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# I Still Find Infant Baptism Difficult

**I**F British Baptists could ever have been said to be stuck in the mud with their position on baptism (a metaphorical expression I would not wish to be pressed), it can hardly be complained that this holds good today, when writers like Neville Clark, Alec Gilmore, Paul Clifford and the like are doing their best to drive the boat into deeper waters. In the April issue of the *Baptist Quarterly* Victor Hayward has called into question some Baptist positions regarded by many as axiomatic for our tradition. He has chosen to do it by putting me on the spot with regard to positions expounded in my popular work, *Baptism Today and Tomorrow*. Mr. Hayward has shown that it is not necessary to be dull as well as charitable, and I am grateful for his candid criticisms and suggestions for consideration. I thought I was being venturesome in pleading for recognition that the Churches generally have replaced the one baptism of the Apostolic Age by two baptisms (infant and believer's); Mr. Hayward, however, has cheerfully pressed on and asked us to accept the proposition that the two baptisms existed in the New Testament Church, each with its appropriate meaning. He considers that the likelihood of infant baptism existing in the primitive Church is seen in the custom of household baptisms; that the concept of vicarious faith in the New Testament confirms this belief; and that it is illuminated by the shining reality of the faith of little children—a faith commended by Jesus and not to be minimised by us.

An acceptance of these views would naturally immensely relieve the problems of Baptists when confronted with schemes of Church reunion. Perhaps it was lack of space, or the limitation imposed by the context of the discussion, that caused Mr. Hayward to refrain from developing the obvious conclusion that flows from his view: on his interpretation Baptists ought not only to soften their attitude to infant baptism as practised in other denominations, but they should introduce it into their own churches forthwith, without waiting for reunion schemes to prod them into action. For if it be true that the Apostolic Church practised infant baptism as well as believer's baptism, and that on grounds that can be shown to be theologically sound, the Baptist plea that New Testament principles should be normative for Church practice would have to be honoured at this point, and they would have to acknowledge the mistake of their forefathers and rectify it at once. Undoubtedly this would take courage,

but if our understanding of New Testament Christianity can be shown to be seriously at fault, I hope that we should not hesitate to submit to the needful reformation, even though it entailed so complete a reversal of our traditional procedures as this would. The day when Baptists deliberately choose to follow the traditions of their Fathers in preference to the testimony of the Word of God will be a day when everything for which they have ever stood will be repudiated.

Now, granting such readiness on our part to be open to truth, may I plead for the acceptance of an assurance that those of us who hitherto have appeared to be somewhat obdurate in our attitude to infant baptism have done so with a consciousness of our responsibility to be loyal to what we understand that Word to convey? I ask this, because of an observation by Mr. Hayward that appears to question whether folk like myself are *compos mentis*, or whether we are really willing to consider seriously the views of others. "It is doubtful", he writes, "whether the problem will ever be solved by books which reach the very conclusion that might antecedently have been expected of the author, in view of his position on one side or other of the debate. Thus Dr. Beasley-Murray's book comes out where the author went in, dead against infant baptism!"<sup>1</sup> After taking that one on my chin, and rising at the count of nine, I am inclined to ask ruefully, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Will Mr. Hayward reflect on how my mind has become so calloused as to produce a book like *Baptism Today and Tomorrow*? Surely he is aware that it is the brief distillation of a good many years of honest endeavour to understand what baptism is supposed to be. It involved a soaking of oneself in the literature that has appeared on the subject—above all that by Paedobaptist authors; an attempt to understand what Biblical scholars made of the Biblical teaching on the subject; and a series of confrontations in ecumenical dialogue with theologians who hold to the traditions of *their* Fathers on baptism. It is of unimportance at this point that I examined the issues in considerable detail (in my larger work on the subject) before directing a book to the people in the Churches, who could not be expected to wade through a technical work. What is of greater importance is that in the study this involved I tried very hard to find a means of rapprochement between Baptists and others in the interpretation of baptism. To my satisfaction I found that this could be done so long as we kept to an exposition of New Testament theology. To my bitter disappointment, however, I slowly reached the conclusion, that so far as I could see, any rapprochement between Baptists and Paedobaptists could only be limited while the latter continued to claim that infant baptism was the "one baptism" of the apostolic Church, and while they applied to it the New Testament teaching on baptism. This caused me a great deal of heart searching, and not a little distress to have to differ radically from men for whom I had not merely respect but affection,

