

INFANT SALVATION NO. 411

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 29, 1861,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.”
2 Kings 4:26.*

THE subject of this morning’s discourse will be “Infant Salvation.” It may not possibly be interesting to all present, but I do not remember to have preached upon this subject to this congregation, and I am anxious moreover that the printed series should contain sermons upon the whole range of theology. I think there is no one point which ought to be left out in our ministry, even though it may only yield comfort to a class. Perhaps the larger proportion of this audience have at some time or other had to shed the briny tear over the child’s little coffin—it may be that through this subject consolation may be afforded to them. This good Shunammite was asked by Gehazi whether it was well with herself. She was mourning over a lost child, and yet she said, “It is well.” She felt that the trial would surely be blessed. “Is it well with your husband?” He was old and stricken in years, and was ripening for death, yet she said, “Yes, it is well.” Then came the question about her child. It was dead at home, and the enquiry would renew her griefs, “Is it well with the child?” Yet she said, “It is well,” perhaps so answering because she had a faith that soon it should be restored to her, and that its temporary absence was well. Or I think rather because she was persuaded that whatever might have become of its spirit, it was safe in the keeping of God, happy beneath the shadow of His wings. Therefore, not fearing that it was lost, having no suspicion whatever that it was cast away from the place of bliss—for that suspicion would have quite prevented her giving such an answer—she said “Yes, the child is dead, but ‘it is well.’”

Now let every mother and father here present know assuredly that it is well with the child, if God has taken it away from you in its infant days. You never heard its declaration of faith—it was not capable of such a thing—it was not baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ, not buried with Him in baptism. It was not capable of giving that “answer of a good conscience towards God.” Nevertheless you may rest assured that it is well with the child, well in a higher and a better sense than it is well with yourselves; well without limitation, well without exception, well infinitely, “well” eternally! Perhaps you will say, “What reasons have we for believing that it is well with the child?” Before I enter upon that, I would make one observation. It has been wickedly, lyingly, and slanderously said of Calvinists, that we believe that some little children perish. Those who make the accusation know that their charge is false. I cannot even dare to hope, though I would wish to do so, that they ignorantly misrepresent us. They wickedly repeat what has been denied a thousand times, what they *know is not true!* In Calvin’s advice to Knox, he interprets the Second Commandment, “showing mercy unto thousands of them who love Me,” as referring to generations, and hence he seems to teach that infants who have had pious ancestors, no matter how remotely, dying as infants are saved. This would certainly take in the whole race. As for modern Calvinists, I know of no exception, but we all hope and believe that all persons dying in infancy are elect. Dr. Gill, who has been looked upon in late times as being a very standard of Calvinism, not to say of ultra-Calvinism, himself never hints for a moment the supposition that any infant has perished. He affirms of it that it is a dark and mysterious subject, but that it is his belief, and he thinks he has Scripture to warrant it, that they who have fallen asleep in infancy have not perished, but have been numbered with the chosen of God, and so have entered into eternal rest. We have never taught the contrary, and when the charge is brought, I repudiate it and say, “*You* may have said so, *we* never did, and you know we never did. If you dare to repeat the slander again, let the lie stand in scarlet on your very cheek if you are capable of a blush.” We have never dreamed of such a thing! With very few and rare exceptions, so rare that I never heard of them except from the lips of slanderers, we have never imagined that infants dying as infants have perished, but we have believed that they enter into the Paradise of God!

