

## The Status of Children

IT is sometimes laid to our charge as Baptists that we do not satisfactorily answer the question concerning the status of children. The *tu quoque* rejoinder, though not altogether beside the point, is unconstructive, and this problem, important enough in its own right, becomes increasingly pressing as a by-product of the baptismal discussion now in progress. At the moment we appear to be less ready to pronounce on this issue than some of our forefathers were.<sup>1</sup> An article in the *Baptist Times*<sup>2</sup> posed certain of the questions, particularly that relating to original sin, but none of us took the matter up and this fact seems to reflect the uncertainties which many feel. We were reminded that the classical answer of the Church to the situation with which the doctrine of original sin confronts us, has been to baptize the child. As Baptists we reject this answer but how then do we meet the situation? What terms have we come to with the doctrine of original sin in its implications for our children? Dr. G. J. M. Pearce hopes to pursue this aspect of the question in the *Baptist Quarterly* at some future date. Meanwhile I offer one or two comments, not by way of answer to the problems he has raised but bearing on the general question of the status of children.

We should frankly recognise that much of the apologetic for Infant Baptism, which to us often seems so laboured, is quickened by a deep concern about this very matter. It is a concern which goes much deeper than anything evoked by mere sentimentality regarding children. Biblical thought confronts us with the idea of corporate solidarity as well as that of individual responsibility and our theology, including our ecclesiology, must find proper room for the interplay of these concepts. Our controversy with the paedo-Baptist is not over the fact that he finds a place for the child in the life of the Church but that, when he wrongly transfers to the beginning of life the rite which belongs to the New Birth, he either reduces the meaning of baptism (admitting that much of what the New Testament says about it cannot apply in the case of infants), or he makes assertions about its significance which, to us, seem alien to New Testament teaching and which distort and confuse the doctrine of the Church and Sacraments. Of this the *Book of Common Prayer* provides a familiar example in declaring that after baptism the child is "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church." The difficulties which this kind of

language presents for us have often been stated and they continue with the unfolding process, as for example, when the person about to be confirmed is asked, "Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do, as they (the godparents) have promised for thee?" We neither understand how godparents can "promise and vow" what they do, nor how it can be supposed that their godchild is under obligation to honour vows made in his name before he had any choice in the matter. It is unnecessary to dwell upon these problems of which we are relieved by the doctrine of Believers' Baptism. Believers' Baptism, however, so far from relieving the problem as to the status of children sharpens it for us. If it leads us to deny certain ideas quite decisively, what do we positively affirm?

Since it is by Believers' Baptism, and all that goes with it, that we enter the Church, the vast majority among us would take the view that a child who has not yet made his responsible committal to Christ cannot possibly be regarded as a member of the Church nor, most would add, as a Christian. Let us take the latter for a moment. It seems straightforward enough but would we assert it *without any qualification* when in our presence a child has just said his prayers "in Jesus' name"? Were his prayers not sincere, was his trust not real? If not a Christian what is he? We will not speak of the child as a member of the Church but is our denial without any qualification when he is found sharing regularly in the worship of the Church and quite obviously feels at home in its environment? Do we think, much less say, "This child does not belong here"? Of course not, but if he does belong, if he is in any sense one of the family of the Church, what exactly is his status? We cannot rest content with purely negative answers to these questions.

Of the child who is being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord we can at least assert that *he is a catechumen of the Church*. This term is one with which all students of early Church History are familiar and which has reappeared in modern missionary terminology. It first appeared in Tertullian and "the context shows it to mean an unbaptised person who has been accepted by the Church for instruction and training in the hope of baptism. It shows also that catechumens were admitted to the first part of the liturgy, and dismissed before the offerings."<sup>3</sup> The phase of worship to which the catechumen was admitted was that sometimes referred to as "the Liturgy of the Word" as distinct from "the Liturgy of the Upper Room" and this first phase came, indeed, to be known in the West as the *Missa catechumenorum*.

