charm,—this was “the lordly christian” who presided over the council at Carthage,—whose members he himself acknowledged, instead of being examples to the flock, “were covetous, fraudulent and usurious.” This was the man who formulated the decision and reasons for its promulgation. Here is the mint where this base coin was struck off, and on it you see his head, and around it “CYPRIAN,—PEDO-BAPTIST THE FIRST, CARTHAGE, A. D. 253.”

Now note the *reasons* that council gave for the decree they sent forth. “That the grace of God is denied to none; that as Jesus came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, we ought to do everything in our power to save our fellow men. That God is not a respecter of age more than of persons, and that His grace is equal to all; that the prophet Elisha lay upon a child, and put his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands,—*that the spiritual sense of this is that infants are equal to men, but that if you refuse to baptize them, you destroy this equality and are partial; insomuch as baptism is a washing away of the sin of human nature, the sooner it is performed the better, lest any should die unbaptized, and so perish.*”