First then, this morning I shall endeavor to *explain the way in which we believe infants are saved.* Secondly, *give reasons for so believing.* And then, thirdly, *seek to bring out a practical use of the subject.*

I. First of all, THE WAY IN WHICH WE BELIEVE INFANTS TO BE SAVED.

Some ground the idea of the eternal blessedness of the infant upon its *innocence*. We do no such thing; we believe that the infant fell in the first Adam, “for in Adam all died.” All Adam’s posterity, whether infant or adult, were represented by him—he stood for them all, and when he fell, he fell for them all. There was no exception made at all in the Covenant of Works made with Adam as to infants dying; and inasmuch as they were included in Adam, though they have not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, they have original guilt. They are “born in sin and steeped in iniquity; in sin do their mothers conceive them.” So says David of himself, and (by inference) of the whole human race. If they are saved, we believe it is not because of any natural innocence. They enter Heaven by the very same way that we do; they are received in the name of Christ! “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid,” and I do not think nor dream that there is a different foundation for the infant than that which is laid for the adult. And equally is it far from our minds to believe that infants go to Heaven through *baptism*—we say, in the first place, that we believe infant sprinkling to be a human and carnal invention, an addition to the Word of God, and therefore wicked and injurious! When we reflect that it is rendered into something worse than superstition by being accompanied with lies, when children are taught that in their baptism they are made the children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is as base a lie as ever was forged in Hell or uttered beneath Heaven; our spirit sinks at the fearful errors which have crept into the Church through the one little door of infant sprinkling!

No; children are not saved because they are baptized, for if so, the Puseyite is quite right in refusing to bury our little children if they die unbaptized! Yes, the barbarian is quite right in driving the parent, as he does to this day, from the churchyard of his own national Church, and telling him that his child may rot above ground, and that it shall not be buried except it be at the dead of night because the superstitious drops have never fallen on its brow! He is right enough if that baptism made the child a Christian, and if that child could not be saved without it. But a thing so revolting to feeling is at once to be eschewed by Christians! The child is saved, if snatched away by death as we are, on another ground than that of rites and ceremonies, and the will of man!

On what ground, then, do we believe the child to be saved? We believe it to be as lost as the rest of mankind, and as truly condemned by the sentence which said, “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.” It is saved because it is *elect*! In the compass of election in the Lamb’s Book of Life, we believe there shall be found written millions of souls who are only shown on earth, and then stretch their wings for Heaven. They are saved, too, because they were *redeemed* by the precious blood of Jesus Christ! He who shed His blood for all His people, bought them with the same price with which He redeemed their parents, and therefore are they saved because Christ was sponsor for them, and suffered in their place. They are saved, again, not without *regeneration*, for, “except a man”—the text does not mean an adult man, but a *person*, a *being* of the human race—“except a man be born-again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” No doubt, in some mysterious manner, the Spirit of God regenerates the infant soul, and it enters into Glory made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light! That this is possible is proved from Scripture instances. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb. We read of Jeremiah, also, that the same had occurred to him; and of Samuel we find that while yet a babe the Lord called him. We believe, therefore, that even before the intellect can work, God, who works not by the will of man, nor by blood, but by the mysterious agency of His Holy Spirit, creates the infant soul a new creature in Christ Jesus, and then it enters into the “rest which remains for the people of God.” By election, by redemption, by regeneration, the child enters into Glory, by the same door by which every believer in Christ Jesus hopes to enter, and in no other way! If we could not suppose that children could be saved in the same way as adults, if it would be necessary to suppose that God’s justice must be infringed upon, or that His plan of salvation must be altered to suit their cases, then we would be in doubt. But we can see that with the same appliances, by the same plan, on precisely the same grounds, and through the same agencies, the infant soul can behold the Savior’s face in Glory everlasting, and therefore we are at ease upon the matter!

II. This brings me now to note THE REASONS WHY WE THUS THINK INFANTS ARE SAVED.

First, we ground our conviction very much upon the *goodness of the Nature of God*. We say that the opposite doctrine, that some infants perish and are lost, is altogether repugnant to the idea which we have of Him whose name is Love! If we had a God whose name was Moloch, if God were an arbitrary tyrant, without benevolence or Grace, we could suppose some infants being cast into Hell! But our God, who hears the young ravens when they cry, certainly will find no