We will glance in a moment at the structure of the early

catechumenate but first let us rehearse the obvious facts about the child of Christian parents which suggest the appropriateness of the catechumenical idea. The child has been born to parents who intend to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He is the object of their prayers and will be helped to say his own as soon as he is capable of the simplest petition and thanksgiving. His parents' example will be such as to encourage faith and love towards God. He is in a home in which the name of Christ is used only with reverence and in which the Church is a reality known and loved. He hears and later will be helped to read the Scriptures. He is taken to Church and in the degree possible to him enters into the act of divine worship. Admittedly much of his early prayer and praise, at home and in Church, will be imitative and repetitive in character, but that will not make it less acceptable to God. He is included in the Church's own ministries of prayer and instruction. In a real sense it embraces him in its community and helps him to feel at home in its midst. Much of its worship will be beyond him but it is only from personal participation in the sacraments that he is, for the time being, debarred. Much of his early instruction will be informal, almost incidental, and imbibed unconsciously from Christian example and environment; he will also be given teaching graded to his age and capacity in the Sunday School and the morning worship of the Church. All this indicates that his relationship to the Church is that of a catechumen though his is a *prolonged catechumenate*, beginning in infancy, as compared with that of the person who comes as an adult from paganism. The aim and purpose behind these various ministries is nothing else but that of the catechumenate, for everything that is being done for the child is being done in the hope that he will in due course make his personal response in repentance, faith and baptism.

The pastoral realities of the catechumenate are perfectly familiar to us. What we have not done is to make allowance for the idea of it in our theology of the Church. If we could do this it would mean that we had a category enabling us to give proper formal recognition to a fact we do not question, i.e. that the kind of child we have in mind is, in some sense, in and of the Christian community before his baptism. We rightly emphasize the necessity of conversion and have often pointed out that our restriction of baptism to believers accords with the character of the Church as a redeemed community. But as a redeemed community the Church is called to a ministry of evangelism and reconciliation. By the very fact of this ministry, by the task to which it is summoned in the terms of our Lord's commission, the Church must always have a catechumenate in its midst. The

population of the catechumenate is constantly changing, for its members are in transit towards full Church membership, but the catechumenate itself must be a permanent feature of the Church's life. Our definition of the Church should make room for this fact. Though not yet baptised, those who are in the catechumenate stage are in a *creative relationship* with the Body of Christ. They do not belong to the indifferent or to the opposition.

That the Church consists of believers is, of course, at once a theological truth and a theological abstraction; to risk an impersonal metaphor, it is the garden considered apart from the nursery in which tomorrow's plants are raised. But the Church *as we know it in life*, ever involved in mission, always has its catechumenate and cannot be fully understood or comprehensively described without it. Unlike an alien or parasitic growth the catechumenate is a necessary organ, integral to the Church's function and vital to its future; almost, we might say, the womb of the Body for in it the life is nurtured which eventually issues in the New Birth.

Our congregations contain not only the central core of full committed and communicant members but other persons who are at varying distances from the centre. These others are the incoming traffic. Some turn away again and some seem to get held up almost indefinitely on the outer fringe though they do not turn away. The members of the typical candidates' class are nearly in. It is the Church's pastoral and evangelistic concern to keep all this traffic moving inwards and it cannot be content to let any of it come to a halt. At the same time we must recognise that some who are not yet Church members are believers of sorts. There are adults in the Women's Meeting and the Men's Circle whose relationship with the Church leaves much room for progress but who seem to come under the heading of "he that is not against us is for us." We cannot be complacent about them nor can we whittle down the need for full committal but our account of the Church will not be complete unless it takes account of the presence of these, the learners who have not yet reached the candidates' class, the fellow-travellers who are not yet members of the Party, the children who love and trust the Lord with their childlike faith but are not yet capable of responsible choice. It is not true to pastoral experience to draw one simple line at Believers' Baptism and classify those on one side as in and the others as out. Whether or not we use the term, the idea underlying the catechumenate is important and valuable, not least in helping us to say something positive concerning the children who share in the Church's life.<sup>4</sup>

At this point I should mention that if we do apply the term catechumen to children we shall not be strictly following the usage

