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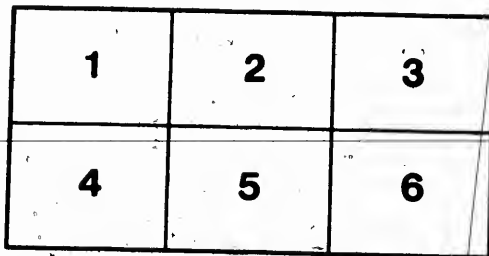
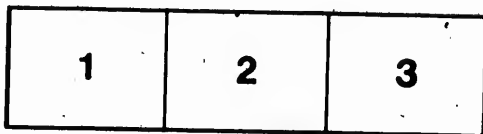
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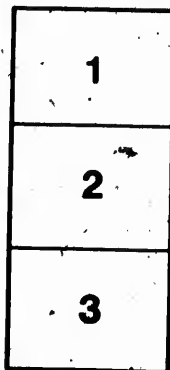
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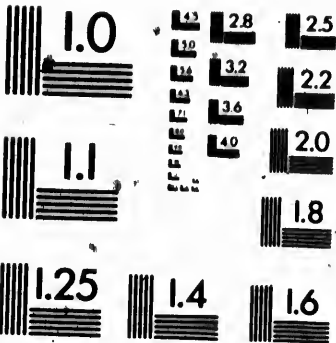
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14



INFANT SALVATION.

A SERMON

—BY—

W. A. M^CKAY, B. A.,

Minister of Presbyterian Church,

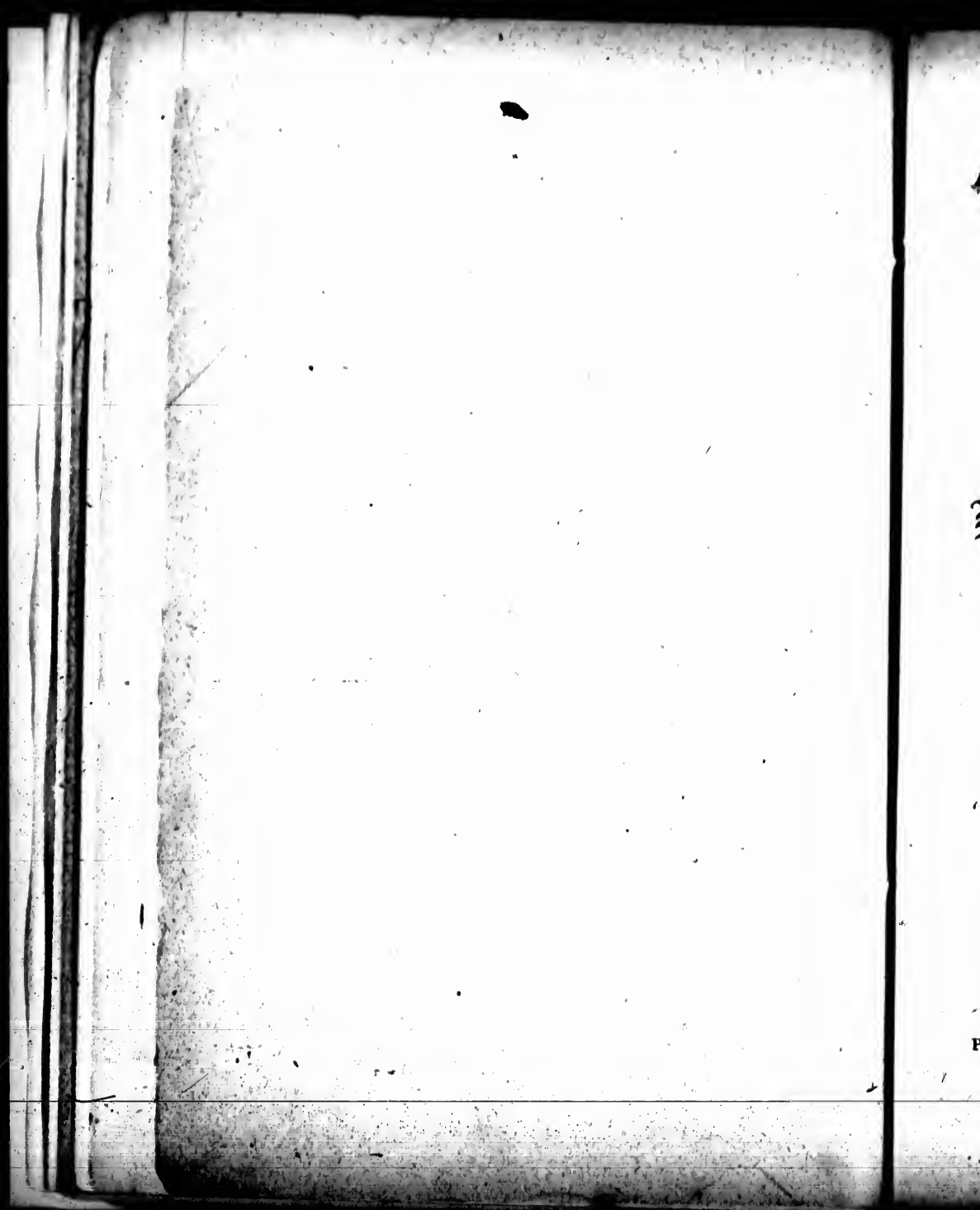
BALTIMORE AND COLDSPRINGS, ONTARIO.

