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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF INFANT SALVATION.

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(In five parts.)

PART I.

THE task which we set before us in this brief paper is not to unravel the tangled skein of the history of opinion as to the salvation of those who die in infancy. We propose to ourselves only the much more circumscribed undertaking of tracing the development of doctrine on this subject. We hope to show that there has been a doctrine as to the salvation of infants, dying such, common to all ages of the Church. And we hope to show that there has taken place with reference to this, as with reference to other doctrines, a progressive correction of crudities in its conception, by which the true meaning and relations of the common teaching have been more and more freed from deforming accretions and its permanent core brought to ever purer expression. As the result of this process, as we hope to show, the Church has found its way to a tolerably complete understanding of the teaching of the Scriptures upon this important subject. Those portions of the Church which have chosen to sit still in the darkness of mediævalism will have advanced, to be sure, but a little way into this fuller and better apprehension. Those portions of the Church which have elected to light their path more or less by the rush-

light of reason, rather than by the sun of revelation, have naturally wandered more or less aside from it. But wherever the Word of God has been the constant study of the Church, the darkness of this problem too has measurably given way before its light; and where the apprehension of scriptural truth in general has become most pure, there the depths of this doctrine too have been most thoroughly sounded and its relations most perfectly perceived.

The Patristic Doctrine.

It is fundamental to the very conception of Christianity that it is a remedial scheme. Christ Jesus came to save sinners. The first Christians had no difficulty in understanding and confessing that Christ had come into a world lost in sin to establish a kingdom of righteousness, citizenship in which is the condition of salvation. That infants were admitted into this citizenship they did not question. When the Apologist Aristides, for example, would make known to the heathen how Christians looked upon death, he did not confine himself to saying that "if any righteous person of their number passes away from the world, they rejoice and give thanks to God and follow his body as if he were moving from one place to another," but adds of the infant, for whose birth they (unlike many of the heathen) praised God, "if, again, it chance to die in its infancy, they praise God mightily, as for one who has passed through the world without sins." Nor did those early Christians doubt that the sole gateway into this heavenly citizenship, for infants too, was not the natural birth of the flesh, but the new birth of the Spirit. Communion with God and the inheritance of life had been lost for all alike, and to infants too were restored only in Christ. To Irenæus, for example, it seems appropriate that Christ was born an infant and grew by natural stages into manhood, since, as he

¹ HELEN B. HARRIS, *The Newly Discovered Apology of Aristides*, London, 1891, p. 108.

says, "He came to save all by Himself—all, I say, who by Him are born again unto God, infants and children, and boys and young men, and old men," and accordingly passed through every age that He might sanctify all.¹

Less pure elements, however, entered inevitably into their thought. The ingrained legalism of both Jewish and heathen conceptions of religion, when brought into the Church, quite obscured for a time the doctrines of grace. It seemed for a season almost as if Christ had died in vain, and as if Paul's whole proclamation of a free salvation had borne no fruit. Men persisted in looking for salvation by the works of the law, and found no ground of trust save in their own virtues. In this atmosphere the problem of the death of little children became an insoluble one. Dying before they had acquired merit, either good or bad, it seemed equally impossible to assign to them reward or punishment. Even a Gregory Nazianzen affirmed that they could be "neither glorified nor punished"—that is, probably, that they went into a middle state similar to that taught by Pelagius. A heretical sect arose, called the Hieracitæ from their master Hierax, who, arguing that if one who strives cannot be crowned unless he strives lawfully it would be absurd to crown one who had not striven at all, consigned apparently all children dying before the use of reason to annihilation.² Gregory of Nyssa seems to have some such notion floating before his mind, when, at the opening of his treatise, *On Infants' Early*

¹ IRENÆUS, *Haer.*, ii., 22, 4, and iii., 18, 7.

² Cf. WALL, *Hist. of Infant Baptism*. Ed. 2, 1707, p. 365.

³ See EPIPHANIUS, *Haer.*, 67; AUGUST., *Haer.*, 47; and compare SMITH and WACE, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, iii., 24. It is possible that this heresy extended itself among the sectaries of the Middle Ages, and that it is some such notion as this that PETER THE VENERABLE intends when he accuses "the heretics" (*i. e.*, PETER DE BRUYS and his friends) of "denying that children who have not reached the age of intelligence can be saved by baptism, or that another person's faith can profit those who cannot use their own, since our Lord says, 'Whosoever shall have believed and shall have been baptized shall be saved.'" Cf. NEWMAN, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States*, p. 14.

Death, he speaks of such children as passing out of the world before they even become human.

This treatise, which is probably the most extended discussion of the question from this general point of view which has come down to us from the patristic age, is full of interest. It was written in Gregory's old age, at the request of Hierius, the governor of Cappadocia, and undertakes to solve, for the instruction of that official, the problem of justice which the early death of children raised under the legalistic viewpoint. Gregory begins by asserting the incongruity of imagining such an infant as standing before the judgment-seat of God, and the equal injustice of supposing him to pass at once into the lot of the blessed, without having acquired any merit. With apparently entire unconsciousness of the existence of anything like race-sin, he frankly proceeds in his argument on the assumption that future blessedness belongs of right to human beings who have not forfeited it by personally sinning, and that the infant, dying such, is therefore entitled to its natural happiness. The point of difficulty arises only from the consideration that then those are unjustly dealt with who are required to grow up in this earthly arena and to earn bliss only with difficulty or to lose it through their transgressions. This he attempts to meet by two suggestions. On the one hand, he suggests that though infants enter at once into happiness, they do not at once enter into all the happiness that rewards him who is victor here. "But the soul that has never felt the taste of virtue," he says, "while it may, indeed, remain perfectly free from the sufferings which flow from wickedness, having never caught the disease of evil at all, does nevertheless in the first instance partake only so far in that life beyond as this nursing can receive; until the time comes that it has thriven on the contemplation of the truly Existent as on a congenial diet, and, becoming capable of receiving more, takes at will more from that abundant supply of the truly Existent which is offered." By this only gradual participation in bliss he would avoid the injustice of placing one that had acquired no virtue on the

same level with him who had borne the heat and burden of the day. On the other hand, he suggests that the reason why God takes some away from the chance of failure here, removing them to certain bliss in their infancy, may be that He owes a debt to their parents' virtue, or that He foresees that the evil to which they would give themselves if left on earth would far exceed that wrought by any actually permitted to remain; or, at all events, he argues, it may be needful to leave some men on earth to sin, that their evil may serve as a foil for the virtue of the righteous, since it is beyond doubt an addition and intensification to the felicity of the good "to have its contrary set against it." We are in little danger of judging Gregory's theodicy successful;¹ but it is doubtless as successful a theodicy as could be wrought out on his premises. If the awards of the future life are to be conceived as distributed strictly according to personal merit, and infants, dying such, are to be esteemed free from sin, it would seem logically unavoidable that we should either suppose them to pass out of existence at death, or, like Pelagius, invent for them a middle place of natural felicity, neither heaven nor hell—or, at the best, like Gregory, less logically but more genially, fancy the Divine Father fitting them gradually for higher things "beyond the veil."

The same ingrained externalism in the conceptions of both Jewish and heathen converts to Christianity wrought, however, in the earliest ages of the Church, more powerfully and permanently another corruption of the Christian idea. The kingdom which Jesus came to found was not of this world, and was not, in its primary idea, an external organization. But it was inevitable that it should soon be identified with the visible Church, and the regeneration which was its door with the baptism by which entrance into the Church was accomplished. Already in Justin and Irenæus the word "regeneration" means "baptism;"

¹ The whole discussion can be conveniently read in vol. v. of *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Second series. New York, 1893. pp. 372-381.

and the language of John iii. 5, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," was from a very early period uniformly understood to suspend salvation upon water-baptism. How early this doctrine of the necessity of baptism for salvation became the settled doctrine of the Church it is difficult to trace in the paucity of very early witnesses. Tertullian already defends it from objection.¹ The reply of Cyprian and his fellow-bishops to Fidus on the duty of early baptism, and especially his whole argument to Jubianus against the validity of heretical baptism, plainly presuppose it.² By this date clearly it was the accepted Church-doctrine; and although its stringency was mitigated in the case of adults by the admission not only of the baptism of blood, but also of that of intention,³ the latter mitigation was not allowed in the case of infants. The watchword of the Church—first spoken in these exact words, perhaps, by Cyprian in his strenuous opposition to the validity of heretical baptism⁴—*Extra ecclesiam salus non est*, hardened in this sense into an undisputed maxim. The whole Patristic Church thus came to agree that, martyrs excepted, no infant dying unbaptized could enter the kingdom of heaven.

The fairest exponent of the thought of the age on this subject is Augustine, who was called upon to defend it against the Pelagian contention that infants dying unbaptized, while failing of entrance into the kingdom, yet obtain eternal life. His constancy in this controversy has won for him the unenviable title of *durus infantum pater*—a designation doubly unjust, in that not only did he not originate the obnoxious dogma or teach it in its harshest form, but he was even preparing its destruction by the doctrines of grace, of which he was more truly the father. Augustine ex-

¹ *De Bapt.*, c. 12.

² *Epistles* lviii. (lxiv.) and lxiii. (lxxii.).

³ With what limitations may be conveniently read in WALL, *Hist. of Infant Baptism*, ed. 2, 1707, pp. 359 sq.

⁴ *Epistle* lxxiii. (lxxii.), § 21.

pressed the Church-doctrine moderately, teaching, of course, that infants dying unbaptized would be found on Christ's left hand and be condemned to eternal punishment, but also not forgetting to add that their punishment would be the mildest of all, and indeed that they were to be beaten with so few stripes that he could not say that it would have been better for them not to be born.¹ His zeal in the matter turned on his deepest convictions, and the essence of his argument may be exhibited by putting together two or three sentences from one of his polemic writings against the Pelagians. "We must by no means doubt," he says, "that all men are under sin, which came into the world by one man and has passed through unto all men, and from which nothing frees us but the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "For inasmuch as infants are only able to become His sheep by baptism, it must needs come to pass that they perish if they are not baptized, because they will not have that eternal life which He gives to His sheep." "Let then there be no eternal salvation promised to infants out of our own opinion, without Christ's baptism; for none is promised in that Holy Scripture which is to be preferred to all human authority and opinion." The Pelagian, denying original sin, found it an easy matter to assign to infants, born innocent and taken out of life before their own activities could soil their consciences, a place outside of the kingdom of God, indeed, but also free from punishment. The semi-Pelagians, allowing original sin, were in deeper waters, and seem to have tentatively suggested that the fate of each infant was determined by what God knew he would have done had he lived to years of discretion. Augustine, with his profound conviction of the reality of innate sin and of its guilt before God,² could not

¹ Augustine's doctrine is most strongly expressed in *Sermo xiv* in *De Peccat. Merit.*, c. 21 (xvi.), and *Contra Julian.*, v., 11, he speaks of the comparative mildness of the punishment.

² *De Peccat. Merit.*, c. 33 (xxii.), c. 40 (xxvii.).

³ Mr. LEA, in his *History of Auricular Confession*, I., 97, adduces a curious instance of the perversity of Monkish thought from St. Obo of Cluny. Augustine bases the condemnability of infants on their

but contend with all his force against these teachings ; he was really striving for the essential doctrines of universal sinfulness and of eternal bliss only through the propitiating work of Christ. Because his doctrine was based on such broad grounds no one could surpass him in the strength of his conviction as to the doom of unbaptized children—*i.e.*, in his view, of children unsaved by Christ. But it is not to Augustine, but to Fulgentius († 533),¹ or to Alcimus Avitus († 523),² or to Gregory the Great († 604)³ that we must go for the strongest expression of the woe of unbaptized infants.

Meanwhile, however, whether through the vigor of Augustine's advocacy or out of the natural and indeed inevitable revulsion of the Christian consciousness in the presence of Pelagian error, the Church had come at length to a fully reasoned reassertion of its primitive and essential faith, that infants, too, need salvation, and

original sin, and he sometimes accounts for the transmission of sin by the presence of concupiscence in the act of procreation. Odo, without more ado, traces the condemnability of infants to the sinfulness of conjugal intercourse ! Since such infants are certainly not punished for guilt of their own, he argues, it is clear that they are punished for that sin by which they are conceived ; " if, therefore," he continues, " the sin in conjugal intercourse is so great that an infant for that alone ought to be punished . . ."

¹ *E.g.*, *De Fide ad Petr.*, c. 27 : " It is to be most firmly held, and by no means doubted, that not only men already in the use of reason, but also children, whether they begin to live in their mother's womb and there die, or pass from this world after being born from their mothers without the sacrament of baptism, are to be punished with the everlasting penalty of eternal fire ; because although they had no sin of their own committing, they nevertheless incurred by their carnal conception and nativity the damnation of original sin."

² *E.g.*, *Ad Fuscinaam Sororem* :

" Omnibus id vero gravius, si forte lavacri
Divini expertem tenerum mors invidia natum
Præpatat, dura generatum sorte Gehennæ.
Qui mox, ut matris cessavit filius esse,
Perditionis erit ; tristes tunc edita nolunt
Quæ flammis tantum genuerunt pignora matres."

³ *E.g.*, *Expos. in Job*, i. 16. Such phrases as these meet us in Gregory's writings : " Those who have done nothing here of themselves, but have not been freed by the sacraments of salvation, enter there into torments ;" " It is perpetual torment which those receive who have not sinned of their own proper will at all." (*Moralium*, ix., xii.).

none of any age enters life save through the saving work of Christ. This is the fundamental thought of the patristic age in the matter, to which only a form was given by its belief that saving grace came only through baptism. There were some outside Pelagian circles, like Gregory of Nazianzus, who sought for those who die in infancy unbaptized an intermediate place, neither salvation nor retribution. But probably, with the exception of Gregory of Nyssa, only such anonymous objectors as those whom Tertullian confutes,¹ or such obscure and erratic individuals as Vincentius Victor whom Augustine convicts, in the whole patristic age, doubted that the kingdom of heaven was closed to all infants departing this life without the sacrament of baptism. And now Augustine's scourge had driven out the folly of imaging an eternity of bliss for men outside the kingdom of heaven and apart from the salvation of Christ.

The Mediæval Mitigation.

If the general consent of a whole age as expressed by its chief writers, including the leading bishops of Rome, and by its synodical decrees, is able to determine a doctrine, certainly the Patristic Church transmitted to the Middle Ages as *de fide* that infants dying unbaptized (with the exception only of those who suffer martyrdom) are not only excluded from heaven, but doomed to hell. Accordingly the mediæval synods so define. The second Council of Lyons and the Council of Florence declare that "the souls of those who pass away in mortal sin or in original sin alone descend immediately to hell, to be punished, however, with unequal penalties." On the maxim that *gradus non mutant speciem* we must adjudge Petavius² unanswerable, when he argues that this deliverance determines the punishment of unbaptized infants to be the same in kind (in the same hell) with that of adults in mortal

¹ *De Bapt.*, c. 12.

² PETAVIUS, *Dog. Theol.*, ed. Paris, 1865, ii., 59 sq.

sin : " So infants are tormented with unequal tortures of fire, but are tormented nevertheless."

Nevertheless scholastic thought on the subject was characterized by a successful effort to mollify the harshness of the Church-doctrine, under the impulse of the prevalent semi-Pelagian conception of original sin. The whole troupe of schoolmen unite in distinguishing between *pæna damni* and *pæna sensus*, and in assigning to infants dying unbaptized only the former—*i.e.*, the loss of heaven and of the beatific vision, and not the latter—*i.e.*, positive torment. They differ among themselves only as to whether this *pæna damni*, which alone is the lot of infants, is accompanied by a painful sense of the loss (as Lombard held), or is so negative as to involve no pain at all, either external or internal (as Aquinas argued). So complete a victory was won by this mollification that perhaps only a single theologian of eminence can be pointed to who ventured still to teach the doctrine of Augustine and Gregory—Gregory Ariminensis thence called *tortor infantum*; and Hurter reminds us that even he did not dare to teach it definitively, but only submitted it to the judgment of his readers.¹ Dante, whom Andrew Seth not unjustly calls " by far the greatest disciple of Aquinas," has enshrined in his immortal poem the leading conception of his day, when he pictures the " young children innocent, whom Death's sharp teeth have snatched ere yet they were freed from the sin with which our birth is blent," as imprisoned within the brink of hell, " where the first circle girds the abyss of dread," in a place where " there is no sharp agony" but " dark shadows only," and whence " no other plaint rises than that of sighs which from the sorrow without pain arise." The novel doctrine attained papal authority by a decree of Innocent III. (c. 1200), who determined " the penalty of original sin to be the lack of the vision

¹ HURTER, *Theolog. Dogmat. Compend.*, 1878, iii., p. 516: Tract. x., cap. iii., § 729. Wycliffe must be added; but he stands out of the mass.

² *Hell*, iv., 23 sq.; *Purgatory*, vii., 25 sq.; *Heaven*, xxxii., 76 sq. (Plumtre's translation).

of God, but the penalty of actual sin to be the torments of eternal hell."

A more timid effort was also made in this period to modify the inherited doctrine by the application to it of a development of the baptism of intention. This tendency first appears in Hincmar of Rheims († 882), who, in a particularly hard case of interdict on a whole diocese, expresses the hope that "the faith and godly desire of the parents and godfathers" of the infants that had thus died unbaptized, "who in sincerity desired baptism for them but obtained it not, may profit them by the gift of Him whose Spirit (which gives regeneration) breathes where it pleases." It is doubtful, however, whether he would have extended this lofty doctrine to any less stringent case.¹ Certainly no similar teaching is met with in the Church, except with reference to the peculiarly hard case of still-born infants of Christian parents. The schoolmen (*e.g.*, Alexander Hales and Thomas Aquinas) admitted a doubt whether God may not have ways of saving such unknown to us. John Gerson, in a sermon before the Council of Constance, presses the inference more boldly.² God, he declared, has not so tied the mercy of His salvation to common laws and sacraments, but that without prejudice to His law He can sanctify children not yet born, by the baptism of His grace or the power of the Holy Ghost. Hence, he exhorts expectant parents to pray that if the infant is to die before attaining baptism, the Lord may sanctify it; and who knows, he says, but that the Lord may hear them? He adds, however, that he only intends to suggest that all hope is not taken away; for there is no certainty without a revelation. Gabriel Biel († 1495) followed in Gerson's footsteps,³ holding it to be accordant with God's mercy to seek out some remedy for such infants. This teaching remained, however, without effect on the Church-dogma, although something similar to it was, among men who served God in the way

¹ Cf. WALL, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

² *Sermon, De Nat. Mar. Virg.*, consid. 2, col. 33.

³ In iv., Sect. iv., q. 11.

then called heresy, foreshadowing an even better to come. John Wycliffe († 1384) had already with like caution expressed his unwillingness to pronounce damned such infants as were intended for baptism by their parents, if they failed to receive that sacrament in fact; though he could not, on the other hand, assert that they were saved.¹ His followers were less cautious, whether in England or Bohemia; and in this, too, they approved themselves heralds of a brighter day.

RECENT DISCOVERIES IN BABYLONIA.

BY A. H. SAYCE.

From *The Contemporary Review* (London), January, 1897.

(*In two parts.*)

PART II.

BUT the empire of Lugal-zaggi-si seems to have passed away with his death, and at no long period subsequently a new dynasty arose at Ur. Ur, now Mugayyar, lay on the western bank of the Euphrates, and was therefore more exposed to the attacks of the Semitic Bedâwin than the other cities of Babylonia. It was at the same time brought into closer contact with them in the way of trade, so that while its citizens were necessarily trained to arms they were also exceptionally rich and prosperous. Doubtless these two causes had much to do with the prominent part now taken by Ur in the history of Babylonia. Among the early monuments of Niffer are the inscriptions of a certain Lugal-kigub-nidudu, of whom it is said that "he added lordship to kingdom, establishing Erech as the seat of lordship and Ur as the seat of kingdom." We may gather from this that he had raised Ur to the rank of a royal capital, and had overthrown the last

¹ Cf. WALL, as above.

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PART II.

The Drift in the Church of Rome.

IN the upheaval of the sixteenth century the Church of Rome found her task in harmonizing, under the influence of the scholastic formulas, the inheritance which the somewhat inconsistent past had bequeathed her. Four varieties of opinion sought a place in her teaching. At the one extreme the earlier doctrine of Augustine and Gregory, that infants dying unbaptized suffer eternally the pains of sense, found again advocates, and that especially among the greatest of her scholars, such as Noris, Petau, Driedo, Conry, Berti. At the other extreme, a Pelagianizing doctrine that excluded unbaptized infants from the kingdom of heaven and the life promised to the blessed, and yet accorded to them eternal life and natural happiness in a place between heaven and hell, was advocated by such great leaders as Ambrosius Catharinus, Albertus Pighius, Molina, Sfondrati. The mass, however, followed the schoolmen in the middle path of *pœna damni*, and, like the schoolmen, differed only as to whether this punishment of loss involved sorrow (as Bellarmine

held) or was purely negative.¹ The Council of Trent (1547) anathematized those who affirm that the "sacraments of the new law are not necessary to salvation, but superfluous; and that, without them, or without the desire thereof, men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification;" or, again, that "baptism is free, that is, not necessary to salvation."² This is explained by the Tridentine Catechism to mean that "baptism is necessary to every one without qualification," and that "the law of baptism is prescribed by our Lord to all, insomuch that they, unless they be regenerated to God through the grace of baptism, are born to eternal misery and perdition, whether their parents be Christian or infidel."³ The Council of Trent thus made it renewedly *de fide* that infants dying unbaptized incur damnation, though it left the way open for discussion as to the kind and amount of their punishment.⁴ The ordinary instruction in the Church of Rome has naturally been conformed to this point of view. Thus the *Catechism Prepared and Enjoined by Order of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore* teaches that "baptism is necessary to salvation, because without it we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."⁵ Müller's popular *Familiar Explanation of Catholic Doctrine* teaches that "baptism is the most necessary sac-

¹ For this classification see BELLARMINE, *De Amis. Gratia*, etc., vi., 1; and compare GERHARD, *Loci* (Cotta's ed.), vol. ix., p. 279; CHAMIER, *Panstrat. Cath.* (1626), iii., 159, or SPANHEIM, *Chamierus Contractus* (1643), p. 797.

² SCHAFF'S *Creeeds of Christendom*, ii., pp. 120, 123 (Seventh Session, March 3, 1547, Canon iv. on the Sacraments, and Canon v. on Baptism).

