

What About Jane?

by W. Alan Smith

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Margaret Campbell sat with her first-born child, Jane. She admired this little miracle of life, counting her toes and fingers one more time just to make sure they were all there! She smiled and stroked the baby's smooth cheeks. What a joy to have given life to this beautiful child!



But something troubled her. She and her husband, Alexander, had agreed that the baptism of infants was not something they believed in. They had decided to allow their children to make their own decisions about following Christ. "Our children will be baptized after they have made their confessions of faith," she said to herself. "Baptism should not be something we do for them."

Alexander's and her thoughts about baptism were one thing. But Jane was a real live baby, not just a thought.

Into the small house came Alexander in a hurry, full of news of his day discussing baptism with other ministers and laypersons. He stopped abruptly when he noticed that Margaret was bothered about something.

"Is something wrong with the baby, Maggie?" he asked nervously. "Is there something wrong with Jane?"

"No," Margaret replied. "No, she's fine. It's just...just..."

"Just what, Maggie?" Alexander asked. "Tell me what's wrong."

"Oh, Alex," Margaret cried, "I know we both agree on what baptism *should* be, but what about Jane? She's not just a matter of 'theology' or discussion; this is our own daughter. What if anything should happen to her? I wouldn't want her to die a sinner."

Alexander was stunned. Maggie was right; all their fine talk had come down to this. *What about Jane?* he thought. *What about our own baby?*

He held Margaret as they both looked at the sweet face of their first child. The two of them sat there for some time, caught up in the beauty of their daughter.

Finally, Alexander looked at Margaret and said, "Maggie, how can there be any sin in something as innocent as a baby? Jane will be all right. And, if you will agree, I think we should wait and let her make her own choice when she's old enough. In the meantime, we will help her know about Jesus and learn about the meaning of faith."

Margaret's face relaxed. "Yes, Alex," she replied, "we will raise her as a Christian, and hope that she will decide to confess her own faith and be baptized."

Alexander reached over and gave Margaret a hug. Then he leaned over and gave Jane a gentle kiss. Somehow, this little child had helped them connect what they believed about God and people with what they believed about baptism.