—♦—

*"Is it well with the Child? It is well."
2 Kings, IV^s 26.*

—♦—

COBOURG.
PRINTED AT THE "WORLD" OFFICE, KING STREET.
1877.



14

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5.437

The following discourse was not preached just in the form in which it now appears. The references to the opinions of others, most of the defence of the statement in the "Confession of Faith," and some passages throughout the discourse, suggested by recent painful bereavements in one of my congregations, are now added. The discourse is published by request, and if it should, in any humble degree, be the means of strengthening faith, brightening hope, alleviating sorrow, and thus magnifying Christ and His "great salvation," the object of its publication will be fully attained.

THE MANNE, }
Baltimore, March, 1877. }

W. A. M.

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SALVATION OF INFANTS.

"Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." — MATT. XVIII. 14.

The subject to which I wish to direct your attention to-day is the Salvation of Children dying in infancy. I do not, however, interpret the text as referring exclusively, or even specially, to infants. It applies to all weak and lowly believers, as well as to the young. The connection in which it stands with the parable of the hundred sheep, one of which went astray, puts this beyond doubt. The text shows that our Lord Jesus Christ is a Shepherd who cares tenderly for every soul committed to his charge. The youngest, the weakest, the sickliest, of his flock is as dear to him as the strongest. It is not his will nor the will of our Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. But while our Lord's statement applies to many adults, it undoubtedly includes children; and its language and spirit are such as to make it a suitable text for a discourse on this subject.

The question then is, Are any children dying in infancy saved? If so, are all such saved, or is it true of only some of the number that they are chosen to everlasting life?

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To this question very different answers are given by those who profess to accept the teachings of God's Word. The symbols of the Church of Rome, the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church and of one section of the Baptist Church, teach the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, and thus limit an entrance into heaven to those alone who are baptized. I have said one section of the Baptist Church, but, in reality, all who refuse baptism to infants because of their inability to believe must, if they would be logically consistent, for the same reason deny to infants the gift of everlasting life. "Believe and be baptized" is not more clearly taught than "believe and be saved;" and if we apply the one to infants, consistency demands that we apply the other also. We believe that both statements refer to adults and to them only.

