

# SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

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INFANT SALVATION.

A Sermon  
BY MR. JAMES WELLS.

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, 6TH NOVEMBER, 1870.

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“But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”—Mark x. 14.

I THINK infant salvation is very generally believed in, but the ground of that belief I think is not so generally understood. There is a tendency among all that know not their lost condition, that know not the truth, and that know not the necessity of the work of God—there is a tendency among all such to believe it, and satisfy themselves in a vague sort of way, without any Scripture authority for their belief. But on the other hand there are many people, good people too, that are very much tried upon the question of infant salvation; and there are, in their minds (what seem to them) insurmountable objections to the doctrine of universal infant salvation; and so they do not, of course, pretend to say how many infants are lost; but they believe, although they have no authority to do so, or rather they fear,—perhaps that is the best form in which to put it,—that thousands of infants are lost. Our theme, then, this morning, is that of infant salvation; and in going through the subject I shall, in the first place, notice *the ground of their salvation*—just the same as our own; secondly, *the usual objections which those who are tried upon that question offer to the universal salvation of infants*; thirdly, *the encouraging proofs we have in the Bible of their salvation*; and fourthly, to demonstrate and prove to you that *there is a law in the Scriptures, in the new covenant, in the gospel, that makes it impossible for one infant to be lost*. If we can demonstrate this, then we prove our point, that every infant must of necessity, dying in infancy, or childhood, be saved. If we cannot prove that there is a law that makes their eternal perdition impossible, then I shall altogether this morning fail in the end I have in view; but for myself I fear no failure; God's blessed word cannot fail; and I hope to show you in the latter part of my discourse the word of the Lord so clearly, that if you believe not, I was going to say, the testimony of the Lord's word, then you would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead. Of course, while I thus speak, I cannot remove the suspicions and the doubts of those who are tried upon the question; it is the Lord alone that can do that. I have always been a firm believer in infant salvation, and I am a firm believer in it now. Let us, then, proceed to notice the subject according to the order in which I have thus presented it.

First, then, a few words, and it will require but a few words, upon *the ground of their salvation*. In the first place, then, infants fell in Adam, the same as all others; and as the apostle saith, "Death reigned over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" "conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, going astray from the womb, speaking lies;"—in a word, infants are represented as we all are, altogether corrupt; and consequently, if an infant be saved, it must be saved entirely by the grace of God. An infant can no more be saved without the atonement of Christ than can an adult; an infant can no more enter heaven without the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul regenerating it than can an adult. The ground of their salvation, therefore, is the same as the salvation of all. I make these two or three remarks that there should not be one of you here suppose, for one moment, that the infant gets to heaven on the ground of any sinlessness, of any goodness, or any righteousness of its own. The word of God is as clear as A B C as to the ground upon which they are saved,—they are saved the same as the dry bones were in Ezekiel's valley; they are saved entirely by grace from first to last. But this I need not enlarge upon. Be it then distinctly understood that I hold they are saved by the grace of God, by the atonement and righteousness of Christ, by the Spirit of God regenerating their souls, and so fitting them for eternal glory. Indeed, it will come before us very clearly this morning, that there is no essential difference between their salvation and the salvation of the adult.

I notice then, after these few remarks, *the usual objections*. The first is that of eternal election. Mind, I am not now trying, in this part of my discourse, to demonstrate their salvation; that is what I have to do at the latter part of my discourse; I am only just going to show how those objections are brought to nothing. First, how does the salvation of all infants accord with eternal election? Well, friends, we could not make it accord with eternal election if we believed that God worked without a plan; but we believe, while this scene of man, as Pope says, is a mighty maze, yet it is not without a plan; that the Lord our God has forefixed everything; but here I must be careful not to lay anything to the door of the Lord that does not belong to him. First, then, the Lord foreknew everything that should come to pass; and as Toplady saith, If he foreknew it, it is sure to come to pass; because if he foreknew something should come to pass, and it does not come to pass, then his knowledge was not perfect; he seemed to foreknow it should come to pass, and by and by it does not come to pass. Therefore, as Toplady well observes, if God foreknew it, his knowledge is infallible; it is sure to come to pass. He saw all the doings of men; he saw infants that would be murdered; he saw it all, and laid his plans accordingly. Do we not read that not a sparrow can fall to the ground without his notice? Do we not read that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered? Do we not read that all our times are in his hands? God, therefore, hath so ordered it, as I shall presently clearly prove, that the greater part of his elect shall die in infancy or in childhood. And observe here further, that of course a consequence follows this doctrine which we must abide by—namely, that no non-elect person

