

2034

COPYRIGHT.]

HOW INFANTS ARE SAVED.

Manuscript by

BY

REV. H. PETTY.

*Dry Lock
Va,*

Sweet, innocent and pure,
Baby spirits through the streets
Of the New Jerusalem,
Linking mankind to angelhood.

1

HOW INFANTS ARE SAVED.

The following, with some slight verbal changes, was read before the "Minister Meeting" of the Roanoke Association, held with the Baptist Church at Lynch's, Campbell county, Va., March 29th, 1890, and published by request of the meeting.

The Children's Kingdom.

A SERMON IN VERSE BY REV. H. PETTY.

"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."—Matthew 19:13.

Behold what gracious words,
What loving words are here,
Set forth by Him who came,
The saddened heart to cheer.

184495

234

P456h

HOW INFANTS ARE SAVED.

“Suffer little children,”
He says to come to me,
And do not say them nay,
My grace can make them free.

’Tis taught us in God’s Word,
How hearts are made anew,
How by the Spirit’s power,
Heaven is brought to view.

How e’en the little ones,
Are made alive to God,
How they are washed and cleansed,
Through the Redeemer’s blood.

How, without *rite* or *seal*,
By priestly hands applied,
From every clime and race,
Jesus for them has died.

All such will Heaven receive,
All such will Heaven own,
Bright jewels they will be,
Gathered around Christ’s throne.

Then mothers, dry your tears,
Let not your hearts be sad,
Your little ones are all
In snowy whiteness clad.

’Tis true no pearly drops,
E’er touched their infant brows,
No want of *cov’nant seal*,
Need your worst *fears* arouse.

For in God's house on high,
Each one doth sweetly rest,
Freed from all sin and guilt,
They are supremely blest.

Oh! magnify the grace,
The grace so freely giv'n,
That gives the infant race,
Admittance into Heav'n.

Oh! what a countless throng
Will gather by and by,
With crown and palm, and song,
With one triumphant cry.

All hail to him who once,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
All hail to Him who now,
As King of Kings doth reign.

How Infants Are Saved.

There is nothing more touching or more tender, than the affection which is lavished by a loving mother upon the little one who nestles closely to her bosom—bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. All the world, for the time being, is forgotten in view of the destiny which awaits this precious little bit of humanity, more precious than the gold of Ophir or the brightest jewel that sparkles in the coronet of a king. The well being of this treasure is guarded with peculiar care. The eye of the mother is ever upon it; the heart of the mother interested in it. Nothing is more beautiful than her infant's smile, and no music more enchanting than her infant's prattle.

This being the case, it is no wonder that when she is made to believe that the eternal destiny of

the little one's soul depends upon it receiving upon its face a few drops of water, trickling from the hands of a sprinkling priest, as if they came from the fountain of all goodness and purity, that she should be anxious to see these drops of liquid grace touch her infant's brow, so that "the seal of the covenant" might be fixed upon it, and the little one ever afterwards be regarded as "*regenerate* and grafted into the body of Christ's Church," an heir of glory born. But is it true, as taught in so many ways by Catholic and Protestant alike, that the way of salvation for infants is opened only by means like this? If it be true, what becomes of the millions of infants who have died and who will continue to die, without this gracious introduction, as it is claimed, into the Church of Christ and the kingdom of heaven?

They are left, says one, to the "*uncovenanted mercies* of God." And what are we to understand by the "uncovenanted mercies of God?" Why, the mercy that is meted out to the little ones who are so unfortunate as not to be "*christ-*

ened”—made Christians, in other words—by having a few drops of water sprinkled upon them. Is there anything more absurd, more unjust, more unsatisfactory, than the idea that the mercy of God is limited in the smallest degree, or tied up in any such way as this? And yet, there are thousands who believe it and teach it. The writer was at the funeral of an infant once, and the preacher said, in the course of his remarks: “We know that this child is safe,” and assigned as a reason for believing it safe—

“Safe in the arms of Jesus,”—

that it had a Christian mother and had been baptized.

The only inference to be drawn from such a statement as this, is, that had the child not received this so-called blessing, its salvation would, to say the least, have been in doubt.

Dr. Timothy Dwight, in his “System of Theology,” a standard Pedo-Baptist work, says :

“When children die in infancy, and are scripturally dedicated to God in baptism, there is much and very consoling reason furnished to

believe that they are accepted beyond the grave."

Here again we have the thought presented, (a thought, too, that should make one shudder,) that children dying in infancy, and not "dedicated to God in baptism," are not numbered with what are termed "*elect infants*," and, of course, are not "accepted beyond the grave." The cases are numerous that might be cited to show that the different denominations practicing the rite of infant baptism, from the Church of Rome down, all of them, more or less, attach some mysterious, saving, gracious influence to it.