³ *The Catechism of the Council of Trent, Translated into English; with Notes* by THEODORE ALOIS BUCKLEY, B.A., pp. 150, 174, 175 (Part II., ch. i., qq. xvi., xxx., xxxiii.); cf. STREITWOLF and KLENER, *Libri Symbolici Eccles. Cath.*, tom. i., pp. 249, 274, 276. On the other hand, we are credibly informed that the council was near anathematizing as a Lutheran heresy the proposition that the penalty for original sin is the fire of hell (so Father PAUL, *Hist. of the Council of Trent*, c. 2).

⁴ PERRONE, *Prælect. Theol. in Compend. Redact.*, i., p. 494.

⁵ New York: The Catholic Publication Society—with the imprimatur of Cardinal McCloskey, and the approval of Archbishop (now Cardinal) Gibbons, dated April 6th, 1888: No. 2, Lesson 14 (p. 27).

rament, because without it no one can be saved ;”¹ words which are repeated by Deharbe.’ This is expanded by Schouppe as follows : “ This necessity is so absolute that children dying without baptism, though innocent of all actual sin, are excluded forever from heaven, on account of the original stain which they bear upon their souls. Therefore our Lord has permitted them to be baptized as soon as they are born, and has given the utmost facility to the administration of so indispensable a sacrament.”² “ Millions,” says Wenham, “ are saved with only this sacrament ; but no one is ordinarily saved without it.”³

It is natural to catch at the word “ ordinary ” in such a deliverance. And the Tridentine declaration, of course, does not exclude the baptism of blood as a substitute for baptism of water, even for infants. Neither does it seem necessarily to exclude the application of a theory of baptism of intention to infants. Even after it, therefore, an alternative development seems to have been possible. The path already opened by Gerson and Biel might have been followed out, and a baptism of intention developed for infants as well as for adults. This might even have been logically pushed on so as to cover the case of all infants dying in infancy. The principle argued by Richard Hooker,⁴ for example, appears reasonable, that the unavoidable failure of baptism in the case of the children of Christians cannot lose them salvation, because of the presumed desire and purpose of baptism for them in their Christian parents and in the Church of God. And it would be to proceed only a single step farther to have said that the desire and purpose of Mother Church to baptize all is

¹ No. IV., improved ed. New York : Benziger Bros. (1888), p. 309.

² *A Full Catechism of the Catholic Religion*, FANDER'S translation, revised, etc., by Bishop LYNCH, of Charleston. New York : The Catholic Publication Society Co., 1891, p. 248.

³ *Abridged Course of Religious Instruction*, etc. By the Rev. Father F. X. SCHOUPPE, S. J., new ed., etc. London : Burns & Oates, p. 188.

⁴ *The Catechumen*, etc. By J. G. WENHAM, Provost of Southwark. 3d ed. London : St. Anselm's Society, 1892, p. 293.

⁵ *Ecclesiastical Polity*, v., ix., 6.

intention of baptism enough for all dying in helpless infancy, or even that what has been called the implicit and interpretative faith¹ of their heathen parents may avail for them. Thus on principles agreeable to the general Roman line of thought a salvation for all dying in infancy might have been logically deduced, and infants, as more helpless and less guilty, have been given the preference over adults. On the other hand, it could be argued that as baptism either *in re* or *in voto* must mediate salvation, and as infants by reason of their age are incapable of the intention, they cannot be saved except they receive baptism in fact,² and thus

¹ What is meant by this language may be gathered from the following sentences from J. HENRY NEWMAN'S *Letter Addressed to His Grace the Duke of Norfolk*, on the infallibility of the Pope: "I have employed myself, in illustration, in framing a sentence which would be plain enough to any priest, but I think would perplex any Protestant. I hope it is not too light to introduce here. We will suppose then a theologian to write as follows: 'Holding, as we do, that there is only *material* sin in those who, being *invincibly* ignorant, reject the truth, therefore in charity we hope that they have the future portion of *formal* believers, as considering that by *virtue* of their good faith, though not of the *body* of the faithful, they *implicitly* and *interpretatively* believe what they seem to deny.' What sense would this statement convey to the mind of a member of some Reformation Society or Protestant League? He would read it as follows, and consider it all the more insidious and dangerous for its being so very unintelligible: 'Holding, as we do, that there is only a very considerable sin in those who reject the truth out of contumacious ignorance, therefore in charity we hope that they have the future portion of nominal Christians, as considering, that by the excellence of their living faith, though not in the number of believers, they believe without any hesitation, as interpreters [of Scripture?], what they seem to deny.'" (P. 93.)

² Thus, *e.g.*, DOMINICUS DE SOTO expresses it (*De Natura et Gratia*, ii. 10): "It is most firmly established in the Church that no infant apart from baptism *in re*—since he cannot have it *in voto*—enters the kingdom of heaven." In a more popular form it is put thus (*A Manual of Instruction in Christian Doctrine*, etc., 10th ed. London: St. Anselm's Society. Ed. 3 [1871], p. 282): "Baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation for all infants, at least wherever the Gospel has been promulgated. . . . Children, therefore, who die unbaptized cannot enter into the beatific vision. . . . The case of adults is somewhat different. For them, when the actual reception of the sacrament is impossible, an act of perfect charity, which includes the desire of it, will suffice for salvation. . . . Again, martyrdom, which is the highest act of charity, has always been held to supply the place of baptism." The book bears the imprimaturs of Cardinals Wiseman and Manning.

infants be discriminated against in favor of adults. It was this second path which was actually followed by the theologians of the Church of Rome, with the ultimate result that not only are infants discriminated against in favor of adults, but the more recent theologians seem almost ready to discriminate against the infants of Christians as over against those of the heathen.

This certainly sufficiently remarkable result grows out of the development which has been given in later Romanism to the doctrine of ignorance, and especially of "invincible ignorance," the latter of which was at length authoritatively defined by Pope Pius IX. A very characteristic statement of the nature of this doctrine is to be found in the late Cardinal Newman's *A Letter Addressed to his Grace the Duke of Norfolk* on the infallibility of the Pope. He is illustrating the care with which doctrinal statements should be interpreted. "One of the most remarkable instances of what I am insisting on," he says, "is found in a dogma, which no Catholic can ever think of disputing, viz., that 'Out of the Church, and out of the faith, is no salvation.' Not to go to Scripture, it is the doctrine of St. Ignatius, St. Irenæus, St. Cyprian in the first three centuries, as of St. Augustine and his contemporaries in the fourth and fifth. It can never be other than an elementary truth of Christianity; and the present Pope has proclaimed it as all Popes, doctors, and bishops before him. But that truth has two aspects, according as the force of the negative falls upon the 'Church' or upon the 'salvation.' The main sense is, that there is no other communion or so-called Church but the Catholic, in which are stored the promises, the sacraments and other means of salvation; the other and derived sense is, that no one can be saved who is not in that one and only Church. But it does not follow, because there is no Church but one which has the Evangelical gifts and privileges to bestow, that therefore no one can be saved without the intervention of that one Church. Anglicans quite understand this distinction; for, on the one hand, their article says, 'They are to be had, accursed (anathematizandi) that presume

to say, that every man shall be saved *by* (in) the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life by that law and the light of nature'; while on the other hand they speak of and hold to the doctrine of the 'uncovenanted mercies of God.' The latter doctrine in its Catholic form is the doctrine of invincible ignorance—or, that it is possible to belong to the soul of the Church without belonging to its body; and at the end of 1800 years it has been formally and authoritatively put forth by the present Pope (the first Pope, I suppose, who has done so), on the very same occasion on which he has repeated the fundamental principle of exclusive salvation itself. It is to the purpose here to quote his words; they occur in the course of his Encyclical, addressed to the Bishops of Italy, under the date of August 10th, 1863: '*We and you know* that those who lie under invincible ignorance as regards our most Holy Religion, and who, diligently observing the natural law and its precepts, which are engraven by God on the hearts of all, and prepared to obey God, lead a good and upright life, are able, by the operation of the power of divine light and grace, to obtain eternal life.''' Thus while an absolute necessity for baptism *in re* is posited for the infants of Christian parents, even though they die in the womb, on the other hand, as the law of baptism is in force only where it is known, and even an ignorance morally invincible (as among sectaries) is counted true ignorance, not even an intention of baptism is demanded of the heathen or of certain sectaries but may be held to be implicit—that is, they may be thought ready to do all that God requires if only they knew it. Among the heathen thus the old remedies for sin are held to be still probably valid, and their "primitive sacraments" are thought to retain their force; and this rule may

¹ *Op. Cit.*, p. 122.

² From the theological point of view, Goussier, *Théolog. Dogmat.*, 10th ed., Paris, 1866, i., 548, 549, 351, ii., 382, may be profitably consulted on this whole subject. How it is popularly presented may be gathered from the following editorial remarks from *The Catholic Review*, 42, 25 (December 11-17, 1893): "The truth is that God does not demand what is impossible; the heathen who have not heard of the Gospel

with some prudence be extended to cover some sec-
 taries. It may be extended also to cover the case of
 the infants of the heathen, dying such. St. Bernard,
 for example, is quoted approvingly by Gousset as say-
 ing, " Among the Gentiles as many as are found faith-
 ful, we believe that the adults are expiated by faith and
 the sacrifices ; but the faith of the parents profits the
 children, nay, even suffices for them." If the fathers
 are saved, in other words, why not the children ?

Sometimes a very sweeping application is given to this
 principle, as may be illustrated by a popular exposition
 of it made a few years ago in the pages of *The London
 Month*.¹ The writer is oppressed by the thought of
 the millions of unbaptized children who die annually.
 On the basis of John iii. 5 he declares that our Lord
 " excludes from the beatific vision all children who die
 unbaptized and who do not supply for the baptism of
 water by the baptism of desire, or the baptism of
 blood." It may be taken, therefore, as a first princi-
 ple " that without baptism no little child, under the
 Christian dispensation, enters the kingdom of heaven."
 " But," he instructs his readers, " we must not omit
 to notice that we are speaking of the Christian dispen-
 sation and of it alone." God provided for the Jews a
 sort of anticipation of baptism ; and we must suppose
 that something of the sort existed in the patriarchal
 age. " How long such traditional offering lasted on
 outside of the Jewish Covenant we do not know ; it
 may be that during the whole period previous to the
 coming of our Lord, those who were believers in the
 true God had the opportunity of obtaining from Him
 the deliverance of their little children from original

will be judged by the light and grace given them. If we, with the
 Sacraments and the Sacrifice, are so apt to fall into sin, how hard it
 must be for the pagans to be faithful to natural virtue. Yet some of
 them, no doubt, have been true to the voice of conscience and are to-
 day in heaven. Having the disposition to do right, they had the im-
 plied desire for baptism, and St. Thomas says that if actual baptism
 had been essential for their salvation, the Almighty would have sent
 an angel from heaven to pour the cleansing water on them. They
 are few, probably, but few or many, they manifest the mercy of God
 and show that nowhere was salvation made impossible."

¹ *London Month*, February, 1893.

sin, when they offered them to be His, and dedicated them, according to the best of their ability and knowledge, to His service. Nay, we may even hope that in the present day the dwellers in lands where the name of Christ is still unknown may save their children, as they certainly can save themselves, from the eternal loss of God, if they offer their little ones to Him with a recognition of Him as their all-powerful King and Lord." As over against this "wider hope" for the children of the heathen, however, nothing so comforting can be said of the children of the faithful who die unbaptized. A few Catholic theologians may have indulged hope for them ;¹ but on insufficient grounds. "Here and there it may be that God, by an extraordinary intervention in behalf of some one of His faithful servants, may grant such a privilege to some favored little one, but only by a very special miracle of grace, and as a rare exception to the general law." And even this meagre comfort is disallowed by most writers, as, indeed, on the basis of the Tridentine decrees it must be. Why, however, the baptism of intention should receive so wide an extension to the heathen, so as to give even the infants of the heathen the benefit of it, and be so inflexibly denied to the infants of Christians, is a question which will not easily receive satisfactory answer.

The application of the baptism of intention to the infants of Christians was not abandoned without some protest from the more tender-hearted. Cardinal Cajetan defended in the Council of Trent itself Gerson's proposition that the desire of godly parents might be taken in lieu of the actual baptism of children dying in the womb.¹ Cassander (1570) encouraged parents to hope and pray for children so dying.² Bianchi (1768) holds that such children may be saved *per oblationem pueri quam Deo mater extrinsecus faciat*.³ Eusebius Amort (1758) teaches that God may be moved by prayer to grant justification to such extra-sacramentally.⁴ Even somewhat bizarre efforts have been made to es-

¹ In 3 Part. Thomæ, Q. 68, art. 2, et. 11.

² *De bapt. infant.*

³ *De Remedio . . . pro parentis.*

⁴ *Theolog. Moral.*, ii., xi., 3.

cape the sad conclusion proclaimed by the Church. Thus Klee holds that a lucid interval is accorded to infants in the article of death, so that they may conceive the wish for baptism.¹ An obscure French writer supposes that they may, "shut up in their mother's womb, know God, love Him, and have the baptism of desire."² A more obscure German conceives that infants remain eternally in the same state of rational development in which they die, and hence enjoy all they are capable of; if they die in the womb they either fall back into the original force from which they were produced, or enjoy a happiness no greater than that of trees.³ These protests of the heart have awakened, however, no general response in the Church,⁴ which has preferred to hold fast to the dogma that the failure of baptism in infants, dying such, excludes *ipso facto* from heaven. What the Church of Rome, therefore, teaches as to the fate of infants of Christian parents dying such is, briefly, as follows: "Baptism is necessary as a means of salvation for both infants and adults. This necessity is not such as to exclude exceptions as regards the rite, though not as regards the substance and chief effects, in case actual baptism is impossible. . . . In the case of adults the effect can be obtained by contrition, perfect love of God, with a desire of baptism. . . . In the case of infants who are dead in sin through sharing in the guilt of Adam, and are incapable of making an act of attrition, the only way they can enter the kingdom of heaven is by baptism. . . . As infants are incapable of rational sentiments, their sanctification must be the work of a sacrament, that is, a divinely ordained rite that produces its effect while their souls are passive."⁵

¹ *Dog.* iii., 2, § 1.

² DE LA MARNE, *Traité métaphysique des Dogmes de la Trinité*, etc., Paris, 1826.

³ HERMESSIUS, *Zeitschr. f. Phil. u. kath. Theol.*, Bonn, 1832.

⁴ Compare VASQUEZ, in 3 P. s. Th., disp. cli., cap. 1; HURTER, *op. cit.*, 1878, iii., 516 sq.; PERRONE, *Praelect. Theolog.* (1839), vi., 55.

⁵ The Very Rev. WILLIAM BYRNE, D.D., Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, *The Catholic Doctrine of Faith and Morals*, etc., Boston, 1892, pp. 224, 225.

The comfort which is refused from the application of the principle of baptism of intention to infants, is sought by the Church of Rome by mitigating still farther than the scholastics themselves the nature of that *pœna damni* which alone it allows as punishment of original sin. And if we may assume that such writers as Perrone, Hurter, Gousset and Kendrick are typical of modern Roman theology throughout the world, certainly that theology may be said to have come, in this pathway of mitigation, as near to positing salvation for all infants dying unbaptized as the rather intractable deliverances of early Popes and later councils permit to them. As the definitions of Florence and Trent require of them, they all teach, of course, (in the words of Perrone,') "that children of this kind descend into hell, or incur damnation;" but (as Hurter says), "although all Catholics agree that infants dying without baptism are excluded from the beatific vision, and so suffer *loss*, are *lost* (*pati damnum, damnari*), they yet differ among themselves in their determination of the nature and condition of the state into which such infants pass." As the idea of "damnation" may thus be softened to a mere *failure to attain*, so the idea of "hell" may be elevated to that of a natural *paradise*.' Hurter himself is inclined to a somewhat severer doctrine. But Perrone (supported by

¹ *Compend.*, 1861, i., 494, No. 585.

² *Op. cit.*, No. 729.

³ What is possible in the Church of Rome in the way of elevating the idea of hell to that of a paradise may be interestingly investigated by reading the notable discussion on *The Happiness in Hell* by Professor ST. GEORGE MIVART and others in *The Nineteenth Century* for December, 1892, and January, February, April, September, and December, 1893. Professor Mivart's language is such as this: "Hell in its widest sense—namely, as including all those blameless souls who do not enjoy the Beatific Vision—must be considered as, for them, an abode of happiness transcending all our most vivid anticipations, so that man's natural capacity for happiness is there gratified to the very utmost; nor is it even possible for the Catholic theologian of the most severe and rigid school to deny that, thus considered, there is, and there will for all eternity be, a real and true *happiness in hell*" (Dec. 1892, p. 919). Professor Mivart's articles have been placed on the *Index*, and his language is extreme. But it is language which obviously expresses a widespread conviction among Roman teachers. And, indeed, a hell for "blameless souls" could scarcely be more severe.

such great lights as Balmes, Berlage, Oswald, Lessius, and followed not afar off by Gousset and Kendrick) reverts to the Pelagianizing view of Catharinus and Molina and Sfondrati—which Petau called a “ fabrication ” championed indeed by Catharinus but originated “ by Pelagius the heretic, ” and which Bellarmine contended was *contra fidem*—and teaches that unbaptized infants enter into a state deprived of all supernatural benefits, to be sure, but endowed with all the happiness of which pure nature is capable. Their state is described as having the nature of penalty and of damnation when conceived of relatively to the supernatural happiness from which they are excluded by original sin ; but when conceived of in itself and absolutely, it is a state of pure nature, and accordingly the words of Thomas Aquinas are applied to it : “ They are joined to God by participation in natural goods, and so also can rejoice in natural knowledge and love. ”¹

Thus, after so many ages, the Pelagian conception of a middle state for infants dying unbaptized has obtained its revenge upon the condemnation inflicted upon it by the Church. To be sure, it is not admitted that this is a return to Pelagianism. Perrone, for example, argues that Pelagius held the doctrine of a natural beatitude for infants as one unrelated to sin, while “ Catholic theologians hold it with the death of sin ; so that the exclusion from the beatific vision has the nature of penalty and of damnation proceeding from sin. ”² It may be doubted whether there is more than a verbal difference here. Both Pelagius and the Church of Rome consign infants dying unbaptized to a natural paradise. In deference to the language of fathers and councils and Popes, this natural paradise is formally assigned by Roman theologians to that portion of the other world designated “ hell. ” But in its own nature it is precisely what the Pelagians taught should be the state of unbaptized infants after death. By what expedients such teaching is to be reconciled with the other doctrines of the Church of Rome, or with its

¹ *Compend*, 1861, i., 494, cf. ii., 252.

² *Ibid.*, 1861, i., 494, No. 590.

former teaching on this same subject, or with its boast of *semper eadem*, is more interesting to its advocates within that communion than to us.¹ Our interest as historians of opinion is exhausted in simply noting the fact that the Pelagianizing process, begun in the Middle Ages by ascribing to infants guilty only of original sin liability to *pœna damni* alone, culminates in our day in their assignment by the most representative theologians of modern Rome to a natural paradise, which has not been purchased for them by Christ but is their natural right. This is of the very essence of Pelagianism, and logically implies the whole Pelagian system.²

The Lutheran Teaching.

This Pelagianizing drift may no doubt be regarded as in part a reaction from the harshness of the Roman-

¹ See some of the difficulties very mildly stated in HURTER, *loc. cit.*

² It is not necessary to point out, *e.g.*, that such a determination implies a Pelagianizing doctrine of sin. When we make all the happiness of which nature is capable the desert of original sin, there is little to choose between this "doctrine of original sin" and its entire denial. Some Roman writers appear to stand, therefore, on the verge of sending all infants dying such to heaven, despite the explicit teaching of the Church to the contrary. For example, S. J. HUNTER, S. J. (*Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*. New York: Benziger Bros., 1896, vol. iii.) says at p. 229: "We hold then that, after the promulgation of the Gospel, infants who die without baptism of water or of blood are not admitted to the supernatural vision of God, which constitutes the happiness of heaven; that in consequence of the sin of Adam they will remain forever deprived of that happiness for which they were destined. But this privation is no injustice to them, for their nature gave them no claim in justice to a supernatural reward; nor does it imply any unhappiness in them, for they need not be supposed to know what they have lost." And then he adds: "What little can be said concerning the difficult subject of their state will be found in the closing treatise of this volume." But when we turn to the closing treatise of the volume, what we find is this (pp. 441, 442): "The Catholic doctrine is that hell is the portion of those who leave this life with the guilt of actual mortal sin. If a sin be such that the punishment of hell is more than is deserved by the malice involved, then that sin is not a mortal sin. . . . We have already said what was necessary concerning the lot of infants that die without baptism either of water or of blood, and therefore still under the guilt of original sin, but without actual sin." Thus we are sent back and forth on a fruitless errand—except so far as we gather this: that as hell is for those alone who are burdened with "the guilt of actual mortal sin," and as infants dying such are "without actual sin," hell is no place for them. As there is no permanent state of existence between heaven and hell, and infants are excluded from both, where do they go?

ist syllogism, "No man can attain salvation who is not a member of Christ; but no one becomes a member of Christ except by baptism, received either *in re* or *in voto*."¹ So considered, its fault is that it impinges by way of mitigation and modification on the *major* premise; which, however, is the fundamental proposition of Christianity. Its roots are planted, in the last analysis, in a conception of men, not as fallen creatures, children of wrath and deserving of a doom which can only be escaped by becoming members of Christ, but as creatures of God with claims on Him for natural happiness, but, of course, with no claims on Him for such additional supernatural benefits as He may yet lovingly confer on His creatures in Christ. On the other hand, that great religious movement which we call the Reformation, the constitutive principle of which was its revised doctrine of the Church, ranged itself properly against the fallacious *minor* premise, and easily broke its bonds with the sword of the Word. Men are not constituted members of Christ through the Church, but members of the Church through Christ: they are not made the members of Christ by baptism which the Church gives, but by faith, the gift of God; and baptism is the Church's recognition of this inner fact.

