

242. Infant Baptism.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

John 3, 5. 6.

There are those who utterly and passionately reject infant baptism. Why? They believe that a man can be saved without Baptism. Now, Christ says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Salvation is by faith and Baptism. It should be remembered that the Lord connects these two, faith and Baptism, and we must never say: "If only I am baptized, it will make no difference whether I believe or not"; nor must we say: "If I but believe, it will make no difference whether I am baptized or not." The Lord has plainly and unmistakably said: *Believe and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved.*

But the opponents of infant baptism say: Little children cannot believe. The question, then, is: Can little children believe? The Word of God clearly says: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Or are little children an exception to this? Do they please God without faith? Do they enter the kingdom of heaven without faith? "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Therefore "ye must be born again," says the Lord. Are little children brought from the flesh to the Spirit, from the kingdom of nature to the Kingdom of Grace and of Glory without the new birth, without faith? No; there is no exception to the plan of salvation here. Of the same little children of whom Christ said that theirs is the kingdom of God He says: "*Which believe in Me.*" These are the clear words of Him who is the Truth. He says of these little ones: "*Which believe in Me.*" Christ Himself has told us that they do believe. To doubt or disbelieve His word is sin. And why should it be considered impossible that little children can and do believe? A child can receive the gifts of nature, why not the gifts of grace? It can receive nourishment of the body, why not of the soul? Why can it not have faith? Faith is a *gift* of grace, a gracious operation of *God*. This, therefore, settles the question of infant baptism. But why doubt that infants should be baptized? Have we not the command of Christ: "Baptize *all nations*"?

Prayer.

Almighty God, faithful Father, we thank Thee that by this washing of regeneration Thou dost receive into the covenant of Thy grace all nations, without distinction of sex or age, all that desire it or are brought to Thee. Especially do we praise Thee that Thou hast promised Thy kingdom also to little children and, since without faith they cannot enter it, dost regenerate them by water and the Spirit, forgiving them their sins and creating a new spiritual life in them. Let Baptism be their comfort against the guilt of sin and let them grow up as Thy true children. Amen.

Yes, Thy warning voice is plain,
And we fain would keep it duly:
"He who is not born again,
Heart and life renewing truly,
Born of water and the Spirit,
Will My kingdom ne'er inherit."

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