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I.

THE ADAMIC PRINCIPLE IN THEOLOGY.

THE origin of our race is Adamic; its probation and apostasy were Adamic; its guilt and depravity are Adamic; its redemption, as far as it is redeemed, is Adamic. This word *Adamic* is the italic word in our language, having more meaning and distinction than any other. Without it, human history would be an enigma, mental philosophy a puzzle, and theology but a vain logomachy. Anthropology and soteriology both turn upon it as a pivotal word.

What, then, is its import in theology—what underlying, informing, and shaping principle does it symbolize as it stands in the vocabulary of the science of religion?

To this question three typical answers have been proposed, giving three fundamental hypotheses as to the nature of the union between Adam and his posterity, and as to the nature of our participation in his guilt and depravity; and the constructive influence of these theories reaches into soteriology. One class of theologians translates the word *Adamic* by the word *parental*; another, by the word *realistic*; and the third, by the word *federal*.

I. According to parentalists, Adam sustained no other relation to his posterity than that of a father to his children; and this relation ruled the whole Edenic probation, and all the consequences of the fall, as they flowed down to the race. This is the key to all the arrangements and consequences of the covenant of works. As a race-father, Adam sinned; as children, all mankind heir his misery and the defects of his character. The Adamic principle, then, to them is precisely and definitely the law of genetic transmission.

IV.

THE ETERNAL FUTURE OF INFANTS

IN THE LIGHT OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION AND OF HOLY
SCRIPTURE.

THINKING on the above-named subject, one day, on my way to a sick-room, as I left the electric car, my attention was arrested by that sad emblem of maternal grief, a white crepe streamer, with printed notice reading, "Lydia Lillian B—— died at such a time, aged eleven months and sixteen days." At the other end of the short block (there was one house between) was an octogenarian drawing nigh the same bourne, and since dead! Death at both ends of the life-line! The babe, I was informed, had died of cholera infantum, which slays its thousands every year, and is largely, from various causes, a city disease. Whether improved sanitation, in perfect drainage, careful plumbing, and honest inspection of milk and water supplies, has anywhere reduced town bills of infant mortality, we have as yet seen no disproof, or even questioning, of the current statement that one-half the race die in infancy! What becomes of this mighty host is a deeply interesting problem. A glance at the infant's form, its spinal column evidently intending it for erect posture and movement, and early dawning of reflection and reasoning, would suggest the belief of a different destiny for these little ones from that of the myriad orchard blooms, which in nature's wastage never come to fruitage, and the countless young of animals, from innumerable causes, cut off before maturity. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth!" Reason infers, what revelation affirms, infant immortality. Of all the dead, without exception, it is said in scripture, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, but the spirit unto God who gave it."

Admitting their immortality, which none will dispute who

credit human immortality at all, what becomes of these young spirits at death?

The Romanist faith, while sending all baptized infants, dying such, directly to heaven, invents for the unbaptized dying infants (a far mightier host) an obscure region, not exactly hell, but not heaven, as their everlasting home, and coolly debates whether their punishment for Adam's sin, and his inherited sinful nature, will be one of positive suffering or simple negation of heavenly bliss, and urges, therefore, the necessity of speedy baptism as essential to salvation.¹

Protestantism, on the contrary, the religion of the Bible, knows of but two places beyond the grave, heaven and hell. With us the inquiry takes the final form: Which of the two is now the home of departed infants, and will be to such, departing, to the end of time, and their residence for all eternity? Pursuing the order of the Confession, which gives, first, man's definitions, and then God's proof texts, I discuss—

I. THE ETERNAL FUTURE OF INFANTS, DYING IN INFANCY, IN THE LIGHT OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH.