delight in the shrieks and cries of infants cast away from His Presence! We read of Him that He is so tender, that He cares for oxen, that He would not have the mouth of the ox muzzled that treads out the corn. No, He cares for the bird upon the nest, and would not have the mother bird killed while sitting upon its nest with its little ones. He made ordinances and commands even for irrational creatures! He finds food for the most loathsome animal, nor does He neglect the worm any more than the angel, and shall we believe with such universal goodness as this, that He would cast away the infant soul? I say it would be clearly contrary to all that we have ever read or ever believed of Him, that our faith would stagger before a revelation which would display a fact so singularly exceptional to the tenor of His other deeds! We have learned to humbly submit our judgments to His will, and we dare not criticize or accuse the Lord of All; we believe Him to be just, let Him do as he may, and therefore, whatever He might reveal, we would accept; but He never has, and I think He never will require of us so desperate a stretch of faith as to see goodness in the eternal misery of an infant cast into Hell!

You remember when Jonah—petulant, quick-tempered Jonah—would have Nineveh perish, God gave it as the reason why Nineveh should not be destroyed, that there were in it more than six score thousand infants—persons, He said, who knew not their right hand from their left. If He spared Nineveh that their mortal life might be spared, do you think that their *immortal souls* shall be needlessly cast away? I only put it to your own reason. It is not a case where we need much argument. Would your God cast away an infant? If yours could, I am happy to say he is not the God that I adore!

Again, we think it would be utterly inconsistent with *the known Character of our Lord Jesus Christ*. When His disciples put away the little children whom their anxious mothers brought to Him, Jesus said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven,” by which He taught, as John Newton very properly says, that such as these made up a very great part of the Kingdom of Heaven. And when we consider that upon the best statistics it is calculated that more than one third of the human race dies in infancy, and probably if we take into calculation those districts where infanticide prevails, as in heathen countries such as China and the like, perhaps one half of the population of the world die before they reach adult years—the saying of the Savior derives great force indeed, “Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” If some remind me that the Kingdom of Heaven means the dispensation of Grace on earth, I answer, yes, it does, and it means the same dispensation in Heaven, too; for while part of the Kingdom of Heaven is on earth in the Church, since the Church is always one, that other part of the Church which is above is also the Kingdom of Heaven. We know this text is constantly used as a proof of baptism, but in the first place, Christ did not baptize them, for “Jesus Christ baptized not.” In the second place, His disciples did not baptize them, for they withstood their coming, and would have driven them away! Then if Jesus did not, and His disciple did not, who did? It has no more to do with baptism than with circumcision! There is not the slightest allusion to baptism in the text, or in the context; and I can prove the circumcision of infants from it with quite as fair logic as others attempt to prove infant baptism! However, it does prove this, that infants compose a great part of the family of Christ, and that Jesus Christ is known to have had a love and amiableness towards the little ones! When they shouted in the Temple, “Hosanna!” did He rebuke them? No. He rejoiced in their boyish shouts. “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has God ordained strength,” and does not that text seem to say that in Heaven there shall be “perfect praise” rendered to God by multitudes of cherubs who were here on earth—your little ones fondled in your bosom—and then suddenly snatched away to Heaven? I could not believe it of Jesus, that He would say to little children, “Depart, you accursed, into everlasting fire in Hell!” I cannot conceive it possible of Him as the loving and tender One, that when He shall sit to judge all nations, He should put the little ones on the left hand, and should banish them forever from His Presence!

Could He address them and say to them, “I was hungry, and you gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink, sick, and in prison and you visited Me not? “How *could* they do it? And if the main reason of damnation lies in sins of omission like these which it was not possible for them to commit, for lack of power to perform the duty, how, then, shall He condemn and cast them away?

