

V

THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS

THE position of infants in respect to baptism is a matter about which controversy has raged for centuries, and the debate shows little sign of abating, as evidenced by the recent spate of literature on the subject. It is not the purpose of the present study of baptism to be polemical, and there can be no question but that it has been one of the outstanding, and at the same time regrettable, features of the Paedo-baptist controversy that it has been dominated by partisan loyalties, emotional judgments and by a wealth of thoroughly unchristian bad feeling. Nevertheless, some discussion of the problem seems unavoidable in a study of this nature, and as far as possible we shall endeavour to treat the matter objectively and allow the evidence to speak for itself. Having said this, however, one must immediately qualify the statement with the admission that there are no such things as uninterpreted facts and it is inevitable that the bias of the writer will show through the arguments to some extent.

The problem itself may be simply stated. The call of the Gospel is a call to repentance and faith; it involves the presentation of the crisis which the Lord brought into the world and it confronts men and women with the challenge to decision. Clearly such a message can only be directed to those of such an age as to be able to understand. The New Testament picture is one of responsible men and women accepting the challenge and demonstrating their new faith in the symbolic act of baptism. As we have attempted to show in an earlier part of this study, repentance and faith were consistently presented as the prerequisites of baptism. The question thus arises that if, in fact, these two elements are the basic pre-baptismal require-

ments in the New Testament, should not the child wait until such time as he is able to make his own personal response to the grace of God in Christ before being baptised? Further, we must ask whether it is possible to predicate of the unconscious infant the deep spiritual significance of baptism.

At the same time, however, it has constantly to be borne in mind that the New Testament arose out of a predominantly missionary situation, a situation in which the place of adults was naturally prominent. Even within this situation, it should be noted, the children of believing parents were considered to have a special position with relation to God, they were 'holy' (1 Cor. 7.14). In this regard it is to be remembered that baptism is constantly considered in the light of circumcision and entry into the covenant. Further, as we noted in the discussion of this point, circumcision was but an empty and meaningless ritual unless it was accompanied by the display of faith at a later age, for it was faith then, as it is now, which was the essential requirement for the covenant blessings. The point at issue thus becomes the temporal position of faith, and this involves the question as to the nature of baptism itself. If faith may normally be subsequent to baptism then we are led to the implication that baptism is an effecting agent and the one baptised is simply a passive recipient. On the other hand, when faith precedes baptism the rite becomes more in the nature of a sign and the one baptised may be seen as an active participant. Before considering these doctrinal issues, however, we must look firstly at the historical background of the controversy in order to see what evidence may be gleaned from the New Testament and the practice of the early Church for the early establishment of the rite of infant baptism.

The Evidence of History

From the outset it is important to bear in mind the close relationship between Christian baptism and the earlier arising Jewish proselyte baptism. In the latter there can be little doubt that infants were baptised with their parents.¹ The child was baptised without its consent on the principle that it is possible

to act on the behalf of another and apart from their knowledge or consent provided that any such action is in order to confer benefit. It has to be remembered though, that such a baptism was essentially provisional. The personal and subjective relationship of the infant to the covenant must wait for his own decision. His baptism as an infant merely placed him in an objective relation to the community. When the child, on his own consent, became a member of the synagogue at the age of 13 years, the father became free of the burden of his son's sins. It is highly probable that ultimately the practice of infant baptism within the Church was derived from these Jewish parallels, and not, as Warns has suggested,² from pagan practices. His derivation of infant baptism from the Roman custom of purification at which the *prae-nomen* was given to the child (for boys at nine days and girls at eight days old), and from the concepts of the mystery religions, is ingenious, but to the present writer, totally unconvincing.