can die in infancy, that no non-elect person can die in childhood. This may seem rather a bold declaration, but I think I can find a scripture or two that will help me out even with this. Therefore, to my mind, for a person to die in infancy or in childhood (and the question of age we shall come to presently) is quite enough to prove that person's eternal election of God. So, then, God has so ordered his plans; he foreknew everything, and he determined before time began what he would permit, what he would suffer, and what he would overrule, and to what ends he would overrule it. None of us hold that God was the author of the fall of man; that would make God the author of sin; but we all hold that he suffered it to take place, he permitted it, he foresaw it, and he has taken that advantage of it which seemed good in his sight. And just so with infants. If a sparrow's life be regulated as to place and time, if a sparrow's flight be regulated by him, much more the existence and the destiny of an immortal soul. The soul of an infant is as immortal as the soul of an adult. Look, then, at those two things;—first, that God perfectly foreknew everything, and determined what he would suffer—that is, what he would permit to take place, and what he would not; and then, secondly, that he has a plan for everything; there is nothing done without a plan. It is true men have their plans, and Satan has his plans; but then all such plans and counsels must be subservient to the plans and counsels of the Most High. So that if he has so made his arrangements that the greater part of his people shall die in infancy, shall not that accord with election? What is there in this contrary to election? No non-elect man can die in infancy, he must be preserved and must grow up. The question would arise, then, Have we any scripture that seems to help us out in the idea that a non-elect person cannot die in infancy, but must grow up to manhood? For mind, we do not hold that infants are saved because they are infants, or because they die in infancy; we hold that they are saved upon infinitely better bases and principles than these. Now there are godly men that represent other godly men; for instance, we will take Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as the representatives of the people of God; and then, on the other hand, there are ungodly men that are representative men, that embody and represent ungodly men at large. And I will ask this one question,—could Pharaoh die in infancy? I think he could not. “For this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” Could Goliath die in infancy? could Nebuchadnezzar die in infancy? could Herod die in infancy? could Judas die in infancy? could Pilate die in infancy? No; the plan of the great Eternal secured their lives;—they should grow up, fill up their measure, be called ultimately to the bar of God, and be subjected to those penalties that he is pleased to inflict upon them. What secret there may be connected with this great question of the non-elect being thus preserved; what secret there may be connected with this great question of the ultimate penalties to be endured by the non-elect, I cannot say. “Secret things belong unto God; but those that are revealed belong unto us and unto our children.” Look then at God's infinite foreknowledge; ordering the sparrow's flight,

ordering everything; not an atom in this dusty globe can move contrary to his plan; not a ripple, not a wave can roll, not a breath can you draw contrary to his plan. Hence it is his plan that accounts on the one hand for the sudden deaths and accidents we meet with, and it is his same plan that accounts for the narrow and the wonderful escapes that thousands of his people have. Our God does not work without a plan. I can see nothing, then, in election contrary to the salvation of all infants;—no infant could be saved without it; for if they are not chosen and blessed in this way, they could not be chosen and blessed at all. This objection that is offered, then,—that of election,—appears to me to be very weak; and I do hope that those that have been tried upon the point will see that God's plan is sure and fixed and arranged. Infants may be put to death, as they have lately been, by infamous wretches;—as you know a poor woman not long ago was hanged for putting some to death; and if I could have had my will, she should not have been hanged until the brutal fellows that were the authors of the existence of those children had been found out, and brought forward, and hanged with her;—if it was right to hang at all, they all ought to have been hanged together. Therefore we are not to lay these horrible crimes to God's account. God foresaw it, and he could have prevented it, but he did not prevent it, he sovereignly permitted it, and takes advantage of the worst doings of men to carry out the greatest purposes of his mercy. I need not try to prove this—that he takes advantage of the worst doings of men to carry out the greatest purposes of his mercy; for there never were worse doings in the world than the doings of the Jews in crucifying Christ; and yet the Lord took advantage of those dreadful doings, and made them subservient to the great purposes of his everlasting love and of his eternal mercy. And in this department I may just meet that barbarous observation we hear sometimes;—some people say, Well, if all infants are sure to be saved, or all that die in infancy, then our better way would be to put our infants to death in order that they might go to heaven. Well, there are three or four answers to that. In the first place, you could not put your infants to death, even from that motive, without being murderers, and “no murderer hath eternal life.” In the next place, you know not whether your infants will grow up and be called by grace or not; and in the next place you have no right to interfere with the life of your fellow-creatures, or with the counsel and wisdom and plans and arrangements of the Most High. There is such a scripture as this:—“What is that to thee? Follow thou me.” Besides, if you put all infants to death, there is an end of the human race. Thus are they saved by grace; and thus election would stand somewhat against the doctrine, were it not for God's infinite foreknowledge, and were it not for his plan;—he has planned everything. You in your life, why, you spend your years as the tale was told out for you in eternity. God is not the author of all we do, but he overrules all we do, he foresaw all we should do. Therefore I can see no objection here. I am not now speaking of the proofs of their salvation, but of the objections.