Furthermore, we think that *the ways of Grace*, if we consider them, render it highly improbable, not to say impossible, that an infant soul should be destroyed. What says Scripture? “Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.” Such a thing as that could not be said of an infant cast away! We know that God is so abundantly gracious that such expressions as the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” “God who is rich in mercy,” “A God full of compassion,” “The exceeding riches of His Grace,” and the like are truly applicable without exaggeration or hyperbole. We know that He is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works, and that in Grace He is able to do “exceeding abundantly above

what we can ask or even think.” The Grace of God has sought out in the world the greatest sinners! It has not passed by the vilest of the vile. He who called himself the chief of sinners was a partaker of the love of Christ. All manner of sin, and of blasphemy have been forgiven unto man. He has been able to save unto the uttermost them who come unto God by Christ, and does it seem consistent with such Grace as this, that it should pass by the myriads upon myriads of little ones who wear the image of the earthy Adam, and never stamp upon them the image of the heavenly? I cannot conceive such a thing! He who has tasted, and felt, and handled the Grace of God, will, I think, shrink instinctively from any other Doctrine than this, that infants dying such, are most assuredly saved!

Once again one of the strongest inferential arguments is to be found in the fact that Scripture positively states that *the number of saved souls at the last will be very great*. In Revelation we read of a number that no man can number. The Psalmist speaks of them as numerous as dew drops from the womb of the morning. Many passages give to Abraham, as the father of the faithful, a seed as many as the stars of Heaven, or as the sand on the seashore. Christ is to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; surely it is not a little that will satisfy Him. The virtue of the precious redemption involves a great host who were redeemed. All Scripture seems to indicate that Heaven will not be a narrow world, that its population will not be like a handful gleaned out of a vintage, but that Christ shall be glorified by ten thousands times ten thousand whom He has redeemed with His blood. Now where are they to come from? How small a part of the map could be called Christian? Look at it. Out of that part which could be called Christian, how small a portion of them would bear the name of Believer! How few could be said to have even a nominal attachment to the Church of Christ? Out of this, how many are hypocrites, and know not the Truth of God! I do not see it possible, unless indeed the millennium age should soon come, and then far exceed a thousand years! I do not see how it is possible that so vast a number should enter Heaven, unless it is on the supposition that infant souls constitute the great majority.

It is a sweet belief to my own mind that there will be more saved than lost, for in all things Christ is to have the pre-eminence, and why not in this? It was the thought of a great divine that perhaps at the last the number of the lost would not bear a greater proportion to the number of the saved, than do the number of criminals in jails to those who are abroad in a properly-conducted state. I hope it may be found to be so. At any rate, it is not my business to be asking, “Lord, are there few that shall be saved?” The gate is strait, but the Lord knows how to bring thousands through it without making it any wider, and we ought not to seek to shut any out by seeking to make it narrower! Oh, I do know that Christ will have the victory, and that as He is followed by streaming hosts, the black prince of Hell will never be able to count as many followers in his dreary train as Christ in His resplendent triumph! And if so, we *must* have the children saved; yes Brothers and Sisters, if not so, we *must have them*, because we feel they must be numbered with the blessed, and dwell with Christ hereafter!

Now for one or two *incidental matters which occur in Scripture*, which also seem to throw a little light on the subject. You have not forgotten the case of David. His child by Bathsheba was to die as a punishment for the father’s offense. David prayed and fasted, and vexed his soul; at last they tell him the child is dead. He fasted no more, but he said, “I shall go to him, he shall not return to me.” Now, where did David expect to go? Why, to Heaven surely! Then his child must have been there, for he said, “*I shall go to him.*” I do not hear him say the same of Absalom. He did not stand over his corpse, and say, “I shall go to him;” he had no hope for that rebellious son. Over this *child* it was not—“O my son! Would to God I had died for you!” No, he could let this baby go with perfect confidence, for he said, “I shall go to him.” “I know,” he might have said, “that He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and when I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death I shall fear no evil, for He is with me. I shall go to my child, and in Heaven we shall be reunited with each other.” You remember, in those instances which I have already quoted, where children are said to have been sanctified from the womb? It casts this light upon the subject, it shows it not to be impossible that a child should be a partaker of Grace while yet a baby.