As far as the New Testament is concerned all examples of baptism were clearly of those who were of such an age as to comprehend the significance of the act; the characteristic statement of the Acts is, 'they believed and were baptised'. There are no examples where it may be stated unequivocally that children or infants were baptised, and in this respect the arguments from the references to household baptism are not in the least conclusive. There are several of these references to 'households' (Acts 16.5, 33; 18.8, (also note 11.4), and 1 Cor. 1.16), and it is just possible, and in the opinion of the present writer it cannot be stated more positively than that, that the expression has a Jewish cultic background.³ Certainly it is worth noting the many references in the Old Testament to households (e.g. Gen. 45.18; 46.7; 1 Sam. 1.21; 22.16, etc.), and in these cases it seems clear that infants were included in the general term. From this background Jeremias concludes that in the New Testament also the expression would almost certainly have included small children as well as others, and he writes, 'Paul and Luke could under no circumstances have applied the *oikso* formula if they had wished to say that only adults were baptised'.⁴

Another factor to be taken into account in this respect is the concept of the solidarity of the family in the ancient world, a factor which applied especially to the Jewish cultural background. The conversion of the father as head of the house meant in most cases, although not always (cf. 1 Cor. 7.12), that the rest of the family followed him. The accounts of conversions at Acts 16.14ff., 30ff., etc., clearly show that the conversion of the head of the house led to a change on the part of each member, and the evidence is impressive that it 'was normal for the ancient mind to regard the faith of the father of the household as decisive'.⁵ On the other hand, it seems to be going beyond the evidence to draw the conclusion from this that Cullmann does, namely, that 'from these passages we can at all events draw this conclusion concerning the doctrine of baptism, that there also the solidarity of the family in baptism is the decisive consideration, and not the individual decision of a single member'.⁶ There is a great danger of reading too much into these passages, for it is abundantly clear that each case of household baptism followed the proclamation of the Gospel and the reception of the word of the Good News by faith. Furthermore, it is not just a matter of question-begging to raise the whole issue of age in respect to the household. A Roman household would consist not only in the family but also the slaves who would all be of an age to make personal decisions. It would certainly seem most likely to be the case with Lydia that her household consisted simply of her slaves and employees. In no case is it suggested that little children were in view. Indeed, even in the case of the Philippian jailor, it is highly likely that any children he may have had would have been quite grown up at the time of his conversion, if, as is most probable, he was a retired veteran from the Roman army.

The use of such a term as 'household' may be, indeed, inexplicit and somewhat vague, but there are no really convincing reasons for suggesting that these examples varied at all from the normative pattern of New Testament baptisms which involved the prior expression of repentance and faith on the part of the recipients. The remarks of K. Aland form a necessary

corrective to some of the over-zealous interpretations given to these passages, 'nowhere in connection with the *oikos*-passages in the New Testament is a child or an infant expressly named, let alone its baptism; and nowhere is any allusion made to any such baptism — a plain datum which we are in danger of forgetting when observing the confident assurance with which the existence of these infants is presupposed in the discussions about the '*oikos*-formula'.⁷

One further point may also be raised in respect of the solidarity of the family. This is that the family solidarity outside the Church cannot be considered identical to that within the Church. Incorporation into Christ produces a new solidarity within a new community. This transcends the planes of natural community through the establishment of the new family. It is surely this point that our Lord Himself makes when He identifies His own family as those who perform the will of God (Mark 3.31-35). Throughout the New Testament the emphasis is placed solidly upon the reality of the corporate, family fellowship of the Church to the exclusion of the bonds of natural family. Indeed, we may note again how the Lord Himself speaks of a break of natural family solidarity in regard to an individual response to His claims (e.g. Mark 10.29, 30, etc.). The New Testament stress is on the corporate nature of the Church and corporate responsibility within this community. In relation to Christ natural ties lose their significance, although, as we shall note later, there is a sense in which the children of believing parents can be said to enjoy a definite relationship to the Church.