<sup>1</sup> *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. XXII (April 1967) p. 51.

and from whom I had learned much. If, then, some of us appear to adopt a hard line on infant baptism, it is for one reason only: we have been unpersuaded by the arguments of those who maintain a different position. Alas, I cannot see that Mr. Hayward's interpretation has succeeded where others have failed. I gladly respond to his request to indicate my reactions to his article, and in turn I look forward to reading his exposé of the inadequacy of this one.

First, as to the significance of household baptisms: it ought to be clearly understood that the treatment I gave of this subject in my book, and indeed the reason for considering it at all, was due entirely to the prominence given to it by Jeremias in his *Infant Baptism in the first Four Centuries*, and in his subsequent debate with Aland. I do not believe that the case for or against infant baptism stands or falls by the consideration of this subject, for in the last resort we are dealing with an argument from silence, and neither the proponents nor the opponents can hope to convince the other party on such a basis. I took the matter up because many have been impressed by the arguments of Jeremias, and it seemed necessary to deal with the points that he himself had raised. Now Mr. Hayward complains that my treatment of the subject was tendentious: "It would not have occurred (in fact it did not!) to any New Testament writer to mention what happened to infants and little children when whole households were being baptised" (p. 53). Quite so, but Jeremias has again and again emphasised that in reports of these baptisms Luke stresses that the entire household was baptised—in such phrases as "all your household", "all that belonged to him", "his whole house" (Acts 11: 14, 16: 33, 18: 8); it is urged that this language implies that Luke did have in mind the little children, for since every member of these households was baptised, the infant children they surely contained must have been included in the baptisms. I pointed out that if this principle is pressed some of Luke's statements involve ludicrous conclusions, and since he manifestly did not intend such conclusions to be drawn, his references to whole houses being baptised were not intended by him to cover infants. I freely grant that this does not prove that infants were excluded from the baptisms recorded; it merely shows that Luke's language cannot be pressed to demonstrate that they were baptised on these occasions.

Mr. Hayward considers that the ancient concept of solidarity would have caused the entire membership of a household to be baptised when its head received baptism as a Christian; the little children would as naturally have been included as the slaves of the household. How I wish we really knew the truth about this! It is clear that the decision of the head of a household would have vitally affected the rest of its members; but have we the right to presume that no differentiation was made between infants and slaves in regard to baptisms? And was baptism purely external and so meaningless for the slaves? And what of the references in the records of household

baptisms to the hearing of the Word and the faith of the baptised? And what of Paul's discussion in I Cor. 7:12ff of the households in which husband and wife did not together receive the word and baptism? Did very young children receive the bread and wine of the other sacrament? They probably will have been present in the house-churches when the Lord's Supper was celebrated; if the primitive Churches had a conscience about administering one sacrament to infants and the very young, might they not also have had a conscience about the administration of the other? "The real question" writes Mr. Hayward, "is simply whether or not it would have been natural in the New Testament times to exclude infants or little children from what was happening to the household as a whole. And that must be answered on the basis of broad arguments." I agree. But the full scope of those "broad arguments" is not contained in the records of the household baptisms in Acts.

