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THE RELATION OF CHILDREN
TO THE CHURCH AND CHRIST.

BY REV. CRANSWICK JOST, A. M.

The religious culture of the young occupies to-day a place of unprecedented importance in the thought and labor of the Christian Church. We would as soon think of abandoning the prayer meeting, or the sermon, in the ordinary acceptance of that term, as of abandoning the God-honoured Sabbath-school. Indeed it has become a custom in some quarters to substitute for the morning sermon the school, in which parents as well as children meet for the united study of the Word of God, the exercises closing with an exposition by the pastor of the lesson of the day.

It is more than probable that such a method of spending the morning hours of the Sabbath would in many cases for the advantage of all concerned. It would be of advantage to the children by giving a prominence and importance to their religious training which is not generally secured, and by accustoming them to regular attendance upon the public services of the house of God, whereas it is a lamentable fact that now many of them are found only in the Sabbath-school. It would be of advantage to parents by inciting them to a more careful and conscientious study of the Scriptures. It would be of advantage to the pastor by enabling him to compass in his preaching a wider range of Scripture truth, and make it more expository than is otherwise possible, thereby better accomplishing one of the grand objects of preaching, namely, to make the hearers familiar with truth in all its various phases. Such a custom appears also to conform closely to the habit of the primitive church; for, it was not until the fourth or fifth century that the sermon, as we understand that term, was introduced.

But, the design of all the agencies of the church in their relation to children, is to train them up for God; and back of the question as to the manner in which these agencies may be most successfully employed, is another question which we propose first to consider; the question as to the relation which children sustain to the Saviour, in virtue of which we may expect them dying to be saved or living to be trained up to an early exhibition of the blossoms and fruits of genuine piety.

It has come to be regarded practically as a fact, by different branches of the Protestant Church, that all children dying in infancy are saved. The Westminster Confession of Faith says, "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit who worketh when, where and how he pleaseth." The logical inference from this assertion is that non-elect infants dying in infancy are not regenerated or saved. And that such was the teaching of the framers of that Confession, and generally of that school of religious thinkers in former times, a review of their writings amply justifies us in saying. Calvin in his "Institute" asks this question, "I inquire again how it came to pass that the fall of Adam should involve without remedy, so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, unless because it was the will of God?" And he ap-

pends to the inquiry the candid confession, creditable to his heart, but, condemning to his head, "A horrible decree, I confess."

Occasionally of late years, though we believe comparatively rarely, the same opinion has found expression in the pulpit. The present writer once heard a prominent and well known minister attempt to emphasize and justify the awful announcement by saying, almost in these exact words, "We may say, poor little things, poor little things, and may pity their condition, but, then it is written in the Word of God, and we cannot get over it."

We have, however, the testimony of a Presbyterian divine, that "the theologians who hold to this (Westminster) Confession (now) generally maintain that all infants (who die in infancy) are elect, and many of them think that this article in the Confession would express the truth more clearly if the word "elect" were omitted. It is omitted in the Confession of Faith as amended by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church."

According to this interpretation the article referred to is now generally understood to mean, Infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved, &c., and thus corresponds *de facto* with our Arminian views.

Let us here pause a moment to observe the comforting reflections to which this truth leads. It has been estimated that taking together all the centuries of human history and all countries, half or more than half of the entire human race have died in infancy, or, in other words, before the period at which personal responsibility begins. These through the mercy of God in Christ are safely treasured up in heaven. Satan is robbed at once of more than half his expected prey, and angels rejoice over these trophies of the Redeemer's victory. When death comes, as he often does, into the garden of the family and cut off the buds, just blooming into the consciousness of life and love, we may smile in the midst of our tears, as we listen to his words,—

"My Lord has need of these flowerets gay."
The Reaper said and smiled:
Dear tokens of the earth are they,
When he was once a child."

"They all shall bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints upon their garments white.
These sacred blossoms wear."

We may add, with Hervey in his "Meditations among the Tombs," "Consider this, ye mourning parents, and dry up your tears. Perhaps the supreme Disposer of events foresaw some inevitable snare of temptation forming, or some dreadful storm of adversity impending. And why should you be dissatisfied with that kind precaution which has housed your pleasant plant and removed into shelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared, before the lightning flew, before the tempest poured its rage? O, remember, they are not lost, but taken away from the evil to come."

But, what shall we say of infants who live and for whose Christian nurture and training we are so largely responsible? What relation do they sustain to Christ?

If we can arrive at the correct Scriptural answer we will be led to a more intelligent, and therefore in all probability, a more successful use of the necessary means. The Discipline of our church teaches that "All children (living as well as dying) by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the Kingdom of God, and, therefore, graciously entitled to baptism."