of the early Church. Writing of that period, C. L. Feltoe speaks of two grades among those who were unbaptised, (i) catechumens pure and simple, i.e. adherents to Christianity who were, however, looked upon as members of the community (e.g. *Can. Hipp.* 63, 64); (ii) catechumens who sought baptism, and were therefore being subjected to a definite course of instruction with a view thereto.<sup>55</sup> The latter, our "candidates' class," had in fact moved a stage beyond that of the catechumen, properly so-called. Having applied and been approved for baptism they were now described variously as *phōtizomenoi, electi, illuminandi*. (This distinction recalls the fact that the catechumens, a very large group, included many who remained as such for most of their lives, seeking to postpone the crucial act of baptism to the last possible moment for fear of post-baptismal sin. "Numberless are the inscriptions telling of the administration of baptism immediately before death took place,"<sup>56</sup> important evidence not always remembered by those who speak of an early universal establishment of infant baptism.) In the early catechumenate there was yet another distinction made. Candidates for admission to the catechumenate proper were called *accedentes* or *rudes* and strictly it was to this class that children of Christian parents belonged. It also included pagans and heretics who were knocking at the Church's door. "When the candidate had given a satisfactory account of his motives for approaching Christianity his preparation for admission to the catechumenate was given in a single instruction. . . . When the catechist had brought this instruction to a close, he asked the candidate whether he believed what he had heard. If the answer was in the affirmative, he was initiated into the catechumenate by the "sacraments" of the signing of the Cross, the imposition of hands, and the administration of salt."<sup>57</sup> These ceremonies would vary in various places.

It used to be held that there were several grades of catechumen but that view has been abandoned. The classification alluded to in the previous paragraph shows us stages on the way to baptism, in *one* of which a person was called a catechumen. It was the researches of F. X. Funk which led to this clarification and so far as I know it is not seriously challenged today. It still remains true that the various groups are often referred to under the general heading of the catechumenate, and with them also the *neophyti*, the newly-baptized who continued to receive catechetical instruction for a period after baptism. We can use the word catechumen for the children we have in mind provided we do not suggest that this was the exact terminology used in the early Church. Baptists are not given to over-elaboration. I do not envisage even catechumen coming into popular use among us, and

which of us would consent to some transliterated form of *rudes* or *accedentes* as applied to our children! Catechumen will do for the present discussion. It is not the word but the idea that I am concerned with.

The catechumenate, catering for those who are under instruction and participating in worship, does not exclude the children of non-Christian parents. Of these there are not a few in our churches and Sunday Schools. In regard to their Christian upbringing, Sunday School teachers or other Church members stand *in loco parentis* so far as that is possible. The domestic setting differentiates the child of a pagan home from one of Christian parents but as learners in the Church and its ancillaries they stand side by side. Is there any other difference of status, character or privilege as between these two?

We can be certain that both share in the love of God and of both we can assert that they have been born into a world for which Christ died. These affirmations are sometimes given as part of the justification for infant baptism (the former often in terms of *Mark* x. 14) but as such they should surely be abandoned by those protagonists of baptismal reform who would restrict the rite to infants whose parents intend to take their Christian vows and responsibilities seriously. It is also a little difficult to understand those who still claim that Infant Baptism is a declaration of the prevenient grace of God and yet restrict it to the children of such parents. If baptism given in the one case proclaims prevenient grace, what does its denial in the other case declare? The severity of God, visiting the unbelief of the parents upon the children? Or the severity of the Church which is prepared to exercise faith on behalf of one child but not the other? We deeply respect the concern of those paedo-Baptists who feel the scandal of "indiscriminate baptism," of the christening which is little more than a social occasion for the lay participants. There are still some among them however who continue to use arguments which had more point before the baptismal reform movement. In pleading for baptism in instances where the Church sees real hope of Christian instruction and pastoral care, what they are really doing is to point to the significance of the catechumenate. The logical step would be the restoration of the order of the early Church in which baptism came not as the introduction to, but the culmination of, the catechumenate. They would still need an infancy rite, not baptism but one which would include everything that can be legitimately said and done for children in infancy. If our Dedication Service does not do this already it is in principle capable of doing so and we should hasten to make good its deficiencies. Among other things it should certainly allow for introduction to the Church's catechu-

menate, perhaps by admission to the Sunday School's cradle roll so long as the Sunday School be understood not as a separate entity but as an integral part of the Church's life.