When issue is taken concerning the Baptists' view of little children, and their relation to the Church and the Kingdom of God, undoubtedly a sensitive point is touched. It cannot be denied that Baptists have given insufficient thought to this, and now that they are trying to remedy the fault, they are finding themselves in difficulties. I am inclined to think that the difference between Baptists and others at this point is not that Baptists are confused while everyone else knows, but that everybody is confused, and that whereas Baptists are beginning to realise their difficulties, members of other Churches have been unwarrantably confident that they have the right answers. For example, it must be frankly faced that the kind of view Mr. Hayward—or, come to that, Free Churchmen generally—puts on infant baptism is held by only a minority of the Church, and if we take into account the sweep of Church history, the minority is very small indeed. The Churches on the whole have assumed that infants are damned, and that through baptism they are cleansed of their sin and guilt and are born again by the Spirit into the kingdom of God and the Church. In Baptist eyes this has been viewed not so much as confusion as an appalling error, made possible in no small measure through a thoughtless application of the Biblical teaching on baptism to infants. And let us make no mistake with regard to the present position: if the universal damnation of infants has been modified generally, through the sheer horror of the doctrine, a shadow of it hovers like a dark cloud over multitudes, and that not only in the Catholic tradition. The view of the vast majority in the Churches today concerning infant baptism and its effects still assumes the need of infants to be cleansed from sin and guilt, and that baptism is God's means of the change of this state and the impartation of the new life. Is even the modern Baptist confusion about little children as bad as this?

Now the document *The Child and the Church* suffers from the fact that the group that produced it was divided on the basic question

of the relation of the world and the Church to Christ and his redemption. If Mr. Hayward has understood their problem, he has dismissed it all too easily, and he should have admitted that this group is far from being alone in its perplexity. The difficulty lies in the fact that the relation of little children to Christ, the Church and redemption is part of the larger issue of the relation of humanity to Christ and his redemption. In the New Testament this problem is posed in terms of the doctrine of the First Adam and the Last Adam, and their relation to the race. In my judgment the discussions on this matter have hitherto been inadequate in all traditions. When first I tried to fathom out this teaching in connection with the doctrine of baptism, I could find no satisfactory discussion of it anywhere. The dogmaticians seemed to me unaware of the ramifications of the Apostolic teaching on this subject (they were largely content to talk within the frame of Romans 5, without realising that that is only the tip of the iceberg), the expositions of Pauline theology were all too brief at this point, and the commentaries are largely unhelpful. This is illustrated by the fact that C. K. Barrett's book on the subject, resting on previous literature, is of little value for solving the problems.

Briefly put, the issue is how to interpret the representative work of Christ on behalf of the race, the precise nature of the difference between the world and the Church in relation to that work and the function of faith. The problem is focused in a passage like Colossians 1:20: "Through him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the cross—to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, through him alone". This statement appears to interpret what took place through Christ on the cross, rather than to express the eschatological goal of history at the end. "God chose to reconcile . . . all things . . . through him." How are we to relate utterances of this kind with the doctrine of justification by faith? What in their light is the Gospel we have to preach to the world? What difference does it make to believe? How do children fit into this view of redemption? I have my answers to these questions, but I know quite well that I come down on a different side of the fence from perhaps the majority of those whose voices are being heard in ecumenical circles concerned with this problem. The difficulties experienced by the group that produced the report on *The Child and the Church* are, in fact, troubling the entire Church, and are bound up with the world-wide debate on evangelism now taking place.<sup>2</sup> I mention this, not to justify the positions adopted in the report on *The Child and the Church*, but to illustrate that we have no business to give the impres-

<sup>2</sup> Paul Clifford, in a recent article in the *New Christian* (29th June, 1967), considered this to be one of the most important points of disunity in the Church of God today, cutting across all denominational traditions and deeper than those mentioned in the report *Baptists and Unity* as separating Baptists from other confessions.

sion that Baptists are the only fools who can't make out the straight path through the desert today: the Church is wandering in confusion at this point, and a good many haven't awakened to the fact that the palm trees by which they are camped are oases in the desert and not the promised land.

