



"By their fruits shall ye know them" Matt. 7:16

Childhood Conversion

By W. B. Godbey

(an excerpt from the 244 page "Autobiography of (W.B.) Godbey.

PREFACE

Long have the people clamored for me to write my life. I did not want to do it, but found myself actually incompetent to resist the united appeals of my friends, who girdle the globe. I am intimately acquainted with many of the Lord's dear people from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf to the Lakes, while my travels in Europe, Asia and Africa, in the providence of God, have given me many happy acquaintances in all of these countries.

The Lord has let me live seventy-three years, given me a splendid education, a bright conversion, a glorious sanctification, permitted me to preach fifty-three years and write forty-eight books and booklets. I have no dark chapter in my biography.

Though, as I believe, I was converted at the age of three years, I inadvertently lost it; but was reclaimed at the age of sixteen, when the Lord so revealed Himself to me as to enable me ever since to walk in the light of His kingdom. He kept me through all the precarious and slippery paths of childhood and youth, so fortifying me against the seducing enchantments incident to the juvenile, as to keep me out of their seductive quarrels and to enable me to lead a moral life, without ever contracting the vicious habits which blight the innocence of childhood and blacken the escutcheon of youth in the overwhelming majority of cases. He has so wonderfully kept His healing hand on my body that I have never been a bed-ridden invalid. Though terrible ailments have taken hold on me, He has always healed me so quickly that I lost no time comparatively and was never missed from the battlefield.

While my dear father and mother were utterly unable financially to give me a collegiate education, God, in His signal mercy, not only permitted me to prosecute a thorough classical course, but has permitted me to travel three times in Europe, Asia and Africa, and within recent years to go around the world again, traveling through the great historic countries and the most important missionary fields. God is no respecter of persons. He loves your children as dearly as your humble servant. Let them read my biography and see how I began as a penniless boy, but finally prosecuted a thorough collegiate education. I have preached for fifty-three years with the constant blessing of God on my labors, and am still on the battlefield, pressing the war for God and souls, having preached as much by pen as by speech. I have traveled extensively for the glory of God and the establishment of His kingdom in all the earth, so my life's history will be an inspiration to your children to do likewise.

There is nothing in it which will not prove a blessing to the reader.

My life has been quite eventful. God sanctified me fifteen years before the Holiness Movement reached the Great South, where I was born and reared, and He used me to preach entire sanctification from the Atlantic Ocean to Mexico in anticipation of the oncoming movement. You will also find in this history a ten years' war with the Campbellites and everything you need on the great baptismal controversy, in which all need light and grace to walk in it.

This book will be about the size and make of my large Commentaries and will sell perhaps for \$1.50.

You and your children cannot do without it.

God bless you.

W. B. Godbey



A Discussion on Childhood Conversion

By W. B. Godbey

I was born June 3, 1833, by the waters of Clifty Creek, in Pulaski County, Kentucky. During my infancy my parents migrated six miles east and settled on a farm which they had purchased by the waters of Pitman's Creek, four and one-half miles north of Somerset, the county seat. There, in the providence of God, I lived until I was twenty years old, the family remaining a number of years afterwards. There were ten of us children, five sons and five daughters; one of the former having gone to Heaven in his infancy. The other nine all reached maturity. The four surviving sons all became preachers, but the daughters, by reason of the prevailing dogma against woman's ministry, were unfortunately withheld from the privilege which I am satisfied they would have participated in with great delight. Half of our number – three sisters and two brothers – are now in Glory. My youngest brother, Martin Adams, was very suddenly called to his heavenly home at the early age of twenty-eight.

I have an exceedingly early recollection, and, for the glory of God, I feel it my duty to say it, an extraordinary memory. I could always read a book and tell substantially everything in it by memory.

When I was quite a little fellow, I doubt seriously whether I was three years old, my mother took me on her lap and told me wonderful things which electrified me with astonishment and thrilled me with interest, as they were utterly new and I had never heard them before. She told me that the time would come when the dead would all rise from their graves, and the world take fire and burn up. Oh, how this stirred and excited my infantile mind and moved my childish heart. I said: "O mother, where will I be when the world is on fire?" Then she said: "O my child, you will be shouting with the angels in the air." Then I said: "Mother, how do you know?" She responded: "I have given you to the Lord for a preacher; your father is a preacher, and I want all of my sons to preach." If it were now, she would have said all of her daughters, too, for my sisters were all intellectually bright and spiritual, and would have made good preachers. She proceeded to tell me not only that she had given us to the Lord for preachers, but she had the evidence that we would preach. She also told me about my baptism, in which I was dedicated to God forever and became a member of His Church.