Then you have the passage, “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He has perfected praise.” The coming out of Egypt was a type of the redemption of the chosen seed, and you know that in that case the little ones were to go forth; no, not even a hoof was to be left behind. Why not children in the greater deliverance to join in the song of Moses, and of the Lamb? And there is a passage in Ezekiel, for where we have but little, we must pick up even the crumbs, and do as our Master did—gather up the fragments that nothing is lost—there is a passage in Ezekiel, 16th Chapter, 21st verse, where God is censuring His people for having given up their little infants to Moloch, having caused them to pass through the

fire, and He says of these little ones, “You have slain *My* children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire.” So, then, they were God’s children, those little ones who died in the red-hot arms of Moloch while babies. God calls them, “*My children*.” We may, therefore, believe concerning all those who have fallen asleep in these early days of life, that Jesus said of them, “These are *My* children,” and that He now today, while He leads His sheep unto loving fountains of water, does not forget to carry out His own injunction, “Feed *My* lambs.” Yes, even today He carries “the lambs in His bosom,” and even before the Eternal Throne He is not ashamed to say, “Behold I and the *children* whom You have given Me.”

There is another passage in Scripture which I think may be used. In the First Chapter of Deuteronomy there has been a threat pronounced upon the children of Israel in the wilderness, that, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, they should never see the promised land. Nevertheless, it is added, “Your little ones, which you said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in there, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.” To you, fathers and mothers, who fear not God, who live and die unbelieving, I would say your unbelief cannot shut your children out of Heaven, and I bless God for that! While you cannot lay hold on that text which says, “The promise is unto us and our children, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call,” yet inasmuch as the sin of the generation in the wilderness did not shut the next generation out of Canaan, but they did surely enter in, so the sin of unbelieving parents shall not necessarily be the ruin of their children, but they shall still, through God’s Sovereign Grace and His overflowing mercy, be made partakers of the rest which He has reserved for His people! Understand that this morning I have not made a distinction between the children of godly and ungodly parents! If they die in infancy, I do not care who is their father, or who their mother—they are saved! I do not even endorse the theory of a good Presbyterian minister who supposes that the children of godly parents will have a better place in Heaven than those who happen to be sprung from ungodly ones. I do not believe in any such thing! I am not certain that there are any degrees in Heaven at all, and even if there were, I am not clear that even that would prove our children to have any higher rights than others. All of them without exception, from whosoever loins they may have sprung, will, we believe, not by baptism, not by their parents’ faith, but simply as we are all saved through the election of God, through the precious blood of Christ, through the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, attain to Glory and immortality, and wear the image of the heavenly as they have worn the image of the earthy!

III. I now come to make a PRACTICAL USE OF THE DOCTRINE.

First, let it be a *comfort to bereaved parents*. You say it is a heavy cross that you have to carry. Remember, *it is easier to carry a dead cross than a living one*. To have a living cross is indeed a tribulation—to have a child who is rebellious in his childhood, vicious in his youth, debauched in his manhood! Ah, would God that he had died from birth; would God that he had never seen the light! Many a father’s hairs have been brought with sorrow to the grave through his living children, but I think never through his dead babies, certainly not if he were a Christian, and were able to take the comfort of the Apostle’s words—“We sorrow not as they who are without hope.” So you would have your child live? Ah, if you could have drawn aside the veil of destiny, and have seen to what he might have lived! Would you have had him live to ripen for the gallows? Would you have him live to curse his father’s God? Would you have him live to make your home wretched, to make you wet your pillow with tears, and send you to your daily work with your hands upon your loins because of sorrow? Such might have been the case. It is not so now, for your little one sings before the Throne of God! Do you know from what sorrows your little one has escaped? You have had enough yourself. It was born of woman, it would have been of few days, and full of trouble as you are. It has escaped those sorrows; do you lament that? Remember, too, your own sins, and the deep sorrow of repentance. Had that child lived, it would have been a sinner, and it would have known the bitterness of conviction of sin. It has escaped that; it rejoices now in the Glory of God! Then would you have it back again?

