

INFANT SALVATION.

Do the Scriptures warrant the expectation, that every infant dying in infancy will be saved? The general hope, not to say belief of Christians is, that they do. This question is but sparingly treated in the Scriptures. The Gospel was written for the use of those able to read it; and its instructions touching infants are few in proportion to the fewer duties which we have to perform respecting them. And if there is any imperfection in the solution which the Bible gives to the question—whether *all* that die in infancy will be saved, the wisdom of God has appointed that imperfection. He is as wise in concealing, as in revealing. He may have had the best of reasons for leaving a little cloud on this portion of the field.

But it may be well to glance at the subject, and see how great is the probability which the Scriptures give on this question. There is evidently nothing in the Scriptures to hinder an expectation that all of this class of human beings embracing nearly half of the race will be saved. Nothing makes it impossible to save them all, if he will. And the fact, that where sin has abounded, grace does much more abound, that is, that grace is an overflowing stream running wherever it meets with no obstructions, and bearing down great obstructions where they exist, would create a natural expectation that mercy would flow over this field.

It is not hindered by the fact of the universal depravity of the race. God has concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all; and those infants who die before they have opportunity to reject offered mercy, can be the subject of God's mercy in no other way than in their salvation. If God has concluded all under sin, that there might be scope for his mercy with all; so he has concluded infants under sin, that there might be scope for his mercy with them. The depravity of infants is no harder to overcome by renewing grace, than that of adults.

Nor does the impossibility of bringing the Gospel to bear on the minds of infants by human means, hinder the salvation of infants.—Their minds are as accessible to divine influence, working on a scale proportioned to the powers of the infant, as are those of men of maturest knowledge.

Nor is there anything in God's election of his people to holiness and salvation, that excludes infants. What is this election but God's choosing whom he will of our race, guided and prompted by nothing but the good pleasure of his goodness. Nothing in this, fixes the age of the vessels of his mercy, or limits him in his choice to those of adult years. Suppose the doctrine contrary to that of election; suppose that God has no eternal purpose to effect the renewal of any, or to move upon the hearts of any, till they first move of themselves towards him—there would then be little chance for infants who cannot be supposed to move first in the case. But if we suppose that every instance of renewal occurs by a pre-determined and special act of God's power, then the way is open for the renewal of infants as well as others. Indeed, if it were a known fact that all infants are saved, then so far as they are concerned, election and special grace would be a matter of irresistible inference.

The fact that God destroyed infants with others in the flood, in Sodom, and in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in like sweeping temporal judgments, does not imply that he carries out the destruction of the soul on the same principle. Moses and Aaron, and many other pious men, were involved in the curse that doomed a whole generation to die in the wilderness; yet they were special friends of God and subjects of salvation.

Nor does the fact that God visits the iniquities of fathers upon the children, hinder the salvation of infants. In this world, God of necessity deals with men in families and according to a thousand social liabilities. But in the final judgment, every one is called to answer only for his own individual wickedness. And we have no means of knowing that, the new born infants of wicked parents are more wicked in the sight of God, and present more obstructions to renewing grace than others. The wickedness of an ancestor meets us at the judgment only so far as it is made our own.

Nor is it anywhere intimated in the Bible, that any of those who die in infancy are lost. The Apostle clearly exposes the hopelessness of the heathen who die without the Gospel—and he graphically describes their wickedness,

as the ground of their condemnation; and he speaks of the light against which they have sinned. Yet in this connection, he says nothing of infants, who are clear of those forms of wickedness.

Infants seem to stand more exclusively upon their relationship to the first and second Adam, than others. They have not, like adults, fallen by a conscious rejection of Christ, nor can they rise by an intelligent reception of Christ. If all dying in infancy are saved, we find a fullness of meaning in those words—"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. Where sin hath abounded, grace did much more abound."—*Puritan Recorder*.

Candid Confession.

AN ANECDOTE.

In a beautiful little town in Western New York, a delightful revival of religion took place in the winter of 1849-50, when some scores of sinners were turned from darkness to light—from the power of Satan to God. In the solemn daily service of worship, the Congregational, Methodist, and Baptist ministers were actively engaged, and it was agreed among them that during the time conversions were going on, little should be said of denominational peculiarities. After a season, as less of conversion was witnessed, it was felt of importance to collect the lambs into the fold of the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls. One of the Pedobaptist brethren proposed, that each of the ministers should preach on baptism and church fellowship in the presence of the brethren. The plan was adopted, and the houses of worship were filled with attentive audiences, while the Congregational and Methodist brethren insisted on infant baptism as a scriptural rite and duty.