Good Mr. Wesley, in his treatise on Infant Baptism, published by the General Conference of the Methodist Church in the United States, clearly avows the sentiment that infants cannot ordinarily be saved without baptism. "If," says he, "infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has already been proved," he adds, "that this original stain cleaves to every child of man; and that hereby they are children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation." [Doct. Tracts, P. 261.] Further on, in summing up his argument, Mr. Wesley urges that "outward baptism is generally, in an ordinary way, necessary to salvation."

Our own Church is not unfrequently charged with holding narrow and gloomy views on the subject of infant salvation. Who has not heard the "span-long" slander repeated like a cockoo-song, until, no doubt, the retaller believed his own story? Certainly there never was a slander more unfounded. Calvin, the great modern expositor of our faith, instead of using such words, or holding such a monstrous doctrine, argues at great length in favor of the salvation of infants. See his Theol. Inst., Bk. IV. ch. 16, Sec. 31, where, in the course of his argument, he uses the following words, "All those whom Christ blesses are exempt from the curse of Adam and the wrath of God. Now, as it is known that infants were blessed by him, it follows that they are exempt from everlasting death."

Any number of quotations might be given from Bunyan, Doddridge, Scott, Dick, Hill, Gandleb, Cunningham, and Hodge, all strong Calvinists, and most of them representative men in the Presbyterian Church, showing how utterly unfounded is this calumny.

Indeed, it requires an extraordinary amount of charity to think that the maligners of our church on this matter are not wilfully dishonest, and I do not wonder that Mr. Spurgeon, with his intense hatred of what is hollow and hypocritical, loses all patience when speaking of them. "It has," he says, "been wickedly, lyingly, and slanderously said of Calvinists, that we believe that some little children perish. Those who make the accusation know that their charge is false. I cannot even dare to hope, though I would wish to do so, that they ignorantly misrepresented us. They wickedly repeat what has been denied a thousand times—what they know to be not true." In another place Mr. Spurgeon, addressing himself to these slanderers, speaks in the following words, as terse as they are true, "You may have said so, (that infants perish,) we never did, and you know we never did. If you dare to repeat the slander again, let the lie stand in scarlet on your very cheek, if you be capable of a blush. We have never dreamed of such a thing. Calvinists have never imagined that children dying as infants have perished; but we have believed that they enter into the paradise of God."

But it is said that our Confession of Faith teaches that some who die in infancy are lost. Let us see. Our Confession refers to this subject but once, and the words are these, "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how, he pleaseth." It is complained of this passage that "if some who die in infancy are 'elect,' others who die in infancy are 'reprobate.'" But surely this is an unwarranted inference. When we speak of infants dying in infancy as elect, we certainly do not mean that they are elect or chosen out of a particular age or class, but out of the whole mass of human beings. This is the Scripture use of the word "elect."—For example, John, when addressing the "elect lady," speaks of her "elect sister." (II John V. 13.) But no one supposes this language to imply that she had a reprobate sister. John means that the lady herself, as well as her sister, was chosen out of the fallen family of Adam. Just in this sense is the word used in our Confession of Faith. When it speaks of infants dying in infancy as "elect," its obvious meaning is that they are elected out of the whole mass of human beings. And being thus elected, they are all, without exception, given by the Father to the Son as the recompense of his obedience and suffering, and taken by the Son from the evils of earth to be trained and nurtured in the school and home of heaven.

Our Methodist brethren, in their Discipline, under the head of "The Ministration of Baptism to Infants," make a similar use of the

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word "elect." There the minister is directed to pray that the child to be baptised may "be found at last in the number of thy faithful and elect children." If the infant be in the number of the elect, it must itself be elect,—an elect infant. So they, too, I am happy to say, believe in infant election. And infant election, I think, must be unconditional election, that is, not founded on foreseen faith or good works, but depending solely upon the free, sovereign will of God.

That the passage in our Confession was not intended to teach that any dying in infancy are lost, is evident from the following considerations:—

(a.) Infant perdition does not appear to have been agitated at all in the Westminster Assembly. In neither of the two histories of that Assembly that have been published, nor in the report of the Assembly's proceedings, is there a trace of it.