This aspect of the inquiry takes on a new interest because of modern assaults, from within and without, upon a certain section of our Confession of Faith. The old slander, which one might reasonably have hoped forever laid in its ignoble grave—that Presbyterians teach “that there are infants a span long in hell”—has been revived in scarcely less slanderous and insulting form. Fiction even takes part, if it did not lead the hue and cry. Paul Leicester Ford, in his *Janice Meredith*, represents a Presbyterian mother as changed from a tender, lovable woman into a severe, harsh, unattractive being, and the transformation wrought by two sermons (they are not among his published sermons) preached by Jonathan Edwards, “in his brief term as president of Nassau Hall,” convincing her that “her four babies were enduring everlasting torment.” The novelist perhaps overlooked the slight circumstance that Edwards, though president of Princeton, was a Congregational and not a Presbyterian minister! The charge

¹ *Den's Theology*, Vol. III., page 339. De penis parvulorum in solo peccato originali decedentium.

was repeated, some time since, from Plymouth pulpit by one at the time a Presbyterian minister connected with Chicago Presbytery, and with the similar use of Edwards; and, echoed by another metropolitan pulpit, this time Presbyterian, and by a Presbyterian pastor, it has been taken up in concert, and repeated in chorus by less familiar voices, viz., that the now-famous clause in the chapter "Of Effectual Calling" about "elect infants" does teach infant damnation.

What, then, is the actual teaching of the Confession of Faith in confessedly the only clause bearing directly on the subject in dispute?

Here the writer may be permitted to quote from a sermon preached in the Napoleon Avenue Presbyterian Church, and published in the columns of the *Times-Democrat* of New Orleans, by its request, but covering the wider field of the broader assault.

It is a matter for congratulation that thus a multitude of readers, many of whom never heard before of the Westminster Confession, have had, through the courtesy of the secular press, the reading of the two entire chapters containing the obnoxious statements, and so Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Christian and infidel, have thus had the opportunity of examining at first hand our credal statements, and of judging for themselves, not only what Presbyterians, North and South, believe, but, what perhaps is more interesting, if not more important at this juncture, what they do not believe.

I quote, leaving off the numerals, which, with the fragments they indicate, like the artificial arrangement of verses in the Bible, sometimes interrupt the flow of thought and even obscure sense:

"Let us now come to the other clause. Here again we have a right to complain of similar unfairness of quotation, so we give the whole chapter—Chapter X.—'Of Effectual Calling.' This describes what is ordinarily called regeneration and conversion, but here described from the standpoint of God's agency in it, 'All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by his Word and Spirit out of the state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; en-

lightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away the heart of stone and giving unto them a heart of flesh, renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. This effectual call is of God's free grace, and especial grace alone; not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ, through his Spirit, who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth. So also are other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and, therefore, cannot be saved; much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they profess (did they anticipate comparative religion), and to assert and maintain they may be is pernicious, and to be detested.'

"Now it is freely admitted that, construed by itself, the clause in question might seem to teach the election and salvation of some dying infants, and the non-election and perdition of others. But it is but fair to us to say this sense or inference, for it is only such, is repudiated by the entire body of Presbyterians, and the doctrine taught only by one or two ancient writers of mark. We do not so understand it when subscription is made. But, again, after a renewed and careful study, I am convinced that it was meant positively to teach no such repellent doctrine as the damnation of any infants, as such. And my reasons for so believing are several. First, note this fact: The original draft of this section read, 'Elect of infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth.' Elect of infants would clearly have meant to describe a certain number of infants belonging to the mass of

infants dying such, and, taken out of the mass, are saved, leaving the rest to perish; but note, they expunged that, and wrote, without the 'of,' 'elect infants dying,' etc. Observe, further, they do not say elect and baptized infants, etc. Leaving off baptized lets in the unbaptized babes. Again, observe this clause is not in the chapter defining the eternal decrees of God, but that defining effectual calling, or application of sovereign grace.

"Beginning with adult sinners, they show first how the elect among them are saved, viz., by voluntary, intelligent, and personal acceptance of gospel terms; but how about other elect, as infants and idiots, who, dying as they are, cannot understand the way of life through faith and repentance? Recollecting that there were two classes of infants, those dying such and those living to maturity, they say, 'Elect infants dying in infancy,' as well as feeble-minded adults, are saved by the Spirit without the Word, and by the sovereign pleasure of Almighty God, working when and where he pleaseth.

"At the most, they simply go as far as 'thus saith the Lord' warrants. All the elect will be saved, because God ordains the means as well as the end, and he will save all the adults through personal faith and repentance, and all the infants and incompetent adults, by the power of the sovereign Spirit, working when and where and how he will, not only effectually calling a Paul in his manhood, but sanctifying a John from the womb.