Consequently I was to be good, preach the Gospel, and go to Heaven when I left the world.

Though I do not think I was more than three years old, then and there I received the call to preach, and it rested on me ever afterward. So profound and thrilling was my impression, that I could not wait for the rolling years to bring me into manhood, but told my playfellows that I was a preacher. Then we began to hold meetings, all the children ever afterward recognizing me as a preacher. Those impressions never left me, but strengthened their grip with the lapse of years. Though I am now seventy-three years old, I would rather preach the Gospel to the poor and starve to death, than to be a millionaire and not preach.



Infantile Justification

I know I received the call to preach through the instrumentality of my dear sainted mother at that time, and I verily believe that I was then converted to God. Of course I had never lost my infantile justification, with which I was born into the world. This brings us to the consideration of a most important Bible truth, i.e., infantile justification and regeneration. When does it take place? We answer: "The moment soul and body constitute personality, which is in the pre-natal state, by the normal economy of grace every human being is born from above" John 3:7. When I was a circuit rider, I made that statement in the presence of my presiding elder, who was a good old man, but not a classical scholar. He at once contradicted me upon the allegation that I had people born again before they were born the first time. The answer to his argument is in the simple fact that "again" in those Scriptures is a wrong translation. Our Savior said "anoother," whose first meaning is "from above," and this is the true translation. The Bible clearly reveals that every human being is born from above, thus becoming a child of God, justified and regenerated, before the natural birth. If this were not so, all infants dying unborn would be sure of Hell; since, without the supernatural birth, no soul can go to Heaven. Our Savior's treatment of the babies abundantly confirms this conclusion. He everywhere takes them in His arms and certifies "of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Therefore, you see in all His ministry that He fully recognizes the infantile membership of His kingdom, positively certifying not only their membership, but holding them up as bona fide paragon members, assuring His disciples that they must be converted and become like them. Now if we take these facts and harmonize them with His positive affirmation (John 3:7), "Ye must be born from above," in order to enter the kingdom, the conclusion follows as an irresistible and logical sequence, that all of the infants in all ages and nations have already been born from above, as otherwise they could not be members of His kingdom, as He positively certifies they are. In connection with these Scriptures, let us take Heb. 2:9, "By the grace of God Christ tasted death for EVERY ONE," which includes every human being in all ages, whether born or unborn. Now when do you become a human being?

We answer: the very moment soul and body are united and constitute a personality you become a human being, and the great and glorious vicarious atonement which our Lord made for the whole human race comes into availability. The Greek word in this passage is hyper, which always mean "instead of," and is the very word constantly used revelatory of the vicarious atonement. Therefore there is no possible evasion of the conclusion that, by the wonderful redemption of Jesus Christ, we are all justified and regenerated in the pre-natal state, at the moment of the transition out of the fetal into the personal existence. Unless you accept this conclusion, you consign to the bottomless pit every infant dying before the physical birth. The truth of it is, that the physical birth is not the beginning of the personal existence, by any means. Our Savior's work is perfect, absolutely leaving out none; it is normal economy, but including every son and daughter of Adam's race, so that Satan gets

none but those who, having reached responsibility, take the bit in their own teeth and, pursuant to their own free agency, **which grace never contravenes**, absolutely reject the redemption of Christ.

Verily, God's time for every soul to be justified and regenerated is the very moment it enters personal existence, and this actually does take place without a solitary exception.



Some Kept Not Their First Estate

There are three things which God never made: a devil, a sinner, and a snake. He created angels, with perfect moral freedom to obey or disobey. Some of them unfortunately “kept not their first estate,” (Jude 6th verse), fell, and became devils and demons. Isaiah 14:12: “How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, the son of the morning!” God created Adam and Eve upright and holy and perfectly free to obey or disobey. Unfortunately they followed in the track of Satan and lost their first estate, becoming sinners. He created the Nahash, the intermediate link between man and brute, the most intelligent of all the animal kingdom and having the power of speech. Unfortunately for him, Satan subsidized him in the abduction of mother Eve, and, through her, father Adam, thus ruining the human race. In consequence of this Satanic manipulation, God pronounced that awful anathema on him, which resulted in his transformation into the loathsome, venomous, hissing serpent. God is the very essence of everything good, therefore from Him nothing bad can possibly emanate.