(b.) There is no evidence that any of that day believed it, except those who believed in Baptismal Regeneration. This was not the case with any member of that Assembly.

(c.) From the fact that such a sentiment cannot be found in the writings of any Calvinist, while the contrary can be found in the writings of more of them than in those of any other evangelical church.

(d.) Prior to the time of the Westminster Assembly, the Church of Scotland, in her "National Covenant or Confession of Faith," still bound up with our Confession, gives the following strong testimony in favor of the salvation of infants: "We abhor and detest . . . (here follows an enumeration of the chief errors of Rome,) "his cruel judgment against infants departing without the sacrament."

(e.) In the Directory of Public Worship, agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly, and also bound with our Confession, in the section on Baptism occur the following words:—"Outward baptism is not so necessary, that, through the want thereof, the infant is in danger of damnation."

I have thus, at some length, referred to the opinions of men on this subject, not in order to prove the truth or falsity of the doctrine, but to vindicate our Subordinate Standard against unfounded calumny, and to show with what an ill grace charges of the kind referred to are brought against our church by members of any sister denominations, or, indeed, by any who profess to respect truth and honesty.

But now, let us to the law and to the testimony. I believe that all children dying in infancy are saved; and I believe it for the following reasons:

1. Of the words

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How is be able to hath not an cessary to of infants,

1. *Children are capable of being regenerated and made partakers of the saving grace of Christ in infancy.*

That they need such a thorough change, no one will deny. They cannot be saved on the ground of their natural innocency and purity, respectively of the electing love of the Father, the redeeming work of the Son, and the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit." No; "by nature they are children of wrath, even as others." "In Adam all die." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The whole human race, infants not excepted, descended from Adam by ordinary generation, inherit depravity, and are liable to death and other penal evils. (Rom. V. 12.)

Children, then, need regeneration and saving grace as well as adults. But how can they receive this? I reply, that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Our children, born in sin because of their descent from the first Adam, are heirs of grace in virtue of their covenant relation to the second. "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." On these words Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, perhaps the highest living authority in the Presbyterian Church, remarks, "We have no right to put any limit on these general terms, except what the Bible itself places upon them. The Scriptures nowhere exclude any class of infants, baptized or unbaptized, born in Christian or in Heathen lands, of believing or unbelieving parents, from the benefits of the redemption of Christ. All the descendants of Adam, except Christ, are under condemnation; all the descendants of Adam, except those of whom it is expressly revealed that they cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, are saved." "As ignorance does not prevent children suffering from the sin of Adam, so ignorance need not prevent them being saved through the righteousness of Christ; for "where sin abounded grace did much more abound." If the sin of Adam has so much abounded as to kill their bodies for 6000 years, will not the grace of Christ, which much more abounds, suffice to save their souls?

"Wide as the reach of Satan's rage,

Doth his salvation flow;

'Tis not confined to sex or age,

The lofty or the low."

How infants are made partakers of saving grace we may not be able to explain. God is not a hard taskmaster, reaping where he hath not sown, or gathering where he has not sowed. Faith, necessary to salvation in the case of adults, is not necessary in the case of infants, but in the language of our Confession, "they are regen-

erated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth."

But whatever mystery may be connected with the mode of the Spirit's working on the heart of a child, the possibility of infant regeneration is proved by Scripture instances. Samuel was called of the Lord while he was yet a babe. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb; and so also Jeramiah.—We reason, therefore, that if these "little ones" were regenerated and saved, so may others be. And since it is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of them should perish they undoubtedly are.

