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GENERAL CHURCH NEWS

Now, this is not the work of man, it is the work of God. No man is ever born of his own will either naturally of the flesh or supernaturally of the Spirit. He has nothing to do with his birth. His earthly parents are the efficient agents of his natural birth; God is the efficient agent of his spiritual birth. He is begotten by the will of God. (John 1:13), with the word of truth (Jas. 1:18), which is the incorruptible seed of truth (1 Pet. 1:23), and is born of the Spirit. (John 3:5). The Holy Spirit is the agent who is directly responsible for the new spiritual life, in that, by the free and special grace of God, He makes the effectual call, implants the seed of truth, and brings about spiritual birth. Man's intellect does not accomplish it, for the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; "for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

How often this fact is illustrated in the experiences of men. A sinner reads, or hears read, the great gospel text: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He knows every word of it; he knows what it means; but it leaves his heart cold and unmoved. Many times this truth has flashed upon his mind, but always with the same result. Then comes a momentous time when the full meaning of the gracious message of God bursts upon him. It is God's word to **him**; Christ died for **him**; all his sins have been laid on the sinless One who was crucified for **him**. His heart leaps with joy; he has become a new creation in Christ Jesus; he has been born again; he is a child of God; he is saved forever. This is the Spirit's work. Another living cell is ready to be transplanted into the body of Christ.

2. Baptized by the Spirit. The Baptism of the Spirit is the next direct work of the Holy Spirit; it is the act of incorporation. It really occurs when the soul is born again, but we think of it separately because of the new relationships set up. The birth is out of darkness into light; from death to life. The baptism is from enmity into love; from an alien to a citizen.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." 1 Cor. 12:13. We do not join the Church of our own will; we are joined to the Church by the Baptism of the Spirit. This is the "one baptism" spoken of in Eph. 4:5. It is not water baptism, which is the symbol of the true baptism, and which the new made member of the Body of Christ will gladly receive of his own accord as a testimony of his faith. He will also unite with some branch of the Church, because he has the right to do so and because he wants the fellowship in worship and service with others who have been saved. So he joins a church because he has already been the direct-work of the Holy Spirit. These new sad to say, who do not have the right of Spirit birth and Spirit baptism, join a church and clog the Body with dead cells or harm the Body with deadly cells that distribute rank poison.

So the Church continues to live and grow by the redeemed souls that are added to it daily by the direct work of the Holy Spirit. These new members, each one indwelt by the Spirit of Life, increase the size of the Church and add to its efficiency as God's earthly agent of salvation.

The Church also has its indirect part in carrying on its life. Perhaps **indirect** is not the best word to

use, but by it we mean that the Church does its part **under** the direction of the Holy Spirit and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said to His disciples, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." "But when the Paraclete is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." These passages show clearly that the Church has something to do, that it saves its life by saving others. Its life is sustained by feeding on the Word of the Spirit. It brings forth fruit by testifying the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and becomes strong in so doing. Its main testimony is very simple: "He saved us, He can save you." That is the living germ of the seed of the Word which the Holy Spirit plants in dead hearts to awaken them to life everlasting.

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Infant Salvation

By Rev. Wm. C. Robinson, D.D.*

Our age is sorely in need of clear thinking on the subject of infant salvation. When a baby dies, do the Christian parents thank God the Father for His grace, the Lord Jesus Christ for His blood, and the Holy Spirit for His regenerating action in saving that baby? And if the baby lives, do the same parents realize that the baby is an heir of racial sin who needs to be taught the law of God that he may realize he is a sinner and the Gospel of Christ that he may be saved? These fundamental facts are often obscured in the baptism of infants. Perhaps, a few affirmations will clarify our understanding.

I. Infants are lost members of a lost race. They need to be saved, and only those that are savingly united to Christ are saved. This fact was brought out in the Pelagian controversy, when under the leadership of Augustine, the Church recognized that every child enters the world with the guilt of Adam's first sin and the consequent corruption of original sin. The Apostle tells us: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. 5:18). According to the Psalmist, we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity; we sin as soon as we are born and we go astray from the womb. Calvin says that infants bring their own condemnation into the world with them and the seeds of that iniquity which will later appear in them. In Craig's old Scottish Catechism we are taught that baptism is "the Seal of our spiritual filthiness through our Communion with Adam, and our purgation by our Communion with Christ." In the Westminster "Directory for the Publick Worship of God," the minister is to instruct the parents, "that the water, in baptism representeth and signifieth, both the blood of Christ, which taketh away all guilt of sin, original and actual; and the sanctifying virtue of the Spirit

of Christ against the dominion of sin and the corruption of our sinful nature." In our Southern Presbyterian Book of Church Order, the minister is to show: "that we are by nature, sinful, guilty, and polluted and have need of cleansing by the blood of Christ, and by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God." He is to propose to the parents the following question: "Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit."