A dogma is extensively preached throughout Christendom which certifies, “Once in grace, always in grace,” involving the conclusion that if you have ever had salvation you will never go to Hell.

When Satan goes into the lying business, he knows how to “do the thing up brown.” If you will investigate the facts of the case, you will find the very reverse of the above dogma to be true. Instead of there being no backsliders in Hell, there are none but backsliders in the dismal regions of endless woe. Oh, how the awful reminiscence of their quondam [former – DVM] happiness in the kingdom of God will haunt them through all eternity, as they wail their hopeless doom. Let us take a momentary invoice of Hell's inmates. We begin with Satan, the fallen archangel, and find him none other than an old backslider. Then we take all of the devils and demons and find them fallen angels, without a single exception, having once been in Heaven, but having failed to keep their probation.

Finally we come to the millions of sinners and find, by the positive testimony of Jesus, that, in their innocent babyhood, they were citizens of God's kingdom. Therefore Hell was made for none but backsliders, and never will have any other occupants.

Then you say: “Brother Godbey, since we are all, by the nominal grace of God in Christ, justified and regenerated in the pre-natal state, why do little children need the conversion which you say you received when only three years old?” The Bible is the most beautiful and glorious book in the world.

It is its own expositor. If you will give it a chance, it will always explain itself. Psalm 51:5, “I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” This is not condemnatory sin, but the inbred depravity which we all inherit from Adam. A man is poisoned and must die, if that poison is not removed by a stomach pump, or in some other way. You do not blame him because it was in the water he drank, but did not know it till it was too late. An enemy had put it there. Adam is the fountain whence emanated the stream of humanity which has broadened and covered the whole earth. Satan poisoned the fountain, and we all

imbibed it. Christ brought us the remedy, which is free for us all to use and get rid of the poison. That remedy is His precious blood, which He shed on Calvary. The first great work of grace realized in human experience, i. e., the beautiful globe denominated conversion, consists of two hemispheres, i. e., justification, freeing us from condemnation, and regeneration, giving us a new heart and resurrecting the human spirit into the life it lost by sin. This justification and regeneration, which we all receive by the normal grace of Christ in the pre-natal transition out of the fetal into the personal state, does not remove the depravity transmitted from Adam to every human being, but only conquers it and gives grace to hold it in status quo, in due time to be utterly and forever eliminated in the great work of entire sanctification.



Hereditary Depravity

“Now, Brother Godbey, why do these justified and regenerated infants need conversion?” Because this hereditary depravity is still in the heart, and when they reach the age of responsibility it will lead them into sin to an absolute certainty, if not converted. Because, while they are born in the kingdom safe and all right, so that if they were to die they are sure of Heaven, yet they are born with their faces away from God, turned toward carnal desires and appetites. Now, the thing to do is to instruct the little one, turn him around and introduce him to God, so that he will start out in life Godwardly and Heavenwardly whereas, if he undergoes no change, he is certain to start sinwardly and Hellwardly. If my godly mother and preaching father had understood this great truth, they would have saved me from years of suffering in Satan’s kingdom; though, under the blessed teaching and prayers of my dear mother, as above specified, at the age of three years I believe I did get converted, i. e., turned around and was introduced to God; *yet I did not know how to abide steadfastly in the kingdom*, though I never went into sinful habits. I kept far from profanity; I would not use any bywords or slang of any kind, because I read in my Bible that our conversation should be yea, yea, and nay, nay, and any more than this cometh from the evil one. Though reared in the worst whiskey state in the Union, in my boyhood I joined a Temperance Society, excluding all beverages, and stuck to it. I never tasted beer in my life, and do not know the taste of any intoxicants. Though reared in the greatest tobacco state in the world, I never used it. I do not know the taste of coffee; do not use tea, chocolate, or any nervines whatever. I never knew the number of cards in a deck; never danced a step in my life, nor had anything to do with Satan’s fandangos, frolics, barbecues, circuses, nor theaters. Though my life remained manifestly unimpeachable, yet I lost my hold on God, became a backslider, and so remained till I was sixteen years of age, when the Lord gloriously converted me and gave me grace to ever afterward abide in His kingdom. We have a vivid illustration of this problem in the lives of John the Baptist and the Apostle Paul. We read in reference to the former that he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his infancy. When Herod was killing the infants in and about Bethlehem, in order to get the one born King of the Jews, lest He might supersede his dynasty on the throne of Israel, though there was no order for this massacre to be extended to Jutta, the home of Zachariah and Elizabeth, a dozen miles distant, yet, through fear that the bloody edict might reach them, they fled away into the wilderness of Judea and returned no more. Among the denominations of the Jewish Church, the Pharisees were orthodox, the Sadducees were heterodox, and the Essenes were the holiness people. The latter, generally too poor to cultivate the rich land, lived in the desert where land was so poor that it was not worth appropriating and they could use all of it they wanted.