Bereaved parents, could you for a moment see your own offspring above, I think you would very speedily wipe away your tears! There among the sweet voices which sing the perpetual carol may be heard the voice of your own child—an angel now, and you the mother of a songster before the Throne of God. You might not have murmured had you received the promise that your child would have been elevated to the peerage; it has been elevated higher than that—to the peerage of Heaven! It has received the dignity of the immortals; it is robed in better than royal garments; it is more rich and

more blessed than it could have been if all the crowns of earth could have been put upon its head! Why, then, do you complain? An old poet has penned a verse well fitted for an infant's epitaph—

*“Short was my life, the longer is my rest,
God takes those soonest whom He loves best,
Who's born today, and dies tomorrow,
Loses some hours of joy, but months of sorrow.
Other diseases often come to grieve us,
Death strikes but once, and that stroke does relieve us.”*

Your child has had that one stroke, and has been relieved from all these pains, and you may say of it, this much we know, he is supremely blessed, has escaped from sin, and care, and woe, and with the Savior rests. “Happy the babe,” says Hervey, “who—

*Privileged by faith, a shorter labor, and a lighter weight,
Received but yesterday the gift of breath,
Ordered tomorrow to return to death.”*

While another says, looking upward to the skies—

*“O blest exchange, O envied lot,
Without a conflict crowned,
Stranger to pain, in pleasure blessed
And without fame, renowned.”*

So is it. It is well to fight and win, but to win as fairly without the fight! It is well to sing the song of triumph after we have passed the Red Sea with all its terrors, but to sing the song without the sea is more glorious still! I do not know that I would prefer the lot of a child in Heaven myself. I think it is nobler to have borne the storm, and to have struggled against the wind and the rain. I think it will be a subject of congratulation through eternity, for you and me, that we did not come so easy a way to Heaven, for it is only a pin's prick after all, this mortal life! Then there is exceeding great glory hereafter. But yet I think we may still thank God for those little ones, that they have been spared our sins, and spared our infirmities, and spared our pains, and are entered into the rest above. Thus says the Lord unto you, O Rachel, if you weep for your children, and refuse to be comforted because they are not—“Restrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for your work shall be rewarded with the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.”

The next and perhaps more useful and profitable inference to be drawn from the text is this—many of you are parents who have children in Heaven. Is it not a desirable thing that you should go there, too? And yet have I not in these galleries, and in this area some, perhaps many, who have no hope hereafter? In fact, you have left that which is beyond the grave to be thought of another day, you have given all your time and thoughts to the short, brief, and unsatisfactory pursuits of mortal life! Mother, unconverted mother, from the battlements of Heaven your child beckons you to Paradise! Father, ungodly, impenitent father, the little eyes of that one who looked joyously on you, look down upon you now, and the lips which had scarcely learned to call you father, before they were sealed by the silence of death, may be heard as with a still small voice saying to you this morning, “Father, must we be forever divided by the great gulf which no man can pass?” Does not Nature itself put a kind of longing in your soul that you may be bound in the bundle of life with your own children? Then stop and think! As you are at present, you cannot hope for that; for your way is sinful, you have forgotten Christ, you have not repented of sin, you have loved the wages of iniquity. I pray you go to your chamber this morning, and think of yourself as being driven from your little ones, banished forever from the Presence of God, cast “where their worm dies not, and where their fire is not quenched.” If you will think of these matters, perhaps the heart will begin to move, and the eyes may begin to flow, and then may the Holy Spirit put before your eyes the Cross of the Savior, the Holy Child Jesus! And remember, if you will turn your eye to Him, you shall live—if you believe on Him with all your heart, you shall be with Him where He is—with all those whom the Father gave Him who have gone before!