II. Infant Baptism is a seal of the promises of God and of the covenant of grace. We baptize adults on their confession that by faith they adhere to the promises of God. We baptize infants on God's promise that He will be our God and the God of our children. We thus claim the salvation held out to us in the covenant of grace for our little ones. By baptism they are claimed for God and sealed with the seal of the righteousness of faith. God's Triune Name is named upon them and thus the Father owns them as His children.

Regeneration is not, however, tied to the moment of baptism. God may see fit to regenerate them as children of believing parents before baptism, at baptism, or after baptism. For them the promises are claimed not necessarily realized at the moment. We need to continue to lay hold on God in prayer that He may fulfill the promise unto the day of Jesus Christ. We need to realize that all salvation is solely, wholly of God's free grace.

Moreover, they are sealed with the seal of the righteousness of faith. And the righteousness of

faith is an **imputed** not an **imparted** righteousness. Those who are righteous by faith are sinners in themselves and only righteous in Christ. At one and the same time, we are **sinners** in ourselves, **justified** in Christ, and **penitent** because of our sins. Thus even if our little ones are regenerated and justified they are not yet angels as some of the religious literature of the day implies. A recent article makes infants of Christian parents better than the Apostle Paul ever professed to be! Calvin well says that Baptism does not remove original sin and that depravity never ceases in us until we are delivered from it by death.

So even if our little ones are regenerated and justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ they still need sanctifying grace and at certain periods they need it very badly. Here as everywhere grace must come first, but as God works in we are to exhort them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, to strive to enter in by the strait gate, to give diligence to make their calling and election sure. In other words the children of the covenant need to be taught that they are members of a fallen and lost race, that no one can be saved except by the mercy of God, by the death of Christ, and by the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit. They need to have the law of God held up to them in the catechism that they may see themselves as sinners in the sight of God. They need to recognize that God the Holy Spirit effectually calls them and brings them to Christ in faith. They need constant encouragement and urging on the heavenly way.

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Look Out for The Roman Catholic Church

By Rev. J. W. Hassell, Th.D.*

We live in a day of extreme tolerance, and on all hands we are warned not to criticize anything that sails under a bright flag, especially if it relates to religion. And so, such pagan beliefs and practices are allowed to flourish right under our eyes without a protest, as Christian Science, Mormonism, Spiritism, Seventh-Day-Adventism and Roman Catholicism. Although all of these should be unitedly and vigorously opposed by the Protestant churches, we are concerned here only with Romanism.

In opposition to these sentiments we are constantly reminded that 'there are good Catholics', the inference being that therefore we should not oppose but encourage them.

Now no one disputes that there are good Catholics. If there were nothing good about them the danger would be far less than it is. But the contention here made is: 1. That the Roman Catholic Church is thoroughly pagan in its Scriptural interpretations and practices; 2. That its whole philosophy of political government is opposed to American democracy, its aims being to undermine

and destroy our free institutions, and dominate the affairs of the State; 3. That the Roman Catholic Church is utterly and unreasonably intolerant of all other faiths, especially of Protestantism; 4. And that it is vigorously and aggressively waging a well planned campaign to make America a Catholic land.

Rome Pagan

With respect to Rome's paganism, let it be noted that her popes and bishops appropriate to themselves divine names and character, God, Jehovah, Lord, Deus Noster. The commands of God are freely set aside and their own "divine" deliverances substituted. They have mounted the throne of the Redeemer, seized His scepter, speak in His power. The absolute power of His Church is in their hands, while the sins of the world are retained or are remitted according to their will. Indulgences to commit sins of any type and degree may be obtained from them for a prescribed consideration. All material possessions are claimed as their property, and all mankind declared to be their vassals.