There are two other sections of the New Testament from which the practice of infant baptism has been derived, namely, the incident of the Blessing of the Children in the Synoptic Gospels, a consideration of which we shall leave to later in this discussion, and the statement of Paul concerning children at 1 Corinthians 7.14. This verse occurs in the larger context of the problem of mixed marriages between Christians and non-Christians. It is quite clear from the fact that Paul can speak of the children as 'holy' (*hagia*) that he regards them as being in a unique relationship to the covenant, simply because they

have been born to Christian parents, but there is absolutely no evidence that we may argue from this, by a process of extrapolation as it were, that these children of believing parents were baptised. The whole point of the passage is to demonstrate that there is no ground for the separation of the believing partner from the unbeliever in a mixed marriage, for the faith of the believer 'sanctifies' (*hēgiastai*) the unbeliever. Although there are clearly certain differences between the position of the child of Christian parents and the unbelieving partner in a marriage, it is also clear that there must be a point of comparison. Warns rightly says, 'if two things or persons are compared with each other they must in some point be alike, else one proves nothing through the comparison. But the resemblance between the unbelieving husbands and the children mentioned consists in this, that both did not belong to the assembly and were not baptised'.⁸ Even Oscar Cullmann, a strong advocate of infant baptism and its New Testament basis, remarks that, 'according to 1 Cor. 7.14 the holiness of the children there envisaged is already guaranteed without their being baptised'.⁹ The conclusion of Jeremias is even more explicit, 'we must accordingly be content with the conclusion that 1 Cor. 7.14 bears no reference to baptism'.¹⁰

It is the opinion of the present writer that infant baptism, like much of our present-day church practice, must first be put into the New Testament before it can be taken out. We would conclude our discussion thus far in the words of Robert Nelson, who wrote, 'that the New Testament says nothing explicitly about the baptising of little children is incontestable'.¹¹

The earliest writings outside the New Testament have equally nothing conclusive to say on this subject. It is not our purpose to enter into any great detail, but it may certainly be said that there is no explicit reference to the baptism of infants before Tertullian. The statement of Justin Martyr (about AD 150) that he could name 'many, both men and women, who were discipled from childhood to Christ (*ek paidōn emathēteuthēsan tō(i) Christō(i)*) remain pure at the age of sixty or seventy years; and I boast I could produce such from every race of men',¹² is not in any way a conclusive argument demonstrating the existence of

infant baptism before AD 90. Although Justin uses the verb *mathēteuō* (to disciple), which seems to be derived ultimately from Matthew 28.19, as an equivalent to *baptizō* (to baptise) elsewhere,¹³ the most natural explanation of the phrase we have quoted would seem to be that these people had been instructed in the Christian faith from an early age, and had been brought up as members of a Christian family. The most that can be said is that the expression is very ambiguous, and, taken in conjunction with the silence of other writings of this age concerning the baptism of infants, it would be foolish to build a case for the practice on this statement. Furthermore, the clear references to pre-baptismal instruction, periods of probation and the like in the writings of the sub-apostolic era and later seem to presuppose an adult baptism being the general practice rather than that of infants.¹⁴

The earliest definite reference to the baptism of infants is not found until Tertullian, that is at the turn of the second and third centuries. In his work on baptism he argues that the baptism of little children (*parvuli*) lays too great a responsibility upon the sponsors, and therefore, except in cases of emergency (*si non tamen necesse est*) the practice is to be discountenanced. He goes on to ask the pertinent question, 'why does the age of innocence need to be in such a hurry to receive the forgiveness of sins?' Therefore, he argues, 'let them come when they are older . . . they may become Christians when they can know Christ'.¹⁵ According to Jeremias¹⁶ the importance of this section is that Tertullian is not contesting the principle of infant baptism but only its expediency, and then only as it relates to the children of pagan parents, since in another work (*De Anima* 39.3-40.1) he advocates the baptising of children of Christian parents. Thus, according to Jeremias, the quarrel was not so much with the practice of infant baptism *per se*, but rather with those who wished to extend it beyond the bounds of the Christian family. It seems, however, to the present writer, that Jeremias has been carried away with his enthusiasm for his crusade to prove a first-century origin for infant baptism. A careful study of Tertullian's writings does not seem to warrant the conclusions that he has drawn from them. Indeed, in