In this, way John the Baptist, in addition to his sanctified father and mother, who “walked in

all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,” had the society of all these poor, humble holiness people, fortifying him against all worldliness of every kind. Therefore, instead of backsliding from his infantile justification, he moved directly on into the sanctified experience, and then and there, steadfast, shining and shouting, awaited the happy welcome of his thirtieth year, the Jewish majority, antecedent to which no priest entered upon his office, therefore it was observed both by John and Jesus.

The Sad Experience of The Apostle Paul

Far otherwise was the sad experience of the Apostle Paul, Rom. 7:9, “But I was alive at one time without law.” This is a clear allusion to his infantile justification with which he was born and which he retained until he reached the age of responsibility and knew right from wrong. That was the time he needed conversion to introduce him to God and turn away his face from carnal appetites and inclinations, toward spiritual and heavenly things. “But the commandment having come, sin revived and I died, and the commandment which was unto me for life, the same is found to be unto death; for, sin having taken occasion through the commandment deceived me and through it slew me.”

This inbred sin, which he inherited from Adam and which was born in him, lay apparently dead in his heart like the grain of wheat in the bin. It is said that wheat has been taken from the catacombs of Egypt four thousand years old and sown, has germinated and actually produced a crop. Paul was a very strong character and had a great mind; hereditary depravity in him was great and strong. Until he reached responsibility it remained perfectly still and could not possibly germinate and produce a crop of condemnatory transgression. So that was the time the commandment came, which he unfortunately rejected and antagonized, then and there forfeiting his infantile justification, falling under condemnation and becoming a backslider. Oh, what a vivid contrast between Paul and John the Baptist! The latter lived and died under the Old Dispensation, whose normal plan is justification, but by the wonderful proleptical grace of God he enjoyed the sanctified experience all his life, while the former, his contemporary, having unfortunately forfeited his infantile justification and become a backslider, yielding to the normal trend of an undue emphasis on works in the absence of their concomitant grace, drifted away into the legalism which has been so fatal to the Church in all ages.

Inadvertently he substituted intellect and education for the Holy Ghost, being environed by the most ample facilities of literary culture the world could give.

Paul having graduated in the Greek colleges of Tarsus, his native city, and adding to his classical lore all the ecclesiastical culture the Jewish rabbins could give him, while sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, the leading Hebrew theologian of the age, he was promoted step by step till he reached a place in the Sanhedrin, where he was honored by all the dignitaries and magnates, who spontaneously stood in awe, spellbound, as they contemplated his towering intellect enriched with the highest culture, literary, classical, philosophical, theological and ecclesiastical. He was then honored by the high priest with the responsible office of expurgating the Church of all heresies and schisms. Pursuant to the supremacy with which he was thus honored officially, he led off the loyal wing of the Church in what he regarded as the noble work of suppressing the fearful Nazarene heresy, which, in his judgment, threatened the very existence of the Church in which patriarchs and prophets had lived and died and gone to Heaven. Though God, in His mercy, sent him the Holy Ghost to convict him, believing that he was right and that the Nazarene heresy, if not suppressed, would ruin the Church, he resisted Him heroically, as we conclude from our Savior’s statement when He shone down upon him as he journeyed to Damascus: “It is hard for thee to kick against the goads.” As the ox kicking back against the steel points with which they teach him to expedite his walk, thus wounds his heels till the blood copiously flows, so Paul had been determinedly resisting the Holy Ghost. He never flickered till the glorified Savior appeared

to him with a brilliancy eclipsing the meridian sun in his noonday splendor.