The Church of Rome, every one knows, teaches this to be a saving ordinance. It is, by this rite, administered by the hands of a priest, that the devil in the heart of the child is said to be exorcised (cast out) and the child made a member of the body of Christ—the Church—and given a passport to heaven. In the Episcopal prayer-book, under the heading of Baptism of Infants, occur these words: "Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin." What can these words mean if they do not mean

that in some mysterious way the heart and life of the child is brought under some gracious influence by the administration of this rite, which it could not otherwise have? Instances are on record where ministers and priests have been sent for, to baptize infants who were likely to die, lest they die without the saving efficacy of infant baptism.

I know a Baptist minister who was sent for to perform such a service. He went to see the poor, anxious, distressed mother, but like Aquila and Priscilla of old, instead of performing the rite, he expounded unto her the way of God more perfectly.

Rev. Mr. Spurgeon, the great London preacher, speaking of his own experience in this line, says :

“I remember seeing a baby sprinkled within less than an hour of its death ; and I seem to hear even now the comfort which certain parties gave to the bereaved parents : ‘What a mercy it was baptized ! what a consolation it must be !’”

It must be remembered that Mr. Spurgeon

himself was brought up a Pedo-Baptist, as both his father and his grand-father were Pedo-Baptist ministers. The seal of the Pedo-Baptist covenant was fixed upon him when an infant, but it did not seal him so firmly as to keep him from straying into another fold when he became old enough to think and act for himself. For when but a boy at school, at the age of fourteen, his attention was called to the subject, which set him to thinking, and searching the Scriptures, the result of which was, that he became, as he says, "a convert from sprinkling *with* water, to Baptism *in* water. The rite which he had received at the hands of his grand-father, did not, in his estimation, meet the scriptural requirement to be baptized ; and hence, after his conversion, he was, on a personal profession of his faith in Christ, as he himself states, "baptized by a Baptist minister *in the river.*"

The testimony and the experience of Mr. Spurgeon is similar to that of thousands of others, and the statement which he makes about seeing "a baby sprinkled within less than an

hour of its death," goes to show the importance that is attached to the administration of the rite of infant baptism by those who practice it, and are made to believe that, in some way, the child is saved by it. Of course, a mother, yearning over the babe upon her bosom and wishing to do it all the good she can, believing at the same time that the little one's soul is in danger, if left unbaptized, will have it baptized at the earliest possible moment, whether it be morn, noon or night, if likely to die. She is but following out her conviction to do so ; but her conviction is evidently wrong, for it is not reasonable to suppose for a moment that God, merciful and kind and gracious, and not willing that any of his creatures should perish, would institute a rite and make the performance or non-performance of that rite at the hands of a sinful man, a condition upon which the salvation of millions of the human family depended. It would be a reflection upon the character of God to suppose that such a thing could possibly be. The Baptists are the only people who have stood out

against this thing, have denied it and suffered for it, and still deny it. They claim that no such rite as infant baptism was ever ordained by Christ, and is not taught in the Word of God. They believe that all infants are saved, both those born in heathen as well as in Christian lands, but that they are saved independent of any rite or ceremony whatever.

The blessing that comes upon the little ones incapable of intelligent action, who cannot exercise faith in Christ, and repentance toward God, comes purely by and through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree," whose blood cleanseth us from all sin, and "by whose stripes we are healed."

Dr. Talmage in his sermon on the "Revision of Creeds," speaking of the "*hot disputes*" occasioned by a discussion of the status of infants in the scheme of redemption, gives his opinion thus: "What Christ will do with all the babies in the next world, I conclude from what he did

with the babies in Palistine when he hugged them and kissed them.”

The Dr. surely draws upon his imagination, and goes beyond the record, when he says that Christ *hugged* and *kissed* the babies of Palistine, but not more so than when he puts a few drops of water on a baby's head and calls it baptism, making it at the same time, a substitute for believers' baptism, the only baptism known to the WORD of GOD, “He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved.”

CHRIST.

Some Questions for Those Who Practice Infant Baptism to Answer.

"It is not the will of your Father who is in Heaven, that one of these *little ones* should perish." Matt. 18:14,

How sweetly does a little babe
Rest on its mother's breast,
So free from guile, no conscious guilt,
'Twas such that Jesus blest.

Can it be true that such an one
Has need of priestly rite,
To give it place at God's right hand,
Clothed in the purest white?

Can it be true that Christ will say
To such an one depart,
You were not laved by priestly hands,
You are defiled at heart?

Can it be true that Heaven's gates
Will evermore be shut
To all upon whose *infant brows*
No pearly drops were put?

Can it be true that Infant hearts
Must thus be made anew?
Then millions of the human race
To Heaven must bid adieu.

Oh! who would charge the Holy One
With any such decree,
That only those thus touched and sealed
"Regenerate" can be?

Who can believe the tree of life
Is barred to souls like these,
Because for want of liquid grace
The Master is displeased?

And who will say such guileless souls
Can never enter Heaven,
Because, alas! a *Romish rite*
Was never to them given.

H. PETTY.