2. *Children were the objects of Christ's special regard and tenderness, when he dwelt on earth.*

Isaiah says, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom." Jesus cares for all his flock; not one of them shall lack any good thing; but specially does he manifest care and tenderness for the lambs. Elsewhere he is represented as carrying the sheep on his shoulders, but here the evangelical prophet represents him as carrying the lambs, not on his shoulders, but in his bosom, the place of endearment and warmth. On many occasions did our Lord's tender concern for the little ones manifest itself. "Take heed," said he to his disciples, "that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. XVIII. 10.) When his disciples disputed among themselves who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he took a little child and set it in the midst of them, and said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. XVIII. 1—4. To the chief priests and scribes looking with haughty contempt on the children crying Hosanna to the Son of David, Jesus said, "Have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt. XXI. 15, 16.) Do not these words seem to imply that in heaven there shall be "perfect praise" to God from multitudes who here on earth were babes and sucklings,—little ones early torn from fond maternal bosoms? On another occasion, when his disciples were displeased at those who brought their little ones to him, he spoke those cheering familiar words, "suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God, . . . And he took them up in his arms, and put his hands on them, and blessed them." (Mark X. 13—16.) "Feed my lambs" was a part of his farewell injunction to Peter. "My lambs." I like that expression. The lambs belong to Christ.

"He justly claims them for his own,
Who bought them with a price;"

and, being his, they are safe.

Surely these instances of our Lord's special regard, tenderness, and love, for children afford a strong encouragement as to their eternal salvation. If he claimed them on earth, will he disown them in heaven? If here he encouraged them to come unto him, will he hereafter forbid them coming? If on earth he blessed them, in heaven will he curse them? Forbid the thought. Jesus, our Elder Brother, has still the same great tender loving heart as in the days when he rejoiced in the praises of the "little ones," invited them to come unto him, took them up in his arms, and blessed them.

3. *Children, according to Christ's own declaration, belong to the family of God.*

In a passage already quoted he gives as a reason why children ought not to be hindered from coming unto him that "of such is the Kingdom of God." The meaning of this expression, according to the great majority of the best commentators, is, that "of such"—of infants—heaven is in a great measure made up. John Newton says, "In these words our Lord informs us of a fact, that the number of infants who are effectually redeemed to God by His blood, so greatly exceeds the aggregate of adult believers, that, comparatively, His kingdom may be said to consist of little children."

Such, I believe, is the true meaning of this precious passage.—The disciples thought these "little ones" beneath their Master's notice, but not so the Master himself. The presence of the children reminds him of his Father's house,—the heaven from which he came, and he says "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

If it be said that the expression, "kingdom of God," or "kingdom of heaven," means the Church of Christ on earth, still the passage bears with scarcely any less force on the salvation of infants. For then we have here Christ's warrant for regarding children as members of his visible church, and the question comes to this,—Does not Christ's recognition of children as members of his church on earth imply that he will recognize them as members of his church in heaven? Men may mistake as to those who are entitled to the privileges of Christ's church. But Christ himself cannot. And therefore, I believe he will not exclude from the church in heaven those to whom he has assigned a place in the church on earth.

In whichever sense, then, we take the expression, "Kingdom of God," the fact that "little children," as such, belong to the family of God seems clearly revealed. I say little children, as

such, for I do not for a moment condition their salvation on the circumstance of their parents being believers. Be the child the offspring of monarch or peasant, Christian or heathen, our Lord here declares him to be a member of God's family, —an heir of his kingdom.

4. *Children dying in infancy are free from the ground of condemnation.*

They have original sin, it is true, but that, I think, is never presented in God's Word as the ground of condemnation. Men are lost because they reject offered salvation. But those dying before they have done good or ill cannot be said to have rejected salvation. Sinners will, on the last day be judged according to their works, whether they be good or bad. It is sufficient to refer to the following passages, Matt. XVI. 27; XXV. 41—46; II Cor. V. 10; Rev. XX. 12; XXII. 12. But those dying in infancy cannot be condemned on the ground of their works. We therefore conclude that when the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there will not be an infant found who has offended or done iniquity.