Now I have no intention of cutting the Gordian knot at this point (to change the picture). But I do ask that we recognise that the status of children, inside and outside the Church, and their relation to God is a complex problem. It is not immediately settled by quoting I Corinthians 7: 14—a text which I had no space to discuss in my shorter work on baptism, but which I treated at length in my larger work on the subject. More to the point, the nature of a child's religion, and the relation of baptism to it, is even more delicate. I entirely agree with Mr. Hayward that a child's faith is to be respected, and if he wants to go on to suggest that we Baptists in Europe have not taken it sufficiently seriously I will agree again. But how to relate this faith to baptism (infant or believer's) and to church membership is notoriously difficult; the Church of England illustrates the difficulties from one kind of practice (in relation to confirmation as well as to infant baptism) and the Southern Baptist Convention illustrates them from another (in problems that arise through applying baptism to very young children who profess faith). The problem of determining responsible faith confronts the Churches that practise confirmation equally as it does those that practise believer's baptism. Roman Catholics tend to look on seven years of age as a suitable time for confirmation, for they believe that a child achieves individuality and responsibility at that age, and it needs to be strengthened and equipped for life in the world. Churches in Protestant traditions tend to leave confirmation till puberty and even later. It is not only British Baptists who distrust child religion! On the contrary Baptists in Europe tend to conform to the customs of the State Churches of the countries in which they live in their administration of baptism to young people (the conditions of baptism being accommodated to those of confirmation). I myself tend to move in the direction of desiring ways of integrating children into the Church at a younger rather than later age—not least, like Mr. Hayward, through the experience of being a parent of four children and observing their progress in faith, and keeping an interested eye on families with which I am acquainted. Like him, also, I am impressed with the significance of our Lord's attitude to children, and with the saying, "Let the children come to me; do not try to stop them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these". I believe, however, that it is necessary to use care in handling that saying and in the deductions one draws from it. If the phrase "such as these" includes the children referred to by Jesus, then they are not merely potentially heirs of the kingdom but they are actual heirs—as with the subjects of the beatitudes ("Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven").

And if Mark is right in conjoining with this statement the sentence that follows it (Mark 10: 15), these children have received the word of the kingdom in such a manner as to become an example to adults. In such a case the saying, and the event in which it is embodied, has no immediate bearing on the status of infants relative to Christ and the Church; nor does it shed any light on baptism, except to suggest perhaps that children who have received the good news of the kingdom are fit for baptism and for recognition as members of the people of the kingdom (the Church). This involves a pastoral problem common to all the Churches, and not to Baptists alone, namely how to determine when a child reaches a responsible faith that is not a mere imitation of its parents' attitude. Till that stage is reached I do not see that there is such a world of difference as that suggested by Mr. Hayward between a very young child baptised as an infant, and viewed as in the Church but not a full Church member till confirmation, and one for whom the blessing of God has been sought in a service of Prayer for the Blessing and Presentation of Infants and who is then viewed as in the care of the Church, nurtured with a view to his receiving the word of the kingdom, to be confessed in baptism (with the laying on of hands?). At least it may be said that the latter position begs fewer questions than the former, and it enables baptism to be retained and applied as in the plain tradition of the New Testament (as distinct from a hypothetical tradition of the New Testament).

This leads me to what I regard as the crux of the problem, namely the theology of baptism. I entirely agree with those scholars of all traditions who believe that the dubiety of historical discussions on baptism must yield to the question of the meaning of baptism. But it is here that I find myself under the greatest pressure. For the significance attributed to baptism in the New Testament is profound. I have earlier called attention to a statement of Adolf Schlatter about this, and I take leave to repeat it again: "The blessing that is bestowed upon the baptised man", he wrote, "does not consist in an individual gift of grace, nor in a particular religious condition, but in a union with Christ, by which the totality of God's gifts are obtained. For which reason the baptismal preaching consistently uses the whole Gospel in its entirety for the interpretation of baptism."<sup>3</sup> I believe that whoever ponders long enough the New Testament teaching on baptism will assent to the truth of that assertion. Admittedly Baptists generally do not assent to it, but that is because they do not "ponder" the New Testament enough—they are too busy preaching to do that. All the Gospel and its blessings are embodied in baptism. That is why, on the one hand, it has been possible for sacramentarianism to arise and become established in the Church, and that is why Bultmann (speaking for a large number of New Testament