"So far, then; from our Confession being committed to infant damnation, it not only proves the possibility of infant salvation by pointing out the way, but gives, in connection with scripture representations of man's fallen nature, the only hope for the infant dead, to-wit, the sovereign will of an electing God. Our creed really teaches infant salvation by proving and explaining the possibility without the word, and holds out the hope at least for all dying in infancy, or born feeble-minded, and in this, I am of the opinion, it is alone among the credal statements of Christendom."

To this allow me to add these three remarks: First, my authority for the statement about the expunging of the preposition "of" from the first draft: *The Baird Lecture for 1882*, by Alexander Mitchell, D. D., LL. D., emeritus professor of Ecclesiastical History, St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, joint editor of

Minutes of the Westminster Assembly, page 408. Reference in the margin to *Minutes of the Westminster Assembly*, page 162, sec. 534; and which, by the way, he construes as we have done. Secondly, no one that we have ever heard of has ever charged the Westminster Confession with teaching the damnation of non-elect idiots, yet, if it bears the meaning ascribed to it in the one clause, it must in the other. Thirdly, there is, therefore, no occasion for the revision of this clause in the chapter on "Effectual Calling." Our Confession of Faith is a piece of solid masonry, not built on the lines of Corinthian ornamentation, it may be, but of Doric simplicity, possibly not of marble, but of granite. What if a stone or two offend our idea of beauty, the plummet reveals no deflection from the perpendicular, and removal might imperil the whole structure, and be the wished-for signal for tearing down much, and rebuilding with inferior material, and out of plumb with the rest. Indeed, this wordy war is not so much against expression of truth as truth expressed! The world, and some in the church, will be content with nothing less than the destruction of the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty in Human Salvation, but as it happens, that would only leave the more difficult task of eliminating it from the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, and could not be done without the aid of higher critics of the infidel stamp.

So much for our Confession of Faith on the eternal future of infants.

II. THE ETERNAL FUTURE OF INFANTS, DYING SUCH, IN THE LIGHT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Our first observation is, that there is no positive assertion, in so many words, of the salvation of any infants dying such in the Bible, as, for example, after this form, "All infants dying infants go to heaven." It is, however, an inference which comes by "good and necessary consequence," a rule of interpretation announced by the Confession itself, and a just rule, especially where applied to divine statements, because the contents of every proposition, explicit or implicit, used by God must be known to the Omniscient. Of course, there is peril in man's application of the rule, but that does not forbid its sober and careful use.

First, then, as it is Bible truth that all the elect will be saved, it was safe to say "elect infants dying in infancy" will be saved, for this is the end of their election or designation by the sovereign grace of the Lord. As for the seed of believers dying in infancy, the Abrahamic covenant, the charter of the church of all dispensations, secures their salvation. Read in full, that covenant runs thus, "I will be a God to thee, and I will be a God to thy seed after thee." It means as much and the same in the one clause as the other. It is only as children of the covenant coming to responsibility reject or refuse to claim the privileges of their spiritual birthright that they forfeit its advantages; but baptized infants of believing parents, dying before the possibility of disavowal of the covenant, reap all its advantages. We maintain, therefore, that circumcision under the law, and baptism coming in its room under the gospel, are divine and visible pledges of the salvation of the children of God's people dying in the irresponsibility of infancy. The marvellous contrast between David's mourning over the deaths of two of his children has always seemed to me proof that he, inspired man of God and sweet singer of Israel, firmly believed in infant salvation, or at least considered the covenant as securing the salvation of the seed of the righteous, perishing before maturity. There is no note of hope in the heart-broken wail over the miserable end of his wretched, handsome son Absalom, hurled, by Joab's darts, in red-handed rebellion against God, king and father, into eternity: "Oh! Absalom, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee; oh! Absalom, my son, my son." But joy of future meeting throbs in his other utterance over his dead babe: "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."

I never in all my life knew one with such robustness of intellect and strength of will and independence of thought and fearlessness in searching for and announcing truth, as Rev. Dr. Charles Colcock Jones, of Georgia. Yet never did I ever meet one who more thoroughly submitted intellect and will and life to ascertained doctrine and precept of the Word. A "thus saith the Lord" was with him a finality, and beyond it he would not as expounder of God's book take one step! Now in my early ministry I heard

him preach a discourse at the funeral of the firstborn of a pastor of the old Midway Church, and he distinctly took and openly held the ground that the infant children of the covenant dying in infancy the Bible taught are saved, and beyond that he only would go in hope. This was probably the position of the framers of the Confession.

