

**CHRISTIANITY AND  
CHILDHOOD; OR, THE  
RELATION OF  
CHILDREN TO THE CHURCH**

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Christianity and Childhood; Or, The Relation of Children to the Church by R. J. Cooke

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# CHRISTIANITY

AND

## CHILDHOOD;

OR,

### THE RELATION OF CHILDREN TO THE CHURCH.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE present work is designed to establish, on Biblical and Historical grounds, the reasons for Child-membership in the Christian Church. Every institution of the Church must have some fundamental reasons for its existence, otherwise it is entitled to oblivion. While the literature on the correlated doctrine is exceeding voluminous, there is no serious attempt, with, perhaps, one or two exceptions, to reduce to a system the various facts which constitute the doctrine underlying the practice of those Churches who include children within their folds. There is, therefore, a real demand for a work of this nature. That this work now presented to the Church will answer the requirement, is not the province of the writer to decide. It has been prompted solely by the desire to advance *within*, the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. That it will be acceptable to all, is not expected. It certainly will not be to those who maintain an unreasonable adherence to the fabricated technicalities of theological terminology, nor to those who antagonize the conservative-progressive method of the best thought of the present.

In my ideal of it, I have but skirted the rim of this great argument, yet no important fact has been

ignored or indifferently treated, while the many divisions have been joined in an articulate, systematic whole. The subject is immense, is of such supreme importance in its results, and so varied in its relations to the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, that it would be a miracle (not to be looked for) if any book producible could satisfy the critical judgment of even all those who may agree on the general principles. I have followed the truths of Scripture and the facts of history; and the critic who imagines I have misinterpreted both, will find it easier to utter his opinion than to furnish the proof.

It will be readily perceived that not all is said that might be said under each theme; and that one or two subjects, important in themselves, have been wholly omitted, such as the "Post-mortem Probation of Children," and the "Origin and Scope of the Catechumenate in the Primitive Church." Should this work receive the approbation of those interested in the position of children in the Christian scheme of redemption, these subjects and others will be added. In the meantime the English reader will find full information concerning catechumens in Bingham's "Antiquities of the Christian Church," Vol. I, and Neander's "History of the Christian Church," translated by Torrey, Vol. I. One thing the author desires to emphasize, and that is, that these pages are not designed to be polemic in character or tone. They were not written in that spirit. It is devoutly



hoped that no written word of mine will ever wound the denominational feeling of any child of God. I have been loyal to the Truth, as prolonged investigation has made it clear. Alas! the history of the Church only too clearly shows that that very loyalty is oftentimes the severest accusation of error. My sole aim has been to set forth, in sun-clear manner, the true grounds for the practice of the Church, and to awaken zeal in the Divinely appointed shepherds for the lambs of the Flock.

Were I certain that no discordant sound would arise from this work, written in behalf of children, I would, as a testimony to much that is contained in these pages, inscribe it to the memory of a bright, sweet boy, who, after five years of blissful life, full of Christian joy, song, and prayer, went out one evening, in the October sunset, while the first pages of this book were being written, to the Church of the first-born, which is without fault before the throne of God.

R. J. C.

August, 1891.

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