A crucial text for discussion at this point is, of course, 1 *Corinthians* vii. 14 and it must be admitted that if paedo-Baptists wrongly employ it in their apologetic, Baptists have made little positive use of it. The background of the verse is familiar. Mixed marriages were not to be contracted by Christians but what of the marriage that had become mixed by the conversion of a partner who as a former pagan had married a pagan? This question had evidently been put to the apostle and his answer was that the continuance of marital relationships in such circumstances was quite permissible. It was not a mixed marriage in the usual sense because the unbelieving partner was consecrated or sanctified through the converted one. (*hēgiastai gar ho anēr ho apistos en tē gunaiki. . . .*) Reinforcing his point Paul went on to argue that if this were not the case the children of the marriage would be unclean (*akatharta*) but as things are, both parents being sanctified, the children are holy (*hagia*). The argument, says St. John Parry, is "by analogy from their conviction about the children of Christian marriage, to the heathen partners of mixed marriages."<sup>8</sup> Paul's concern at the moment is with the latter but on his understanding of the situation the argument can be used in either direction. Are the children holy? Then it follows that the parents must be, including the unbelieving one. Are the parents holy, including the unbelieving one? Then the children must be too.

The verse provides no support for infant baptism.<sup>9</sup> The children are not holy because they have been baptised but because they are the progeny of holy parents. If they had been baptised that would have been an alternative explanation of their holiness which would still leave open the question of the unconverted parent. If baptised they could scarcely now be thought of as "unclean" whatever the state of one of the parents.<sup>10</sup> If the verse is far from proving that infants actually were baptised in the Corinthian Church it is also a curious one to employ in favour of the *principle* of infant baptism, though it is sometimes so used even by commentators who concede that it says nothing about the practice in Corinth. This text, says Lightfoot, "enunciates the principle which leads to Infant Baptism, *viz.* that the child of Christian parents shall be treated as Christian."<sup>11</sup>

It may or may not be significant that Lightfoot spoke there of Christian parents. Was that plural a slip of the pen or did he regard the heathen but "sanctified" parent as Christian? It is a matter of some moment. On the basis of this verse there is as

much ground, no more and no less, for "treating as Christian" the unbelieving spouse as Lightfoot says we should treat the child. Whatever holiness means in this context it means it as much for the one as for the other. "This principle of family solidarity holds good of the *conjugal* tie no less than of the filial derived therefrom."<sup>12</sup> Yet those who find here an argument for infant baptism do not take the discussion further and clarify the position of the heathen partner *vis-a-vis* baptism. If we are to baptise an infant on the basis of this kind of holiness we cannot in principle reject the legitimacy of it for the unbelieving parent. It would hardly be a satisfactory answer, in this instance, to assert the necessity of faith in the case of an adult for this is not an ordinary pagan. He is not "unclean" but enjoys a derived sanctification which puts him in a different category as it does his child. Why indeed should the paedo-Baptist argue against the offer of baptism to a pagan parent thus sanctified? Much has been made of the so-called "household baptisms" of the primitive Church. If the argument is sound why not practise *household* baptism, the *whole* household, including the heathen adult members, instead of selecting the infant members for attention? Does the principle of family solidarity not apply to adults? The introduction of a selective principle fatally weakens the argument from family or household solidarity. This argument should be abandoned or its full implications should be acted upon and, for the latter, the first step would be to declare the legitimacy of baptism for the heathen partner of a mixed marriage. This at least would not be a matter of offering that which is holy to the dogs but that which is holy to the holy, according to 1 *Corinthians* vii. 14. But of course the true step is to leave this verse out of the baptismal discussion altogether.

If however the verse contributes nothing to the baptismal question it does say something on the status of children and the crux of the matter is the meaning of "holiness" in this context. In discussions of the Biblical development of the term it is generally recognised that there was a primary, non-moral connotation. This is not contradicted by the truth that if any person or thing is called holy "it is in a sense derivative from (God) and dependent upon him or upon his will" and that therefore "there is a personal conception of holiness implicit at the source."<sup>13</sup> It was of course this personal conception which enabled the prophets of the Old Testament to fill the term out with moral content. In the primary sense things a-moral in themselves might be declared "clean" or "unclean"; persons immoral in character might be classified as "sacred" as, for example, the prostitutes attached to fertility cults. "Holy" or "sacred" in this sense meant consecrated to or claimed by the