The full benefit of this better apprehension of the nature of that Church of God membership in which is the condition of salvation, was not reaped, however, by all Protestants in equal measure. It was the strength of the Lutheran movement that it worked out its positions not theoretically or all at once, but step by step, as it was forced on by the logic of events and experience. But it was an incidental evil that, being compelled to express its faith early, its first confession was framed before the full development of Protestant thought, and subsequently contracted the faith of Lutheranism into too narrow channels. The Augsburg Confession contains the true doctrine of the Church as the *congregatio sanctorum*; but it committed Lutheran-

¹ The words are AQUINAS's (p. 3, q. 68, art. 1); see them quoted and applied by FERRONE, *Compend.*, ii., 253.

ism to the doctrine that baptism is necessary to salvation. This it did by teaching that children are not saved without baptism (Art. IX.),¹ inasmuch as the condemnation and eternal death brought by original sin upon all are not removed except from those who are born again by baptism and the Holy Ghost (Art. II.).² Surely by this declaration the necessity of baptism is made the necessity of means. And the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession is repeated in the Formula Concordiæ. In this symbol the Anabaptists are condemned because they teach "that infants not baptized are not sinners before God, but just and innocent, and in this their innocence, when they have not as yet the use of reason, may, without baptism (of which, to wit, in the opinion of the Anabaptists they have no need) attain unto salvation. And in this way they reject the whole doctrine of original sin, and all the consequences that follow therefrom." From this it seems clear that to the framers of the Formula it is one of the consequences which follow from original sin that even infants, dying before the use of reason, cannot attain unto salvation without baptism; and this inference is strengthened by the subsequent article which condemns the Anabaptists for teaching "that the children of Christians, on the ground that they are sprung from Christian and believing parents, are in very deed holy, and are to be accounted as belonging to the children of God, even apart from and before the receiving of baptism." Whence it would seem to follow that they

¹ "Of baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation. . . . They condemn the Anabaptists, who allow not the baptism of children, and affirm that children are saved without baptism," "and outside the Church of Christ," as is added in ed. 1540. (SCHAFF, *Creds of Christendom*, iii., p. 13.)

² "Also they teach that, after Adam's fall, all men begotten after the common course of nature are born with sin; . . . and that this disease of original fault is truly sin, condemning and bringing eternal death now also upon all that are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit. They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny this original fault to be sin indeed, and who, so as to lessen the glory of the merits and the benefits of Christ, argue that a man may, by the strength of his own reason, be justified before God" (SCHAFF, *loc. cit.*, p. 81.)

are made holy first and only by baptism.¹ These deliverances have naturally been felt to require some mollifying interpretation, and in this direction the theologians have urged : 1. That the necessity affirmed is not absolute but ordinary, and binds man and not God. 2. That as the assertion is directed against the Anabaptists, it is not the privation but the contempt of baptism that is affirmed to be damning. 3. That the necessity of baptism is not intended to be equalized with that of the Holy Ghost. 4. That the affirmation is not that for original sin alone any one is actually damned, but only that all are therefor damnable. There is force undoubtedly in these considerations. But they obviously do not avail wholly to relieve the Lutheran formularies of limiting salvation to those who enjoy the means of grace, and, as concerns infants, to those who receive the sacrament of baptism.

It is not to be contended, of course, that these formularies assert such an absolute necessity of baptism for infants, dying such, as can admit of no exceptions. From Luther and Melancthon down, Lutheran theologians have always taught what Hunnius expressed in the Saxon Visitation Articles : " Unless a person be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. *Cases of necessity are not intended, however, by this.*"² Lutheran theology, in other words, has taken its stand positively on the ground of baptism of intention as applied to infants, as over against its denial by the Church of Rome. " Luther," says Dorner,³ " holds fast, in general, to the necessity of baptism in order to salvation, but in reference to the children of Christians who have died unbaptized, he says : ' The Holy and Merciful God will think kindly of them. What He will do with them He has revealed to no one, that baptism may not be despised, but has reserved to His own mercy ; God does wrong to no man.' "⁴ From the fact that Jewish children dying be-

¹ SCHAFF'S *Creeks of Christendom*, iii., pp. 174, 175.

² *Ibid.*, iii., 184.

³ *Hist. of Protestant Theology* (E.T.), i., 171.

⁴ *Opp.*, xxii., 872 (Dorner's quotation).

fore circumcision were not lost, Luther argues that neither are Christian children dying before baptism ;¹ and he comforts Christian mothers of still-born babes by declaring that they should understand that such infants are saved.² So Bugenhagen, under Luther's direction, teaches that Christians' children intended for baptism are not left to the hidden judgment of God if they fail of baptism, but have the promise of being received by Christ into His kingdom.³ It is not necessary to quote later authors on a point on which all are unanimous ; let it suffice to add only the clear statement of the developed Lutheranism of John Gerhard (1610-22) :⁴ " We walk in the middle way, teaching that baptism is, indeed, the ordinary sacrament of initiation and means of regeneration necessary to all, even to the children of believers, for regeneration and salvation ; but yet that in the event of privation or impossibility the children of Christians are saved by an extraordinary and peculiar divine dispensation. For the necessity of baptism is not absolute, but ordinary ; we on our part are obliged to the necessity of baptism, but there must be no denial of the extraordinary action of God in infants offered to Christ by pious parents and the Church in prayers, and dying before the opportunity of baptism can be given them, since God does not so bind His grace and saving efficacy to baptism as that, in the event of privation, He may not both wish and be able to act extraordinarily. We distinguish, then, between necessity on *God's* part and on *our* part ; between the case of *privation* and the *ordinary* way ; and also between infants born *in* the Church and *out* of the Church. Concerning infants born out of the Church, we say with the apostle (1 Cor. v. 12, 13), ' For what have I to do with judging them that are without ? Do not you judge them that are within ? For them that are without God judgeth.' Wherefore, since there is no

¹ *Com. in Gen.*, c. 17.

² *Christliche Bedenken.*

³ See for several such quotations brought together, LAURENCE, *Bampton Lectures*, 1804, ed. 1820, p. 272. Also GERHARD as in next note.

⁴ Ed. Cotta, vol. ix., p. 284.

promise concerning them, we commit them to God's judgment; and yet we hold to no place intermediate between heaven and hell, concerning which there is utter silence in Scripture. But concerning infants born in the Church we have better hope. Pious parents properly bring their children as soon as possible to baptism as the ordinary means of regeneration, and offer them in baptism to Christ; and those who are negligent in this, so as through lack of care or wicked contempt for the sacrament to deprive their children of baptism, shall hereafter render a very heavy account to God, since they have 'despised the counsel of God' (Luke vii. 30). Yet neither can nor ought we rashly to condemn those infants which die in their mothers' wombs or by some sudden accident before they receive baptism, but may rather hold that the prayers of pious parents, or, if the parents are negligent of this, the prayers of the Church, poured out for these infants, are clemently heard and they are received by God into grace and life."

From this passage we may learn not only the cordial acceptance given by Lutheran theologians to the extension of the baptism of intention to infants, but also the historical attitude of Lutheranism toward the entirely different question of the fate of infants dying outside the pale of the Church and the reach of its ordinances. These infants are a multitude so vast that it is wholly unreasonable to suppose them (like Christians' children deprived of baptism) simply exceptions to the rule laid down in the Augsburg Confession. And it is perfectly clear that the Lutheran Confessions extend no hope for them. It is doubtful whether it can even be said that they leave room for hope for them. Melancthon in the *Apology* is no doubt arguing against the Anabaptists, and intends to prove only that children should be baptized; but his words in explanation of Art. IX. deserve consideration in this connection also—where he argues that "the promise of salvation" "does not pertain to those who are without the Church of Christ, where there is neither the Word nor the Sacraments, because the kingdom of Christ exists.

only with the Word and the Sacraments." Luther's personal opinion as to the fate of heathen children dying in infancy is in doubt: now he expresses the hope that the good and gracious God may have something good in view for them; and again, though leaving it to the future to decide, he only expects something milder for them than for the adults outside the Church: and Bugenhagen, under his eye, contrasts the children of Turks and Jews with those of Christians, as not sharers in salvation because not in Christ.* From the very first the opinion of the theologians was divided on the subject. (1) Some held that all infants except those baptized in fact or intention are lost, and ascribed to them, of course—for this was the Protestant view of the desert of original sin—both privative and positive punishment. This party included such theologians as Quistorpius, Calovius, Fechter, Zeibichius, Buddeus. (2) Others judged that we may cherish the best of hope for their salvation. Here belong Dannhauer, Hulemann, Scherzer, J. A. Osiander, Wagner, Musæus, Cotta, and Spener. (3) But the great body of Lutherans, including such names as Gerhard, Calixtus, Meisner, Baldwin, Bechmann, Hoffmann, Hunnius, held that nothing is clearly revealed as to the fate of such infants, and they must be left to the judgment of God. (a) Some of these, like Hunnius, were inclined to believe that they will be saved. (b) Others, with more (like Hoffmann) or less (like Gerhard) clearness, were rather inclined to believe they will be lost. But all of them alike held that the means for a certain decision are not in our hands.† Thus Hunnius says: "That the infants of Gentiles, outside the Church, are saved, we cannot pronounce as certain, since there exists nothing definite in the Scriptures concerning the matter; so neither do I dare simply to assert that these children are indiscriminately

* Cf. DORNER, *Hist. Prot. Theol.*, i., 171.

† Cf. LAURENCE, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 272.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ This classification is taken from COTTA (Gerhard's *Loci*, ix., 282).

¶ *Quæst. in cap. vii. Gen.*

damned. . . . Let us commit them, therefore, to the judgment of God." And Hoffmann says: "On the question, whether the infants of the heathen nations are lost, most of our theologians prefer to suspend their judgment. To affirm as a certain thing that they are lost could not be done without rashness."

This cautious agnostic position has the best right to be called the historical Lutheran attitude on the subject. It is even the highest position thoroughly consistent with the genius of the Lutheran system and the stress which it lays on the means of grace. The drift in more modern times has, however, been decidedly in the direction of affirming the salvation of all that die in infancy, on grounds identical with those pleaded by this party from the beginning—the infinite mercy of God, the universality of the atonement, the inability of infants to resist grace, their guiltlessness of despising the ordinance, and the like.¹ Even so, however, careful modern Lutherans moderate their assertions. They may affirm that "it is not the doctrine of our Confession that any human creature has ever been or ever will be lost purely for original sin;"² but they speak of the matter as a "dark" or a "difficult question,"³ and suspend the salvation of such infants on an "extraordinary" and "uncovenanted" exercise of God's mercy.⁴ We cannot rise to a conviction of a "faith" in the matter, but may attain to a "well-grounded hope," based on our apprehension of God's all-embracing mercy.⁵ In short, it is not contended that the Lutheran doctrine lays a foundation for a conviction of the salvation of all infants dying in infancy; at the best it is held to leave open an uncontradicted hope. We are afraid we must say more: it seems to contradict this hope. For should this hope prove true, it would no longer be true that "baptism is necessary to salvation" even *ordinarily*; the exception would be the rule. Nor

¹ See KRAUTH, *Conservative Reformation*, p. 433.

² Compare the statements in COTTA and KRAUTH, *loc. cit.*

³ KRAUTH, *l.c.*, p. 429.

⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 561-563.

⁵ *Ib.*, pp. 430, 437.

⁶ *Ib.*, *Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System*, p. 22.

would the fundamental conception of the Lutheran theory of salvation—that grace is in the means of grace—be longer tenable. The logic of the Lutheran system leaves little room for the salvation of all infants, dying in infancy, and if their salvation should prove to be a fact, the integrity of the system is endangered.

That it is not merely the letter of the Lutheran formularies which needs to be transcended, if we are to cherish a hope for the salvation of all infants, dying such, but the distinctive principle of the Lutheran system, is doubtless the cause of the great embarrassment exhibited by Lutheran writers in dealing with this problem, and of the extraordinary expedients which are sometimes resorted to for its solution. Thus, for example, Klieforth knows nothing better to suggest than that unbaptized children dying in their infancy, whether children of Christian parents or of infidel, stand in the same category with adult heathen, and are to have an opportunity to exercise saving faith when the Lord calls them before Him for judgment on His second coming. And the genial Norse missionary bishop Dahle, though he recognizes the scriptural distinction between the infants of Christian and those of heathen parents (1 Cor. vii. 14), seeks in vain to ground a hope on which he may rest his heart even for Christians' infants; and ends by falling back on the conjecture of the mediating theology of an opportunity for receiving Christ extended in the future life to those who have not enjoyed that opportunity here; thus, in other words, in his own way also assimilating the infant children of Christians with heathen. "The sum of the whole," he says, in concluding his discussion, "is that we may entertain a hope of salvation and bliss for our unbaptized children immediately after death, yet not more than a hope. But the question is still unanswered. Under any circumstances we have this consolation: that if the hope shall be unfounded such children will at least have the opportunity of the uncalled at some time to receive God's gracious call."¹ For

¹ LARS NIELSEN DAHLE, *Life After Death*, etc., translated from the Norse by the Rev. John Beveridge, M.A., B.D. (Edinburgh, 1896), p. 227.

the Lutheran the question is thus still unanswered, and must remain unanswered. The restrained paragraph with which Dahle opens his discussion appears, indeed, to put into words what every Lutheran must feel: "This is a very difficult—indeed, we might almost say a hitherto unanswered—question," he says. "All salvation is connected with Christ. But we come into connection with Him only through the means of grace; at all events, we do not know of any other way to Christ than this. Now, the means of grace are the Word and the sacraments. But the child is not susceptible to such means of grace as are afforded in the Word of God, which directs itself to the developed personal life; and so we have only the sacraments left. Of these, baptism is the one which incorporates into fellowship with Christ, and thereby with the Triune God, into whose name the candidate is baptized (Matt. xxvii. 19). Now, if a child is not susceptible to the means of grace of the Word, and does not receive the opportunity of baptism, is there any means whereby it can come into connection with Christ, apart from whom there is no salvation? This is the knot which no one yet has been able to undo."¹

SOME RECENT ENGLISH THEOLOGIANS:
LIGHTFOOT, WESTCOTT, HORT, JOWETT,
HATCH.

BY A. M. FAIRBAIRN, D.D.

From *The Contemporary Review* (London), March, 1897.

(*In two parts.*)

PART I.

THE heaviest loss which theology has sustained within the past decade seems to me, even after the lapse of more than seven softening years, to have been

¹ LARS NIELSEN DAHLE, *Life After Death*, etc., translated from the Norse by the Rev. John Beveridge, M.A., B.D. (Edinburgh, 1896), pp. 219, 220.

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No. 1.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF INFANT SALVATION.

BY PROFESSOR B. B. WARFIELD, D.D., LL.D.

(*In five parts.*)

PART III.

The Anglican Position.

A SIMILAR difficulty has been experienced by all types of Protestant thought in which the Roman idea of the Church, as primarily an external body, has been incompletely reformed. This may be illustrated, for example, from the history of opinion in the Church of England. The Thirty-nine Articles in their final form are thoroughly Protestant and Reformed. And many of the greatest English theologians, even among those not most closely affiliated with Geneva, from the very earliest days of the Reformation, have repudiated the "scrupulous superstition"¹ of the Church of Rome as to the fate of infants dying unbaptized. But such repudiation neither was immediate, nor has it ever been universal. And it must needs be confessed that

¹ *Reform. Legum*; de Baptismo: "Illorum etiam videri debet scrupulosa superstitio, qui Dei gratiam et Spiritum Sanctum tantopere cum sacramentorum elementis colligant, ut plane affirmant, nullum Christianorum infantem salutem esse consecuturum, qui prius morte fuerit occupatus, quam ad Baptismum adduci potuerit: quod longe secus habere judicamus." This code of laws seems to have been drawn up by a commission with CRANMER at the head of it. It was published by PARKER in 1571.

this "scrupulous superstition" was so deeply imbedded in the forms of the Book of Common Prayer, that it has survived all the changes which successive revisions have brought to its language, and remains to-day the natural implication of its Baptismal Offices.

The history of the formularies of the Church of England begins with the publication in 1536 of the somewhat more than semi-Romish *Articles devised by the Kinges Highnes Majestie, to stablyshe Christen quietnes and unitie amonge us, and to avoyde contentious opinions, which articles be also approved by the consent and determination of the hole clergie of this realme,*¹ commonly known as the "Ten Articles." These Articles explicitly teach the twin doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the necessity of baptism for salvation. Among the things which "ought and must of necessity" be believed regarding baptism, they tell us, is "that it is offered unto all men, as well infants as such as have the use of reason, that by baptism they shall have remission of sins, and the grace and favour of God;" that it is "by virtue of that holy sacrament" that men obtain "the grace and remission of all their sins;" and that it is "in and by this said sacrament" which they shall receive," that "God the Father giveth unto them, for His son Jesus Christ's sake, remission of all their sins, and the grace of the Holy Ghost, whereby they be newly regenerated and made the very children of God." Accord-

¹ "As seen by us, from the position we now occupy," says HARDWICK (*A History of the Articles of Religion*, etc. Third ed. revised by the Rev. FRANCIS PROCTER, M.A., etc. London: Bell, 1876, p. 42), "these articles belong to a transition-period. They embody the ideas of men who were emerging gradually into a different sphere of thought, who could not for the present contemplate the truth they were recovering, either in its harmonies or contrasts, and who consequently did not shrink from acquiescing in accommodations and concessions, which to riper understandings might have seemed like the betrayal of a sacred trust." Dr. SCHAFF repels DIXON's description (*History of the Reformation*, i., p. 415) of these articles as bearing "the character of a compromise between the old and the new learning." "They are essentially Romish," he says (*Creeds of Christendom*, i., 611), "with the Pope left out in the cold;" and he endorses Foxe's characterization of them (which Hardwick deprecates) as intended for "weaklings, which were newly weyned from their mother's milke of Rome."

ingly they "ought and must of necessity" also believe that "the sacrament of baptism was instituted and ordained in the New Testament by our Saviour Jesu Christ, as a thing necessary for the attaining of everlasting life;" that original sin cannot be remitted "but by the sacrament of baptism;" and that, therefore, since "the promise of grace and everlasting life (which promise is adjoined unto this sacrament of baptism) pertaineth not only unto such as have the use of reason, but also to infants, innocents, and children," they "ought therefore and must needs be baptized," and "by the sacrament of baptism, they do also obtain remission of their sins, the grace and favour of God, and be made thereby the very sons and children of God;" "insomuch as infants and children dying in their infancy shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, and else not." The express assertion of the loss of all unbaptized infants included in these last words was taken over from the "Ten Articles" into *The Institution of the Christian Man*, commonly called "The Bishop's Book," which was published in 1537;¹ and thence, though with the omission of the final words in which the statement reaches its climax, into *The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition of Any Christian Man*, commonly called "The King's Book," which was published in 1543.² Here its career in the doctrinal formularies ceased.

But it still had a part to play in the liturgical forms of the Church of England. The first *Book of Common Prayer* was published in 1549, and in it, among the rubrics which precede the Order of Confirmation, is found this parargraph: "And that no man shall think that any detriment shall come to children by deferring of their confirmation: he shall know for truth, that it is certain by God's word, that children being baptized

¹ The full text may be conveniently read in HARDWICK, as above, p. 242 sq.

² The text may be seen in Bishop LLOYD's *Formularies of Faith in the Reign of Henry VIII.*, p. 1.

³ *Ibid.* Cf. FRANCIS PROCTER, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer*, etc. 15th ed. London and New York: Macmillan & Co., 1881, pp. 384, 385, note 1.

(if they depart out of this life in their infancy) are undoubtedly saved." In the Prayer Book for 1552 this was so far altered that its latter portion reads "that children being baptized have all things necessary for their salvation, and be undoubtedly saved," and so it stands in the Elizabethan Prayer Book of 1559, and substantially in later issues, until in the Prayer Book of 1661 it was transferred to the end of the order for the Public Baptism of Infants in the form: "It is certain by God's Word, that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." Thus it still remains in the Book of Common Prayer according to the use of the Church of England, although it has dropped out of the Prayer Book according to the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

The successive alterations in this statement, no doubt, mark in a general way the growing Protestant sentiment in the Church of England, although it is noteworthy that the omission of the most obnoxious words, "and else not," in which the condemnation of unbaptized infants, dying in infancy, is made express, first occurs in the reactionary "King's Book," while the effect of the transposition of the rubric from the Confirmation Service to that for Baptism, which took place so late as 1661, was distinctly reactionary. Its primary effect, standing in the Confirmation Service, was to declare that confirmation is not necessary to salvation; and any implication which may be thought to reside in the words of the necessity of baptism to salvation was entirely incidental. While, standing at the end of the Baptismal Service, its primary effect seems to be to declare the certain efficacy of baptism when administered to infants, and the implication of the loss of the unbaptized infants dying in infancy is certainly

¹ *The Two Liturgies, A.D. 1549 and A.D. 1552, etc., edited for the Parker Society, by the Rev. JOSEPH KETLEY, M.A., etc.* (Cambridge, 1844, p. 121).

² *Ibid.*, p. 295. The two may be found together in *The Two Books of Common Prayer set forth . . . in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth*, by EDWARD CARDWELL, D.D., etc. (Oxford, 1852, p. 544).

more natural, even if not necessary. The explanation of this reactionary alteration is to be found, of course, in the general spirit which governed the revision of 1661, which not only was hostile to the more Protestant party in the Church, but was determined upon all possible insult and degradation to it.¹

The more Protestant party had, of course, never been satisfied with this rubric, and it had, of late, necessarily received its share of criticism. The committee of divines appointed by the House of Lords in 1641 had proposed the omission from it of the words "and be undoubtedly saved." The Presbyterian divines at the Savoy Conference had commented on it: "Although we charitably suppose the meaning of these words was only to exclude the necessity of any other sacraments to baptized infants; yet these words are dangerous as to the misleading of the vulgar, and therefore we desire they may be expunged."² The answer of the bishops was not conciliatory: "It is evident that the meaning of these words is, that children baptized, and dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved, though they be not confirmed: wherein we see not what danger there can be of misleading the vulgar by teaching them truth. But there may be danger in this desire of hav-

¹ Observe how even CARDWELL speaks of the general spirit of this revision (*A History of Conferences and other Proceedings connected with the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer*, etc. Third ed. Oxford, 1849, pp. 387 sq.) and the warning he draws from it (pp. 463 sq.): "Let it be remembered, also, on the part of nonconformists, that whenever objection is made against any expressions as ambiguous or indefinite, other parties, of different and even opposite opinions, will be as ready as they themselves are, to offer amendments. In such a case, the result will probably be that phrases, which had previously afforded a common shelter to both, will be made precise and contracted in accordance with the wishes of the more rigid interpreters. Let it be remembered that if one party complain of a strict adherence to forms and a tendency toward superstition, another party, more compact, more learned, and more resolute, may call for the restoration of prayers and usages which once found a place in the liturgy, and were removed by the fathers of the reformation as too nearly allied to Romanism."

² CARDWELL, as cited, p. 276.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

ing these words expunged, as if they were false ; for St. Austin says he is an infidel that denies them to be true. Ep. 23. ad Bonifac.”¹ This defence of the rubric obviously is *ad rem* only in the form and place which it had in the Confirmation Service. When, as was immediately done, it was removed from its place in the Confirmation Service and, curtailed of all reference to confirmation, inserted into the Baptismal Order in the sharply assertive form : “ It is certain by God’s Word, that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved,” it must be accounted one of the alterations designed to exclude a Protestant interpretation of the Book of Common Prayer ; and, in the intention of the authors of the change at all events, as no longer open to be understood as not implying the necessity of baptism for salvation but only asserting that confirmation is not necessary to salvation. It was obviously intended by those who gave it its present form and place to assert baptismal regeneration, and to leave whatever implications the doctrine of baptismal regeneration may include as the natural teaching of the rubric.