<sup>3</sup> *Die Theologie des N.T.* ii p. 495.



scholars in this century) regards baptism in the apostolic Church as a "miracle working rite". Yet I believe that the New Testament does not reflect a sacramentarian (as distinct from a sacramental) view, and I consider that Bultmann and his friends are wrong in their judgment. The mistake in both cases is the same, namely a failure to give serious weight to the context of baptism in the New Testament: it is that of a man declaring his faith in the Lord who died and rose for his salvation and a plea that he might share in it. Baptism in the New Testament had this much in common with John's baptism: it was a repentance-baptism, and repentance is turning to the Lord. This is illustrated in the first proclamation of Christian baptism, Acts 2:38: "Repent and be baptised . . . for the forgiveness of your sins . . .". I Peter 3: 21 indicates that the baptismal context is secondary to the Gospel facts and the response that are set forth in baptism: "Baptism . . . as the *eperotema* to God for (or by) a good conscience, saves through the resurrection of Jesus Christ". In this latter passage the operative factors are not the water at all, but the *eperotema* and the resurrection of Christ. A like conjunction of the same context, Gospel and faith, is seen in Colossians 2: 12: "In baptism you were buried with him, in baptism also you were raised to life with him through your faith in the active power of God". I have never seen any discussion of that statement in any apology for infant baptism; it would seem to imply that the baptism in which the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ become effective in a man is the baptism in which faith in the living God is operative. (Mr. Hayward's suggestion that Romans 6 could in some sense apply to infants as well as to responsible persons would appear to be negated by this passage, which is the one authentic commentary on Romans 6 we possess from Paul—or his disciples!)

Now if there be any truth in what I have said, it ought to be obvious that there is far more at stake here than a typically Baptist Biblicistic concern (as Paedobaptists view it) for a particular context for baptism, as though we Baptists were too dumb to see that this was a merely accidental concomitant of the Church initially finding itself in a state of mission, and so under the necessity to recruit largely from the pagans outside her ranks. On the contrary, so far as I can see, this is the only context in which the New Testament teaching on baptism can be held to be Christian. In this way alone the moral relation between faith and grace is preserved which lies at the heart of the apostolic kerygma. I speak with candour, and I hope not without a sense of humour, when I intimate my guess that Mr. Hayward has allowed himself to be bullied (by his ecumenical colleagues?) into the view that to insist on faith as integral to the Gospel is to pervert faith into a work. That is a Lutheran heresy, far more damnable than all the Baptist heresies put together (and we have our fair share!). Roman 3: 25 is characteristic of the Gospel proclaimed by Paul: "God has set forth Jesus as a means

of expiation by his blood, through faith". Let Mr. Hayward see how the Lutheran commentators wriggle round that saying, and he will realise that Baptists are not the only folk who read the New Testament with denominational spectacles. In truth both Jesus and the apostolic Church show that the proclamation of the Gospel includes the announcement of God's mighty act of salvation and the call to repentance and faith. The peculiarity of baptism in the New Testament lies in its embodiment of *both* these elements—grace and faith, redemption and repentance. The real issue here is not between Baptists and Paedobaptists, but between a view of grace that takes seriously the role of faith and the essentially Catholic view of grace which sees it as operative through the means that God has given his Church, irrespective of the condition of the receiver. This is not to denigrate the Catholics: it is merely to say that I cannot stand with them on this issue, or with Protestants who share their view of grace.

Now I am not unmindful that Mr. Hayward wrote this article with the set purpose of breaking this dilemma by pursuing a path neither Baptist nor Catholic. In seeking to expound one possible solution of the problem, however, he actually has sent forth two solutions. On the one hand he appeals to Baptists to look again at the concept of vicarious faith, and on the other he affirms that in the New Testament times infant baptism had a different and a lesser significance from that of believer's baptism. Allow me to consider the former point separately.