The solution of this awful obduracy on the part of great Saul of Tarsus was the fact that, though perfectly honest and sincere, he was not enjoying spiritual salvation, but, with all of his zeal for God, he was a mere legalist. I have no idea that he ever was reclaimed during all of his honored and influential ministerial life in the Jewish Church; not till his wonderful conversion in the house of Judas, under the ministry of Ananias, the normal fruitage of that transcendent conviction which flashed through him like forked lightnings, streaming down from the unutterable splendor of our Savior's glorified person. There are multitudes of preachers at this day, full of learning and zeal for the Church, in the succession of Saul of Tarsus before his glorious conversion in Damascus, who have substituted dead legalism for the mighty works of the Holy Ghost, which are always new, fresh, and bright.

The Value of Efficient Teachers

Oh, the incalculable value of efficient teachers to serve our Sunday Schools as spiritual guides in the experimental realm! If we only had them in every Sunday School, intelligently instructed in reference to the infantile relation to the Divine economy so that they could lead the little ones of the kindergarten to the Savior before they reach responsibility, and introduce them to Him by prayer, instruction and spiritual songs, and thus get them intelligently converted! This, with Sabbatically instructing and diagnosing their spiritual status, so that, in case they are backslidden during the week, they will get them reclaimed, will be their great work to keep them in the kingdom of God. The great trouble is that our Sunday Schools, like our homes, are *radically deficient in spiritual diagnosis* of the children and that simple, plain, spiritual instruction necessary to acquaint them with the Savior and qualify them to walk with Him day by day. While I shall always believe that I really found the Lord at the time above mentioned, when I was three years old, my mother, whom the Spirit used to lead me to God and get me converted, for the want of instruction did not know that I was converted, and of course I did not know it myself. If she and my preaching father had understood the beautiful economy of grace in reference to the little ones, I am satisfied that they could have kept me in the kingdom of God. I do believe that my grandchildren, Emma and John Hill, of ten and nine years of age, both got converted before they lost their infantile justification. I have always made them a specialty in my prayers in my almost perpetual absence and in my instruction when with them. I find them ready and able in prayer and testimony, and clearly evincing decisive growth in grace during my absence from them. Little children, even when clearly converted and walking with God, **need constant attention to keep them from backsliding, because of the non-development of their intellect which is a powerful fortification against temptation. They are easily and quickly converted and very liable to backslide before we are aware.** Consequently acute spiritual diagnosis is necessary on the part of the teachers to detect the lapses and get them reclaimed as quickly as possible. It is the nature of a sheep when it gets out of the pasture to stray off and just keep going farther and farther indefinitely until it is captured by a robber or devoured by a wild beast.

Mother Wesley was wonderfully blessed with spiritual light, diagnosis and an aptitude to teach.

She not only taught her large family in the school every day, but took each one aside and interviewed it specially in the interest of its soul.

I date my infantile conversion from this lesson which my mother gave me at the age of three years.

The Prodigal Son

This took place before I had reached responsibility and had an opportunity to backslide, as in

the case of Paul (Rom. 7:9) where he lost his infantile justification because he had reached the years of accountability and, instead of obeying, disobeyed the Lord's commandment, thus becoming a backslider, which is really the status of every adult sinner in the world, as we see it illustrated in the case of the Prodigal Son, whom we count converted when he got back to his father's house. But you know he was born in that house and never got out till he wandered away from his father's house. A simple analysis of the case will convince you thoroughly that the return of the prodigal was nothing more nor less than his reclamation. "No Scripture is of private interpretation," (2 Pet. 1:20), therefore the case of the Prodigal Son parallels that of every sinner in the world, confirming the conclusion that what we call the conversion of the sinner is the reclamation of the backslider. The true and normal conversion takes place before the infantile justification is forfeited. In this there is neither justification nor regeneration, for these are received in the prenatal state in the moment of the transition from the fetal to the personal status.

We have in the case of the Prodigal Son's elder brother a beautiful illustration of the gracious possibilities of retaining our infantile justification. You see when his younger brother got home and he returned from the field and heard the rousing jollification and learned from the servant that his father had slain the fatted calf and they were all rejoicing over the returned prodigal, how he refused to go in. He thought there ought to be shouting over him instead of his brother, as he had been so good and his brother so bad. Then, responsive to the pleadings of his father importuning him to come in, he says, "Father, I have never at any time transgressed thy commandment." This shows clearly that he had never disobeyed him, consequently had never forfeited his infantile justification. If the testimony of his innocence of which we here read had been incorrect, his father would have corrected him, but as he left that declaration unchallenged, the normal conclusion is that he was correct, having never actually violated his father's command, which he would have done if he had forfeited his infantile justification. We see clearly that he much **needed sanctification to take away the hereditary fret and jealousy out of his heart, which he had inherited from father Adam**, and regeneration does not remove, but only gives grace to keep down the depravity, so that it is no longer permitted to rise up and commit actual transgressions. We find this interview of the father with the elder son continues, until the curtain drops, hiding the scene from our vision. I believe the elder son did eventually yield to the importunities of the father, came in, got sanctified, joined the jollification, and, in all probability, before it was over, proved the highest jumper and loudest shouter.