Nor can it be denied that, as assertorial of baptismal regeneration, the rubric finds a very natural place in the Book of Common Prayer. It was inevitable that in the beginning of the Reformation movement

¹ CARDWELL, as cited, p. 358. The reference to AUGUSTINE is to Ep. 98 in the Benedictine enumeration (§ 10). Augustine is discussing the propriety and effect of baptism prior to the exercise of active faith on the part of the recipient, and says : “ During the time in which he is by reason of youth unable to do this, the sacrament will avail for his protection against adverse powers, and will avail so much on his behalf, that if before he arrives at the use of reason he depart from this life, he is delivered by Christian help, namely, by the love of the Church, commending him through the sacrament unto God, from that condemnation which by one man entered into the world. He who does not believe this, and thinks that it is impossible, is assuredly an unbeliever, although he may have received the sacrament of faith ; and far before him in merit is the infant which, though not yet possessing a faith helped by the understanding, is not obstructing faith by any antagonism of the understanding, and therefore receives with profit the sacrament of faith” (translation of the Rev. J. G. CUNNINGHAM, M.A., in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series, vol. i., p. 410).

remainders of the unreformed doctrine of baptismal regeneration should intrench themselves in the liturgical offices of the Church. As a matter of fact, the assumption of this doctrine underlay a good deal of the language relative to baptism in the first Prayer Book (1549).¹ This may be true even of the words of the opening address which recite the fact of original sin, and declare that "no man born in sin can enter into the kingdom of God (except he be regenerate and born anew of water and the Holy Ghost)." It is more clearly true of the language of the opening prayer where the figure of baptism found in the flood and the passage through the Red Sea, is developed rather on the negative than on the positive side; and God is besought, therefore, to look mercifully upon these children, "that by this wholesome laver of regeneration, whatsoever sin is in them may be washed clean away; that they, being delivered from His wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's church, and so be saved from perishing." Similarly, after "the white vesture" had been given to the child "for a token of the innocence which by God's grace, in this holy sacrament of baptism, is given unto it," the priest was to bless the child in the name of the God "who hath regenerate it by water and the Holy Ghost, and hath given unto it remission of all its sins." When a child privately baptized was brought to the church for the priest to examine whether it had been lawfully baptized, if it were so decided, the minister was to certify the parents of their well-doing in having the child baptized, because it "is now, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, made the child of God, and heir of everlasting life." The same implication naturally underlay also the whole form for the sanctification of the font, which appears only in this earliest of Anglican Prayer Books. In it God is said to have "ordained the element of water for the regeneration of His faithful people," and is asked to sanctify "this fountain of bap-

¹ The quotations that follow are taken from the text as given by CARDWELL, *The Two Books of Common Prayer . . . in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth*, etc., 3d ed. Oxford, 1852, pp. 320 sq.

tism . . . that by the power of His word all those that should be baptized therein might be spiritually regenerated and made the children of everlasting adoption." In the Catechism included in the Confirmation Service, the child is instructed to say that it was in its baptism that it "was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and the inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" while in the Invocation in the Confirmation Service itself God is addressed as He "who has vouchsafed to regenerate these His servants of water and the Holy Ghost, and also has given unto them forgiveness of all their sins."

The revising hand was, to be sure, as busy with this as with other portions of the Prayer Book. In particular, the opening prayer was already in the second Prayer Book (1552) brought into substantially the form which it still preserves: and this involved not only the omission of the words, "and so saved from perishing"—"expressions," as even Laurence is forced to admit, "too unequivocal to be misconceived," in their exclusion of all unbaptized infants from salvation¹—but also a recasting of the whole tone of the prayer. But the revision was never complete enough to excise the underlying doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and, in the shifting opinion of the Church of England, after a while a reaction set in in its favor, which not only resisted all attempts to eliminate it,² but added new expressions of it.³ So it came about that when the Presbyterians at the Savoy Conference

¹ LAURENCE, *Bampton Lectures for 1804*, rev. ed., Oxford, 1820, p. 71. Compare PROCTER, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 15th ed., 1881, p. 374, note 1; SCHAFF, *Creeeds of Christendom*, i., 642.

² It was naturally against this doctrine that the "Puritan party" directed their most persistent objection. See the form of their objections in the documents printed by CARDWELL, *A History of Conferences*, etc., 3d ed., Oxford, 1849, pp. 266, 276, 325, 326; and the answers of the bishops, pp. 357 and 358.

³ For example, the thanksgiving address and prayer after baptism inserted in the Prayer Book of 1552, which declare the baptized child to be regenerate, and the questions, at the end of the Catechism, on the sacraments, added apparently in 1604, which declare that "we are made the children of grace" by baptism.

represented it as a hardship that ministers should "be forced to pronounce all baptized infants to be regenerate by the Holy Ghost, whether they be the children of Christians or not," and protested that they could not "in faith say," as required to say in the Thanksgiving, "that every child that is baptized is 'regenerated by God's Holy Spirit,'" the bishops' reply simply asserts in terms the obnoxious doctrine: "Seeing that God's sacraments have their effects, where the receiver doth not 'ponere obicem,' put any bar against them (which children cannot do); we may say in faith of every child that is baptized, that it is regenerated by God's Holy Spirit." There seems to be little room for doubting, therefore, that these expressions were retained by the revisers of 1661, not as "ambiguous and indefinite," but as distinct enunciations, and just because they were judged to be distinct enunciations, of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. We must adjudge Laurence right, therefore, in finding this doctrine plainly taught in the Book of Common Prayer as now in use; nor can we see how his summing up of the case can be set aside. "In the prayer after Baptism," he says, "every child is expressly declared to be regenerated: 'We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church.' And in the Office of private Baptism it is unreservedly stated, that he 'is now by the laver of regeneration in Baptism received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life.' That all baptized children are not nominally, but really, the elect of God, our Church Catechism likewise distinctly asserts. Q. 'Who gave you that name?' A. My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' . . . Nor is the position, that an actual regeneration always takes place confined to our Baptismal service, but also

¹ CARDWELL, as cited, pp. 276, 325; cf. 326.

Ibid., p. 356.

subsequently recognized in the Order of Confirmation, the first prayer of which thus commences: 'Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water, and the Holy Ghost,' etc. "Surely," he adds, with some justice, "it requires something more than a common share of ingenuity to pervert language like this from its plain grammatical sense, into one directly repugnant."

On the basis of this doctrine of Baptismal regeneration, thus clearly implied in her forms of worship and firmly retained in their latest revision, the Church of England is justified in asserting with the emphasis which the rubric at the close of the Baptismal Service asserts it, that "it is certain" "that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." Whether, however, this assertion, as Laurence contends, carries with it no implication of the loss of those who die unbaptized, is more questionable.¹ The mere change of language from the earlier form of "children being baptized" into the more distinguishing seventeenth-century form of "children which are baptized," bears a contrary suggestion. And the arguments which Laurence adduces from the known opinions of Cranmer and his coadjutors, and from the elimination from the earlier forms, under their hand, of phrases which assert the necessity of baptism to salvation, are vitiated by the fatal flaw that he neglects to distinguish times and seasons.² That the leaders of the Reformation in England advanced rapidly from a semi-Romish, through a Lutheran, to a Reformed stage of opinion, and that their

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 440, 441.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 70 and 176. Laurence contends that "the Reformers" intended by the language of the Prayer Book in no way "to establish any opinion inconsistent with the salvation of infants unbaptized:" "the very reverse of this is the fact," he thinks. And thus it has become customary to speak. So, e.g., PROCTER, *Op. cit.*, p. 384, note 1: and even BLUNT, *The Annotated Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1866), ii., 230, although himself inclining to believe the loss of all infants dying unbaptized. These opinions would seem, however, to be too little determined by historical considerations. See further below.

³ In some cases also his knowledge of historic facts was defective.

handiwork in the public formularies of the Church bears traces of this growth, is true enough. But it does not follow that every product of their labors must, therefore, have left their hands in a form which represents their highest attainments in doctrinal thought; or that every one has reached us in the precise form which they gave it. That much that was inconsistent with the better thought of the Protestant world was eliminated from the first Prayer Book of 1549 in its passage through the Book of 1552 to the Elizabethan Book of 1559 is thankfully to be recognized. But it must needs be recognized also that much was left in it which was scarcely consistent with the higher point of view which had been only gradually attained by the Reformers themselves; and that in the reactionary revision of the seventeenth century this unreformed element was even increased.¹

¹ It must be thankfully recognized also that a more complete reformation of doctrinal statement was accomplished in the doctrinal formularies of the Church of England than in her devotional forms. This is probably due to the singular discontinuity in the growth of the doctrinal formularies, by which the later Articles were saved from corruption through inheritance from the earlier and more tentative attempts to state the reformed faith. The first Prayer Book (1549) stands at the basis of and contributes its substance to the whole series of Prayer Books. But the first doctrinal formularies, the "Ten Articles" and the "Bishop's" and "King's Books," though they contributed to the Prayer Book the very rubric in which the assertion of baptismal regeneration reaches its climax, had little effect on the development of the "Articles of Religion." For them, an entirely new beginning was made in the "Thirteen Articles" of 1538, which were formed under Lutheran influence and rather on the basis of Lutheran than earlier Anglican formularies. In these Articles the Lutheran doctrine of the sacraments, of course, finds expression, and is sometimes even strengthened. In Article 2, for example, it is asserted that original sin condemns and brings eternal death "to those who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit." In Article 4 it is declared that "by the word and sacraments, as by instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, who effects faith when and where it seems good to God, in those who hear the Gospel." These statements came from the 'Augsburg Confession. Article 6, "on Baptism," teaches, in the words of the Augsburg Confession, that "baptism is necessary to salvation, and by baptism remission of sins and the grace of Christ are offered to infants and adults." Then it is added that "by baptism infants receive remission of sins and grace and are the children of God," and "that the Holy Spirit is efficacious even in infants and cleanses them"—a statement which is repeated

Whatever may be thought, however, of the implications of the doctrine taught in the Prayer Book, this much is at least certain—that the formularies of the Church of England hold out absolutely no hope for the salvation of infants who die unbaptized. They assert with great strength of language the certainty of the salvation of all baptized children dying in infancy. As to those who die unbaptized, they at the least preserve a profound silence. "This assertion," says Mr. Francis Procter, the learned historian of the Book of Common Prayer, "carefully avoids all mention of children unbaptized. . . . Our Reformers are intending to speak only of that which is revealed—the covenanted mercy of Almighty God."¹ Whence we may learn that, in the judgment of Mr. Procter at least, the Prayer Book knows of no covenanted mercy of God for children dying before baptism, and can find nothing in God's revealed word which will justify an assured hope for them. In the same spirit is conceived the comment in Mr. Blunt's *Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, which runs as follows: "Neither in this Rubric, nor in any other formulary of the Church of England, is any decision given as to the state of infants dying without Baptism. Bishop Bethell says [*Regeneration in Baptism*, p. xiv.] that the common opinion of the

in Article 9. These Articles were never published, and have influenced the development of the Articles of the Church of England only through their use by the framers of the Forty-two Articles of 1553. The first draught of these was from the hand of Cranmer himself, and reflects his more advanced Reformed opinions, deriving practically nothing from former Articles except where the "Thirteen Articles" have been drawn upon. In the portions at least which have been retained in the Thirty-nine Articles the influence of even the "Thirteen Articles" has affected rather language than doctrine, in which latter particular the new Articles follow Reformed rather than Lutheran modes of statement. If the language of the "Thirteen Articles," by which the sacraments are said, "as by instruments," to convey the Holy Spirit who effects faith, seems to be repeated here in the Article on Baptism (Art. 28 of 1553, 27 of 1563-71), it is along with an important caveat by which the effect is confined "to those that receive baptism rightly." By this the stress is thrown rather on the subjective attitude of the recipient than on the mere reception of the rite.

¹ *A History of the Book of Common Prayer*, etc., 15th ed. (London and New York, 1881), p. 384, note 1.

ancient Christians was, that they are not saved : and as our Lord has given us such plain words in John iii. 5, this seems a reasonable opinion. But this opinion does not involve any cruel idea of pain or suffering for little ones so deprived of the Sacrament of new birth by no fault of their own. It rather supposes them to be as if they had never been, when they might, through the care and love of their parents, have been reckoned among the number of those 'in whom is no guile,' and 'who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.'¹ This position has indeed the best right to be called the historical understanding of the Church of England as to the teaching of her Prayer Book, as we may be advised by the statement of it by the great historian of infant baptism, William Wall, writing indeed two hundred years ago, but putting into his carefully chosen and sober language just what as we have seen the best accredited expounders of the Prayer Book in our own day repeat. "The Church of England," says Wall,² "have declared their sense of its [*i.e.* baptism's] necessity by reciting the saying of our Saviour, John iii. 5, both in the Office of Baptism of Infants and also in that for those of riper years. . . . Concerning the everlasting state of an infant that by misfortune dies unbaptized, the Church of England has determined nothing (it were fit that all churches would leave such things to God) save that they forbid the ordinary *Office for Burial* to be used for such an one ; for that were to determine the point and acknowledge him for a Christian brother. And though the most noted men in the said Church from time to time since the Reformation of it to this time have expressed their hopes that God will accept the purpose of the parent for the deed ; yet they have done it modestly and much as Wycliffe did, rather not determining the negative than absolutely determining the positive, that such a child shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The Church of England holds thus the unenviable

¹ *The Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, etc., edited by the Rev. JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., F.S.A., etc. (London, 1866), ii., 230.

² *Hist. of Infant Baptism*, ed. 2, 1707, p. 377.

place among Protestant churches of alone of them having no word of cheer to say as to the destiny of the children of Christian parents who depart from this world without baptism. There is no covenant with reference to them ; it may be that they may be saved—but if so, she is sure she cannot tell how ; or if they be not saved, it may be that they may be “ as if they had never been :” there is no word of God with reference to them. Surely this is all cold comfort enough. And if this is all that can be said of the children of the faithful, lacking baptism, where will those of the infidel appear ?

SOME RECENT ENGLISH THEOLOGIANS:
LIGHTFOOT, WESTCOTT, HORT, JOWETT,
HATCH.

BY A. M. FAIRBAIRN, D.D.

From *The Contemporary Review* (London), March, 1897.

(*In two parts.*)

PART II.

III.

BUT we turn from Jowett to the younger scholar whose work suggested this paper, Edwin Hatch. Of his hard struggle for a foothold and even a livelihood, of his long unrecognised merit and unrewarded labours, I will not venture to speak. For years, even after he had attained European fame, he was allowed to hold the office of Vice-Principal of St. Mary Hall, which may fitly be described as the least of all the cities of Judah ; and even at one time he was forced to undergo the exhausting and depressing drudgery of taking private pupils. When University recognition did come it was parcelled out in small offices, which in most cases involved the maximum of uncongenial toil. These things are said only that they may indicate the difficul-

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF INFANT SALVATION.

BY PROFESSOR B. B. WARFIELD, D.D., LL.D.

(In five parts.)

PART III.—(CONTINUED.)

The Anglican Position.

THE hope which the formularies of the Church of England can find no basis for in the Word of God, and which those whose views of Divine truth are moulded by these formularies must deny or at least withhold, has nevertheless, as Wall tells us, been "from time to time since the Reformation" freely expressed by individual teachers in that Church, and that especially, as he adds, by "the most noted men" in it. Those to whose labors and sufferings the Church of England owed her very existence were in no respect behind their successors in this. We have seen that the *Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws*, drawn up by a commission with Cranmer at its head, affirmed, of the opinion that no infant dying without baptism could be saved, which Cranmer and his coadjutors had themselves incorporated into the earliest formularies, that it was a "scrupulous superstition" and far different from the opinion of the Church of England.¹ Obviously "in the

¹See above, foot-note on p. 1.

meantime," as Dr. Schaff suggests, Cranmer "had changed his opinion." What was the current conviction on this subject among the leading reformers we may learn, as well as from another, from one of Cranmer's chaplains, Thomas Becon, who chanced to have written repeatedly and at length upon it.

In the second part of his treatise on *The Demands of Holy Scripture*, the preface to which is dated on the first of September, 1563, Becon raises the question, "What if the infants die before they receive the sacrament of baptism?" and answers it succinctly as follows: "God's promise of salvation unto them is not for default of the sacrament minished, or made vain and of no effect. For the Spirit is not so bound to the water that it cannot work his office when the water wanteth, or that it of necessity must always be there where the water is sprinkled. Simon Magus had the sacramental water, but he had not the Holy Ghost, being indeed an hypocrite and filthy dissembler. In the chronicle of the apostles' Acts we read that, while Peter preached, the Holy Ghost came upon them that heard him, yea, and that before they were baptized; by the reason whereof Peter brast out into these words, and said: 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' True Christians, whether they be old or young, are not saved because outwardly they be washed with the sacramental water, but because they be God's children by election through Christ, yea, and that before the foundations of the world were laid, and are sealed up by the Spirit of God unto everlasting life."¹

In the voluminous *Catechism*, which he wrote somewhat earlier (1560) for the instruction of his children, and presents to them in a touchingly beautiful preface, he develops his views on this matter at great length: "The infants of the heathen and unbelieving," "for-

¹ *Creeds of Christendom*, i., p. 642.

² *Prayers and Other Pieces by Thomas Becon, S.T.P.*, edited for the Parker Society by the Rev. JOHN AYRE, M.A. (Cambridge, 1844), p. 617.

asmuch as they belong not unto the household of faith, neither are contained in this covenant, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed;' again, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy buds,' " he leaves "to the judgment of God, to whom they either stand or fall." But "with the children of the faithful God hath made a sure and an everlasting covenant, that he will be their God and Saviour, yea, their most loving Father, and take them for his sons and heirs, as St. Peter saith, 'The promise was made to you and to your children.'" He knows well "how hard and rigorous divers fathers of Christ's church are to such infants as die without baptism," but he judges this opinion of theirs to be injurious to the grace of God and dissenting from the verity of God's Word. Injurious to the grace of God, because "the Holy scripture in every place attributeth our salvation to the free grace of God, and not either to our own works, or to any outward sign or sacrament." "Hath God so bound himself and made himself thrall to a sacrament, that without it his power of saving is lame, and of no force to defend from damnation?" Baptism is to Christians what circumcision was to the Jews, not a thing that makes righteous, but "'a seal of righteousness,' and a sign of God's favor toward us," and so "the outward baptism, which is done by water, neither giveth the Holy Ghost, nor the grace of God, but only is a sign and token thereof," and therefore, "if any of the Christian infants, prevented by death, depart without baptism (necessity so compelling), they are not damned, but be saved by the free grace of God; forasmuch as we tofore heard, they be contained in the covenant of grace, they be members of God's church, God promiseth to be their God, they have faith, and be endued with the Spirit of God, and so finally 'sons and heirs of God, and heirs annexed with Christ Jesu.'" His firm conviction from Scripture is "that the grace and Spirit of God cometh where and when it pleaseth God, yea, and that they be not bound to any external ceremony, as to be present and to be

given when the sacraments are ministered, and otherwise not, so that the Spirit and grace of God must wait and attend upon these outward signs, as servants do attend and wait upon their lords and masters"—“which is nothing else,” he declares, “than to bring God into bondage to his creatures, and to make him not master of his own.” “They, therefore,” he concludes, “that teach and hold this doctrine are not only enemies to the salvation of the infants, but they also utterly obscure, yea, and quench the grace and election of God and the secret operation of the Holy Ghost in the tender breasts of the most tender infants, and attribute to an external sign more than right is.” In a word, Thomas Becon plants himself squarely on that “covenanted mercy of Almighty God,” which Mr. Procter tells us the framers of the Prayer Book failed to discover for those who die unbaptized; and finds no difficulty in showing from Scripture that it underlies baptism which is its seal, and does not rather wait on baptism as its cause.

Such an instance as that of John Hooper is, of course, even more striking. He had come under distinctly Zwinglian influences, and, like Zwingli and possibly first after Zwingli, taught the salvation not only of the infants of Christians dying unbaptized, but also of all infants dying such, whether the children of Christians or of infidels. As to baptismal regeneration, he speaks of “the ungodly opinion, that attributeth the salvation of man unto the receiving of an external sacrament,” “as though God’s holy Spirit could not be carried by faith into the penitent and sorrowful conscience except it rid always in a chariot and external sacrament.” With reference to the salvation of unbaptized infants, therefore, he says: “It is ill done to condemn the infants of the Christians that die without baptism, of whose salvation by the Scripture we be assured: *Ero Deus tuus, et seminis tuis post te*. I would likewise judge well,” he adds, “of the infants of the infidels who hath

¹ *The Catechism of Thomas Becon, S.T.P.*, etc., edited for the Parker Society by the Rev. JOHN AYRE, M.A. (Cambridge, 1844), pp. 214-225.

none other sin in them but original, the sin of Adam's transgression. And as by Adam sin and death entered into the world, so by Christ justice and life. *Ut quemadmodum regnaverat peccatum in morte, sic et gratia regnaret per justiciam ad vitam æternam per Jesus Christum.* Rom. v. Whereas the infants doth not follow the iniquity of the father, but only culpable for the transgression of Adam, it shall not be against the faith of a Christian man to say, that Christ's death and passion extendeth as far for the salvation of innocents, as Adam's fall made all his posterity culpable of damnation. *Quia quemadmodum per inobedientiam unius hominis peccatores constituti fecimus multi, ita per obedientiam unius justii constituentur multi.* The Scripture also preferreth the grace of God's promise to be more abundant than sin. *Ubi exuberavit peccatum, ubi magis exuberavit gratia.* Rom. v. It is not the part of a Christian to say, this man is damned, or this is saved, except he see the cause of damnation manifest. As touching the promises of God's election, *sunt sine pœnitentia dona et vocatio Dei.*"

Naturally many other opinions have found expression in the bosom of this most inclusive communion. In the vexed time of the seventeenth century, for example, men like William Perkins¹ and James Usher² approached the question from the side of the Reformed

¹ *An Answer unto My Lord of Winchester's Booke*, etc., 1547, in the Parker Society's *Early Writings of Bishop Hooper*, pp. 129, 131.