Another objection is that there is nothing said about their age: therefore, as there is nothing said about their age, we cannot tell

whether they are saved or not ; or at what age infancy ceases and responsibility begins. Well, my answer to that is very simple. First, just look at it, if the age were revealed. For my own feelings, seven, or eight, or nine years would not at all alarm me. I think even as far as that, and perhaps farther, I should scarcely doubt the salvation of a person that died in that childhood. And it is a remarkable thing that you find in Mark v. that the damsel who was there raised up is three times in the original—it does not appear in our version, but in the original she is three times—called by a Greek word which signifies “a little child;” as though the Lord would thereby suggest that even at that age she was ranked among the infants, ranked among saved children; and it is said she was about twelve years old. Mind, I am not fixing the age; but I have rather a liberal feeling upon this matter. And if you say, Well, but there are some children in London who, as soon as they begin to talk, are taught to speak most awful language by their own parents in some of the low slums of London—that would not affect my mind; because the poor little things being thus taught, the sins which they innocently and ignorantly commit will be set down not to their account, but to the account of those that teach them. But the Lord has hidden this point as to the age; and I think just a little thought will give you to see the importance of its being hidden. We will take, for instance, seven years, just for argument's sake;—we will suppose that the Holy Scriptures revealed that doctrine, that every one that dies under seven years of age is sure to be saved, being reckoned an infant;—we will suppose that. Your child is taken ill, and its illness continues; presently it comes to its birthday; at such and such a time in the evening, any time you like to name, the child is exactly seven years old; and if the child should die half an hour or a quarter of an hour before it completes its seventh year, it will go to heaven; but if it should live half an hour afterward it will be lost. Now only imagine such a revelation as this; only imagine it to be so; what a state you would be in! Therefore it is not at all likely that the Lord has fixed any age. This is a matter that you will understand, I think, that it is better concealed than it is revealed; it is enough for us to know that infants and little children certainly are saved. So then, friends, the age seems to me to be no objection at all.

Then again, another objection is that infants have been involved in the judgments of God upon the world. Thousands were drowned in the flood, and many destroyed in the cities of the plain; and infants and little children were cut to pieces during the ministration of God's judgments on the Amalekites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites; and you read that the Lord commissioned king Saul to go and slay utterly old and young, little children and sucklings, women and all,—to slay every one. Now, say some, make me believe that these infants could be saved; make me believe that these infants are gone to heaven. Well, friends, the answer to that is this:—solemn as were those judgments, there are two considerations;—the one is that none of those judgments were inflicted on account of anything done by infants; and secondly, these judgments were only temporal. Now if you can prove that even good people,



people that we know to be good, have been subjected to the same temporal judgments, and have gone out of the world under the same kind of temporal judgments, then, if those temporal judgments do not stand against the salvation of the one, they cannot in fairness stand against the salvation of the other. Did not Jonathan, a good man, fall in battle? Did not Eli sink out of the world under the displeasure of God? He fell backward, and his neck brake. And did not Josiah make such a terrible mistake as to go to war without the authority of the Lord, and did he not fall in battle? And do you not read of a good man—for I no more doubt that the man is in heaven than I do that the apostle Paul is there—do you not read of a good man that went to Bethel and did not honour his message, was decoyed by the false prophet, and a lion slew him? And think you, in the terrible wars that we have had this autumn—think you among the Germans, and perhaps the French as well, there have not been some real Christians, some good men? We know many good men have fallen in battle; and we know that many good men and good women have died raving mad, under the influence of a raging fever; and we know that many good men and good women have died by what we call accidents. It is not very long ago since I visited a good man myself, that died by meeting with an accident. Will you infer from these temporal judgments that such men are not saved? Therefore infants being thus destroyed is no more an argument against their salvation than the temporal circumstances by which thousands of good people have gone out of this world can be an argument against their salvation. Nay, I will go further;—“it is appointed unto all once to die;” and it lies with the Lord to choose the time, the circumstance, and the means by which each shall die. It is after all a matter of very little importance how you die; the great question is where you die. If you die in the Lord, as all infants do (for the word of God is clear upon that, as we shall presently show), then these temporal judgments are not only no argument against their salvation, but the temporal judgment itself was a mercy;—I say it was a mercy. That that cuts the body down sets the soul free and sends it into eternal glory. Standing, as we do, on the mortal side of the scene, it looks distressing; but if we could stand on the other side and see their triumphant souls enter into glory, we should lose that feeling, and should at once see that these temporal judgments are not the least argument whatever against their salvation. Dr. Kitto well observes that the children cursed-by Elisha were young men (idolators), and mocked in Elisha the ascension to heaven of Elijah.