Tertullian's account of the actual rite of baptism it is clear that he has adults in view, especially as he speaks of an interrogation of the recipient before three witnesses, and the confession of faith 'made with the mouth', and the ordering of the service.¹⁷ It would seem therefore that Tertullian's arguments would point to the fact that infant baptism was not, at this time, a universal practice, although, on the other hand, J. Warns is a little too strong in his emphatic conclusion that 'his (i.e. Tertullian's) protest is the plainest proof that infant baptism was not regarded as an apostolic usage'.¹⁸ It is, however, possible that 'in Tertullian's tract *De Baptismo* . . . we catch a glimpse of the very beginnings of infant baptism in Carthage and Africa'.¹⁹

From Tertullian onwards references to infant baptism become increasingly frequent, but it is with the early period that we are concerned, and from the evidence available we are forced to the conclusion that the argument from history would point to the practice being a late introduction, for which the evidence before about AD 220 is scanty, ambiguous and unreliable.²⁰ It is not so much with the historical evidence, however, that we are concerned. The real problem is whether infant baptism may be doctrinally justified from the New Testament, even though the practice was a later introduction into the life of the Church. Much, if not most, of our church practice today has little in common with the practice of the Church of the first century, and yet we believe that these innovations and differences are not in conflict with the theology of the New Testament. The important question, therefore, with regard to infant baptism is not so much whether we can discover a first-century origin for it, but rather whether it may be justified on the grounds of the overall theology of the New Testament.

Doctrinal Considerations

In our consideration of the doctrinal position of infant baptism it is important to remember that we must base our conclusions not on a series of isolated texts, but upon the whole tenor of the apostolic argument concerning the nature of

baptism. The root of the problem lies in the question of the temporal position of faith and in the relation of the spiritual significance of baptism to the unconscious infant. Again, in this respect, we must emphasise that the New Testament indicates the character and meaning of baptism without any great concern over its method of administration. Therefore, if infant baptism can be shown to be in accord with the New Testament theology of baptism then there should be no hesitation about its practice, regardless of the historical questions. On the other hand, if it does not accord with the New Testament theology of baptism then it must, equally emphatically, be rejected.

What we have attempted to demonstrate to be the New Testament position with regard to baptism is affirmed by Barth as he writes, baptism is 'in every case the indispensable answer to an unavoidable question by a man who has come to faith. It answers the question concerning the divine certainty and the divine authority of the word which the man has already heard, which in faith he has already laid hold of, and to which he has replied in the affirmative'.²¹ It is abundantly clear that such a position can never be posited of an infant, for he cannot, of his own accord, make a definite response to the call of God. Consequently the baptism of such an infant is an act performed without the willingness or readiness of the party concerned, and thus it cannot, from any point of view, be called an act of faith-obedience. Yet this is what baptism was in every recorded case in the New Testament. Some have attempted to overcome this obvious doctrinal obstacle to infant baptism by calling baptism a passive experience. For example, Stauffer has maintained that 'the whole ritual is neither an active performance, nor a sacramental activity of the person to be baptised, but rather a passive experience'.²² We suggest however that the conscious act of union of the believer with Christ can hardly be called a passive experience. Indeed, one cannot escape from the conviction that the consistent and clear emphasis of the New Testament is that baptism is to be viewed as an act of obedience and faith, and that the one baptised was an *active* partner in this rite, having taken his stand upon the promises of God in Christ.