On what Scripture assertion is this briefly based?

We regard it as an incontrovertible statement that every one born into the

world inherits a sinful nature. The sad consequences of the first sin are universal. Pain, suffering, and sinful tendencies are manifest with the first breathings of the infant, and the first development of its powers. But, there is a Saviour, and wide-reaching as is the influence of sin, so wide-reaching is the influence of His atonement.

Listen to the Apostles statement where these two truths are placed in antithesis to each other. (Rom. 5, 18.) "As by the offence of our judgment (i. e. the sentence of death) came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Here is the broad truth that by the sin of Adam the sentence of death has been pronounced upon the entire human race, infants, of course, included. But, here is also another truth that by the righteousness of Jesus Christ the entire human race, infants of course included, is placed in a position of justification of life," a phrase meaning "that sentence of God by which a sinner under sentence of death is adjudged to life." Dr. Whedon in his notes upon this passage presents the contrast expressed in its antithetical clauses in these words.

To be continued.

JAMES vs CASSIDY.

EVIDENCE OF WITNESSES.

Examination of Rev. Mr. James by Attorney General Grey:

From the Bermudian

Are you Rector of Pembroke Parish?—

I am.

How long have you been Rector?—

3 years.

On the 21st of June did you perform burial service over the body of Hester Levy?—

Yes, I did.

How was you summoned to that funeral?—

I got a notice in writing.

Have you that letter?—

Yes, [letter read.]

Was it on the same day?—

Yes.

Did you attend at 5 o'clock?—

Yes.

Where was she buried, in the old or new part?—

In the old.

Was there anything unusual?—

I met Mr. Cassidy at the gate.

Did you go to the gate?—

Yes.

What did he say?—

That he had been requested to perform the burial service.

Was he with the funeral?—

Yes at the head.

What did you tell him?—

I told him I could not allow it. After the body was brought in, I commenced reading aloud the funeral service, and went towards the grave.

Mr. Cassidy commenced reading aloud a funeral service. I told him he was interrupting me, and I objected to him interrupting me in the performance of my duty. Mr. Middleton then objected. Mr. M. is a church warden. Mr. Cassidy did not desist; he came in reading aloud, commencing at the gate, and continued it to and at the grave. I continued to read the Church of England service; Mr. Cassidy ended first.

Were many present?—

Yes.

What did Mr. Cassidy do when he ended?—

He turned and left.

Did others go?—

Some did.

Did some wait?—

I think the greater number remained.

Was Hester Levy a Parishioner of Pembroke parish?—

I believe so.

Were you requested to perform the burial service?—

Yes.

Did you ever know before of any minister other than that of the Church of England performing any burial service in that church yard?—

No.

Cross Examined by Mr. Cassidy.

Are you Rector of Pembroke Parish?—

I am.

That is your spiritual office?—

That is my legal title.

What are you officially in the Church?—

A clergyman of the Church of England.

Are you officially the Rector in your spiritual capacity?—

No answer.

Is the office of Rector civil or spiritual?—

Both civil and spiritual.

In what respect is it civil?—

By holding property.

Do you hold property in your spiritual capacity as Rector?—

I hold property as Rector.

Do you get the title from ecclesiastical or statute law?—

From statute law.

Do you know what statute?—

There have been many laws read to-day.

Does any one law occur to you conferring the title of Rector?—

Not on me personally, but on my predecessors in office.

Can you name any statute giving the title to your predecessors?—

Not any particular statute.

Is there any statute to your knowledge creating the office of Rector?—

I am not aware of any creating the office, but there are many recognizing it.

Is there any ceremony making you Rector?—

I am presented by the Governor, and inducted by mandate from the Bishop or his Commissary.

Did you obtain your Rectorship thus?—

I did.

When?—

On 28th of December, 1872.

What is induction?—

The object and ceremony.

The object, to put the Rector in possession of temporal goods.

Are you only inducted into temporalities?—

Both temporalities and spiritualities.

Will you please explain to the Court how you were inducted?—

Rev. Mr. Tucker took my hand and put it on the handle of the door of the Church, using a form of words, [suggested by a bystander]—and gave me the key. I forgot the form of words.

Was anything said about the graveyard?—

I can't remember the exact words.

Can you not recall the form of words?—

I can read the words of the Governor's presentation.

[Mr. C. to the Judge.—

I am anxious, your Honor, to get the form of words, to see if there is anything at all said about the graveyard.]

—No, I went in and rang the bell.

Was that all?—

A paper was signed and witnessed.

Any other circumstance then or shortly after?—

I had to take certain oaths and make a certain declaration.