Another objection to the salvation of infants is that people can find no infants among the saved at the last. One writer, in a very unbecoming way indeed, says, “Infants all saved? Then,” he says, “heaven would be crowded with infants; and when we get there we shall meet throngs of infants.” I was sorry to see any one serious about these tremendous matters speaking in such a profane, such an unhallowed way. They say, You can get no evidence of any infants being among the saved at the last. Well, we can explain that, or rather the word of the Lord explains it, and explains it very beautifully. I will bring the explanation, and at the end of my discourse

I shall have to bring in a scripture upon this question that perhaps you would not dream of, wherein, if you have any eyes at all, you will see the truth of what I am saying. Now, as to there being no infants, Isaiah will give us a hint upon it—"the child shall die an hundred years old." I have just lost a little grandson that I loved most dearly, and that I shall never forget while memory holds her seat. I felt chained to his bedside, could not leave him night or day until the Lord took him to himself. Now that child's spirit as it entered heaven became developed, and ceased to be an infantine mind. "The child shall die an hundred years old." As God constituted Adam a man without going through the process of growth and gradual development, so when the spirit of the infant enters eternal glory its powers are developed. It is but an infant as it dies, but it is an hundred years old, that is, of full age, as it stands in Christ and enters into glory. That is one scripture; so you may well find no infants there. And now we have two more scriptures. The next is when the apostle would inform the Hebrews where they were come to. He says, among other things, "Ye are come unto the spirits of just men made perfect." There it is, you see; they are made perfect;—"just men made perfect;" perfect in holiness, and their capacities are developed. Why, some of you have good minds of your own; some of you, men and women too, the Lord has blessed you with good minds; and as I shall not name any names, I cannot make you proud;—I may say great minds, and I like to see it; but you had all that greatness in you when you were born; certainly you had, and all you have acquired now is nothing but the development of those hidden powers. So "the spirits of just men made perfect." Ah, says one, it says "just men;" but it does not say a word about infants. Very well, we will meet you there too; we will accommodate you upon every point. "The child shall die an hundred years old;" and "the spirits of just men made perfect;" it does not say "children;"—why not say "children"? For this reason; in the sense in which you will understand me, all are men as they stand in the perfection of Christ. The apostle saith, "I knew a man in Christ;" so all are men as they stand in Christ. And after all there is not much difference between me and an infant that dies. I looked at my little grandson after he was dead, and thought, Well, I know but little; he knew nothing, not consciously so; and how easy it is for the Lord to turn that nothing into everything, and it will take the same power to augment what little I know into that perfection into which the soul enters when it enters eternal glory.

What then is there in election against universal infant salvation? what is there in temporal judgments against the universal salvation of infants? and what is there then in the fact that no infants are found among the saved? And certainly none are found among the lost. There are other objections which I need not perhaps dwell upon; they will come out probably in what we have to say as to the encouraging aspects we have in the Holy Scriptures upon infant salvation, and which I will approach gradually.

Now my next point is, and I hope and trust I am not wrong in it—*I cannot feel that I am—that eternal (for I must use the word)*

damnation is not by our fall in Adam. We are by that fall in a lost condition, I grant; but I cannot find in Matthew xxv., in Revelation xx.,—I cannot find in any part of the Bible where ultimate judgment is spoken of, that men are sentenced to eternal perdition, except on the ground of their personal works; that is, while all men by the fall of Adam are brought under condemnation, yet their personal works are the rule by which the punishment is to be measured to them. And if it be on the ground of their personal works, and some are to receive a greater damnation than others, then how can an infant be sentenced to eternal perdition when there are no works by which it can be so sentenced? But, says one, if there had been no Jesus Christ, then infants must have been lost as well as others. Stop; do not go too fast. In the first place there is a Jesus Christ, and that some of you, most of you I hope, savingly know; therefore we have no right to assume how matters would have been if there had been no Jesus Christ, for there is a Jesus Christ. And in the next place, if you assume that there had been no Jesus Christ, infants must have been lost as well as others; then in opposition to that I could easily assume that if there were no Jesus Christ, God would not have permitted any to die in infancy, but all should have grown up, and have worked out and filled up their iniquity, and been condemned eternally for their own personal works. "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity." (Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.) I very much admire that epitaph you are all acquainted with, and I quote it, not for the sake so much of the epitaph itself as for the sake of the use that I want to make of it:—

"Bold infidelity, turn pale and die;  
Beneath this stone four infants' ashes lie;—  
Say, are they lost or saved?  
If death's by sin, they sinned because they are here;  
If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear.  
Ah, reason, how depraved! reverse  
The Bible's sacred page, the knot's untied;  
They died, for Adam sinned; they live, for Jesus died."

I grant this is mere assertion. I have mentioned the words because I want to make use of them. Now the poet there saith,—

"If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear."

