

## **TWENTY-TWO DIRECT REFERENCES TO INFANT BAPTISM FROM THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS**

"And when a child has been born to one of them [ie Christians], they give thanks to God[ie baptism]; and if moreover it happen to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who as passed through the world without sins." Aristides,Apology,15(A.D. 140),in ANF,X:277-278

"And many, both men and women, who have been Christ's disciples from childhood, remain pure and at the age of sixty or seventy years..." Justin Martyr, First Apology,15:6(A.D. 110-165),in ANF,I:167

"For He came to save all through means of Himself--all, I say, who through Him are born again to God--infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men." Irenaeus, Against Heresies,2,22:4 (A.D. 180),in ANF,I:391

"And they shall baptise the little children first. And if they can answer for themselves, let them answer. But if they cannot, let their parents answer or someone from their family." Hippolytus of Rome, Apostolic Tradition,21(c. A.D. 215), in AT,33

"[T]herefore children are also baptized." Origen, Homily on Luke, XIV(A.D. 233),in JER, 65

"For this reason, moreover, the Church received from the apostles (Peter, Andrew, James, John; Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Matthias) the tradition of baptizing infants too." Origen, Homily on Romans, V:9(A.D. 244),in JER,65

"Baptism is given for the remission of sins; and according to the usage of the Church, Baptism is given even to infants. And indeed if there were nothing in infants which required a remission of sins and nothing in them pertinent to forgiveness, the grace of baptism would seem superfluous." Origen, Homily on Leviticus,8:3(post A.D. 244),in JUR,I:208

"But in respect of the case of the infants, which you say ought not to be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, and that the law of ancient circumcision should be regarded, so that you think one who is just born should not be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day...And therefore, dearest brother, this was our opinion in council, that by us no one ought to be hindered from baptism...we think is to be even more observed in respect of infants and newly-born persons.." Cyprian, To Fidus, Epistle 58(64):2,6(A.D. 251),in ANF,5:353-354

"It shows no crease when infants put it on [ie the baptismal garment], it is not too scanty for young men, it fits women without alteration." Optatus of Mileve, Against Parmenium,5:10(A.D. 365),in JER, 94

"Have you an infant child? Do not let sin get any opportunity, but let him be sanctified from his childhood; from his very tenderest age let him be consecrated by the Spirit. Fearest thou the Seal on account of the weakness of nature?" Gregory Nazianzen, Oration on Holy Baptism,40:17(A.D. 381),in NPNF2,7:365

"Be it so, some will say, in the case of those who ask for Baptism; what have you to say about those who are still children, and conscious neither of the loss nor of the grace? Are we to baptize them too? Certainly, if any danger presses. For it is better that they should be unconsciously sanctified than that they should depart unsealed and uninitiated." Gregory Nazianzen, Oration on Holy Baptism,40:28(A.D. 381),in NPNF2,7:370

"We do baptize infants, although they are not guilty of any sins." Chrysostom John, Ad Neophytos, (A.D. 388), in LCF, 169

" 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' No one is expected: not the infant, not the one prevented by necessity. Ambrose, Abraham, 2, 11:79 (A.D. 387), in JUR, 2:169

"And if any one seek for divine authority in this matter, though what is held by the whole Church, and that not as instituted by Councils, but as a matter of invariable custom, is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolical authority, still we can form a true conjecture of the value of the sacrament of baptism in the case of infants, from the parallel of circumcision, which was received by God's earlier people, and before receiving which Abraham was justified, as Cornelius also was enriched with the gift of the Holy Spirit before he was baptized." Augustine, On Baptism against the Donatist, 4:24:31 (A.D. 400), in NPNF1, IV:461

•Apostolic authority refers only to the twelve apostles.