It will scarcely be supposed that the audience or the interest would be less when the Baptist brother with less of learning than his brethren, should have to meet and reply to the arguments and learning which, for the last two evenings, had been placed before many hundreds of their neighbourhood. No anxiety, however, was felt by those who knew our brother's extensive acquaintance with his bible and with men. He entered on his duties with great composure and apparent ease, and occupied some forty minutes in a clear statement of scriptural truth on his subject. He then remarked;

"I suppose that after the learned discourses to which we have listened on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, it will be expected that I should say something respecting infant baptism, a subject, I confess, somewhat out of the range of my studies. However," turning to his Methodist brother, who sat in the pulpit, and placing in his hands a New Testament; he added, "my brother understands it, and he will read some of the strongest passages on the subject, and I will offer some remarks on them."

The Methodist brother seemed somewhat surprised, and at length said that such a mode of discussion was rather difficult, and that he was not prepared.

"Oh, my brother," said the Baptist, "I do not want you to discuss the matter; only to give us a few of the texts, the commands, or examples on which you most generally depend."

"Indeed," replied the worthy Methodist, "I cannot do that just now; for nothing strikes my mind as very pertinent."

The Baptist then turned to his hearers and said, "It seems that our brother has nothing to say in defence of infant baptism, and knows no scripture to sustain it. I am sure I know of none; so that it appears there can be nothing said on the subject." We will therefore close the meeting."

This was done, and by far the larger number of the converts were baptized and added to the church."

The Visitation Sermon.

Some forty years have elapsed since a curious circumstance occurred at Norwich, England, in connection with the Rev. Joseph Kinghorn, of that city, the well known opponent of Robert Hall, on Terms of Communion; the facts will afford amusement to our readers, and will show the clergy that if ever they choose to preach another man's sermon, it is important to read it beforehand, at least while there is yet time to procure another.—It is a fact well known that many of the Episcopalian clergy of England, even some of those who are reputed as evangelical, purchase

their sermons in manuscript; and that not a few of them are written by dissenting ministers. It happened that at the period we have already indicated, a visitation was about to be held by the bishop, and a certain reverend of the city, probably because he was a sprig of nobility was to preach the sermon. His reverence utterly unable to compose a suitable discourse, applied to different persons famed for pulpit eloquence to assist him, but met with a series of disappointments. At length some one recommended an application to Mr. Kinghorn. He heard the request of his neighbor, and knew precisely what was wanted, but unfortunately his engagements were so numerous that he could not possibly write the sermon till the evening before the day when it was to be delivered. This was no difficulty whatever to the clergyman, who indeed did not call for it till he was on his way to deliver it. On receiving it from Mr. K., with the assurance that it was "the best sermon he could write for the occasion," and handed over "the fee," about five dollars, he proceeded to the crowded church. A few minutes before entering the pulpit, after being fully robed in the vestry, and having also put on his "Master's scarf," he took out his sermon case to see whether the manuscript was fairly and boldly written. This being "all right," his eye first caught the text, which was scarcely satisfactory; but at this moment the rector and beadle came to conduct him to the pulpit, where in a few moments he read as the foundation of his discourse, Isaiah xlv. 10, 11, "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber, yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that can not understand; they all look to their own way, every one for gain from his quarter."

The sermon was, as the reader has already anticipated, a severe philippic on the imbecility and vices of the clergy. The preacher had wit enough to see that all was wrong, but he had no other sermon provided, and had not sense sufficient to alter the one before him.—The commotion in the church during its delivery, was terrific; the bishop frowned, the clergy bit their lips with chagrin, and the congregation fairly laughed outright. The service at length closed, and the bishop angrily asked the preacher why he had given them such a sermon. The answer was at least true: "Indeed, my Lord, I am very sorry; but I assure your Lordship I did not write the sermon, and did not know what was in it till your Lordship heard it." "Who wrote it for you?" "Why, my Lord, it was written by Mr. Kinghorn, a very eloquent Baptist minister of the city, from whom I had it this morning." His lordship now saw that he was talking to a most incorrigible doct, and dismissed him with the wise counsel, that if he ever again was called to preach on a public occasion, he would do well to compose his own sermon.—*Baptist Memorial*.

The Knowledge of God.