What have I said? I have said, all that appear among the lost are nominated by their personal wilful wicked works. We all go astray from our very birth, but for all this infants are called innocents; first, because they are included in the mediation of the Saviour; second, because they are not the subjects of responsible works. (Jer. ii. 34.)

"If hell's by works, in hell they can't appear;  
If heaven's by grace, in heaven they can appear."

So then here is a barrier to the one, a security to the other, and I rejoice in the blessed things we have before us presently to state concerning universal infant salvation. How encouraging is this also! I am now naming not the demonstrations, but only the encouragements.

The next that I name is that of the personal instances we have in the Bible. You never have an instance in the Bible of the individual



death of an infant named without its salvation being clearly and fairly pointed out. And the first I shall name—I hope I shall not be misunderstood; I should be very sorry to say anything in this rather long discourse this morning that would stumble any one; therefore what I am going to say I will say it with deep sobriety and with great care;—I refer now to the child of David. The Lord struck that child, as he strikes every one, with disease. Now the Lord struck the child, the child died, but its salvation is indicated. “Can I bring him back? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.” A writer says, “Ah, going to him merely meant going to the grave.” Well, in order to accommodate that writer, and to accommodate all such, we will take it both ways. “I shall go to him.” He will go to the grave, and so shall I; but is that the person that is in the grave? That is only the shell, that is only the house that the tenant lived in. Did David go to hell? No, say you, David went to heaven. Then how could he say, “I shall go to him,” if the child was not gone to heaven too? David knew he would go to heaven. Here is a child, and yet almighty grace steps in and saves that child. I hope I shall not be misunderstood in this matter; but it is to impress our minds with what God is never afraid to impress the minds of the people with—that there is no case too bad for grace, that there is no case too hard for God. David was well aware that no infant could be lost; no man was better taught in that mystery than himself. “Can I bring him back again?” Ah, say some, that means the grave. Does it? Well, but David could easily put him into the grave, and bring him back again, you know; and if he brought him again to animal life, what good would that be without the soul? David would not wish to bring him back again; “I shall go to him;” and we know where David went to, and we know where David is now—enthroned in eternal glory. What cannot grace do? Is anything too hard for God? This is one instance. Again, here is a child dies; the woman went to the minister, very natural; “Is it well with thee? Yes. Is it well with thy husband? Yes. Is it will with the child? It is well;” not only right, but it is well. I challenge any mother, I don’t care who she is; and I challenge any father that is worthy the name of a father—for the man that does not love his own offspring intensely and sincerely is utterly unworthy of a father’s name,—I would ask any mother or any father that has just lost an infant, could you say concerning it, “It is well,” if you believed it was in hell? Could you say concerning it, “It is well,” if you did not believe it was in heaven? But if you believe it is in heaven, you may well say, “It is well.” There is the salvation of that one. And there is only one more, I think, individually named, and he was in a very idolatrous house, just showing, wherever the Lord’s jewels are, if they are in a dunghill, he can discriminate them from all others; Jeroboam’s wife went to see what would become of the child. What did the Lord say? “He only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him”—ah, who planted it there? who wrought it there? who fixed it there? “in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.” Is not this encouraging? I say it is; it is not de-

monstrative, but it is encouraging. Then, again, the little ones that were slain when the Saviour was born, what is the answer of the Most High there? "Cense the voice of thy weeping; thy children shall come again from the land of the enemy." There is their eternal salvation. They were gone only to the grave, and they could not come from the land of the enemy if they were not destined to rise at the last day to eternal life. That again, then, is encouraging. And when the little children in Matthew xxi. sang the praises of the Saviour, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;" the Scribes and the Pharisees said, "Hearest thou what these say?" I wish I could imitate the dear Saviour's answer—"Yea;" yes, of course I do, and delighted I am. The Saviour seems to stand and look them in the face—the old hard-hearted, iron-hearted Pharisees, and shame them out of countenance, "Yea;" their dear little lips, their innocent lips, their lovely voices, their glorious testimony; he embodied them all in his eternal mediation, and they shall rise to eternal glory; they have begun the song, or grace has begun it in them. "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" See how the Saviour was delighted. And then it says, "he left them," these old Pharisees; he did not depart from the little ones. That is a quotation from Psalm viii., "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger,"—the enemy means the devil, and sin, and death, and all adversaries; and the avenger means the law; and Christ has conquered the enemy, and met the law, and thus silenced the avenger; so that all their enemies shall be found for ever liars unto them. So, then, he rejoiced in the songs of the little ones.