This active partnership is further demonstrated by the constant use of the Middle Voice, a matter which has already been discussed. The command was couched in such terms as, 'wash yourself', 'get yourself baptised', expressions which surely demand a sense of active participation. Baptism as the sign of a renunciation of the past, of an entry into a new life, of justification and regeneration, can have little meaning for the unconscious and innocent child. Indeed, we would assert, that viewed in this light, baptism can only have genuine meaning as applied to one of understanding. Cullmann agrees that 'the distinctive element in the baptismal act of the primitive church at first consisted in the relation of that act to the individual who now dies and rises again with Christ'.²³ This is the aspect of baptism which we considered earlier in relation to the text of Romans 6 and Colossians 2, and this, we suggest, is the crucial point of the whole argument. In the New Testament the evidence is overwhelming that baptism is an act in which the believer consciously enters into the death and resurrection of Christ. Baptism is never considered as effecting something on or in a passive recipient. Barth makes the point abundantly clear as he writes, 'neither by exegesis nor from the nature of the case can it be established that the baptised person can be a merely passive instrument (*Behandelter*). Rather it may be shown by exegesis and from the nature of the case that in this action the baptised is an active partner. . . . In the sphere of the New Testament one is not brought to baptism; one comes to baptism'.²⁴ Cullmann rightly points out that anyone who regards this interpretation as correct 'will have difficulty in defending infant baptism'.²⁵

In the New Testament baptism is viewed not as an effecting agent but as an effective sign, a view which became, regrettably, less prominent over the years until eventually the figure was mistaken for the reality. It was not long before references were being made to the baptised person being born again in the waters. But nowhere in the New Testament can there be found evidence from which it may be asserted that water baptism *per se* is a causative or generative means by which the blessings of God in Christ are imparted and received. To apply baptism

to the unconscious infant is to assert that the act is capable of inducing some change in the infant's life, and such concepts will inevitably lead to the *ex opere operato* position of the Roman rite. Of this situation Forsyth has said that it is one in which 'things moral, things possible and true only for the adult experience were transferred to the unconscious child and thus became magic'.²⁶ As Dinkler well remarks, when the 'sacramental meaning is no longer exclusively dependent on the faith of the participant but attains a quality in itself as a magically operative rite . . . (and) faith in Christ is no longer the only *conditio sine qua non* but is seen as an outcome of baptism . . . infant baptism had its dogmatic justification'.²⁷ Furthermore, we may trace in the underlying ideas a complete misconception of original sin. Stemming from the ideas inherent in the writings of Augustine which came to full flower in mediæval thought, we may trace the concept that baptism is essential for the washing away of the sin inherited from Adam. Such mechanistic and deterministic ideas destroy the whole basis of human freedom, and, indeed, to think of the new-born infant in terms of 'sin' at all is surely question-begging to say the least.

It is our conviction that a general consideration of the New Testament teaching and an appreciation of the general tenor of its doctrine will demonstrate that the practice of infant baptism involves the adoption of a position which cannot be squared with the meaning and significance of baptism as the New Testament presents it. For infant baptism to be meaningful in any sense of the word it must be given a position and power unrecognised by the apostolic teaching, and, indeed, contrary to the basis of historic Protestantism which has ever denied 'that grace is ever conferred *ex opere operato*, without corresponding faith on the part of the recipient'.²⁸ In conclusion we may restate the New Testament view of baptism with the following quotation: 'the rites of initiation mark the passage of the convert into this new world. It is assumed in all the New Testament language about the rites that the convert receives them with a lively faith and a renunciation of the old world . . . they are the focus of a creative action of God whereby a man is made one with Christ in His death and resurrection, cleansed

from his sin, admitted into the fellowship of the Ecclesia which is Christ's body, given the adoption of sonship to the Father, and sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption'.²⁹ The theology of the New Testament is thus, we believe, against the baptism of infants, in the words of a recent American author it 'disfavour[s] infant baptism with considerable inflexibility'.³⁰ In this respect it cannot be over-emphasised that those who find something of value in infant baptism to which they wish to hold, should be prepared to acknowledge, as some indeed do, that the New Testament theology of baptism, which implies a real and genuine faith on the part of the one baptised, cannot be imposed on a rite which in the very nature of the case implies no such thing. We must therefore look for some other means of demonstrating the inclusion of the Christian family in its entirety within the covenant relationship.³¹