The idea of vicarious faith is believed to be exemplified in the healing of the paralytic brought to Jesus by his four friends (Mark 2: 1ff). Jesus is said to have observed "their faith", i.e. the faith of the four, and to have preceded the healing of the diseased man with a declaration of his forgiveness. The conjunction of the healing and the bestowal of forgiveness is believed to illustrate the wholeness of *shalom*: the healing of body and the restoration of relationship to God is a unitary concept, not to be divided. Accordingly it was possible for the Lord to grant both healing and salvation to one through the faith of others. This links up the story of the paralytic with others in the Gospels that tell of the healing of children at the entreaty of their parents. It would seem therefore a very natural application of the principle of vicarious faith to the baptism of infants and little children on the request of believing parents: this does not take the element of faith out of the rite of baptism, but transfers its operation from the subject to the parents. The argument is plausible and it appeals to many, but to me it appears highly speculative and in the end unacceptable. For one thing, most New Testament scholars do not agree with this interpretation of the healing of the paralytic. Vincent Taylor is typical in his treatment of the narrative: commenting on the phrase "their faith" he writes, "Victor and Ephraem explain (it) of the faith of the four bearers rather than the paralytic, but most modern commentators rightly include the

faith of the paralytic himself", and he cites the observation of the Catholic Lagrange, "Il (Jésus) a compris la disposition de son âme". Further, it should be observed that on the interpretation of Victor and Ephraem, there is no reason to limit the application of the story to the baptism of *infants* on the basis of their parents' faith. The paralytic was a grown man; his restoration on the basis of the faith of his friends could equally encourage the (by no means novel) idea that anyone may be baptised on the ground of another's faith. Here I remind Mr. Hayward that he gave a side reference to I Corinthians 15:29 as indicating that vicarious faith was not unknown in New Testament times, and well he might, for it is the weightiest piece of evidence he could have adduced for his view. Alas, however, that plank in his platform happens to be a bit of pagan driftwood that has floated on to the shores of the Church. The baptism of the living on behalf of the dead (to which the saying appears to refer) was taken up by the Marcionites, and it is extensively practised by the Mormons today. I believe that Paul cited the notion purely as an *ad hominem* argument to buttress his own reasoning about resurrection from the dead ("people who get baptised for the deceased are the last who should deny the doctrine of resurrection"); on Mr. Hayward's view, apparently, this practice would be agreeable to the Christian administration of baptism, but to me its total destruction of the ethical and personal element in the faith-grace relationship makes it border on pure heathenism.

But further, if vicarious faith is to be taken as seriously as Mr. Hayward asked, what reason is there for limiting the significance of infant baptism? If the Gospels and Acts show us that salvation can be assured to one by the exercise of the faith of another, there is no ground for hesitating to pour "the whole Gospel in its entirety" into infant baptism, as indeed the Church has done through the centuries. Am I right in thinking that there has been a failure of nerve on Mr. Hayward's part in wishing to differentiate between infant and believer's baptism? Has he perchance allowed his inherited Baptist prejudices to hold him back from the conclusions to which the ideas that now impress him logically lead? Vicarious faith, as expounded in Mr. Hayward's article, opens the way to the full-blooded doctrine of infant baptism as it exists to this day in the traditional theology of the Churches, and I think that he will be hard put to it to justify to his Paedobaptist friends his scruples about the interpretation of infant baptism, once he has admitted the principle of vicarious faith.

Doubtless Mr. Hayward will protest that he never intended letting the idea be pushed that far, and he will declare, possibly with indignation, that I am unwarrantably leaving out of account the real intention of his article, which was to plead for the recognition that the New Testament Church itself distinguished between the meaning of infant baptism and that of believer's baptism, and that his use of vicarious faith must be set within *that* context, and not estimated in

the light of its employment by Paedobaptists generally. Well, I have not forgotten this, but I do feel it incumbent on me to remind Mr. Hayward that his weapons are sharper than he bargained for, and if he gets cut through taking them up, that is his responsibility! But as to the lesser interpretation of baptism, I simply wish to ask: where is there in the whole New Testament a single line that suggests a modified doctrine of baptism, formulated with a view to its application to infants? I cannot find one, and the Church of the centuries does not seem to have found one either; this is why it has insisted on the one baptism for the remission of sins, and why it has resolutely defended the full meaning of baptism at whatever age it is received, for there is no hint of another explanation of the rite in the New Testament.