5. *Children dying in infancy possess none of the characteristics of the lost.*

Paul, (Rom. II. 8, 9,) describing the lost, says, "they are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness;" and he tells us that to such God will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. But are the sins here mentioned sins of which an infant could be guilty? In Gal. V. 19—21, the apostle gives a list of the works of the flesh, and a black and terrible list it is. He tells us that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But in this long list of soul-destroying sins there is not one sin of which an infant could be guilty. I would refer, also, to the character of the lost, as given in Rev. XXI. 8. In these and other passages of Scripture we have enumerated a vast variety of sins, of which we are told that such as do them cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But yet none of these is ever found in an infant. The rosebud, first opening to the smile of the light, is not more unconscious of the rude blasts of the world than the newborn babe is unconscious of those sins of omission or commission which make up the character of the lost. From the envy, malice, lust, hatred, folly, falsehood, cruelty, injustice, impiety, madness, murder, which so blacken the life of man, infants are free. They have "not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."

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From this I do not conclude that they will be saved because of their innocence. I have already shown from God's Word that they have sinful natures and need regeneration. But they will not be condemned on the ground of possessing those fearful characteristics by which the inspired writers describe the lost.

6. *Children dying in infancy are always referred to in the Scriptures in language that is soothing and encouraging.*

In Ezek. XVI: 21, God rebukes his people for giving up their children to Moloch, by causing them to pass through the fire, and those little ones who were sacrificed, God calls "my children." Already we have seen Jesus speaking of them as "my lambs," and here God says "my children." May we not, therefore, believe that they will never be disowned or cast away?

In II Sam. XII. 15—23, we have the account of the death of the first child of David by Bathsheba. While the child was sick, David prayed and fasted and wept, but when they told him the child was dead, he ceased from his grief, and said, "Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Now, where did David expect to find his child? Certainly not in the grave. That would be no ground of consolation. He means that when his own work would be over, and his pilgrimage completed, he would be reunited with his child in heaven. Contrast David's calm, cheerful composure on the death of this child with his agonising frenzy of mind at the death of his adult and rebellious son Absalom. Why this difference? Ah, he could not say of Absalom, "I shall go to him." He had no hope of Absalom, and, therefore, he bitterly bewailed, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" But not so with his babe; he could let him go with perfect confidence, for he "sorrowed not as they that are without hope." Many a bereaved parent has found comfort and encouragement in this passage. A few weeks ago, a mother sat weeping with her sorrowing husband and family. It was Sabbath evening, and the still solemn silence of the day seemed to give depth and intensity to feeling. Every heart in that family knew its own bitterness that Sabbath evening, for in the afternoon the remains of dear little Mary were taken away and laid in the cold grave, and there was an empty chair at the table, and a familiar voice was gone. While that bereaved mother's heart was breaking, and she was giving way to immoderate grief, she sent up a silent petition for help to the God of all consolation. She then asked for a Bible. It was brought her. Opening it at a venture, the first

words that caught her eye were those before us, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Each may put what explanation he pleases on this remarkable circumstance; I have simply related the facts. I would only add, further, that the Bible had not been opened at that particular place for months before. To my own mind there is no difficulty in the matter. While I would shrink from using the Word of God as a lottery, yet I have faith to believe that he who numbers the hairs of our heads, and hears the faintest cry of a distressed soul, can and does, in answer to prayer, direct our minds to a particular passage or word as indicating to us his mind. And this he will do in his own way. On the occasion referred to, God's special guidance was too evident to be doubted. The impression produced was unusually deep and solemn. All felt that while they could not call their loved one back again, and would not if they could, yet they could go where she was, nor would the journey be long. Soon all will be home.