My Infant Baptism

I feel it my duty as a faithful autobiographer here to state that my infant baptism was, in the providence of God, a great blessing to me. My parents often told me about it when I was little, reminding me that I was a church member, having been solemnly dedicated to God in baptism, therefore I must be good and obedient to all of His commandments. I became a good reader when only six years old, reading the Scriptures with great interest. Finding the commandment, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord," I remembered it with the deep and constant realization that, when I disobeyed my father and mother in anything, I was violating the commandment of God. The constant realization that I had been baptized and in this way dedicated to God, rested on me as a potent incentive to obedience, good behavior and rectitude. Baptism should not be given to infants recklessly and improvidently; afterward disregarded, while the children are permitted to go unscrupulously into sin; as in that case it is really taking the name of the Lord in vain, ultimating with the recipients as a hardener of their hearts and wielding a detrimental moral influence over the life. But when it is used by the parents with due reverence for the Holy Trinity and with an appreciation of their privileges as citizens of the kingdom to dedicate their offspring and all their possessions to God, the influence on the parents is exceedingly helpful in tightening up their

obligations to bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; meanwhile it is to the child a perpetual reminiscence of his relation to God and of the inalienable obligations growing out of that relation. All children need every possible legitimate influence to fortify them against the perpetual temptations to do wrong, arising from hereditary depravity in the heart and all sorts of external allurements in the world. The journey of life is crowded with temptations from the cradle to the grave, our Savior assuring us that "the saved are few," therefore it is our imperative duty to do our utmost from the beginning to build around our children the strongest wall we possibly can in order to fortify them against temptation. In the discharge of this duty we should begin as soon as they are born. We are all the creatures of education. Truly has it been said, "Education forms the common mind; as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined."

A Christian Home

I know I am a miracle of providence and grace; it does not seem to me that I could have dispensed with any of His blessings without serious detriment and jeopardy, therefore I am full of gratitude for the blessings of a Christian home, and among them my dedication to God in infancy. When they told me about it, my bark was already launched and the compass set, steering me Heavenward. Learning those facts, I accepted the situation, and with my earliest susceptibility of recognizing the obligation, realized that the very consciousness that I was already given to God in the ordinance of His own appointment inspired my heart with resignation, reconciliation, joyful acceptance of the situation and sincere and ardent resolution by the help of God to be true. The great mistake of parents is in neglecting their children until Satan gets the lasso around their necks. Solomon says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." It is our imperative duty from the beginning, not only to restrain but to constrain, lest the vicious predilections, hereditary in the heart of every child, get the start of us. Solomon again gives us the benefit of the wisdom which God gave him, when he says, "If you beat a boy with a rod, you shall save his soul." I am full of gratitude to God both for the restraint and constraint of the Christian home in which He gave me birth, and feel that when I get to Heaven the first thing I will do will be to hunt my sainted father and mother and thank them for their faithful efforts to bring me up for God, and ask their pardon for all the sorrow I ever gave them by disobedience.

We are living in a dispensation of glorious spiritual freedom, our Savior having broken every yoke of bondage. Some think we would better not baptize the infant, but wait until adulthood, so he may choose for himself. The great trouble is that if we do not bring into availability every auxiliary in behalf of virtue and righteousness, Satan may so capture the heart as to forestall the choice on his side. You say, "I am afraid that if I have my baby baptized, when it grows up it will be dissatisfied and want it again." Suppose it does; do not hesitate to encourage a repetition of the ordinance to the satisfaction of the conscience. Baptism was protracted from the day of Moses and repeated whenever they had contracted ceremonial defilement. Many a devout Jew was baptized with water thousands of times. Peter says it should be the answer of a good conscience. Therefore we should feel perfectly free to satisfy our conscience when truly enlightened by the Word and Spirit.