"While the son is a child and thinks as a child and until he comes to years of discretion to choose between the two roads to which the letter of Pythagoras points, his parents are responsible for his actions whether these be good or bad. But perhaps you imagine that, if they are not baptized, the children of Christians are liable for their own sins; and that no guilt attaches to parents who withhold from baptism those who by reason of their tender age can offer no objection to it. The truth is that, as baptism ensures the salvation of the child, this in turn brings advantage to the parents. Whether you would offer your child or not lay within your choice, but now that you have offered her, you neglect her at your peril." Jerome, To Laeta, Epistle 107:6 (A.D. 403), in NPNF2, VI:191

"Now, seeing that they [Pelagians] admit the necessity of baptizing infants,--finding themselves unable to contravene that authority of the universal Church, which has been unquestionably handed down by the Lord and His apostles,--they cannot avoid the further concession, that infants require the same benefits of the Mediator, in order that, being washed by the sacrament and charity of the faithful, and thereby incorporated into the body of Christ, which is the Church, they may be reconciled to God, and so live in Him, and be saved, and delivered, and redeemed, and enlightened. But from what, if not from death, and the vices, and guilt, and thralldom, and darkness of sin? And, inasmuch as they do not commit any sin in the tender age of infancy by their actual transgression, original sin only is left."

Augustine, On forgiveness of sin, and baptism, 39[26] (A.D. 412), in NPNF1, V:30

"The blessed Cyprian, indeed, said, in order to correct those who thought that an infant should not be baptized before the eighth day, that it was not the body but the soul which behoved to be saved from perdition -- in which statement he was not inventing any new doctrine, but preserving the firmly established faith of the Church; and he, along with some of his colleagues in the episcopal office, held that a child may be properly baptized immediately after its birth" Augustine, Epistle 166:8:23 (A.D. 412), in NPNF1, I:531

" 'C. Tell me, pray, and rid me of all doubts, why little children are baptized.?

A. That their sins may be forgiven them in baptism." Jerome, Against the Pelagians, 3:18 (A.D. 415), in NPNF2, VI:482

"Likewise, whosoever says that those children who depart out of this life without partaking of that sacrament shall be made alive in Christ, certainly contradicts the apostolic declaration, and condemns

the universal Church, In which it is the practice to lose no time and run in haste to administer baptism to infant children, because it is believed, as an indubitable truth, that otherwise they cannot be made alive in Christ." Augustine, Epistle 167,7,21(A.D. 415),in NPNF1,I:530

"Canon 2. Likewise it has been decided that whoever says that infants fresh from their mothers' wombs ought not to be baptized....let him be anathema. "Council of Carthage, Canon 2,(A.D. 418),in Denzinger 101

"Concerning the Donatists it seemed good that we should hold counsel with our brethren and fellow priests Siricius and Simplician concerning those infants alone who are baptized by Donatists: lest what they did not do of their own will, when they should be converted to the Church of God with a salutary determination, the error of their parents might prevent their promotion to the ministry of the holy altar." African Code, Canon 47/51(A.D. 419), in NPNF2,XIV:463

"Believest thou this?...when a newborn child is brought forward to receive the anointing of initiation, or rather of consummation through holy baptism." Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John,7(A.D. 428),in JER,95

"QUESTION XIX. Concerning those who after being baptized in infancy were captured by the Gentiles, and lived with them after the manner of the Gentiles, when they come back to Roman territory as still young men, if they seek communion, what shall be done?

REPLY. If they have only lived with Gentiles and eaten sacrificial food, they can be purged by fasting and laying on of hands, in order that for the future abstaining from things offered to idols, they may be partakers of Christ's mysteries. But if they have either worshipped idols or been polluted with manslaughter or fornication, they must not be admitted to communion, except by public penance." Pope Leo the Great [regn A.D. 440-461],To Rusticus, Epistle 167(A.D. 459),in NPNF2,XII:112

"But with respect to trine immersion in baptism, no truer answer can be given than what you have yourself felt to be right; namely that, where there is one faith, a diversity of usage does no harm to holy Church. Now we, in immersing thrice, signify the sacraments of the three days' sepulture; so that, when the infant is a third time lifted out of the water, the resurrection after a space of three days may be expressed."

Gregory the Great [reign A.D. 590-604],To Leander, Epistle 43(A.D. 591),in NPNF2,XII:88