In II Kings, ch. IV, we have the death of another child recorded. When the son of the pious Shunammite suddenly died, she hastened to meet the prophet Elisha. On her near approach the prophet sent his servant Gehazi to meet her and to ask, "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?" And she answered, "It is well." But how could she so answer respecting her dead child, if that child had no future and happy existence? Any doubt as to her child's happiness would have prevented this answer. But good reason had she for speaking as she did if her child was then in heaven. O, weeping Rachels, sorrowing because your "little ones" are not, learn the lesson which this good mother in Israel teaches you. It is well with your child. Jesus has taken it out of your bosom, and laid it in his own; stripped it of those garments you provided, and clothed it in white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Walking in the light of the Saviour's countenance, or folded in the Saviour's loving arms, is it not well with your child? If Hannah willingly gave up Samuel to serve in the tabernacle with Eli, surely you should cheerfully resign your darling to serve the Saviour, and to be the companion of angels in the temple not made with hands. Desire rather to go where your child is than to bring your child back again.

7. *Children seem to be included in the vision of John, (Rev. VII. 9.) "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb!"*

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The nations which have passed away during the last 6000 years without the true religion must be very many. And since there will be some saved out of "all nations," and as no idolater can be saved, (Gal. V. 19-21,) who among the heathen will be saved unless those who died in early childhood?

I would not, of course, press too far a literal interpretation of these words "all nations," &c. The passage taken by itself might not have much bearing on the salvation of infants, but taken with other considerations it is at least worth pointing out. There is surely a crumb of comfort in it. To my own mind it is a welcome and blessed thought that out of every nation and country under the sun the multitudes of children, who die in infancy, are "caught up to God and to his throne," swelling the number of the redeemed, and constituting imperishable monuments of the grace and power of the Redeemer.

8. *Children seem to be included in those passages of Scripture which speak of the number that shall at last be saved.*

That the number of the saved will be inconceivably great is beyond all doubt. In Revelation, the number of the redeemed is spoken of as "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, (V. 11,) even a great multitude which no man could number." (VII. 9.) Elsewhere they are said to be numerous as the drops of dew, as the dust of the earth, or the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered. I lately saw a calculation founded on Rev. XXI. 16, in which it was attempted to be made out that there is room provided in heaven for all the inhabitants of 11,000 such worlds as ours, even should these worlds be continued for 100,000 years, and the inhabitants multiply as ours have done in the past. I am not prepared at present to pass judgment on this calculation, though I think it at least plausible. All Scripture, however, teaches that heaven will not be a small place, or its population the " gleanings of the vintage." I love to think with many that at the last, as some one has said, the number of the lost will not bear a greater proportion to the number of the saved, than do the criminals in our jails to the whole population of our country. But of whom is this great multitude of happy ransomed ones to be composed? The number of believing adults has always been "few," constituting but a "little flock." What a small fraction of the world's population to-day have even a nominal connection with the Church of Christ! And of these how many have only a nominal! Whence, then, is the vast number of the saved? May we not point to the "little ones," and say, "of such is the kingdom of heaven?" More than a

third of our race die before they are two years old, and more than half before they reach the age of five years. Five millions of precocious babes, it is reckoned, die every year. If then all these are saved, we have more than half of the human family saved in infancy and early childhood. And now if to these we add the number of adults who since Adam have been saved, and the numbers that are yet to be redeemed when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in,—when Israel shall be restored,—when Satan shall be bound, and millennial peace and prosperity shall reign,—when the whole earth shall become the garden of the Lord and a nursery for heaven, what a flood of light does such a consideration throw on those delightful promises which speak of the countless multitudes that shall at last be redeemed. Great, terribly great, as the number of the lost is, how inconceivably greater the number of the saved. It must surely be gratifying to every Christian heart to think that from the very beginning Christ has had the majority of our race. At no era has the Prince of Darkness been able to boast of the victory. And as the years roll on this shall be more and more the case. In all things Christ shall have the pre-eminence. "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." But in order to this the "little ones" must be saved.