It is worth noting at this point that there are certain practical issues involved in this for those churches that follow 'baptist' principles. The question that has to be considered is whether those Christians who have been baptised as infants, and who regard that baptism as valid and sufficient, are to be made to submit to a further baptism as a precondition of church membership. In this respect it is well to remember the 'one baptism' of Ephesians 4.5 and the fact that the only case of anabaptism in the New Testament (Acts 19.1-7) was of those who had been previously baptised in John's baptism, *not* Christian baptism. Further, the issue on that occasion was the reception of the Holy Spirit rather than the ordinance of baptism *per se*. On the other hand it is clearly a different situation if someone baptised in infancy comes to desire 'responsible baptism' as a matter of personal conviction. This whole question is one which must be adequately faced and answered for it is of vital importance in the present ecumenical dialogues.³²

Is There an Alternative?

If baptism is an act which involves concepts which are inapplicable to the infant, it is clear that there should be some other means of demonstrating the fact that the child of Christian

parents has a place within the fellowship of the Church until such time as it is able to make his or her own response to the Gospel. Does the New Testament offer any guidance in this matter? It is our belief that it does. The account of the blessing of the children in the Synoptic tradition (Matt. 19.13-15; Mark 10.13-16; Luke 18.15-17) has often been used to adduce support for Paedo-baptism, and indeed, it has thus been used from quite early times. It is our contention, however, that to be properly understood these verses must be placed within their primary historical setting. Quite clearly the actual incident had nothing whatever to do with the sacrament of baptism, it concerned an act of blessing and prayer. It seems likely that the event took place on the eve of the Feast of the Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), and in bringing their children to Jesus the parents were following an accepted custom. On such days of fast the parents would bring their children to the rabbis and elders of the synagogue in order that they might receive their blessing. As the Babylonian Talmud puts it, they were brought to the rabbis 'for them to bless them, and pray for them, that one day they might attain to the knowledge of the Torah and good works'.³³ The primary background is thus clear; Jesus, in His position as a rabbi, takes the children and blesses them in accordance with the accepted custom, and in so doing emphasises that only those who are like little children in their smallness and humility before God can hope to enter His kingdom. This then is the primary *Sitz im Leben* (life-setting), but over against this we must look for the secondary setting, the setting in the life of the early Church, which led to the story being recorded, remembered and eventually set down. It would appear that the early Christians believed the story possessed a real value in relation to the life and problems of the first-century Church. On the other hand the view that it was so remembered because it gave the practice of infant baptism the sanction of the Lord seems, to us, to be insupportable. We certainly believe that it possessed a relation to the children of believing parents and their position in the fellowship of the Church, but not with respect to baptism. Rather, the incident portrays a practice which was to be continued in the life of the Church, namely, the

bringing of the children to the elders of the local congregation in order that they might receive their blessing and the prayers of the assembled company that they might grow up into the Faith. It is our suggestion that this may well have been the practice of the early Church at the beginning, but later, through the pressure of a popular movement, it became bound up with, and inseparable from, the rite of baptism. It seems possible that such a practice would provide a more biblical alternative to infant baptism and at the same time it might well be a better practice to emulate. This would allow baptism to be reserved for those able to come themselves as a responsible act rather than being brought as infants.³⁴

NOTES

1. Cf. *SB*, i, pp. 110ff.
2. J. Warns, *Baptism*, (ET 1956) pp. 73ff.
3. See E. Stauffer, 'Zur Kindertaufe in der Urkirche' *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt*, (1949) 49. pp. 153ff. who makes much of this point.
4. J. Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*, (ET 1960) p. 21f.
5. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 22. The same situation still obtains to some extent among primitive communities in Africa, as the writer can testify, and no doubt elsewhere.
6. O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, (ET 1950) p. 45.
7. K. Aland, *Did the Early Church Baptise Infants?*, (ET 1963) p. 94.
8. J. Warns, *op. cit.* p. 61. Note also the comment by K. Barth, *The Teaching of the Church regarding Baptism*, (ET 1948) p. 43.
9. O. Cullmann, *op. cit.* p. 61.
10. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 45.
11. R. Nelson, *The Realm of Redemption*, (1951) p. 129.
12. Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1. 15.6.
13. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 39.2. The expression is also thus used by his contemporary Melito of Sardis and other early Fathers.
14. In passing it is worth noting the interesting variant of the text of Acts 2.39. The Western text (D d Aug.) reads, 'to us and our children' (*hēmin . . . hēmōn*) instead of 'to you and your children' (*humin . . . humōn*). The reference is to the extension of the covenant, but the suggestion of Jeremias (*op. cit.* p. 72) that the redaction came naturally because the 'baptism of Christian children was taken for granted' is surely a case of the wish being father to the thought.
15. Tertullian, *De Bapt.* 18.3-6.
16. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.* pp. 81ff.