But now we must come round to our text, and just see what we can find there. When they forbade the little children to come to Christ, "when he saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Yes, say some, the meaning is not that the kingdom of heaven is made up chiefly (though we shall presently prove it too clearly for you to dispute it)—not that the kingdom of heaven is made up chiefly, say some, of little children, but that they represent spiritual children; so we must understand these little children not literally, but figuratively, to represent spiritual children. That little children are made use of to represent little children spiritually, I grant; but that little children literally are here meant I also abide by, and hope pretty clearly to prove. Well, now, when the Saviour said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," I think before we go any further we had better analyse that—what was it? Why, those words were nothing else but the almighty fiat of the God-man Mediator. Sin, forbid them not; Satan, forbid them not; man, forbid them not; world, forbid them not; hell, forbid them not; death, forbid them not. I can easily prove, and I think you will see the truth of it, that this language is the language of the Eternal Three. Did Christ speak by the Spirit of God? Very well, then it is the language of the Spirit of God, and can no more fail to be fulfilled than

any promise made to the saints can fail to be fulfilled. Doth not the Saviour say, "I speak not mine own words, but the words of him that sent me"? Then they are the words of God the Father. Was Jesus Christ God as well as man? He was. Thus, then, the language, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," is the language of God the Father, it is the language of God the Son, it is the language of God the Holy Ghost; and if he command, who can command it not? Here is his almighty fiat; and these were not children figuratively, these were children literally, these were literally little children. And then, again, how wonderful is the expression that when Jesus saw this hindrance put in the way "he was much displeased,"—"he was *much* displeased." Why, there is not another such expression in all the Bible; as though they could not have touched the Saviour in a tenderer place,—“he was *much* displeased." Why, only just look at it; the disciples must have shrunk into nothing; they must have felt that they had committed a tremendous error, a tremendous mistake. "He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God,"—that is, the kingdom of heaven is made up chiefly of such; that we have presently to prove; and I shall quote a scripture before I close that neither you nor anybody else can prove the truth of unless you admit the salvation of infants. But let us have a word here upon what the Saviour saith, that "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Here the Saviour puts little children and his disciples upon a level. Shall I show you this? It exactly accords with the sentiments of us high-doctrine people. Now how does a little child receive the kingdom of heaven? A friend of mine, a Church of England man, said to me the other day, "In my family there was a little one died three weeks before it was born; do you think that child had a soul?" "Yes," I said. "Where do you think it went to?" "Well," I said, "it went to heaven, to be sure; the Lord designed it should be so. I can prove that a child has a soul three months before it is born, and this is only three weeks before. If you go to Luke i., you will find there that John the Baptist, at the voice of Mary, (John the Baptist was then only six months), leaped for joy when the salutation of the Saviour's presence reached the ears of Elizabeth." And how did that infant, think you, before it was born receive the kingdom? Was there any free will there? Well, no, say you. Just as much as there was in your conversion; your conversion, if a saving one, was as independent of you as was the conversion of John the Baptist before he was born. Was there any human merit there? Was there any person to sprinkle the child there? Was there any bishop's hand to confirm it there? Was there the sacrament, turned, transubstantiated, into the body and blood of Jesus Christ there? My Bible says you must all receive the kingdom upon the same terms. Again, look at the dry bones;—in what way can they receive the kingdom if they receive at all? Just as John the Baptist did before he was born. Ah, Lord, am I thus helpless? is salvation, yea, is my conversion, thus unconditional? Yes; hear it:—"You hath he quickened"—what hand had you in it?—

“who were dead in trespasses and in sins;”—“God, who is rich in mercy, and for his great love wherewith he loved you, even when ye were dead in trespasses and in sins.” Ah, Erskine might well sing,—

“Babes thither caught from womb and breast,  
Claim'd right to sing above the rest;  
Because they found the happy shore  
They never saw nor sought before.”

Here then, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein.” I have a great liking to this; because when I look back at what I was, why, the Lord saved my soul as independent of me, good or bad, as he did John the Baptist before he was born; and as independent as he did Jeremiah when he sanctified him from the womb, and ordained him before he was born to be a prophet unto the nations. Ah, my hearer, let me here dwell for a minute upon little children. If two-thirds—I do not say how many, but if two-thirds of the human race die in infancy or childhood, then what mighty multitudes enter heaven! Do the barbarous Chinese throw their infants out of the window when they are born, and the carts come round in the morning to pick them up? Read Psalm cxxxix.; you will see God is there. They throw the infants out;—God is there to pick them up and take care of them, to regenerate their souls in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. You can't slay the infant, you can't expose the infant; you can't, as the barbarous wretches in ancient time used to do, throw them into the open field—you cannot throw them where the Lord is not—he is everywhere;—nor contrary to what he sovereignly permits. Woe to the wretches that do it, but the infants shall gain the advantage—though thus exposed to a violent death, received into eternal glory. And as I have said, we shall have a scripture presently that for the life of me I cannot understand without admitting the salvation of all infants. Thus, then, “when Jesus saw it, he was much displeas'd, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God;” and you must receive salvation on the same terms. “And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them;”—took them up in his arms to denote that they were his; put his hands upon them to bestow the priestly blessing. In Leviticus ix. Aaron stretched out his hand toward the people, and came down from offering the burnt-offering, and the sin-offering, and the peace-offering;—Jesus put his hands upon the children to minister the priestly blessing;—escape by the burnt-offering, escape by the sin-offering, reconciliation to God by the peace-offering; “and blessed them.” Now is it reasonable, can common sense or would scripture admit it, that the same pure lips which said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me,” shall at the last great day hurl them from him into eternal woe? Is that possible? To hell from whence it came, let such a thought be driven. Shall he say, “Of such is the kingdom of God,” and then at the last great day deny this, and cast them into eternal perdition? Shall he take them up in his arms, and at the last day cast them away? Shall he put his hands upon them, and at the last day take his hands off,