These, then, my friends, are some reasons why I believe that all children dying in infancy are saved. That each of these reasons is conclusive in itself, or even that all of them taken together amount to a mathematical demonstration, I do not pretend. Still I think I have said enough to satisfy the sorrowing hearts of bereaved parents that to our "little ones" death is gain. In my own mind there is not the "shadow of a doubt" on the subject. If others cannot enjoy the same confidence I am sorry for them. Years ago the subject of infant salvation ceased to be to me one of mere speculative importance, and became one of the most intensely absorbing interest. As loved one after loved one has been taken away, the interest has increased, until now the conviction is strong as life itself that it is not the will of my Father in heaven that one of these "little ones" should perish.

Bereaved parents, I speak as one of yourselves. Have you been tried,—sorely tried? So have I. I know what it is to sit day by day and night by night beside the couch of a dying child, to witness the pangs that shake the feeble frame, to listen to the shortening and struggling breath, to see the cherub eye grow dim in death, the countenance changing, the body sinking, the soul departing; to feel a weight of heart-grief which, though felt, cannot be described; to

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lay a loved one in the grave, and then to return to a desolate home, only to see the empty cradle, cast off clothes, and useless playthings. I know all this, for I have felt it all. Our little ones are gone, and we miss them much. No longer will they gladden us by their smiles, or enrich us with their love. Let me quote to you the touching words of an esteemed minister known to you all:—

"Gone! Gone! Gone!
 We miss her sight and day,
 We miss the face of sunshine,
 And the voice of melody,
 We miss her morning laughter
 When carried down the stair;
 We miss her evening prattle,
 And smile, beguiling care;
 We miss her form at worship
 From her own little chair;
 We miss the pattering footsteps,
 The cheek, the hand, the hair;
 We miss from bed and table,
 We miss her everywhere!"

Yes, our "little ones," of whom the Good Shepherd has of late been taking so many to his fold, are sorely missed. And it is not wrong to mourn; it is not unmanly to weep. Jesus wept. Yet let our sorrow be with moderation. Let them mourn without measure who mourn without hope. It is well with our "little ones." Already has God done far more for them than you and I and all the world could do in a thousand years. They are now free from all sin and sorrow, danger and death. They are gone where there is "no more death, neither sorrow nor crying;" where "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters," and where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Their happy spirits peacefully repose in realms of glory; the light of heaven shines on them; their visions are unclouded, and their infant powers, so speedily paralyzed by the ruthless hand of death, are now expanding amid the untold glories of the heavenly world. Would we, then, wish them back again on life's stormy sea? Did they not live long enough in this world? It is truly said, he hath sailed long enough that has won the harbour; and he hath fought long enough that hath obtained the victory; he hath run long enough that hath touched the goal, and he hath lived long enough on earth that hath won heaven, be his days never so few. See that you make the Saviour of your children your Saviour, that your thoughts be so much absorbed in Him that, much as you think of your departed loved ones, you can still say of Christ, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee;" and then, after "a few more tolls, a few more tears," your last tear will be wiped away, and those

for whom you now mourn may meet you on the threshold of glory and welcome you home.

"O! blissful meeting! ye seraphs bright,
How oft on such, in your home of light,
Have ye paused to gaze and smile!"

We can go where they are, and this hope gives us "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The day of our mourning shall soon be ended. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." It is but a little while, "and he that cometh shall come, and will not tarry." We will wait patiently, and when we reach our blessed home above, we shall be ready to say, "Our Father hath done all things well."



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Wherefore should I make my moan,
Now the darling child is dead?
He to rest is early gone,
He to paradise is fled!
I shall go to him, but he
Never shall return to me.

God forbids his longer stay,
God recalls the precious loan!
He hath taken him away,
From my bosom to his own.
Surely what he wills is best:
Happy in his will I rest.

She cries out, 'It is the Lord!
To him do I commend him good;
His holy name adored,
Take the gift awhile bestowed;
Take the child, no longer mine;
Thine he is, for ever thine!'

--C. WESLEY.