² "Reprobates are either infants or men of riper age. In reprobate infants the execution of God's decree is this: As soon as they are born, for the guilt of original and natural sin, being left in God's secret judgment unto themselves, they dying are rejected of God forever." (*The Golden Chain*, ch. 53, in *Works*, ed. 1603, i., p. 107.) "We are to judge that Infants of believing parents in their infancy dying, are justified." (*How to Live Well*, i., 486.)

³ "Some Reprobates dying Infants . . . Being once conceived they are in a state of Death (Rom. 5. 14), by reason of the sin of Adam imputed, and of original corruption cleaving to their Nature, wherein also, dying they perish: As (for instance) the Children of Heathen Parents. For touching the Children of Christians, we are taught and account them holy. 1 Cor. 7. 14." (*Body of Divinity*, 4to ed., 1702, p. 165.)

theology ; others, like Jeremy Taylor,¹ from a fundamentally Pelagianizing standpoint ; others, like Matthew Scrivener,² from a "churchly" one. From a somewhat earlier period, the argument of Richard Hooker may be taken as fairly representing the more considerate churchmanship of the time. Holding to the necessity of baptism, not indeed as "a cause of grace," but as "an instrument or means whereby we receive grace," ordained as such by Christ, he argues that "if Christ himself which giveth salvation do require Baptism ; it is not for us that look for salvation to sound and examine him, whether unbaptized men may be saved ; but seriously to do that which is required, and religiously to fear the danger that may grow by the want thereof." Nevertheless he remarks that the "Law of Christ, which in these considerations maketh Baptism necessary, must be construed and understood according to rules of natural equity ;" "and (because equity so teacheth) it is on our part gladly confessed, that there may be in divers cases life by virtue of inward Baptism, even when outward is not found." Whether this principle may be extended to infants dying unbaptized, he makes the subject of special consideration. Inasmuch as "grace is not absolutely tied unto Sacraments ;" and God accepts the will for the deed in cases where the deed is impossible ; and there is a presumed desire and even purpose in Christian parents and the Church to give these children baptism ; and their birth of Christian parents marks them, according to Scripture, as holy, and gives them "a present interest and right to those means

¹ *The Whole Works of*, etc. (London, 1828), vol. ii., p. 258 sq., 289 sq.; vol. viii., 150 sq.; vol. ix., p. 12 sq., 90 sq., 369 sq.

² "Either all children must be damned, dying unbaptized, or they must have baptism. . . . The principle in Christian religion is, That children come into the world infected with original sin ; and therefore, if there be no remedy against that, provided by God, all children of Christian parents, which St. Paul says are holy, are liable to eternal death without remedy. Now, there is no remedy but Christ ; and his death and passion are not communicated to any but by outward signs and sacraments. And no other do we read of but that of water in baptism" (*Course of Divinity*, London, 1674), p. 196.

wherewith the ordinance of Christ is that his Church shall be sanctified," "it is not to be thought that he which, as it were, from Heaven, hath nominated and designed them unto holiness by special privilege of their very birth, will himself deprive them of regeneration and inward grace, only because necessity depriveth them of outward sacraments."¹

It would seem that on grounds such as these, even the highest churchmanship might find it possible to assert the certain salvation of all the children of Christians, at least, which die unbaptized; and, as has been pointed out on an earlier page,² the considerations thus so judiciously set forth would even appear to open a way for the development, on churchly grounds, of a baptism of intention as applied to infants which could be extended, without danger to any important interest, to embrace all infants that die in infancy. Nevertheless it has not been on the part of high-churchmen that, in the Church of England, the salvation of infants dying such has been affirmed. This has rather been the part of low-churchmen, like John Newton³ and Thomas Scott⁴ and Augustus Toplady,⁵ while high-

¹ *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V., § 60. (Dobson's ed., i., 600-607; Keble's ed. ii., 341-347.)

² See above, p. 156.

³ *Works*, IV., 182: "I cannot be sorry for the death of infants. How many storms do they escape! Nor can I doubt, in my private judgment, that they are included in the election of grace. Perhaps those who die in infancy are the exceeding great multitude of all people, nations, and languages mentioned (Rev. 7: 9) in distinction from the visible body of professing believers, who were marked on their foreheads and openly known to be the Lord's."

⁴ *The Articles of the Synod of Dort*, etc. (Philadelphia, 1818, p. 189): "The salvation of the offspring of believers dying in infancy is here scripturally stated, and not limited to such as are baptized. Nothing is said of the children of unbelievers dying in infancy, and the Scripture says nothing. But why might not these Calvinists have as favorable a hope of all infants dying before actual sin as anti-Calvinists can have?"

⁵ *The Works of*, etc. (new ed., London, 1837, pp. 645, 646): "But you observe . . . that 'With regard to infants, the rubrick declares it is certain by God's word that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.' I firmly believe the same; nay, I believe more. I am convinced that the souls of all departed infants whatever, whether baptized or unbap-

churchmen have ever shown a tendency to doubt or deny the salvation of those who die without having been "admitted into covenant with God" by baptism. This is the language of *Tract No. 35*¹ (written by A. C. Percival) of the *Oxford Tracts for the Times*, within which were included also Dr. Pusey's voluminous treatises on baptismal regeneration. These treatises have not failed of their effect, and possibly at no time before the present in the whole history of the Church of England since the first years of its reformation, has there ever been a more widespread tendency to stand simply upon the wording of the rubric at the end of the Baptismal Service, as if it included all ascertainable truth, and to affirm only the certainty of the salvation of those infants dying in infancy which have been baptized. All others, though they be the children of God's recognized children, are, sometimes with a certainly not very easily understood complacency, at the best committed to the "uncovenanted mercies of God," at the worst consigned to a place among those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

tized, are with God in glory. . . . I believe that in the decree of predestination to life, God hath included all whom he hath decreed to take away in infancy; and that the decree of reprobation has nothing to do with them." So, again, p. 142, *note m*: "No objection can hence arise against the salvation of such as die in infancy (all of whom are undoubtedly saved); nor yet against the salvation of God's elect among the Heathens, Mohametans, and others. The Holy Spirit is able to inspire the grace of actual faith into those hearts (especially at the moment of dissolution) which are incapable of exerting the explicit act of faith."

¹ "The Sacrament of Baptism, by which souls are admitted into covenant with God, and without which none can enter into the kingdom of heaven (John 3 : 5)" (*Tract No. 35*, p. 1). Cf. the words of *Tract No. 66* affirming that "the relationship of sonship to God is imparted through baptism, and is not imparted without it."

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF INFANT SALVATION.

BY PROFESSOR B. B. WARFIELD, D.D., LL.D.

(In five parts.)

PART IV.

The Reformed Doctrine.

IT was among the Reformed alone that the newly recovered scriptural apprehension of the Church to which the promises were given, as essentially not an external organization but the true Body of Christ, membership in which is mediated not by the external act of baptism but by the internal regeneration of the Holy Spirit, bore its full fruit in rectifying the doctrine of the application of redemption. This great truth was taught alike, to be sure, by both branches of Protestantism, Lutheran as well as Reformed. But it was limited in its application in the one line of teaching by a very high doctrine of the means of grace; while in the other, wherever the purity of the Reformed doctrine was not corrupted by a large infusion of Romish inheritance, it became itself constitutive of the doctrine of the means of grace. There were some Reformed theologians, even outside the Church of England, no doubt, who held a high doctrine of the means. Of these Peter Jurieu (1637-1713) may be

taken as a type.¹ This famous writer, to whom Witsius somewhat rashly promised the grateful veneration of posterity, taught that even elect infants, children of covenanted parents, are children of wrath until they are baptized, and up to that time have not received their complete reconciliation, nor have been washed from the stains with which they are born, nor are the objects of God's love of complacency ; that baptism is as necessary to salvation as eating is to living or taking the remedy is to recovery from disease ; that therefore infants properly baptized and dying in infancy are certainly saved, and their baptism is an indubitable proof of their election, while of the salvation of those who die before baptism we can have no certainty, but only a judgment of charity ; that God no doubt does save some infants without baptism, but this is done in an extraordinary, and, so to speak, miraculous way, and so that the death of the infant may be supposed to supply the defect of baptism, as martyrdom does for adults in the Romish teaching. Such opinions, however, were not characteristic of the Reformed churches, the distinguishing doctrine of which, rather, by suspending salvation on membership in the invisible instead of in the visible Church, transformed baptism from a necessity into a duty, and left men dependent for salvation on nothing but the infinite love and free grace of God.

From this point of view the absolutely free and loving election of God alone is determinative of the saved. How many are saved, and who they are, can therefore be known absolutely to God alone ; to us, only so far forth as may be inferred from the presence of the marks and signs of election revealed to us in the Word. Faith and its fruits are the chief signs in the case of adults ; and accordingly he that believes may know that he is of the elect and be certain of his salvation. In the case of infants dying in infancy, birth within the bounds of the covenant is a sure sign, since the promise is "unto us and our children." But present unbelief is not a

¹ See his views quoted and discussed by WITSIUS, *De Efficace et Utilitate Bapt.* in *Miscel. Sacra* (1736), ii., 513.

sure sign of reprobation in the case of adults ; for who knows but that unbelief may yet give place to faith ? Nor in the case of infants, dying such, is birth outside the covenant a trustworthy sign of reprobation ; for the election of God is free. Accordingly there are many—adults and infants—of whose salvation we may be sure : but of reprobation we can never be sure ; a judgment to that effect is necessarily unsafe even as to such adults as are apparently living in sin, while as to infants who “ die and give no sign,” it is presumptuous and rash in the extreme. The above is practically an outline of the teaching of Zwingli.¹ He himself, after some preliminary hesitation,² worked it out in its logical completeness, and taught that : 1. All believers are elect and hence are saved ; though we cannot know infallibly who are true believers, except each man in his own case.’ 2. All children of believers dying in infancy are elect, and hence are saved ; their inclusion in the covenant of salvation rests on God’s immutable promise, and their death in infancy must be taken as a

¹ Zwingli’s teaching may be conveniently worked out by the aid of AUGUST BAUR’S valuable *Zwingli’s Theologie*, especially vol. ii. (Halle, 1889). Zwingli’s peculiar doctrine of original sin had practically very little influence on his resolution of the question of the salvation of infants, which rather turned on his doctrine of the extent of the atonement.

² *Works*, i., 423 (1523).

³ The word “ church,” says Zwingli, “ is used variously in the Scriptures. First of all, it is used for those elect who are destined by the will of God to eternal life. . . . This is known to God alone, for He, according to the word of Solomon, alone knows the hearts of the sons of men. But none the less, those who are members of this church know that they themselves, since they have faith, are elect and are members of this first church ; but they are ignorant of other members than themselves. . . . Those then who believe are ordained to eternal life. But who truly believe no one knows except the believer himself. . . . From these, therefore, it follows that that first church is known to God alone, and only those who have certain and unshaken faith know that they are members of this church.” (*Works*, iv., p. 8.) “ It follows, therefore, that those who believe know they are elect ; for those who believe are elect. Election is, therefore, the antecedent of faith. . . . It is proper to pronounce concerning those only who persist in disbelief until death. However much any give open signs, whether by cruelty or lust, that they are repudiated by God, nevertheless we ought not before the end or ‘ departure ’ (as the poet says) to condemn any one.” (*Works*, iv., 723 sq., 1530.)

sign of election.¹ 3. It is probable, from the superabundance of the gift of grace over the offence, that all infants dying such are elect and saved; there is, indeed, no sure promise of their salvation, which must, therefore, be left with God, but it is certainly rash and even impious to affirm their damnation.² 4. All who

¹ "We are more certain of the election of none than of infants who are taken away in youth, while as yet they are without law; for human life is sometimes not truly, but only apparently innocent, while there cannot be any stain (*labes*) in infants who spring from believers. For original sin is expiated by Christ; for as in Adam all died, so in Christ we are all restored to life—we, that is, who either believe or are of the church by promise. But no stain of misdeeds (*labes facinorum*) can contaminate them, for they are not yet under law. But since no cause disjoins them from God except sin, and they are alien from all sin, it follows that none can so irrefragably be known to be among the elect as those infants who are taken away by fate in youth; for in their case to die is the sign of election, just as faith is in adults. And those who are reprobated or repudiated by God do not die in this state of innocence, but are preserved by Divine providence, that their repudiation may be manifested by a wicked life." (*Works*, iv., 127, 1530.) "Therefore the infants of Christians, since they are not less than adults of the visible Church of Christ, are not less to be (so it follows) in the number of those whom we judge to be elect than their parents. Hence it happens that those judges act impiously and presumptuously who devote the infants of Christians to dreadful things, since so many clear testimonies of Scripture contradict this . . ." (*Works*, iv., 8.)

² "Since those alone who have heard and then either believed or remained in unbelief are subject to our judgment, it follows that we vehemently err in judging infant children, whether of Gentiles or of Christians. Of Gentiles, because no law condemns them, for they do not fall under that of 'Who shall not believe,' etc. Hence, since the election of God is free, it is impious to exclude from it those of whom by these signs, faith and unbelief, we are not able to determine whether they are in it or not. With reference to those of Christians, however, we are not only intruding rashly into the election of God, but we are not even believing His word by which He manifests this election to us. For since He admits us into the covenant of Abraham, this word now renders us no less certain of their election than formerly of the Hebrews. For that word, that they are within the covenant, testament, people of God, makes us certain of their election until God shall announce something else concerning any one." (*Works*, iii., 427, cf. 429, 1527.) "Hence it follows that if in Christ, the second Adam, we are restored to life, just as we were handed over to death in the first Adam, we rashly condemn the children born of Christian parents; nay, even the children of Gentiles. But as to the infants of Gentiles, whatever opinion may be held, we confidently assert that on account of the virtue of the pre-eminent salvation of Christ, they go beyond the mark who adjudge them to eternal malediction, both

are saved, whether adult or infant, are saved only by the free grace of God's election and through the redemption of Christ.¹

It is probable that Zwingli stood alone among the Reformers in his extension of salvation to all infants dying in infancy. That all children of believers, dying in infancy, are included in the covenant of God and enter at once into glory was the characteristic feature of the Reformed doctrine; the boldness of which and the relief which it brought to the oppressed heart are alike scarcely estimable by us after centuries of emancipation from the dreadful burden of what had up to the rise of the Reformed theology been for ages the undoubting belief of the Church—viz., that all unbaptized infants are excluded from bliss. With this great advance the minds and hearts of most men were satisfied, and, happy in teaching from positive Scriptures the certain salvation of all the children of Christian parents departing from their arms to the arms of Jesus, they were content to leave the children of un-

because of the reparation spoken of and because of the free election of God, which does not follow, but is followed by, faith. . . . They ought not, therefore, to be rashly condemned by us who, by reason of age, have not faith; for although they do not as yet have it, the election of God is nevertheless hidden from us, with respect to which, if they are elect, we judge rashly concerning things of which we know nothing." (*Works*, iv., 7.)

¹ "But I have spoken in this manner, That the children of Christians cannot be damned by original sin for this reason, because though sin should condemn according to the law, yet on account of the remedy exhibited in Christ it cannot condemn, especially not those included in the covenant made with Abraham; for concerning these we have other clear and solid testimonies: concerning the rest, who are born out of the church, we have nothing except the present testimony" (*i.e.*, "As in Adam, so in Christ, but more"), "so far as I know, and similar ones in this fifth chapter of Romans, by which to prove that those who are born outside the Church are cleansed from original contamination. But if any one should say that it is more probable that the children of the Gentiles are saved by Christ than that they are damned, certainly he is less making Christ void than those who damn those born in the Church, if they die without baptism; and he will have more foundation and authority from the Scriptures than those who deny this, for he would assert nothing more than that the children of the Gentiles, too, while of tender age, are not damned on account of original vice, but this, of course, through the benefit of Christ." (*Works*, 637, 1526.)

believers, dying such, to the just but hidden judgment of God. It has been thought by many, indeed, that both John Calvin and Zwingli's successor in the leadership of the Church at Zurich, Henry Bullinger, shared to the full extent the hope of Zwingli, and were ready, with him, to extend their assurance of infant salvation to all who die in infancy of whatever parentage. It is true that it is difficult to adduce from the writings of these great teachers any passages which clearly affirm the opposite; what have been brought forward as such are usually rather assertions of the presence and desert of "original sin" in infants than declarations of the punishment which they actually undergo. But, on the other hand, there is a more entire lack of positive evidence for the affirmation; and there are not altogether wanting passages from either writer which appear, in their natural sense, to imply belief that some infants dying such pass into doom. It would seem difficult to read, for example, Calvin's rejoinders to Pighius, Servetus and Castellio without becoming convinced that he did not think of all infants, dying such, as escaping the just recompense of their sinfulness. Even such a comment as that which he makes on Rom. v. 7 seems, indeed, to carry this implication on its face: "Hence, in order to partake of the miserable inheritance of sin, it is enough for thee to be a man, for it dwells in flesh and blood; but in order to enjoy the righteousness of Christ, it is necessary for thee to be a believer, for a participation of Him is obtained by faith alone. He is communicated to infants in a peculiar manner; for they have in the covenant the right of adoption, by which they pass over into participation of Christ. It is of the children of the pious that I am speaking, to whom the promise of grace is directed. For the rest are by no means released from the common lot."¹ Similarly Bullinger's language, now and again, as he argues for the inclusion of believers' infants within the covenant and their consequent right to baptism, appears inconsistent with the supposition that, in his

¹ Amsterdam ed. of CALVIN'S *Opera*, vii., 36a: "De piorum liberis loquar, ad quos promissio gratiæ dirigitur. Nam alii à communi forte nequaquam eximuntur."

mind, all infants dying such were alike included in the election of God. Thus a fundamental distinction between the children of the faithful and those of unbelievers, not only in privileges but also in ultimate destiny, seems to color the whole language of a passage like the following: "Wherefore, I, trusting to God's mercy and his truth and undoubted promise, believe that infants, departing out of this world by a too timely death, before they can be baptized, are saved by the mere mercy of God in the power of his truth and promise through Christ, who saith in the Gospel, 'Suffer little ones to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of God:' Again, 'It is not the will of my Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' For verily God who cannot lie hath said, 'I am thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee.' Whereupon St. Paul also affirmeth that they are born holy which are begotten of holy parents; not that of flesh and blood any holy thing is born, for 'that which is born of flesh is flesh;' but because that holiness and separation from the common seed of men is of promise, and by right of the covenant. For we are all by natural birth born the sons of wrath, death, and damnation: but Paul attributeth a special privilege to the children of the faithful, wherewith by the grace of God they which by nature are unclean are purified. So the same apostle, in another place, doth gather holy branches of a holy root; and again elsewhere saith: 'If by the sin of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift of grace which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.'"¹ As over against the natural implications of such passages there is nothing positive to set, and it is certainly within the mark to say that as yet no decisive evidence has been adduced to show that either Calvin² or

¹ *Decades*, Parker Soc. ed., iv., 373; cf. 382, 313, 344.

² Dr. CHARLES W. SHIELDS, in a very thorough and learned paper in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for October, 1890 (vol. i., pp. 634-651), has said everything possible to be said in favor of including Calvin in the class of those who teach the salvation of all infants dying such. Dr. Shields's ingenious and powerful argument is vitiated, however, by two faults of interpretation. He does not always catch the drift of Calvin's argument, as directed rather to showing against

Bullinger¹ agreed with Zwingli in cherishing the hope that all infants dying in infancy are saved; the probability is distinctly to the contrary.

the Anabaptists that infants, too, as subjects of salvation, are also subjects of baptism; and he refers Calvin's repeated assertions of the presence of personal guilt as distinguished from imputed guilt in all those who are lost, to guilt arising from actual sinning, whereas Calvin means it of guilt arising from inherent corruption or "original sin." Calvin says that every soul that is lost deserves it not merely because it is implicated in the guilt of Adam's first sin, but also because it is inwardly corrupt and wrath-deserving; he does not say it is not condemned unless it has committed overt acts of sinning. When these two errors of interpretation are eliminated, no passages remain which even seem to imply the salvation of all who die in infancy.

¹ That Bullinger agreed with Zwingli in holding that all who die in infancy are saved is repeatedly asserted by Dr. SCHAFF, but without the adduction of evidence, unless we are to read the note in *Creeks of Christendom*, i., 642, note 3, as directing us to the passages cited in Laurence's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 266, 267, as such. But these passages do not support the contention; they only prove that Bullinger taught that infants, too, are salvable (arguing for their baptism as against the Anabaptists), not that all that die in infancy are saved. In the seventh volume of his *History of the Christian Church*, published in 1892, Dr. Schaff somewhat qualifies the sharpness of his previous statement by adding a justifying clause. Bullinger, he here says, "agreed with Zwingli's extension of salvation to all infants and to elect heathen; at all events, he nowhere dissents from these advanced views, and published with approbation Zwingli's last work, where they are most strongly expressed" (p. 211). That the young Bullinger—he was then thirty-two—did put forth his beloved master's last work, the *Expositio Fidei*, addressed to King Francis, with a preface of hearty appreciation and praise, is certainly true. But this can scarcely be said to commit him to every statement in the work. We know that he did not share his master's doctrine of original sin, but labors to explain away its peculiarities and reduce it to only a verbal deviation from the common doctrine of the Reformers (*Decades* as above, ii., 394, 388). Why should the case be different with reference to matters lying on the periphery of the doctrinal system? Surely the argument from silence here is most precarious. Nor is it clear that he nowhere betrays dissent from these views of his master. We have adduced passages which appear to imply that he did not contemplate heathen infants dying in infancy as saved. And in a little book on the Judgment Day, published in 1572 (*Von höchster Freud und gröstem Leyd des künftigen jüngsten Tags, u.s.w.*), he certainly does not speak in Zwingli's manner of the heathen. The learned Zwingli scholar, Dr. J. W. Wÿss, of Zurich, suggests that Bullinger may have changed his mind in the interval between the ages of thirty-two and sixty-eight, a suggestion which seems unnecessary in the entire absence of proof that he ever had a different mind from that suggested in the *Decades* of 1551 as well as in his *Judgment Day* of 1572.

The constitutive principles of Zwingli's teaching, however, are not only the common conviction of all the Reformed, but are even the essential postulates of the whole Reformed system. That the salvation of men depends ultimately upon nothing except the free election of God must be the hinge of all Reformed thinking in the sphere of soteriology; and differences relative to the salvation of infants can arise within the limits of Reformed thought only on the two points of what the signs of election and reprobation are, and how surely these signs may be identified in men. On these points the Reformed were early divided into five distinguishable classes.