It will not, I hope, however, be called presumption if "I also declare mine opinion." Here I may be permitted again to use my own material:

"As for myself, I believe in universal infant salvation; that is to say, in the salvation of all infants in pagan or Christian lands, dying in infancy, baptized or unbaptized, and I think I have, by 'good and necessary consequence,' warrant for that belief. I purposely forego what some regard as a proof-text, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' and for several reasons. First, because the exegesis which bases the Saviour's supposed claim of heaven for them, viz., on their innocence, is anti-scriptural, and, secondly, because, while Calvin, who, by the way, on the strength of one passage of at least doubtful interpretation, is accused of teaching infant damnation, uses the incident and words with skill and force against the Anabaptists, who refused children baptism, and incidentally teaches infant salvation through sovereign grace, it has seemed to me that Jesus was there defining membership in the church on earth, his kingdom, viz., children of God's people and childlike adults. Passing by the baptized children of the covenant dying babes, to whom God promises to be God, and whose salvation is acknowledged as sure, finding in my Bible that the reasons assigned for human perdition are all or mainly such as are impossible to babes; such as sinning against the natural light of reason and conscience, willful transgressions of law, rejection of the gospel, grieving the Spirit away, I infer from the Word itself the salvation of all infants dying any where, baptized or unbaptized.

"What a lovely light this belief lets fall on the myriads of little mounds holding the dear, small bodies from which countless young spirits have fled from pagan and Christian homes to the bosom of the children's great Friend; even infanticide, horrible,

unnatural crime as it is, is robbed of some of its dreadfulness, if of none of its guilt, by being overruled to infant salvation!

“As Henry Rogers, in his *Greyson's Letters*, beautifully phrases it, ‘The arch-enemy has in this case outwitted himself; he has been even rendering heaven more populous, much against his will, hounding into the everlasting fold the young lambs of the flock, who would otherwise have lost themselves “on the dark mountains.” ’ ”

I close with a fine passage, awakening tender memories in parental hearts not a few, sound in theology, exquisite in poetry, from Bickersteth's *Yesterday, To-day and Forever*, reminding of a sweet thought of Harbaugh in his *Heavenly Recognition*, possibly familiar to the poet, that as babes add so much to our earthly homes, something analogous to this should be in our Father's house; that is to say, while saved infants will ever grow in knowledge and advance in character, they will ever retain about them certain indefinable infantile graces, making them inexpressibly dear to such an one as Paul the aged, and all like him, triumphant but battle-scarred saints.

A babe in glory is a babe forever.
 Perfect as spirits and able to pour forth
 Their glad hearts in tongues which angels use,
 These nurslings gathered in God's nursery
 Forever grow in loveliness and love,
 (Growth is the law of all intelligence),
 Yet cannot pass the limit which defines
 Their being. They have never fought the fight,
 Nor borne the heat and burden of the day,
 Nor stagger'd underneath the weary cross;
 Conceived in sin, they sinned not. Though they died,
 They never shuddered with the fear of death;
 These things they know not and can never know.
 Yet children of a fallen race,
 And early to transgression like the rest,
 Sure victims, they were bought with Jesus' blood,
 And cleansed by Jesus' Spirit and redeem'd
 By his omnipotent arm from death and hell;
 A link between mankind and angelhood;
 As born of woman sharer with all saints
 In that great ransom paid upon the cross;
 In purity and inexperience
 Of guilt, akin to angels. Infancy
 Is one thing, manhood one. And babes, though part

Of the true archetypal house of God,
Built on the heavenly Zion, are not now,
Nor will ever be, massive rocks, or fluted shafts
Of columns, or far shadowing pinnacles,
But rather as the delicate lily-work
By Hiram wrought for Solomon of old,
Enwreathed upon the brazen chapiters,
Or flowers of lilies round the molten sea.
Innumerable flowers thus bloom and blush
In heaven. Nor reckon God's design in them
Frustrate or shorn of full accomplishment;
The lily is as perfect as the oak;
And Sharon's roses are as beautiful
As Lebanon's majestic cedar crown."

ROBERT QUARTERMAN MALLARD.

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