Now in all candour I have to admit that it is not impossible that Mr. Hayward may be right in his guess that baptism may have been applied to infants, and that in that case it did have a different meaning from believer's baptism; I have to say this, for there is no statement in the New Testament to say that such baptisms did *not* take place, and none to say that such an interpretation was *not* placed upon it! What I do think, however, Mr. Hayward must recognise is that he is indulging in pure speculation, and that it involves immense difficulties. We are landed in the unhappy predicament once more of being confronted with arguments from silence that none can confute and none can prove. For Mr. Hayward's comfort he should know that he does not stand alone in his speculation. I seem to recall that Paul Althaus, in discussing Paul's doctrine of baptism, suggested that the apostle may have extended the application of baptism to infants, but what interpretation he will have placed upon it we cannot know. In truth we cannot know, for neither Paul nor any other apostolic writer has told us how they would have interpreted infant baptism. I can but say that after examining all the interpretations of infant baptism put forward by sacramental theologians who have tried to modify suitably the New Testament doctrine of baptism, I have not found one that has seemed plausible to me. Presumably that is due to my own prejudices, but it must be added that not a single alternative interpretation of infant baptism (alternative, that is, to the New Testament teaching on baptism) has found favour in the Churches that do practise infant baptism. On the whole they still go on cheerfully applying the New Testament teaching as though no problem existed, and they do not realise what harm they do to the Faith and to the Mission.

In sum, Mr. Hayward's suggestion is unacceptable to me because there is no evidence for it in the records of the apostolic age, whereas there is a great deal of evidence in those records for the administration of baptism to men who repent and believe, and a fairly consistent doctrine of the significance of that baptism. That this leaves ragged edges in our doctrine and practice regarding the place of children in the Church should not be permitted to justify making the position

worse by confusing the doctrine and practice of baptism. There are ragged edges in all the Churches in this matter—except perhaps the Eastern Orthodox Church, whose acceptance of infants into full communion of the Church is logical, but also unacceptable, again by reason of the doctrine of grace that is thereby involved. But does this position necessarily involve a hopeless stalemate in relations between Baptist Churches and Churches that practise infant baptism? Part of the purpose of my writing *Baptism Today and Tomorrow* was to suggest that it does not, providing that both Baptists and Paedobaptists will be prepared to make adjustments. The chief of these would be close to that which is Mr. Hayward's concern, namely the recognition that there is not one baptism in the Church but there are two. The chief difference between Mr. Hayward and myself at this point is that he puts the two baptisms into the primitive Church and I view the second as a later ecclesiastical development. I rigidly separate the functions of the two and see no possibility of putting the meaning of believer's baptism into infant baptism. Moreover, I feel that the confusion of having two baptisms in the Church is so great, I could wish that infant baptism were abolished and replaced by some sort of service of infant blessing, whereas Mr. Hayward feels infant baptism to be desirable. Above all, I believe that the functions performed in the two baptisms are so different, there is no ground for maintaining that submission to infant baptism cancels out the desirability for submission to believer's baptism at the time when the person confesses Christ. If the Churches which practise infant baptism would recognise this position, and Baptists on their part were willing to make the kind of distinctions I suggested in my book, I see no reason why the Churches of different traditions should not be able to live with each other in warm hearted fellowship, despite their different views about baptism. Whether this is a dream incapable of fulfilment this side of the final kingdom, I know not. Perhaps Mr. Hayward and I are both dreaming. But there is something in the New Testament (citing the Old) about young men seeing visions and old men dreaming dreams!

G. R. BEASLEY-MURRAY.

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