1. There were a few, from the very beginning, who held with Zwingli that death in infancy is one of the signs of election, and hence that all who die in infancy are the children of God and enter at once into glory. After Zwingli it is probable that Bishop Hooper was the first to embrace this view.¹ It is presented in a characteristically restrained and winning way by Francis Junius in his work on *Nature and Grace*, which was published in 1592. "Some one will say, perhaps," he says, "'But infants surely who are called from this life before they commit actual sin are not to be assigned to destruction nor held by us to be lost on account of that natural vitiosity which they have contracted as an inheritance from their parents?' I respond that there is a double question raised here under the appearance of one; one is, What end do they deserve according to God's justice by their vitiosity? the other is, What end will they actually have? The first we answer, briefly, thus: they cannot but deserve for their vitiosity, according to God's justice, separation from God—that is, destruction and eternal death. . . . Let us look, then, at the second question. None of us is so wild, or has ever been known to be so wild, as to condemn infants *simpliciter*. Let those who teach otherwise look to it by what right they do it, and relying on what authority. For, although they are in themselves

¹ See reference, *ante*, p. 191.

and in our common nature condemnable, it does not follow that we ought to pass the sentence of condemnation upon them. What then? Will they be saved? We hold that all those will be saved who belong to the covenant and who belong to the election. But those infants belong to the covenant who spring from covenanted parents, whether immediately—*i.e.*, from covenanted father and mother, or either; or mediately—*i.e.*, from covenanted ancestors, even though the continuity has been broken, as God says He 'will show mercy unto thousands of generations' (Ex. xx.). And this is the way in which Paul speaks of the Jews as being included in his time (Rom. xi.); nor do we doubt that by the same force of the covenant God sanctifies by the covenant as His own some from the number of unbelievers—for the sake of the covenant, we mean, that their ancestors received. Some also, however, belong to the election, for God has not cut off from Himself the right and authority to communicate more widely the grace of His own election to those of whom it cannot be said that either their parents or ancestors belonged to the covenant; for just as of old He called into the covenant afresh, according to His election, those who were not in the covenant, in order that they might be in it, so also in every age the same benefit may be conferred by His most free action. And why may not this happen to infants as well as to others, since of them may be justly said what the author of the Book of Wisdom wrote of Enoch, that 'he was taken away lest evil should change his mind or guile ensnare his soul'? All infants, therefore, are in themselves condemnable by the justice of God; and if God have condemned any (a matter to be left to Him) they are justly condemned; but we nevertheless affirm that those who are of the covenant and those who are of the election are saved—whomsoever He has ordained to eternal life; and out of charity we presume that those whom He calls to Himself as infants and snatches seasonably out of this miserable vale of sins are rather saved according to His election and fatherly providence than expelled from the kingdom of heaven. We

rest utterly in His counsel." ¹ More lately this genial judgment has become the ruling view, especially among English-speaking Calvinists, and we may select Augustus M. Toplady ² and Robert S. Candlish as its types. The latter, for example, writes : " In many ways I apprehend it may be inferred from Scripture that all dying in infancy are elect, and are, therefore, saved. . . . The whole analogy of the plan of saving mercy seems to favor the same view, and now it may be seen, if I am not greatly mistaken, to be put beyond question by the bare fact that little children die. . . . The death of little children must be held to be one of the fruits of redemption. . . ."

2. At the opposite extreme a very few Reformed theologians taught that the only sure sign of election is faith with its fruits, and, therefore, that we can have no real ground of conviction concerning the fate of any infant. As, however, God certainly has His elect among infants too, each man can cherish the hope that his own children are of the elect. This sadly agnostic position, which was afterward condemned by the whole body of the Reformed assembled in the Synod of Dort, is at least approached by Peter Martyr, who writes : " Neither am I to be thought to promise salvation to all the children of the faithful which depart without the sacrament, for if I should do so I might be counted rash ; I leave them to be judged by the mercy of God, seeing I have no certainty concerning the secret election and predestination ; but I only assert that those are truly saved to whom the divine election extends, although baptism does not intervenc. Just so, I hope well concerning infants of this kind, because I see them born from faithful parents ; and this thing has promises that are uncommon ; and although they may not

¹ FRANCIS JUNIUS, *De Natura et Gratia*, 1592, pp. 83, 84 : the closing words are : " Ex charitate autem eos quos ad se infantes vocat, et tempestive ex hac misera valle peccatorum eripit, potius servari præsumimus, secundum electionem et providentiam ipsius paternam, quam à regno cœlorum abdicari. Omnino conquiescimus in consilio ejus."

² See reference, *ante*, p. 193.

³ *The Atonement*, etc., 1861, pp. 183, 184.

be general, *quoad omnes*, yet when I see nothing to the contrary it is right to hope well concerning the salvation of such infants."¹ Even after the declaration of the Synod of Dort there remained some to whom it did not seem possible to speak with the Synod's confidence of the salvation of all the children of believers dying in infancy. Thus, Thomas Gataker writes to Richard Baxter on November 1st, 1653,² that he dares not "herein speak so peremptorie as the Synod of Dort doth;" "nor," he adds, "do Zanchie, Ursine, or divers other of our Divines, of whom see Malderi Antisynodica," pp. 63, 64. Tho I confess that some of them in their Discourses and Disputes overthrow sometime with one hand, what they seem to build up with the other." That the infants of believing parents are included in the covenant he did not doubt; but he conceived of this covenant as rather conditional than absolute, and therefore felt it to be "more than can certainlie be avowed or from Scr. can be averred," "that the Child is therein considered as a member of the Parents, and is by its parents' faith discharged of the guilt of its sin, and put in an actual state of Salvation." "Concerning the state of infants, even of true believers," therefore, he thinks that the Scripture is "verie sparing; and in averring ought therein peremptorie we have great cause therefore to be verie warie." Something of the same hesitancy characterizes also Baxter's own statements on the subject. In his *Plain Scripture Proof of Infant Church-Membership and Baptism*, the third edition of which was issued short-

¹ *Loci Communes*, i., class. 4., cap. 5., § 16 (compare iv., 100).

² This letter is preserved in the Williams Library, London, and was printed by Dr. BRIGGS in *The Presbyterian Review*, v., 705 sq. See pp. 708 and 706.

³ Dr. Briggs prints "Antisquodica," which is a mere blunder, of course, for Gataker's "Antisynodica." Malderus was bishop of Antwerp and a prolific writer, author of a number of commentaries and theological and ethical treatises. The book cited by Gataker was published at Antwerp by Balthasar Moretus, in 1620, and is a volume of over 300 8vo pages. Its full title is: *Antisynodica, sive Animadversiones in decreta conventus Dordraceni, quam vocant synodum nationalem, de quinque doctrinæ capitibus inter Remonstrantes et Contra-Remonstrantes controversis.*

ly before the date of the letter to which Gataker's was a reply, he speaks in a very similar manner. "We have," he says, "a stronger probability than he [Tombs] mentioneth of the salvation of all the Infants of the Faithfull so dying, and a certainty of the salvation of some. . . . If any will go farther and say that God's assuring mercy to them, and calling them blessed, and covenanting to be their God, with the rest of the Arguments, will prove more than a probability, even a full certainty of the salvation of all Believers' Infants so dying; though I dare not say so my selfe, yet I profess to think this opinion far better grounded than Mr. T[omb]'s, that would shut them all out of the Church."¹ Twenty years later he returns to the question, and treats it at great length. He thinks that "there can no promise or proof be produced that all unbaptized Infants are saved, either from the *pæna damni* or *sensus*, or both;" but, on the other hand, he can now "say, as the Synod of *Dort*, Art. I., that *Believing Parents have no cause to doubt of the salvation of their children that dye in infancy*, before they commit *actual sin*; that is, not to trouble themselves with fears about it:" and he thinks "it very probable that this ascertaining promise belongeth not only to the *natural* seed of believers, but to all whom they have the true *power* and *right* to dedicate in covenant to God." Still, however, he "dares not say" that he is "*undoubtedly certain of it*;" he is giving opinions, not convictions.² A hint of the same unwillingness to make the affirmation of the salvation of the children of believers absolute is found even in the statement of the *Compendium* of John Marck. "Nor is it to be doubted," he says, "that to those reprobated, there are likewise most justly to be referred as well the Gentiles who are strangers to the proclamation of the Gospel as the infants of unbelievers, while we have good hope for those of believers because of God's promise (Gen. xvii. 7, etc.), although

¹ *Op. cit.*, ed. 3, 1653, pp. 76 and 78.

² *A Christian Directory*, etc., London, 1673, p. 807 *sq.* See p. 809. ("Christian Ecclesiastics: Ecclesiastical Cases of Conscience," Quest. 35.)

they are in themselves not less damnable, and possibly some of them are even to be damned (*cæteròquin in se non minus damnabilibus, et forte quibusdam etiã damnandis*). For although concerning individual persons of Gentiles and of infants born of unbelievers we neither can nor wish to determine anything particularly, because of God's freedom and the frequently hidden paths of the Spirit, yet all these are by nature children of wrath, impure, alien, and remote from God, without hope, left to themselves (cf. Eph. ii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 14; Eph. ii. 12, 17; Acts xiv. 16, etc.); God has revealed nothing concerning a salvation decreed or to be wrought for them; and they are destitute of the ordinary means of grace."¹

To the great body of Calvinists, however, both of these views seemed insufficiently in accord with "what is written." The one appeared to err by going beyond, and the other by falling short of, the warrant of Scripture. All their thought on this subject took its start from the cardinal scriptural fact of the covenant, and they were jealous of everything which seemed to dull the sharpness of the distinction between the covenanted children of believers and the uncovenanted children of unbelievers. Triglandius speaks not for himself alone but for practically the whole body of the Reformed when, in answer to the suggestion of Episcopius that "it makes no difference whether the infants are children of believers or unbelievers, since the same innocence is found in all infants as such," he replies: "But to us the two do not stand on the same footing; since the one are included in the covenant of God and the others are strangers to that covenant (Gen. xvii. 7; Eph. ii. 11, 12). For this reason children of unbelieving Gentiles are said to be *impure*, but those of believers *holy* (1 Cor. vii. 14); wherefore also Peter says, when exhorting the Jews to repentance and faith (Acts ii. 39), 'To you is the promise (*i. e.*, of remission

¹ JOANNIS MARCKII *Compendium*, etc. (1752), p. 147 (cap. vii., § xxxiii.). In defending Marck's suggestion, DE MOOR quotes a similar passage from the *Censura Confess. Remonstr.*, and another from TRIGLANDIUS very much to the same effect as GATAKER'S.

of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost), and to your children, and to all who are afar off whom our Lord God shall call.'"¹ And John Gerhard might have quoted many more names than those of Calvin, Beza, Sadeel, Ursinus, Gentilis, and Musculus, as affirming that "the infants of believers, all alike, whether baptized or unbaptized, are rightly holy from their mothers' womb by the inheritance of the promise, and enjoy eternal salvation in the covenant and company of God."² With this central point of agreement, the great body of Calvinists differed among themselves only in their belief concerning the destiny of infants dying outside the covenant, and on this point parted into three varieties of opinion.

3. Many held that faith and the promise are sure signs of election, and accordingly that all believers and their children are certainly saved ; but that the lack of faith and the promise is an equally sure sign of reprobation, so that all the children of unbelievers dying such are equally certainly lost. The younger Spanheim, for example, writes : " Confessedly, therefore, original sin is a most just cause of positive reprobation. Hence no one fails to see what we should think concerning the children of pagans dying in their childhood ; for unless we acknowledge salvation outside of God's covenant and Church (like the Pelagians of old, and with them Tertullian, Epiphanius, Clement of Alexandria, of the ancients, and of the moderns, Andradius, Ludovicus Vives, Erasmus, and not a few others, against the whole Bible), and suppose that all the children of the heathen, dying in infancy, are saved, and that it would be a great blessing to them if they should be smothered by the midwives or strangled in the cradle, we should humbly believe that they are justly reprobated by God on account of the corruption (*labes*) and guilt (*reatus*) derived to them by natural propagation. Hence, too, Paul testifies (Rom. v. 14) that death has passed upon them which have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, and distinguishes

¹ *Antapolog.*, caput. 13, p. 207a.

² *Loc.*, ix., p. 281, edition of 1769.

and separates (1 Cor. vii. 14) the children of the covenant as holy from the impure children of unbelievers." Somewhat similarly Stapfer, after affirming the salvation of the infants of believers, dying such, continues: "As to the children of unbelievers, we believe, indeed, that they will be separated from communion with God; and hence because, as children of wrath and cursing, they are excluded from the beatific communion with God they will be damned"—though he eases the apparent harshness of his language by recalling the fact of various degrees of punishment in hell.¹ On an earlier page² we have quoted a passage from Usher's *Body of Divinity* to the same effect. That work was a compilation, and we find the same words in an earlier *Catechism* published by Samuel Crooke,³ which may stand as an example of this very widespread opinion from English ground.

4. More held that faith and the promise are certain signs of election, so that the salvation of believers' children is certain, while the lack of the promise only leaves us in ignorance of God's purpose; nevertheless that there is good ground for asserting that both election and reprobation have place in this unknown sphere. Accordingly they held that all the infants of believers, dying such, are saved, but that some of the infants of unbelievers, dying such, are lost. Probably as much as this is intended to be asserted by Thomas Goodwin when to the question, "Doth God inflict eternal death merely for the corruption of nature upon any infants?" he answers: "My brethren, it must be said, Yes: we are children of wrath by nature; and unless there come in election amongst them, for it is election saveth and is the root of salvation, it must needs be so. . . . But you will say, Do these perish? or Doth God let those perish? Doth His wrath seize upon them? Not only what the text [Eph. ii. 3] saith, but that in Rom. v. is clear for it. . . . It is true elec-

¹ *Opera*, iii., cols. 1173-74, § 22.

² *Institut. Theolog. Polemic.*, 1716, iv., 518.

³ See above, p. 191.

⁴ *Guide unto True Blessedness*, etc., ed. 2, 1614.

tion knows its own amongst infants, but it must be free grace, it must be by grace that ye are saved, for clearly by nature ye are all children of wrath. Therefore the Lord, as He will have instances of all sorts that are in heaven, so He will have some that are in hell for their sin brought into the world."¹ But probably no higher expression of this general view can be found than John Owen's. He argues that there are two ways in which God saves infants: "(1) by interesting them in the covenant, if their immediate or remote parents have been believers. He is a God of them and of their seed, extending his mercy to a thousand generations of them that fear him;" (2) by his grace of election which is most free and not tied to any conditions, by which I make no doubt but God taketh many unto him in Christ whose parents never knew or had been despisers of the Gospel."²

5. Most Calvinists of the past, however, have held that faith and the promise are marks by which we may know assuredly that all those who believe and their children, dying such, are elect and saved; while the absence of sure marks of either election or reprobation in infants, dying such outside the covenant, leaves us without ground for inference concerning them, and they must therefore be left to the judgment of God, which, however hidden from us, is assuredly just and holy and good. This agnostic view of the fate of uncovenanted infants has been held, of course, in conjunction with every degree of hope or the lack of hope concerning them, and thus in the hands of the several theologians it approaches each of the other views. Petrus de Witte may stand for one example of it. He says: "We must adore God's judgments and not curiously inquire into them. Of the children of believers it is not to be doubted but that they shall be saved, inasmuch as they belong unto the covenant. But be-

¹ *Works*, ii., 135-36.

² It is, perhaps, worth noting that this is the general Calvinistic view of what "children of believers" means. Compare CALVIN, *Tracts*, vol. iii., p. 351; and also JUNIUS as quoted above, p. 187.

³ *Works*, x., 81; compare v., 137.

cause we have no promise for the children of unbelievers we leave them to the judgment of God."¹ Our own Jonathan Dickinson² may stand as another. "It may be further urged against this proposition," he says, "*That it drives multitudes of poor infants to Hell who never committed any actual Sin; and is therefore a Doctrine so cruel and unmerciful as to be unworthy of God.* To this I answer that greatest Modesty becomes us in drawing any Conclusions on this Subject. We have indeed the highest Encouragement to dedicate our children to Christ, since he has told us, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*; and the strongest Reason to Hope as to the Happiness of those deceased Infants, who have been thus dedicated to him. But God has not been pleased to reveal to us how far he will extend His *uncovenanted* Mercy to others that die in Infancy.—As, on the one Hand, I don't know that the Scripture anywhere assures us that they shall *all* be *saved*: So, on the other Hand, we have not (that I know of) any Evidence, from Scripture or the Nature of Things, that *any* of them will eternally *perish*.—All those that die in Infancy may (for aught we know) belong to the *Election of Grace*; and be *predestinated to the Adoption of Children*. They may, in Methods to us unknown, have the benefits of Christ's Redemption applied to them; and thereby be made Heirs of Eternal Glory. They are (it is true) naturally under the Guilt and Pollution of Original Sin; but they may, notwithstanding this, for any thing that appears to the contrary, be renewed by the gracious Influences of the Spirit of God, and thereby be made mete for Eternal Life. It therefore concerns us, without any bold and presumptuous conclusions, to leave them in the Hands of that God whose *tender Mercies are over all His Works*." It is this cautious, agnostic view which has the best historical right to be called the general Calvinistic one, and it has persisted as such until the present day in all but English-speaking lands. One of the ablest living Calvinistic thinkers, for example, Dr.

¹ *Catechism*, q. 37.

² *The True Scripture Doctrine concerning some Important Points of Christian Faith*, etc. Boston, 1741, pp. 123, 124.

A. Kuyper, of Amsterdam, writes as follows: "Constantly and unwaveringly the Reformed Confession stations itself on the standpoint of the *covenant* and withholds baptism from all who stand outside the covenant, because it belongs to those within the covenant. To be sure, the Reformed Confession does not pass judgment on the children of heathen who die before coming to years of discretion. They depend on God's mercy, widened as broadly as possible. But when the Scriptures are silent, the Confession, too, preserves silence. Men know nothing here and can say nothing. Mere conjecture and imagination have no right to enter so serious a matter. The lot of these numerous children belongs to the hidden things that are for the Lord God, and is not included among the things which He has revealed to the children of men. Revealed, however, is the matter of the covenant, and this covenant makes known to us the remarkable rule that God has been pleased to set His holy election in connection with the bond of generation."¹ Van Mastricht correctly says that while the Reformed hold that infants are liable to reprobation, yet "concerning *believers'* infants . . . they judge better things. But *unbelievers'* infants, because the Scriptures determine nothing *clearly* on the subject, they judge should be left to the Divine discretion."²

The Reformed Confessions with characteristic caution refrain from all definition upon the negative side of this great question, and thus confine themselves to emphasizing the gracious doctrine common to the whole body of Reformed thought. The fundamental Reformed doctrine of the Church is nowhere more beautifully stated than in the sixteenth article of the Old Scotch Confession, while its polemical appendix of 1580, in its protest against the errors of "antichrist," specifically mentions "his cruell judgement againis infants departing without the sacrament: his absolute necessitie of baptism." No synod probably ever met which labored under greater temptation to declare that

¹ *De Heraut*, for September 7th, 1890.

² *Theoretico-Pract. Theol.* (1724), p. 308.

some infants, dying in infancy, are reprobate, than the Synod of Dort. Possibly nearly every member of it held as his private opinion that there are such infants. And the certainly very shrewd but scarcely sincere methods of the Remonstrants in shifting the form in which this question came before the Synod were very irritating. But the fathers of Dort, with truly Reformed loyalty to the positive declarations of Scripture, confined themselves to a clear testimony to the positive doctrine of infant salvation and a repudiation of the calumnies of the Remonstrants, without a word of negative inference. "Since we are to judge of the will of God from His Word," they say, "which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they together with their parents are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy" (cap. i., art. xvii.). Accordingly they repel in the Conclusion the calumny that the Reformed teach "that many children of the faithful are torn guiltless from their mothers' breasts and tyrannically plunged into hell."¹ It is easy to say that nothing is here said of the children of any but the "godly" and of the "faithful." This is true. And therefore it is not implied (as is often thoughtlessly asserted) that the contrary of what is here asserted is true of the children of the ungodly; but nothing is taught of them at all. It is more to the

¹ The language here used has a not uninteresting history. It is CALVIN'S challenge to Castellio: "Put forth now thy virulence against God, who hurls innocent babes torn from their mothers' breasts into eternal death" (*De Occulta Dei Providentia*, in *Opp.* ed., Amst., viii., pp. 644-45). The underlying conception that God condemns infants to eternal death may, no doubt, be Calvin's; but the mode of expression is Calvin's *reductio ad absurdum* (or rather *ad blasphemiam*) of Castellio's opinions. Nevertheless the Remonstrants allowed themselves in their polemic zeal to apply the whole sentiment to the orthodox, and that, even in a still more sharpened form—viz., with reference to *believers'* children. This very gross calumny the Synod repels. Its deliverance is subjected to a very sharp and not very candid criticism by ERISCIUS (*Opera* I., i., p. 176, and specially II., p. 28).

purpose to observe that it is asserted here that all the children of believers, dying such, are saved ; and that this assertion is an inestimable advance on that of the Council of Trent and that of the Augsburg Confession that baptism is necessary to salvation, as well as upon the ominous silence of the Anglican Prayer Book as to all who die unbaptized. It is, in a word, the confessional doctrine of the Reformed churches and of the Reformed churches alone, that all believers' children, dying in infancy, are saved.