You need not be shut out. Will you sign your own doom, and write your own death warrant? Neglect not this great salvation, but may the Grace of God work with you to make you seek, for you shall find—to make you knock, for the door shall be opened—to make you ask, for he who asks shall receive! O might I take you by the hand—perhaps you have come from a newly-made grave, or left the child at home dead, and God has made me a messenger to you this morning. O might I take you by the hand and say, “We cannot bring him back again, the spirit is gone beyond recall, but you

may follow!” Behold the ladder of light before you! The first step upon it is repentance, out of yourself; the next step is faith, into Christ, and when you are there, you are fairly and safely on your way, and before long you shall be received at Heaven’s gates by those very little ones who have gone before, that they may come to welcome you when you land upon the eternal shores.

Yet another lesson of instruction, and I will not detain you much longer. What shall we say to parents who have living children? We have spoken of those who are dead—what shall we say of the living? I think I might say, reserve your tears, bereaved parents, for the children who live. You may go to the little grave, you may look upon it and say, “This, my child, is saved. It rests forever beyond all fear of harm.” You may come back to those who are sitting round your table, and you can look from one to the other and say, “These, my children, many of them are unsaved.” Out of God, out of Christ, some of them are just ripening into manhood and into womanhood, and you can plainly see that their heart is like every natural heart—desperately wicked! *There* is subject for weeping for you. I pray you never cease to weep for them until they have ceased to sin; never cease to hope for them until they have ceased to live; never cease to pray for them until you yourself cease to breathe! Carry them before God in the arms of faith, and do not be desponding because they are not what you want them to be. They will yet be won if you have but faith in God! Do not think that it is hopeless. He who saved *you* can save *them*. Take them constantly, one by one, to God’s Mercy Seat and wrestle with Him, and say, “I will not let You go except You bless me.” The promise is unto you and to your child, even to as many as the Lord your God shall call. Pray, strive, wrestle, and it shall yet be your happy lot to see your household saved! This was the word which the Apostle gave to the jailer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house.” We have had many proofs of it, for in this pool under here I have baptized not only the father and the mother, but in many cases all the children, too, who, one after another, have been brought by Grace to put their trust in Jesus! It should be the longing of every parent’s heart to see all his offspring Christ’s, and all who have sprung from his loins numbered in the host of those who shall sing around the Throne of God! We may pray in faith, for we have a promise about it. We may pray in faith, for we have many precedents in Scripture. The God of Abraham is the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, but for this good thing He will be inquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them. Inquire of Him, plead with Him, go before Him with the power of faith and earnestness, and He will surely hear you!

One word to all the congregation. A little child was saying the other day—and children will sometimes say strange things—“Papa, I cannot go back again.” When he was asked what he meant, he explained that he was here, he had begun his life, and it seemed such a thought to him that he could not cease to be—he could not go back again! You and I may say the same; here we are; we have grown up, we cannot go back again to that childhood in which we once were; we have therefore no door of escape there. Good John Bunyan used to wish that he had died when he was a child. Then again he hoped he might be descended from some Jew, for he had a notion that the Hebrews might be saved. That door God has closed. Every door is closed to you and me except the one that is just in front of us, and that has the mark of the Cross upon it. There is the golden knocker of prayer; do we choose to turn aside from that to find another—a gate of *ceremonies*, or of *blood*, or of *birth*? We shall never enter that way. There is that knocker! By faith, great God, I will lift it now. “I am the chief of sinners, have mercy upon me!” Jesus stands there. “Come in,” He says, “you blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside?” He receives me in His arms, washes, clothes, glorifies me, when I come to Him. Am I such a fool that I do not knock? Yes, such I am by nature—then what a fool! O Spirit of God, make me wise to know my danger, and my Refuge! And now, Sinner, in the name of Him who lives and was dead, and is alive forever more, lay hold upon that knocker, lift it, give it a blow, and let your prayer be, before you leave this sanctuary, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” May the Lord hear and bless, for His name’s sake! Amen.

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