17. Cf. Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 4.1, *De Corona Militis* 3.2ff., *De Baptismo* 6. For a full and careful discussion of the evidence see K. Aland, *op. cit.* pp. 61ff. His suggestion as to what might have happened had Tertullian remained in fellowship with Rome would make a good discussion point (p. 69n.).
18. J. Warns, *op. cit.* p. 79. In point of fact Warns is as biased in his interpretation of Tertullian in one way as Jeremias is in the other.
19. K. Aland, *op. cit.* p. 69.
20. It is interesting to note the comments of a Roman Catholic theologian on this situation. Rudolf Peil (*A Handbook of the Liturgy*, (ET 1960) p. 253) writes, 'there is indeed some evidence that the children of Christian parents were sometimes baptised in infancy even during the second and third centuries, it is nevertheless true to say that in the early centuries of the Church adult baptism was the rule'.
21. K. Barth, *op. cit.* p. 42.
22. E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, (ET 1955) p. 162.
23. O. Cullmann, *op. cit.* p. 23.
24. K. Barth, *op. cit.* pp. 41f.
25. O. Cullmann, *op. cit.* p. 24.
26. P. T. Forsyth, *The Church and the Sacraments*, (1917) p. 182.
27. E. Dinkler in *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, (revised edn. 1962) p. 89 (*s.v.* Baptism). Attempts to overcome this major problem have been many. The Lutheran concept of an infant faith induced by prevenient grace can only be termed 'a desperate expedient' (thus G. H. Lang, *The Churches of God*, (1959) p. 52). The view of some of the Reformed Churches is little better with concepts of presumptive regeneration and vicarious faith. Such views do not do justice to the evidence of the New Testament, and are designed to bolster up a practice which the Reformers, for reasons of expediency or because they saw something of value in the practice, were unwilling to drop.
28. J. S. Whale, *Christian Doctrine*, (1957 edn.) p. 156.
29. Church of England Report, *Baptism and Confirmation*, (1959) p. 9.
30. W. Carr, *Baptism; Conscience and Clue for the Church*, (1964) p. 176.
31. N. P. Williams, (*Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin*, (1927) p. 552) can write that in 'the author's view the argument a *praxis ecclesiae* is the only, but also sufficient ground, for affirming the legitimacy and laudability of Paedo-baptism'. To rest one's case, however, upon the basis of what has always been done is little better than a policy of despair, and we might contrast these words with those of another Anglican (C. E. Pocknee, *The Parson's Handbook*, (1965) p. 120), 'the idea that all infants must receive baptism... has done immense harm... such indiscriminate baptism rests on no Scriptural warrant or authority'. He at least is aware of the problem.
32. The writer is indebted to Professor F. F. Bruce for drawing his attention to this practical matter.
33. *Sopherim* 18.5. Although the authorities for this practice are late there seems to be no valid reason to suppose that they do not reflect a much earlier practice. It would surely be conceded that these rabbinical sources reflect a long oral tradition.
34. It is the present writer's belief that K. Aland's answer to the problem

of infant baptism (*op. cit.* pp. 112ff.) falls down on two counts, firstly on his apparent view that baptism as an act has saving efficacy (p. 113), and secondly, on his peculiar view of faith in the context of baptism (p. 115) in which he seems overmuch influenced by Luther.