What has been said of the Synod of Dort may be repeated of the Westminster Assembly. The Westminster divines were generally at one in the matter of infant salvation with the doctors of Dort, but, like them, they refrained from any deliverance as to its negative side. That death in infancy does not prejudice the salvation of God's elect they asserted in the chapter of their Confession which treats of the application of Christ's redemption to His people : "All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His word and Spirit. . . . so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace. . . . Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth."¹ With this declaration of their faith that such

¹ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, X., i. and iii. The opinion that a body of non-elect infants dying in infancy and not saved is implied in this passage, although often controversially asserted, is not only a wholly unreasonable opinion exegetically, but is absolutely negated by the history of the formation of this clause in the Assembly as recorded in the *Minutes*, and has never found favor among the expositors of the Confession. DAVID DICKSON'S (1684) treatment of the section shows that he understands it to be directed against the Anabaptists ; and all careful students of the Confession understand it as above, including SHAW, A. A. HODGE, MACPHERSON, MITCHELL, and BEATTIE. This is true of all schools of adherents to the Confession. See, e.g., LYMAN BEECHER (*Spirit of the Pilgrims*, 1828, i., pp. 49, 81) : "The phrase 'elect infants,' which, in his usual way, the reviewer takes for granted implies that there are infants who are not elect, implies no such thing." "But this Confession, which represented the Calvinism of Old England and New, and which expresses also the doctrinal opinions of the Church of Scotland and of the Pres-

of God's elect as die in infancy are saved by His own mysterious working in their hearts, although incapable of the response of faith, they were content. Whether

byterian Church in the United States, teaches neither directly nor by implication that infants are damned." Compare also PHILIP SCHAFF, *Creeks of Christendom*, i., 380, 795. Compare also *The Presbyterian Pastor's Catechism*, by the Rev. JOHN H. BOCKOK, D.D. (Presbyterian Board, 1857): "Q. 13. Why do we not baptize the infant children of unbelievers? A. 1. Not because we think such children would be lost if they died in infancy. We do not think children will be saved on account of their baptism, but through the merits of Christ. Baptism does not confer salvation, but only acknowledges and recognizes it. 2. Non-elect infants are such as do not die in infancy, but grow up to be wicked and impenitent men, as Cain, Herod, Judas, Voltaire, Paine." The impression that the phrase "elect infants dying in infancy," implies as its contrast "non-elect infants dying in infancy," rather than "elect infants living to grow up," is probably due in some measure to lack of acquaintance with the literature of the subject. A glance into CORNELIUS BURGES'S treatise entitled *Baptismal Regeneration of Elect Infants*, which was published in 1629, will supply a number of instances of the use of the phrase in the latter contrast. "Elect infants that live to years . . . yet such as dye in infancy" (p. 166). Some think Calvin in his *Institutes*, iv., 16, 21, speaks only of the "case of elect infants dying in infancy," "but he is not so to be taken, as if he held that only elect infants who dye in infancy doe receive the Spirit in baptism: but that all the elect, whether they live or dye, doe ordinarily partake of the Spirit in that ordinance" (p. 164). "That all elect infants doe ordinarily, in Baptism, receive the Spirit of Christ, to seaze upon them for Christ, and to be in them as the roote and first principle of regeneration and future newnesse of life. . . . This I speake . . . with reference only unto such Infants as dye not in infancy, but live to years of discretion, and then come to be effectually called, and actually converted by the ordinary means of the word applied by the same Spirit unto them, when and how he pleaseth. As for the rest of the elect who dye infants, I will not deny a further worke, sometimes in, sometimes before baptisme, to fit them for heaven" (p. 3). The relation of this sentence to the statement in the *Westminster Confession* is obvious. Among the testimonies which Burges cites from leading Reformed theologians in support of his contentions, we may adduce two, the language of which is closely similar to that of the *Confession*. One is from the Continental divine JUNIUS (*De Padobapt.* 7), and asserts that "elect infants are regenerated when they are ingrafted unto Christ (regenerantur infantes electi cum Christo inseruntur), and this is sealed to them when they are baptized" (quoted p. 26); the other is from the English divine WHITAKER (*De Sacram. in Genere, quest.* i., cap. 3, p. 15), and affirms that "God renews elect infants dying in infancy by the power of His Spirit (infantes electos, morientes antequam adoleverint, Deus virtute Spiritus sui renovat); but if it falls to them to live to greater age, they are the more incited to seek renewal, because they know they received its badge while infants" (quoted p. 211).

these elect comprehend all infants, dying such, or some only—whether there is such a class as non-elect infants dying in infancy, their words neither say nor suggest. No Reformed confession enters into this question; no word is said by any one of them which either asserts or implies either that some infants are reprobated or that all are saved. What has been held in common by the whole body of Reformed theologians on this subject is asserted in these confessions; of what has been disputed among them the confessions are silent. And silence is as favorable to one type of belief as to another.

Although, thus, the cautious agnostic position as to the fate of uncovenanted infants dying in infancy may fairly claim to be historically the Calvinistic view, it is perfectly obvious that it is not *per se* more Calvinistic than the others. The adherents of all the types enumerated above are clearly within the limits of the Reformed system, and hold with the same firmness to the fundamental Reformed position that salvation is absolutely suspended on no earthly condition, but ultimately rests on God's electing grace alone, while our knowledge of who are saved depends on our view of what are the signs of election and of the clearness with which they may be interpreted. As these several types differ only in the replies they offer to the subordinate question, there is no "revolution" involved in passing from one to the other; and as in the lapse of time the balance between them swings this way or that, it can only be truly said that there is advance or retrogression, not in fundamental conception, but in the clearness with which details are read and with which the outline of the doctrine is filled up. In the course of the latter half of the eighteenth century the agnostic view of the fate of uncovenanted infants, dying such, gradually gave place, among English-speaking Calvinists at least, to an ever-growing universality of conviction that these infants too are included in the election of grace; so that in the first half of the nineteenth century it was almost forgotten among American theologians that anything else had ever been believed among them.

Men like Henry Kollock and James P. Wilson, of course, retained consciousness of the past and spoke with caution. "It is in perfect consistence," says the one, "with both these doctrines [of original sin and the necessity of atonement], that we maintain that God has ordained to confer eternal life on all whom He has ordained to remove from this world before they arrive at the years of discretion."¹ And the other, having spoken of the desert of original sin, adds similarly: "Nevertheless it does not follow that any dying in infancy are lost, since their salvation by Christ is more than possible."² But Dr. Lyman Beecher, in a sermon which this declaration made famous, was almost ready to assert that there never had been a Calvinist who believed that any of those dying in infancy were lost. "I am aware," he said in his inimitable way, "that Calvinists are represented as believing and teaching the monstrous doctrine that infants are damned, and that hell is doubtless paved with their bones. But having passed the age of fifty, and been conversant for thirty years with the most approved Calvinistic writers, and personally acquainted with many of the most distinguished Calvinistic divines in New England, and in the Middle and Southern and Western States, I must say that I have never seen nor heard of any book which contained such a sentiment, nor a man, minister or layman, who believed or taught it. And I feel authorized to say that Calvinists as a body are as far from teaching the doctrine of infant damnation as any of those who falsely accuse them. And I would earnestly and affectionately recommend to all persons who have been accustomed to propagate this slander that they commit to memory without delay the ninth com-

¹ *Sermons* (Savannah, Ga., 1822), iii., pp. 20 *sq.* (esp. p. 23); cf. iv., p. 273 *sq.*

² *An Essay on the Probation of Fallen Man*, etc., 1827, pp. 15, 16. Dr. H. M. DEXTER, in *The Congregationalist*, December 10th, 1874, says that Dr. Wilson, editing Ridgeley's *Body of Divinity*, "dissents from his author, and argues effectively and at great length in proof that all infants dying before actual transgression are 'saved by sovereign mercy, by free favor, to the praise of the glory of God's grace.'" The reference given is vol. i., p. 422, but it is wrong; and we have, consequently, not been able to verify the statement.

mandment, which is, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.'"¹ A challenge delivered in such a tone as this could not fail of a reply,² and Dr. Beecher's history was soon set right; but his testimony to the state of opinion in his own day on the subject is, of course, unaffected by his historical error. The same state of affairs is witnessed also by Dr. Charles Hodge, who, as the end of his long life of service as a teacher of theology was drawing to a close, could remark of the opinion, "that only a certain part, or some of those who die in infancy, are saved:" "We can only say that we never saw a Calvinistic theologian who held that doctrine."³ Dr. Hodge's predecessor as teacher of theology at Princeton spoke of the salvation of all infants dying such in something of the tone prevalent early in the century: "As infants, according to the

¹ *The Government of God Desirable*. A sermon delivered at Newark, N. J., October, 1808, during the session of the Synod of New York and New Jersey. By LYMAN BEECHER, A. M., Pastor of the Church of Christ in East Hampton, L. I. Seventh edition. Boston: T. R. Marvin, 1827, 8vo, pp. 27. P. 15, note. This footnote was added in this (seventh) edition. The sermon is also reprinted in Dr. Beecher's *Works*.

² In three articles in *The Christian Examiner* for 1827 and 1828 (vols. iv. and v.), said to be by F. Jenks. In *The Spirit of the Pilgrims*, i. (1828), pp. 42 sq., 78 sq., and 149 sq. Dr. Beecher explained that in writing the note attacked his mind was more upon contemporary than past teachers. He says further: "I have only to add that I have nowhere asserted that Calvinists as a body teach that all infants are *certainly* saved. I am aware that many, with Dickinson and the Reformers" (doubtless a blunder, from Van Maastricht's *Reformati*) "and 'moderate Calvinists' have hoped that they are saved, and referred the event to the unerring discretion of heaven" (p. 51).

³ *Systematic Theology*, iii., 605, note 4, published in 1872. In the succeeding words Dr. Hodge approaches, but fortunately does not attain, the unhistorical assertion of Dr. Beecher. He adds: "We are not learned enough to venture the assertion that no Calvinist ever held it; but if all Calvinists are responsible for what every Calvinist has ever said, and all Lutherans are responsible for everything Luther or Lutherans have ever said, then Dr. Krauth as well as ourselves will have a heavy burden to carry." Dr. Krauth, of course, found no more difficulty than the writer in *The Christian Examiner* had found in reply to Dr. Beecher, in bringing together, in reply to Dr. Hodge, a great list of Calvinists who had held this doctrine. The result is found in his *Infant Baptism and Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System*, etc. (Phila., 1874, p. 83.)

creed of all Reformed churches, are infected with original sin, they cannot without regeneration be qualified for the happiness of heaven. Children dying in infancy must, therefore, be regenerated without the instrumentality of the Word ; and as the Holy Scriptures have not informed us that any of the human family departing in infancy will be lost, we are permitted to hope that all such will be saved." ¹ Dr. Hodge himself speaks with more decision ; ² and to-day few English-speaking Calvinists can be found who do not hold with Toplady, and Thomas Scott, and John Newton, and J. H. A. Bomberger, ³ and Nathan L. Rice, and Robert J. Breckinridge, and Robert S. Candlish, and Thomas Hamilton, ⁴ and Charles Hodge, and William G. T. Shedd, ⁵ and the whole body of those of recent years whom the Calvinistic churches delight to honor, that all who die in infancy are the children of God and enter at once into His glory—not because original sin alone is not deserving of eternal punishment (for all are born children of wrath), nor because those that die in infancy are less guilty than others (for relative innocence would merit only relatively light punishment, not freedom from all punishment), nor because they die in infancy (for that they die in infancy is not the cause but the effect of God's mercy toward them), but simply because God in His infinite love has chosen them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, by a loving foreordination of them unto adoption as sons in Jesus Christ. Thus, as they hold, the Reformed theology has followed the light of the Word until its brightness has illuminated all its corners, and the darkness has fled away.

¹ *The Life of Archibald Alexander, D.D.*, etc., by JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D., p. 585.

² *Systematic Theology*, i., 26 ; iii., 605.

³ *Infant Salvation in its Relation to Infant Depravity, Infant Regeneration and Infant Baptism*. Philadelphia, 1859, pp. 64, 109, 196.

⁴ *Beyond the Stars*, ch. vii. (pp. 184, etc.).

⁵ *Dogmatic Theology*, ii., 714.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF INFANT SALVATION.

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(In five parts.)

PART V.

"Ethical" Tendencies.

THE most serious peril which the orderly development of the Christian doctrine of the salvation of infants has had to encounter, as men strove, age after age, more purely and thoroughly to apprehend it, has arisen from the intrusion into Christian thought of what we may, without lack of charity, call the unchristian conception of man's natural innocence. For the task which was set to Christian thinking was to obtain a clear understanding of God's revealed purpose of mercy to the infants of a guilty and wrath-deserving race. And the Pelagianizing conception of the innocence of human infancy, in however subtle a form it may be presented, puts the solution of the problem in jeopardy by suggesting that no such problem exists and no solution is needed. We have seen how some Greek Fathers cut the knot with the facile formula that infantile innocence, while not deserving of supernatural reward, was yet in no danger of being adjudged to punishment. We have seen how, in the more active hands of Pelagius and his companions, as part of a

great unchristian scheme, the assertion that there has been no such thing as a "fall" and every human being comes into the world in the same condition in which Adam was when he came from his Maker's hands, menaced Christianity itself and was repelled only by the vigor and greatness of an Augustine. We have seen how the same conception, creeping gradually into the Latin Church in the modified form of semi-Pelagianism, lulled her heart to sleep with suggestions of less and less ill-desert for original sin, until she neglected the problem of infant salvation altogether and comforted herself with a constantly attenuating doctrine of infant punishment. If infants are so well off without Christ, there is little impulse to consider whether they may not be in Christ.

The Reformed churches could not hope to work out the problem free from menace from the perennial enemy. From the very beginning of their history, of course, they were continually called upon to meet the assaults of individuals who found that the most telling form they could give their Pelagian attack was to charge the Reformed with dishonoring God by attributing to Him cruel treatment of "innocent infants."¹ The crisis came, however, with the Remonstrant contro-

¹ Outstanding instances may be found in CASTELLIO and SERVETUS. The latter taught that infants are born with hereditary disease (morbus) of sin, indeed, but without guilt, which comes only with responsibility, *i. e.*, with the knowledge of good and evil, the age for which he sets at about twenty. Those who die before that age go, like all men, to the purifying pains of Hades—a sort of purgatory: whence they are released by Christ at the resurrection. They are soiled by the serpent of original sin; but they are guilty of no impiety, and hence the merciful and pitiful Master who gave His blessing to unbaptized babes in this life will not condemn them, but will raise them up at the last day and convey them to heavenly bliss. These tenets may be verified from the extracts given from the *Christianismi Restitutio* by Dr. SCHAFF, *History of the Christian Church*, vii., pp. 748 sq. Dr. Schaff is wrong, however, in paralleling Servetus's doctrine of original sin with Zwingli's. Zwingli taught the universality of the guilt of Adam's first sin, only denying that hereditary corruption is the source of guilt; while Servetus makes no more of *adherent* than he does of *inherent* guilt, denying guilt altogether to infants. On the other hand, Servetus's doctrine is curiously similar to that of our modern Pelagianizing Arminians, as represented, say, by Drs. Whedon, Miner Raymond and John Miley.

versy, which marked the first considerable Pelagianizing defection from the Reformed ranks. Like all their predecessors, the Remonstrants put themselves forward as the defenders of "innocent infancy" against the "barbarity" of the Reformed doctrine, which represented them as born, on account of original sin, under the condemnation of God; and they accordingly passionately asserted the "salvation" of all that die in infancy. "Neither does it matter," said Episcopius,¹ "whether these infants are the children of believers or of heathen, for the innocence is just the same in infants as infants." The anthropology of the Remonstrants, however, was distinctly semi-Pelagian, and on that basis no solid advance was possible toward a sound doctrine of infant salvation. Nor was the matter helped by their postulation of a universal atonement, which lost in intention as much as it gained in extension. Infants may have very little to be saved from, but their salvation from even that cannot be wrought by an atonement which only purchases for them the opportunity for salvation. Of this opportunity they cannot avail themselves, however uninjured by the fall the natural power of free choice may be, for the simple reason that they die infants. Nor can God be held to make them, without their free choice, partakers in the atonement without an admission of that sovereign discrimination among men which it was the very object of the whole Remonstrant theory to exclude. It is not strange that the Remonstrants looked with some favor on the Romish theory of *pœna damni*, which would have been more conformable to their Pelagianizing standpoint. Though the doctrine of the salvation of all infants dying in infancy became one of their characteristic tenets, therefore, it had no logical basis in their scheme of faith, and their proclamation of it could have no direct effect in working out the problem. Indirectly it had, however, a twofold effect. On the one hand, it retarded the true course of the development of doctrine, by leading those who held

¹ *Opera Theologica*, ed. Curcellæus, altera pars. Goudæ, 1665, p. 153a.

fast to biblical teaching on original sin and particular election, to oppose the doctrine of the salvation of all dying in infancy, as if it were necessarily inconsistent with these teachings. Probably Calvinists were never so united in affirming that some infants, dying such, are reprobated, as in the height of the Remonstrant controversy. On the other hand, so far as the doctrine of the salvation of all infants, dying such, was accepted by the anti-Remonstrants, it tended to bring in with it, in more or less measure, the other tenets with which it was associated in the teaching of the Remonstrants, and thus to lead men away from the direct path along which alone the solution was to be found.

Wesleyan Arminianism brought only an amelioration, not a thoroughgoing correction, of the faults of Remonstrantism. The theoretical postulation of original sin and natural inability, though corrected by prenatal justification and the gift to all men of a gracious ability on the basis of universal atonement in Christ, was a great advance. But it left the salvation of infants dying in infancy logically as unaccounted for as had been done by original Remonstrantism. A universal atonement could scarcely bring to these infants more than it brought to such infants as did not die in infancy but grew up to exhibit the corruption of their hearts in appropriate action, and surely this was something short of salvation—at the most an ability to improve the grace given alike to all. But infants, dying such, cannot improve grace; and, therefore, it would seem, cannot be saved, unless we suppose a special gift to them over and above what is given to other men—a supposition subversive at once of the whole Arminian contention. The assertion of the salvation of all infants dying in infancy, although a specially dear tenet of Wesleyan Arminianism, remains, therefore, as with the earlier Remonstrants, unconformable to the system. The Arminian difficulty, indeed, lies one step further back; it does not make clear how *any* infant dying in infancy is to be saved. This is thrown into startling relief by such sentences as these from a sermon of Dr.

Phillips Brooks : " What do we mean by original sin ? Not surely that each being comes into the world guilty, already bearing the burden of responsible sin. If that were so, every infant dying before the age of conscious action must go to everlasting punishment, which horrible doctrine, I think, nobody holds to-day." This " horrible doctrine " probably no one in any age ever avowed ;¹ but the noteworthy point is that Dr. Brooks found it inconceivable that anything deserving the name of salvation could take place " before the age of conscious action." If " salvation " were needed before that, there would be no hope for those needing it. And this is logically involved in the Arminian principle.

The difficulty which faces Arminian thought at this point is fairly illustrated by the evident embarrassment of Arminian theologians in dealing with the whole question of infant salvation. There are doubtless few who will be willing to follow Dr. James Strong in his admission that the Arminian doctrine of salvation is inapplicable to infants, and his consequent suggestion that those who die in infancy are incapable of salvation ; that, like " idiots, lunatics, and other irresponsible human beings " (all of whom present the same difficulty to a type of thought which suspends salvation absolutely as a personal act of rational choice), it may be doubted whether they have souls, since " the existence of an absolutely undeveloped soul is to us inconceivable."² But it cannot be said that the attempts

¹ *Sermons*, vol. vi., Sermon 1, on *The Mystery of Iniquity*.

² Something similar to it has occasionally been held ; see above, p. 145.

³ *The Doctrine of a Future Life* (New York, 1891), p. 94, *note*. The text is speaking of probation and of the fact of reprobation founded on it ; and the note adds : " All this is, of course, inapplicable to infants, idiots, lunatics and other irresponsible human beings who can hardly be called *persons* in the strict sense. Their case has its peculiar difficulties. . . . We may be permitted, however, to venture the suggestion that where the moral disability is congenital and total there is grave reason to doubt the existence of an immortal spirit ; and perhaps we may be forced to believe that immortality itself is *developed* rather than innate. Certain it is that the soul, as a thinking, moral substance, is itself at least developed at some point of embryonic life, and why may not its immortality be likewise a stage in its progress ? The perpetuity or even the existence of an absolutely undeveloped soul is to us inconceivable."

that have been made to explain, conformably to Arminian principles, the salvation of those who die before reaching the age of responsible action have met with much success. The original Wesleyan position, in its effort to evangelize the Arminian scheme, began with allowing the evangelical doctrine of original sin and the consequent guilt of the whole human race, and laid, therefore, the whole weight of infant salvation upon the cancelling grace supposed to come equally to all men on the basis of the atonement in Christ. Though all men are by nature guilty and condemned, yet no one comes into being under mere nature but under grace; and "the condemnation resting upon the race as such is removed by the virtue of the one oblation beginning with the beginning of sin."¹ Every man comes into the world, therefore, in a saved state; and if he departs from the world again before reaching the age of responsible action, he enters at once into the fruition of this salvation. This is essentially the doctrine not only of Wesley, and indeed of Arminius before him,² but hitherto of the leading Wesleyan thinkers—of Fletcher³ and Richard Watson,⁴ and in our own day, of W. B. Pope⁵ and T. O. Summers,⁶ and all who follow the original type of Wesleyan theology.⁷ It is, indeed, the official

¹ W. B. POPE, *Christian Theology*, ii., 59.

² He is defending his friend BORRIUS, and denies that Borrius would have infants saved without the intervention of Christ; and affirms that Borrius's doctrine of infant salvation rested on the conception that "God has taken the whole human race into the grace of reconciliation, and has entered into a covenant of grace with Adam and with the whole of his posterity in him." (*Works*, Nichols's translation, ii., 10, 11.)

³ *Works*, i., 283, 284.

⁴ *Theological Institutes*, ii., 57 sq.

⁵ As above.

⁶ *Systematic Theology*, ii. 39.

⁷ This includes very explicitly the late Dr. HENRY J. VAN DYKE, who wrote: "We believe that the satisfaction which He [Christ] as the seed of the woman and Saviour of the world, rendered to God's broken law, takes away the guilt and condemnation of Adam's sin from the whole human race. We do not say the inherited corruption and depravity of our nature, which is commonly called original sin; but we say the guilt and condemnation of original sin; so that the multitude of the redeemed which no man can number will include not only all believers, but 'all who have not sinned after the simili-

teaching of the great Methodist Episcopal Church, which says in its *Discipline*: "We hold that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the kingdom of God, and therefore graciously entitled to baptism."¹

Therefore it is customary among Methodist theologians, in treating of the benefits of the atonement, to separate between the "immediate" or "unconditional" and the "conditional" benefits, and to speak of the salvation of infants under the former and of the salvation of adults under the latter caption. There have naturally arisen minor differences among them as to exactly what is included in these "unconditional benefits" conferred prenatally on all who come into being. The ordinary custom is to identify them with "justification," and to speak, as standing over against the "decree of condemnation" which has been "issued against original sin, irresponsibly derived from the first Adam," of another "decree of justification" which has "issued from the same court, whose benefits are unconditionally bestowed through the second Adam."² Others have seen that such a justification must necessarily drag in its train a "regeneration" also, by which the sinful de-

tude of Adam's transgression,' that is to say, who die in infancy' (*The Presbyterian Review* for January, 1885, vol. vi., p. 58; cf. *The Church: Her Ministry and Sacraments*, p. 106, where the middle clause of the above is omitted, but without change of sense). So also Dr. HENRY VAN DYKE (*God and Little Children*, N. Y., 1890, p. 62 *sq.*): "The obedience of Christ countervails the disobedience of Adam and blots it out completely. . . . Original sin is all atoned for; the guilt of it is taken away from the race by the Lamb of God." Perhaps a shade less clearly assertory of the fundamental Arminian soteriologic principle is Dr. HENRY E. ROBINS (*The Harmony of Ethics with Theology*, 1891, p. 63 *sq.*): "The sentence of acquittal is the first indispensable step in the process of redemption which will go on to its consummation unless thwarted by personal moral resistance. Now, since infants dying in infancy, idiots, the congenitally insane, and all who in the infallible judgment of God have not reached the stature of moral personality, are incapable of such intelligent moral resistance, incapable of resisting the new terms of salvation proposed under the grace system, they become, we believe, on that account, subjects of regeneration by the Holy Spirit."