and hurl them to remediless woe? Shall he bless them now, and curse them then? Is he thus a changing Saviour? No; we despise the very thought. And shall not Christ in all things have the pre-eminence? I think he will; and he will have, in my view, the pre-eminence numerically. Now, if the present population of the globe be twelve hundred millions, are there a hundred million of Christians in the world? That is to say, is every twelfth man a Christian? is every twelfth person throughout the world a Christian? I fear not. As such, the adult population belonging to God are but a remnant, they are but a fraction. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it." That has nothing to do with infants; it has to do with them that are raised up by the power of God, and then brought to know his blessed name. Shall he not, then, in all things have the pre-eminence?

Well now, there are two laws in the gospel, one law relating to the disciples, and another law relating to infants; and if the one stand good, the other will stand good also. If you go to Luke vi. you will find a law laid down there; and then we shall see that there is a law laid down here, and upon that same law, as here, a threefold illustration. What is the law? "He lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God." Now, does that law apply to the disciples that were there at that time, and to them only, or does it apply to all disciples? Well, say you, it certainly does apply to all disciples in all ages; so that in all ages the law of Zion is that "theirs is the kingdom of God." If you are disciples, then the law is that yours is the kingdom of God. And if I am an infant or a child, and die in childhood, then the law is, I am of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of heaven is mine, and I belong to that. If the one law apply to all disciples, the other law applies to all infants. Here, then, is a law that if they are little children, and die as such, "of such is the kingdom of God;" they belong to the glorious kingdom of God; and here are the three things, including all we can need for time and eternity,—“he took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

While thinking this over, I saw that this passage which I have read for a text, might read considerably more in favour of infant salvation than it appears in our version; but I thought, Well, I will not meddle with the Greek, for I shall have, of course, critics upon me if I do, and it may lead to a dispute, so I will go on as well as I can without it; but I could have said more upon our version than I have. But a friend some few years ago sent me a modern translation of the New Testament; the name on the title page is the "New York American Bible Union." So after I had made up my mind to speak upon this subject in the way I have, I thought, Well, I will just look into this book kindly sent to me,—who sent it I do not know, but I sincerely thank the friend who did send it;—and several scriptures read a little differently. I thought I will just look at this, and see how it reads. We have here a committee of modern thorough good Greek scholars; and I saw that the original, not only here, but in several other scriptures, might be made to read much more in favour of infant salvation. And when

I took this book up, I thought, Well, I do not think I can do better than read these three scriptures in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and if that does not settle it, with another scripture I have to quote, then I must confess that I have broken down and failed in my object so show that there is a law in the Bible;—one law that makes the kingdom of God belong to all disciples; and another law in the same covenant, in the same gospel, from the same Mediator, from the same God, that makes the kingdom of God belong to all infants or little children, dying as such. Now in Matthew it reads thus:—“And there were brought to him little children, that he might put his hands upon them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them; but Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, *for to such belongs the kingdom of God*; and he put his hands upon them.” “For to such belongs the kingdom of God;” does that not seem to settle the matter? And then, to indicate his claim, he put his pure hands, his blessed hands, upon them;—the very thought of his claiming them does the heart good. “For to such belongs the kingdom of God.” Here is the law, then—not an infant can be lost, of saint, or savage, or any other. I will bring a scripture presently more powerful, if possible, than this. Now I will come to our text:—“And they brought little children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them; but Jesus, seeing it, was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come, and forbid them not, *for to such belongs the kingdom of God*. Verily I say to you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein. And he folded them in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” Talk to me about an infant being lost! You might as well talk to me about the apostle Paul being lost as about an infant being lost. “He folded them in his arms,” pressed them to his bosom. Could any father or mother act more lovingly? And then send these children to hell after this! Doth it not beautifully carry out that scripture in Isaiah,—“As one whom his mother comforteth?” Forgive me, if I say that the dear Saviour had in his pure manhood all the intense sympathy of a mother and all the ardent affection of a father; he united in his pure manhood a perfection of sympathy. Watts does not go too far when he says,—

“All human beauties, all divine,  
In my beloved meet and shine.”