As a man that would come to God by Christ must, antecedent to his so coming, know himself, what he is; the world, how empty it is; the law, how severe it is; death and what it is; and Christ and what he is; so also he must know God: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him." God he must know, else how can the sinner propound him as his end, his ultimate end? for so doth every one that indeed doth come to Christ aright: he comes to Christ, because he is the way; he comes to God, because he is the end. But I say, if he knows him not, how can he propound him as the end? The end is that for the sake of which I propound to myself any thing, and for the sake of which I use any means. Now then, I would be saved, but why? Even because I would enjoy God. I come to Christ to be saved; and why? because I would enjoy God. I am sensible that sin has made me come short of the glory of God, and that Christ Jesus is he (the only one) that can put me into a condition to obtain the glory of God; and therefore I come to God by him.

But I say again, who will propound God for his end, that knows him not, that knows him not aright? yea, that knows him not to be worth being propounded as my end, in coming to Jesus Christ? and that he that thus knows him, must know him to be above all, best of all, and him in whom the soul shall find that content, that bliss, that glory and happiness, that can by no means be found elsewhere. And, I say, if this be not found in God, the soul will never propound him to himself as the

only, the highest, and ultimate end in its coming to Jesus Christ; but it will propound something else, even what it shall imagine to be the best good: perhaps heaven, perhaps ease from guilt, perhaps to be kept out of hell or the like. I do not say but a man may propound all these to himself, in his coming to Christ; but if he propounded these as his ultimate end, as the chiefest good that he seeks; if the presence and enjoyment of God, of God's glorious majesty, be not a chief design, he is not concerned in the salvation of Christ.—*Bunyan*.

Watch First Dealings.

He that will find his house in good repair, must stop every chink as soon as discovered; and he that will keep his heart, must not let a vain thought be long neglected; the serpent of heart apostasy is best killed in the egg of a small remission of care. Oh! if many poor decayed Christians had looked to their hearts in time, they had never come to that sad pass they now are in! We may say of heart-neglects, as the apostle doth of vain babblings, that they increase to more and more ungodliness. Little sins neglected will become great and unconquerable: the greatest crocodile once lay in an egg; the greatest oak was once but an acorn. The firing of a small train of powder may blow up all, by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton, or worldly thought may grow to; behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!

Ministerial Itinerancy.

Dixon in taking leave of his late circuit (Birmingham West,) made some very suggestive observations in relation to this point. Having been requested to publish a volume of sermons as a memento of his ministry, he replied:

"I cannot receive all you say about my preaching. I have done my best; but, were I to stay longer with you, I do not hesitate to say I could preach better. I will tell you why: there is an originality about every man. (originality is too great a word in my case,) peculiarity rather, which it takes you some time to get habituated to; there's a mode of expression, a habit of thought, which cannot be entered into all at once. Besides, I now know your characters—your habits—your wants; and I am sure I could suit my remarks to your cases better than in times past. But my three years are expired, and our unbending itinerancy requires me to leave. I could gladly have remained in my present circuit for life. My study is roomy, and so sunny, and so full of gladsome light, that I could there have fulfilled your request, and have written a volume of sermons. I say, I wish I could have remained here; for, the longer I live, the more objectionable does itinerancy become to me. I have long hated it; I hate it the more the longer I live; and I shall hate it till the day of my death."—*London Patriot*.

Maxims and Proverbs.

A bitter jest is the poison of friendship.
Be always at leisure to do good.
Change seldom, for changes are inconvenient.
Deeds are fruits, words are but leaves.
Enough is as good as a feast.
False friends are worse than open enemies.
Good counsel is above all price.
He doubles his gift who gives in time.
Idleness is the sepulchre of a living man.
Lean liberty is better than fat slavery.
Make no jest of another man's infirmities.
Never sound the trumpet of your own fame.
Of all prodigality, that of time is the worst.
Party faction is the bane of society.
Quick believers need broad shoulders.
Ratify promises by performances.
Say well is good, but do well is better.
That is gold which is worth gold.
Undertake no more than you can perform.
Valor can do but little without discretion.
We lessen our wants by lessening our desires.

WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF SIN.—What is the fruit of sin? Sometimes it brings honor and fame, as it did to the prophet Balaam; sometimes it bears a wedge of gold, as it did for Achan; at other times it produces purple and fine linen, as it did to Dives. Do you say, then, "I will sin?" Stop! It bears another fruit besides—DEATH. The honors of Balaam, the gold of Achan, the linen of Dives, were all poisoned with death. Sweet in the mouth, and bitter and destructive when swallowed, is the characteristic of sin. Do not forget, reader, if you will sin, you must die the second death!