When that was over were you Rector of Pembroke Parish?—

I believe so.

Is it then an Ecclesiastical Rectorship?—

Ecclesiastical and civil.

You are set forth in your declaration in this Court both as Rector of the Parish Church of Pembroke Parish and also as the Rector of Pembroke Parish. Will you please explain the meaning of these two statements?—

It embraces the Parish; any one can call on me to perform certain specific services.

Have you spiritual jurisdiction over all in the Parish?—

I don't understand.

[Question repeated.]—

I told you I could be called on by any one to perform certain services.

I ask not what others can do, but what you consider. Do you consider you have spiritual jurisdiction over every one in the Parish?—

I don't understand what you mean.

Do you consider you have the spiritual charge of all in the parish?—

[No answer.]

[The Court then interposed, saying that the pertinency of the question was not clear, but that if Mr. King would assure the Court of its relevancy the Court would be satisfied. Mr. King gave the assurance and Mr. Cassidy proceeded.]

Was Hester Levy under your spiritual jurisdiction?—

She was in my Parish?

[Attorney General.—

The question is a mean trap.]

Judge.—

If it is an improper question the proper way to do is for the counsel to object.]

[Question objected to by the Attorney General.]

[No objection could be made and the Court allowed the question.]

Was Hester Levy under your spiritual care?—

If she called upon me I should be obliged to render her any services.

Did she ever call on you for spiritual services?—

No.

Did you ever call on her?—

No.

Mr. C.—

and she a Parishioner?—

laughter.]

When did you first hear of her?—

I don't know that I heard of her before the 21st of June, 1875.

How then?—

I got a notice of her funeral.

The notice before the court?—

Yes. Where did you get it?—

At home.

From whom?—

I did not see the person. The note had no signature; how did you know it was genuine?—

I got many notes without signatures from many persons; I presumed it was genuine.

Did you get any other message?—

I am not aware that it was a message, a person came to me. I don't know her name.

What did she say?—

She told me Mr. Cassidy said that a law had been passed, to allow members of all denominations to bury in the Parish burial grounds.

What else did she say?—

That Mr. C. had sent to the house and said he wished to perform the burial service over Hester Levy.

Are you sure she said the words you attribute to her?—

She said words to that effect.

Did she say anything else?—

I don't remember.

Was there anything in what she said that implied a countermand of the request in the note?—

I think not, she gave me the impression that she wanted me to do it if not illegal.

Did she not convey the idea that she wanted to tell you that you were not asked to bury Hester Levy?—

My impression was that she wanted to know from me what was the law.

She came then, as you understood it to enquire from you the law?—

When did you go to the Church?—

At about half past 3.

The burial was at 5?—

I had another funeral at 4.

Did you have any apprehension that I was going to perform the service?—

Yes I had.

Any in consequence of information previously received?—

I had heard rumors in town.

I referred to any from the first information I had, my apprehension from that that I was going to perform the service?—

Yes.

In consequence, did you notify any one?—

Yes, my Church Wardens.

Were you waiting for Hester Levy?—

Yes.

Where?—

In the Church—the vestry.

Did you see me?—

Yes.

Did you recognize me?—

I did.

When we met did you apprehend I intended to perform the service?—

It looked so.

You expected the funeral?—

I did.

There was hesitancy in bringing out the bier. Do you know why?—

No.

There was hesitancy, was there not?—

Not more than necessary.

What did I say?—

I have been requested by the friends of the deceased to perform this funeral service.

What answer did you make?—

I said I had been notified and had come to do my duty, and that I could not allow it.

Did I answer?—

I don't think you did, I don't remember.

Do you remember my repeating that I had come to perform this burial service by the request of the friends of the deceased?—

No.

Was all done courteously under the circumstances?—

I could hardly say it was a courteous action; after some dispute—

(Here Mr. C. addressed the Court, and said he wished to disprove by this witness what been falsely asserted concerning his Mr. C's—conduct.)

Did I say anything discourteous?—

No.

Anything ungentlemanly?—

No.

Anything boisterous or violent?—

No.

Was there any noise?—

No.

Then all was quiet, courteous, without noise or violence, or any ungentlemanly action?—

Yes.

After I told you I came by request and with the intention of performing the service, did I seem in haste?—

I began and you immediately after.

Did you walk some distance and then stop?—

Yes.

Had I begun?—

You had.

Why did you stop?—

(Hesitancy.)

Did you not stop because the procession did not move with you?—

No direct answer.

Did it move with your service. Was it moving when you stopped?—

I don't know.

Did the procession move or seem to move?—

I don't remember whether or not.

Do you remember whether it moved at first or not?—

I don't know.