¹ *Methodist Discipline*, § 43 (1892).

² The words quoted here are Dr. JOHN J. TIGERT'S in SUMMERS'S *Systematic Theology*, ii., 39.

pravity, which otherwise infants would bring with them into the world, is removed. While Richard Watson draws off to himself in his cautious hesitancy to affirm even actual "justification" of all who come into the world, preferring to say that they are "all born under the 'free gift,' the effects of the 'righteousness' which extended to 'all men;' and this free gift is bestowed on them *in order to* justification of life;" which "justification" follows unconditionally, by a process of which we are not informed, in the case of all who die in infancy.¹ These minor variations of statement, however, while they illustrate the difficulties of its construction, do not affect the common doctrine; which is, briefly, that all men are born into the world, in principle, saved, and it is therefore that they who die in infancy enter into life. Nor do they affect the portentous consequences which flow from this doctrine—fatal, it would seem, to the whole system. For that all men enter the world in a saved state is assuredly not verifiable from experience; those that do not die in infancy certainly do not exhibit the traits of salvation: and, in order to believe that all are born in a saved state, we would seem to be forced to postulate a universal individual apostasy to account for universal sin—a thing which the Wesleyan theologians are naturally somewhat loath to do.² Further, if all men enter the world in a saved state, but with the certainty of apostatizing if they live to years of discretion, the difficulty of justifying the ways of God with man is surely vastly increased; for we have now the permission of two universal apostasies to account for instead of one. Moreover, it would look as if, in that case, grace were openly exhibited as hopelessly weaker than nature; and one would seem justified in doubting whether the grace which protects none from sin who live beyond infancy can be depended on to introduce all who die in infancy into certain glory.

It cannot be held strange, therefore, that a strong ten-

¹ *Theological Institutes*, ii., 59.

² Dr. PORE, for example, says: "We do not assume a second personal fall in the case of each individual reaching the crisis of responsibility" (*Comp. Christ. Theology*, ii., 59.)

dency has recently developed itself among Arminian theologians to discard entirely the assuredly very artificial scheme which postulates a purely theoretical race sin, corrected by an equally theoretical race salvation that cannot be traced in any portion of the race subject to our scrutiny, and to revert to the Pelagianizing anthropology of the Dutch Arminians. From this point of view, which denies the guilt of original sin, infants are thought to enter into the world unfortunates indeed and soiled by an inherited depravity which will inevitably cause them to sin when responsible action begins, but in the meantime under no condemnation; so that if they die in infancy they are liable to no punishment, and must perforce enter into life, for which they are then unconditionally fitted by grace. This is, in general, the doctrine of Drs. Whedon,¹ Raymond,²

¹ *The Methodist Quarterly Review*, 1883, p. 757. *Commentary on Eph. ii. 3 et al.*

² *Systematic Theology*, ii., 311 sq. Dr. RAYMOND is not without some little hesitation in his rejection of the older Wesleyan view. "The doctrine of inherited depravity," he says, "involves the idea of inherited disqualification for eternal life. The salvation of infants, then, has primary regard to a preparation for the blessedness of heaven—it may have a regard to a title thereto; not all newly created beings, nor those sustaining similar relations, are by any natural right entitled to a place among holy angels and glorified saints. The salvation of infants cannot be regarded as a salvation from the peril of eternal death. They have not committed sin, the only thing that incurs such a peril. The idea that they are in danger of eternal death because of Adam's transgression, is at most nothing more than the idea of a theoretic peril. But if it be insisted that 'by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to [a literal and actual] condemnation,' we insist that, from that condemnation, be it what it may, theoretic or literal, all men are saved; for 'by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life,' so that the conditions and relations of the race in infancy differ from those of newly created beings solely in that, by the natural law of propagation, a corrupted nature is inherited. As no unclean thing or unholy person can be admitted to the presence of God . . . it follows that if infants are taken to heaven, some power, justifying, sanctifying their souls, must be vouchsafed unto them; the saving influence of the Holy Spirit must be, for Christ's sake, unconditionally bestowed. Not only their preparation for, but also their title to, and enjoyment of, the blessedness of heaven comes, as came their existence, through the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Our Lord's assurance of infant salvation is sufficient; that, if saved, they are saved by His blood, admits of no doubt; hence we catalogue among the unconditional benefits of atonement the secured salvation of those dying in infancy."

John Miley,¹ C. W. Miller,² G. W. King,³ and a great host of others who are in our day illustrating the inevitable tendency of consistent Arminian thought to find its level in a Pelagian anthropology. The gain to Arminian thought, however, of substituting for the formula, "All infants are born saved," the simpler one of "All infants are born innocent and need no salvation," is certainly not apparent enough to justify the price at which it is purchased—which is no less than the denial that Jesus is, in any proper sense, the Saviour of those that die in infancy. For, this account of the "salvation" of infants, no less than that which it would supplant, is fundamentally destructive to the very principle of Arminianism. For, whether the grace of Christ is called in for the pardon of the sin of those who die in infancy or merely for the removal of their uncondemnable depravity, in either case their destiny is determined irrespective of their choice, by an unconditional decree of God, suspended for its execution on no act of their own; and their salvation is wrought by an unconditional application of the grace of Christ to their souls, through the immediate and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit prior to and apart from any action of their own proper wills. We can scarcely speak of their death in infancy as their own voluntary act, and we are therefore forbidden to say that their salvation is conditioned on their death in infancy—that is no proper condition which depends on God's providence and not their act. And if death in

¹ *Systematic Theology*, i., 518, 532; ii., 247, 408, 505 *sq.* Dr. MILEY is very decided in his Pelagianizing construction and controverts at length the earlier Wesleyan view. We are indebted to him for a number of references.

² *The Conflict of Centuries* (Nashville, Tenn., Southern Meth. Pub. House, 1884, pp. 115 *sq.*, 166, 208. "The fundamental truth is here affirmed 'that there is no corruption in children which is truly and properly sin,' etc.

³ *Future Retribution* (New York, 1891): "This is not the place to discuss the question of the relation of children to the atonement, and we need only say that, not being sinners in any true definition of sin, their relation to Christ must be wholly peculiar, as is their relation to probation and the new birth" (p. 159 *note*).

infancy does depend on God's providence, it is assuredly God in His providence who selects this vast multitude to be made participants of His unconditional salvation. It would be hard to contend that He did not foreknow those who would die in infancy, when He gave Christ to die for the sin of the world; and it would be inevitable that He should have had them in mind as certainly and unconditionally recipients of the benefits of His atonement, whatever other benefits it might bring conditionally to others. And this is but to say that they were unconditionally predestinated to salvation from the foundation of the world. If only a single infant dying in irresponsible infancy be saved, the whole Arminian principle is traversed. If all infants dying such are saved, not only the majority of the saved, but doubtless the majority of the human race hitherto, have entered into life by a non-Arminian pathway.

The truth, indeed, seems to be that there is but one logical outlet for any system of doctrine which suspends the determination of who are to be saved upon any action of man's own will, whether in the use of gracious or natural ability. That lies in the extension of "the day of grace" for such as die before the age of responsible action, into the other world. Otherwise, there will inevitably be brought in covertly, in the salvation of infants, that very sovereignty of God, "irresistible" grace and passive receptivity, to deny which is the whole *raison d'être* of these schemes. There are indications that this is being felt increasingly and in ever wider circles among those who are most concerned; we have noted it recently among the Cumberland Presbyterians,¹ who, perhaps alone of Christian denominations, have embodied in their confession their conviction that all infants, dying such, are saved.²

¹ *Cumberland Presbyterian Review*, July, 1890, p. 369; cf. January, 1890, p. 113.

² "All infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth; so also are others who have never had the exercise of reason, and who are incapable of being outwardly called by the minis-

The theory of a probation in the other world for such as have had in this no such probation as to secure from them a decisive choice, has come to us from Germany, and bears accordingly a later Lutheran coloring. Its roots are, however, planted in the earliest Lutheran thinking,¹ and are equally visible in the writings of the early Remonstrants; its seeds are present, in fact, wherever man's salvation is causally suspended on any act of his own, and they are already germinated wherever the Scriptural declaration that none can be saved except through faith in Christ is transmuted into its pseudo-disjunctive that none can be lost except through rejection of Christ—as if from the proposition that none can live without food it followed that none can die who do not reject food. But the outcome offered by this theory certainly affords no good reason for affirming that all infants, dying such, are saved. It is not uncommon, indeed, for its advocates to suppose the present life to be a more favorable opportunity for moral renewal in Christ than the next.² Some, no doubt, think otherwise. But in either event what can assure us that *all* whose opportunity comes to them only on the other side of the grave will be so renewed? Surely we must bear constantly in mind that, however the circumstances in that world may differ from those of life here, there will nevertheless always “remain the mystery of that freedom which makes it possible to reject

try of the Word.”—*The Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*, revised and adopted by the General Assembly at Princeton, Ky., May, 1829 (Nashville, Tenn., Board of Publication C. P. Church, 1880, ch. x., § 3). Cf. SCHAFF, *Creeds of Christendom*, iii., 773, and for the history, I., p. 816, and R. V. FOSTER in *The American Church History Series*, xi., 303 sq.

¹ Cf. e.g., ANDRÆ (Actis Colloq. Montisbelligart, p. 447, 448), who argues that those who are adjudicated to eternal punishment are not condemned for the reason that they have sinned, but because they have refused to embrace Christ in true faith. BEZA very appropriately replied: “This that you say, ‘these are not therefore damned because they have sinned,’ is something wholly new to me and hitherto unheard of, since sin is the sole cause of eternal damnation, why the wicked are left in their wickedness and condemned.”

² Cf. *Progressive Orthodoxy*, p. 76: “There is much reason also, in the nature of the case, to believe that the present life is the most favorable opportunity for moral renewal in Christ.”

Christ,"¹ and therefore a probability less or greater, according to our estimate of the relative favorableness of the opportunity offered then and now for moral renewal in Christ, that fewer or more of those that die in infancy will use their freedom in rejecting Christ, and so pass to doom.

Efforts enough, no doubt, have been made to show that, even on the so-called "ethical" postulates, it is reasonable to believe that all infants, dying such, will attain blessedness, and that, without the assumption of any proper probation beyond the grave. We are ready to accept the subtle argument in Dr. Kedney's valuable work, *Christian Doctrine Harmonized*,² as the best that can be said in the premises. Dr. Kedney denies the theory of "future probation," but shares the general "ethical" view on which it is founded, and projects the salvation of infants dying in infancy into the next world on the express ground that they are incapable of choice here. He assures us that they will surely welcome the knowledge of God's love in Christ there. But we miss the grounds of assurance, on the fundamental postulates of the scheme. He reasons that we may fairly believe "that even in such cases the moral trend is in this life determined, and through mystical influence, as in all cases whatever, such determination sure to issue in self-determination, foreseen by God and the environment adapted accordingly." "This simply locates the will," he adds, "back of the point of clear self-consciousness, and uses the word to represent the rudimentary consciousness, which last has spiritual elements." "Hence the inference," he concludes, "that infants dying are on the way to perfection, since the knowledge of God's love in Christ is sure to reach them under the coming environment, and that, not to be possibly rejected, but sure to be welcomed, and to carry them to the blessed end. This supply of the highest possible motive-spring, in every case needful for perfection, is not probation, but elevation." We certainly rejoice in this conclusion. But as certainly we do not find it possible to view it as a

¹ *Progressive Orthodoxy*, p. 93.

² Vol. ii., pp. 91 sq.

logical corollary from Dr. Kedney's general principle that every man's eternal state is determined by a true probation, personally undergone by him under influences and providential provisions for making a holy choice easy. Rather it appears to us to rest on assumptions which stand in flagrant contradiction with this principle; and it is hard for us to see why, if the great majority of those who are saved are saved by a mystical influence of the Holy Spirit's, acting beneath consciousness, such as makes their choice of Christ certain, we need be so strenuous in denying with reference to the minority the morality of so blessed and sure a salvation.¹

Dr. Kedney's inconsistency^a appears to us happy in-

¹ It is a view not essentially differing from Dr. Kedney's that the Rev. D. FISK HARRIS, himself a Congregational minister (*Calvinism Contrary to God's Word and Man's Moral Nature*, p. 107), tells us, "seems to be the prevailing view of Congregationalists." This he states thus: "All infants become moral agents after death. Exercising a holy choice, they are saved on the ground of the atonement and by regeneration." Suppose they do not exercise a "holy choice"? What is to assure us that they will *all* "exercise a holy choice"? If the choice of these infants while it remains free can be made certain *there*, why not the same for all men here? And if their choice is made certain, by what is it that their destiny is *determined*—by their choice, or by the Divine act which makes it certain? Assuredly, no thoroughfare is open along this path for a consistent doctrine of the salvation of all that die in infancy, unless the whole principle of the theory is given up and the Reformed doctrine of the sovereign and irresistible grace of God sub-introduced.

^a This inconsistency naturally appears in all writers of similar tendencies, and the popular religious literature of the day is accordingly full of it. An example may be found in Bishop HUGH MILLER THOMPSON'S Baldwin Lectures on *The World and the Man* (New York, 1890). His conception of Christianity is the so-called "ethical" one (pp. 59, 150), and his central idea is that the world is "the wilderness" or trial-ground necessary for fitting men for heaven. In the middle of a chapter the very object of which is to show that the sons of God must needs be trained by tests and trials, attempts and temptations, and that the law that "resistance is the measure of advance" is *universal*, he needs to stop suddenly and say: "And it does not change the law that myriads of the children of our race are spared this trial. The majority of those born into the wilderness are taken out of it before temptation begins." "There is no sense in this," he adds justly, "if we look at our 'science' only. The death of infants is absolutely irrational in the face of the law of survival, if we confine that law only to time and the world. I dare say there is nothing more preposterously senseless than the death, at a year old, of a child

deed when we consider what the more consistent solution of the problem would be, as it is offered by Dr. Emory Miller.¹ Because his theory forces him to consider that the racial and social life existent in this world affords the lowest and easiest conditions which "all-conditioning love" can prepare for the rise, progress and perfection of finite personalities, Dr. Miller can find nothing better to say of "infants of days," dying such, than that, along with idiots, as they have "never exercised self-determination, they have not at-

who in head and hand, in health and intellect, was the perfect flower of his race! But the great Father has other schools besides this. He is not confined to one curriculum for the training of His sons, and those He takes away need other discipline than this wilderness affords. He trains some here. He need not train all" (p. 96). It certainly is interesting to learn that a "universal" law is not affected by its inapplicability to "the majority" of those over whom it was to rule. It is equally worthy of note that Dr. Thompson's "ethical" theory of the necessity of "probation" forces him to assume that children departing this life must enter, not a place of bliss, but a new trial place in the same sense in which this life is a trial-place, and equally including likewise the risk and certainty of many failures. There is, in other words, no pathway open along this road for belief in the salvation of all who die in infancy, nor even for the immediate salvation of *any* who die in infancy. All who are saved must be saved through trial, here or hereafter. Whether Dr. Thompson would assent to this or not, we do not know; his theory involves it. Compare the following words of Dr. E. H. PLUMPTRE (*The Wider Hope*, edited by James Hogg, London, 1890, p. 132): "I dwell . . . on the fact that for a large number of human souls, whom the great mass of Christians recognize as heirs of immortality, there has been absolutely no possibility of any action that could test or develop character. 'As yet I am compelled to believe that where there has been no adequate probation or none at all, there must be some extension of the possibility of development or change beyond the limits of this present life. Take the case of unbaptized children. Shall we close the gates of Paradise against them and satisfy ourselves with the *levissima damnatio* which gained for Augustine the repute of the *durus pater infantum*? And if we are forced in such a case to admit the law of progress, is it not legitimate to infer that it extends beyond them to those whose state is more or less analogous?' " Dr. Plumptre does not once think of the possibility of infants passing at once to bliss,—"*unbaptized* children," he says out of his Anglican consciousness; the best he can hope for is that they "may have a chance" under probation: and that is certainly the best that can be hoped under his "ethical" view.

¹ *The Evolution of Love*. By EMORY MILLER, D.D., LL.D. (Chicago, 1892), p. 330; cf. pp. 254 and 336, which speak of *children* and not merely *infants*.

tained to individual self-consciousness," and are persons "only in the sense of a bundle of personal conditions;" and hence "physical death, which is merely racial retribution, the dissolution of race conditions, must, so far as we can determine without a revelation on the subject, end their being." Even for children of a somewhat larger growth, "who have passed from human conditions without human temptation or probation into the conditions and associations of the blessed," though he is forced to allow that their new conditions are those of "overwhelming motives to love and entire absence of temptation," he yet, because he is required to contend that any conceivable conditions are less easy for attaining perfection than those provided in this world, can only promise relatively low attainments and doubtful advance toward perfection. These new conditions, after all, are not such as will afford opportunity of "self-determined conquest of natural susceptibilities to selfishness," or of the attainment "of the consciousness of moral security as against supposable temptation to sin." By them alone, therefore, perfect personality or the highest order of moral character cannot be reached; though it must be admitted that through association with the "faithful" who have determined their own security (and whom Dr. Miller strangely speaks of as constituting the "main body" of the perfect universe, as if the number of these conquering "faithful" could possibly exceed the combined numbers of "angels, infants, and innocent heathen") they too may eventually acquire a like transcendent security. From such speculations one turns with the sense of a great relief to the simplicity of the Word, which does not suspend salvation upon man's action, but solely upon the loving act of God, for whom nothing is "too hard;" and with a deepened conviction that it is better to fall into the hands of God than in those of men, however well-intentioned.

The drifts of doctrine which have come before us in this rapid sketch may be reduced to three generic views. 1. There is what may be called the *ecclesiasti-*

cal doctrine. According to this the Church, in the sense of an outwardly organized body, is set as the sole fountain of salvation in the midst of a lost world ; the Spirit of God and eternal life are its peculiar endowments, of which none can partake save through communion with it. Accordingly to all those departing this life in infancy, baptism, the gateway to the Church, is the condition of salvation. 2. There is what may be called the *gracious doctrine.* According to this the visible Church is not set in the world to determine by the gift of its ordinances who are to be saved, but, as the harbor of refuge for the saints, to gather into its bosom those whom God Himself in His infinite love has selected in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world in whom to show the wonders of His grace. Men accordingly are not saved because they are baptized, but they are baptized because they are saved ; and the failure of the ordinance does not argue the failure of the grace. Accordingly to all those departing this life in infancy, inclusion in God's saving purpose alone is the condition of salvation : we may be able to infer this purpose from manifest signs, or we may not be able to infer it, but in any case it cannot fail. 3. There is what may be called the *humanitarian doctrine.* According to this the determining cause of man's salvation is his own free choice, under whatever variety of theories as to the source of his power to exercise this choice, or the manner in which it is exercised. Accordingly whether one is saved or not is dependent not on inclusion by baptism in the Church, the God-endowed institution of salvation, or on inclusion by grace in God's hidden purpose of mercy, but on the decisive activity of the individual soul itself.

The first of these doctrines is characteristic of the early, the mediæval, and the Roman churches, and is not without echoes in those sections of Protestantism which love to think of themselves as " more historical " or less radically reformed than the rest. The second is the doctrine of the Reformed churches. These two are not opposed to one another in their most fundamental conception, but are related rather as an earlier

misapprehension and a later correction of the same basal doctrine. The phrase *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is the common property of both ; they differ only in their understanding of what is meant by the "ecclesia," outside of which is no salvation, whether the visible or the invisible church, whether the externally organized institution or the true "body of Christ" bound to Him by the indwelling Spirit. The third doctrine, on the other hand, has cropped out ever and again in every age of the Church, has dominated the thought of whole sections of it and of whole ages, but has never, in its purity, found expression in any great historic confession or exclusively characterized any age. It is, in fact, not a development of Christian doctrine at all, but an intrusion into Christian thought from without. In its purity it has always and in all communions been recognized as deadly heresy ; and only as it has been more or less modified and concealed among distinctively Christian adjuncts has it ever made a position for itself in the Church. Its fundamental conception is the antipodes of that of the other doctrines, inasmuch as it looks to man and not to God as the decisive actor in the saving of the soul.

The first sure step in the development of the doctrine of infant salvation was taken when the Church drew from the Scriptures that foundation which from the beginning has stood firm, *Infants too are lost members of a lost race, and only those savingly united to Christ are saved.* It was only in its definition of what infants are thus savingly united to Christ that the early Church missed the path. All that are brought to Him in baptism, was its answer. And long ages needed to pass before a second step in the development of the doctrine was taken in a corrected definition. The way for a truer apprehension was prepared indeed by Augustine's doctrine of grace, by which salvation was made dependent on the dealings of God with the individual heart, and thus in principle all ecclesiastical bonds were broken. But his own eyes were holden that he should not see it. It was thus reserved to Zwingli to proclaim the true answer clearly, *All the elect children of God, who*

are regenerated by the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth. The sole question that remains is, Who of those that die in infancy are the elect children of God? Tentative answers have been given. The children of God's people, some have said. Others have said, The children of God's people, with such others as His love has set upon to call. *All those that die in infancy*, others still have said. And it is to this reply that Reformed thinking and not Reformed thinking only, but in one way or another, logically or illogically, the thinking of the Christian world has been converging. Is it the Scriptural answer? If it be really conformable to the Word of God it will stand; and the third step in the development of the doctrine of infant salvation is already taken.

But if this answer stand, it must be clearly understood that it can stand on no other theological basis than that of the Reformed theology. If all infants dying in infancy are saved, it is certain that they are not saved by or through the ordinances of the visible Church; for they have not received them. It is equally certain that they are not saved through their own improvement of a grace common to all men; for, just because they die in infancy, they are incapable of personal activity. It is equally certain that they are not saved through the granting to them of a bare opportunity of salvation in the next world; for a bare opportunity indubitably falls short of salvation. If all that die in infancy are saved, it can only be through the almighty operation of the Holy Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth, through whose ineffable grace the Father gathers these little ones to the home He has prepared for them. If, then, the salvation of all that die in infancy be held to be a certain or probable fact, this fact will powerfully react on the whole complex of our theological conceptions, and no system of theological thought can live in which it cannot find a natural and logical place. It can find such a place only in the Reformed theology.