“To them belongs the kingdom of God.” Who dares to say it does not belong to them? He saith it does. “He folded them in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” Then if you go to Luke xviii.—“And they brought to him also infants, that he might touch them; and the disciples seeing it rebuked them; but Jesus, calling them to him, said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; *for to such belongs the kingdom of God*.” Thus three times, in Matthew, in Mark, in Luke, three times does the great God declare that the kingdom of God belongs to infants and to little children; well, then, if God says it, there is an end of it. Don't think the Lord carries on his work in a lax

sort of way. When my dear little grandson was dying the other day, I and all in my house were in intense distress and concern about it; but our concern was only a creature concern; there was over our concern a divine concern, there was over our concern a divine counsel and a divine arrangement. So I say to you mothers, to you fathers, to you sisters and brothers, I hope you will never have a mean thought of the great God again to suppose he will cast infants into hell.

But now I have one more scripture, which I can't understand, which I don't wish to understand, and I can't see the truth of it, without admitting the salvation of all infants; and that scripture I will read directly. Now one part of the word of God declares concerning the saved that they are out of all nations. Was the gospel preached in the great continent of America, in the South Sea Islands, and many other parts, in the apostolic age? We have no proof that it was. How is it then that we read of "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds?" So then not one family out of all Adam's race from which there are not some saved, *every* kindred, some of all the families of the earth. I will read it carefully:—"Lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds,"—"and kindreds." Why, I should like to know, and yet it cannot be known, the number of infants that the parents in this congregation have lost. I got into an omnibus the other day, going to see a friend who was ill, and there was a Christian woman there who knew me, and we got speaking about infants; and she said, "I have lost six." I happened to call the next day to see a Christian brother who is present; he has lost six; another now present has lost six; so here are six parents who have lost eighteen children; and there are numbers of you present who have lost many. So then here it is,—“out of all nations and *kindreds*,” there we get the savage, there we get the Chinese, there we get all nations;—“out of all nations.” Why, the gospel has never been preached yet literally in all nations; and yet here is a people out of all nations, and you can account for it only by the salvation of infants. “Lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne;”—not an exception. Well, if this be the case, and if to them belongs the kingdom of heaven, what room is there for doubt about the matter?

Well but then, say you, it goes on to say that “these came out of great tribulation.” Ah, haven't you? I have no doubt you have that are parents, witnessed the sufferings of your babes that have died, till your heart has been rent in twain. Have you not thought,—I wonder how the Lord, if he is of tender mercy, can suffer this poor little thing to writhe in agony like this? And when that infant arrives at that happy clime, would it not say it has come out of great tribulation? I think it would—I think and feel that it would. Well but then, say you, there is something in that chapter rather against your idea, and that is, it says that they have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;” how can infants do that? Just as easily as you can—just as easily as you can. You can no more wash your soul, you can no more

pardon your sins, you can no more clothe yourself in Christ, you can no more gain possession of eternal things, than the infant can. You can do it by the power of God, and the infant does it, the child does it, by the power of God ; and hence all—both the infant and the adult—are brought at the last to perceive, to know, and to understand that the Lord did all the work. Therefore the song centres in that great theme,—“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, to him be glory for ever and ever.” Amen and Amen.

This book of the Revelation, as I have shown in lectures thereon, is a summing up of the whole Bible ; how then, as both in the fifth and in this chapter, can they be of *every kindred*, as it reads in the fifth chapter, and of *all kindreds*, as it reads here in this seventh chapter ? How can they be of *every kindred*, but by universal infant salvation ? Admit that *all* infants of *all* ages of the world, and of all nations, are saved, then they are of *every kindred*. And according to the New York translation, to them belongs the kingdom of God. So then the law of Zion is that as the kingdom of God belongs to *all* true disciples ; so the same kingdom of God, by the same law of Zion, belongs to *all* little children that die in infancy and childhood.

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### EARLY AND HAPPY IN HEAVEN.

How happy are the infant souls,  
That leave this dark abode,  
And go to dwell in realms of light,  
With their dear Saviour God.

But oh, says Nature, do not go,  
And leave me here to mourn ;  
But Grace replies, 'Tis Jesus comes  
To take the infant home.

But we're travelling here below,  
Amidst the frowns of man,  
While infants miss the thorny road,  
And go to adore the Lamb.

'Tis Jesus saves his own elect,  
The aged and the young ;  
And the rich wonders of the Lamb  
Shall dwell on every tongue.