deity, separated or set apart for religious purposes. It implied no moral judgment but an objective status in relation to the god worshipped.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Paul was here using the word "holy" in this earlier sense for he was not attributing moral qualities either to the heathen parent "sanctified" by marriage or to the children of the marriage. Commentators who refer to the moral influence of the believing parent on marriage partner or child are to this extent off the mark. Holiness is attributed to the child and the unbelieving parent because of their existent relationship with the believer, not because of moral results which that relationship has achieved or may hope to achieve. We have one other Pauline passage<sup>14</sup> in which holiness is similarly attributed to unbelievers. In Romans xi the apostle declares his belief that all Israel is to be saved and he explains his confidence by the use of two metaphors: *ei de hē aparchē hagia, kai to phaurama, kai ei hē riza hagia, kai hoi kaldoi* (v. 16). The first of these metaphors is drawn from the ritual practice referred to in Numbers xv. 19, 20. "It shall be, that when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave offering unto the Lord. Of the first of your dough (*aparchēn phuramatos* LXX) ye shall offer up a cake for an heave offering. . . ." The first-fruits being offered (though part only of the whole) the rest of the dough became "holy" too. So with the tree metaphor, the root being holy the branches which stem from it must be. Israel was "beloved for the fathers' sake" (v. 28) and was holy in the formal sense through racial affiliation to the holy patriarchs. In the formal sense only, because Paul is clearly not attributing anything more than that to a people which "did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (*Romans* x. 3). It is an objective status to which he is referring in *Romans* xi. 16 and 1 *Corinthians* vii. 14. Admittedly in the former Paul argues from this to the future ingathering of Israel but, as Dodd has pointed out, "it is difficult to reconcile this principle, as it is here applied, with Paul's strenuous denial . . . that descent from Abraham gives any right to the inheritance of his blessing"<sup>15</sup> Certainly it would be rash to conclude by analogy from *Romans* xi. 16 that the child and unbelieving partner of 1 *Corinthians* vii. 14 are undoubtedly destined to be saved. Otherwise we should have an excellent argument for mixed marriages! But Paul himself did not envisage the inclusion of Israel other than by belief in Christ. Of the *Corinthians* passage we must assert that it was an objective status, not yet (and possibly never) an inward reality to which Paul was referring.

By what means was this brought about? Of course Paul

would say that the status derived ultimately from the will of God but it is also evident that in some sense it is mediated through the particular relationship with the believer. Paul does not explain this but it is obvious that the type of relationship, perhaps the physical aspect of it, is important to his thought and that it is not simply a matter of the child or heathen parent being in an environment sanctified by the presence of a Christian. Lietzmann draws our attention to 1 *Corinthians* vi. 15 where the apostle speaks of the result of intercourse with a prostitute. However casual and fleeting a brothel encounter might be, Paul insisted that such intercourse had deeper significance for those concerned. In the case of a Christian and a prostitute it would be a joining to her of "the members of Christ." He quotes *Genesis* ii. 24, "they two shall become one." Intercourse with a prostitute led to a uniting of personalities as did the ordained intercourse of marriage. On 1 *Corinthians* vii. 14 Lietzmann is surely penetrating to an important element in the apostle's thought when he says: "The heathen spouse becomes sanctified through sexual intercourse with the Christian party."<sup>16</sup>

Of the sanctification of the children Lietzmann speaks similarly of it taking place in a "mysterious manner, through physical derivation from a Christian man or woman"<sup>17</sup> In the relationship between parent and offspring there is much more than the physical but in this instance it seems as though the physical link was fundamental in enabling Paul to assert the status of holiness for the child. Even if we are not prepared to specify the physical link exclusively the status certainly arises from the bonds of marriage and parenthood.

There is no claim here, of course, that these ties are the *sole* means by which the status could be created. It is additional rather than contradictory to Paul's idea to suggest that, as everything which comes into the "possession" of a Christian is holy to the Lord, so would an adopted child though not by means of physical derivation. And what of the situation when the Church itself, through an orphanage for example, takes a child formally into its care and becomes its responsible guardian? Again it is not a physical relationship which is created but Paul's argument was designed to meet the one kind of relationship under consideration, not to exclude others. May we, using 1 *Corinthians* vii. 14 as a starting point, suggest that in addition to the marital and parental there are special relationships with a Christian or with the Christian Church which may provide a basis for the same assertion that Paul made in the case before him? If so, the status of holiness would not apply exclusively to children physically begotten of a Christian parent or parents.

Setting aside these speculations and restricting ourselves to those Paul had in mind, what content can we give to this derivative holiness? "The conception depends upon the fact that *hagios* and *hagiazō* primarily refer not to moral character, but to the state in relation to God, and the claim of God on the person, even antecedently to the personal response to that claim. . . . Here the word must be used in its primary meaning, as consecrated to, claimed by God."<sup>18</sup> The "consecration" and the "claim" in this instance arise from and are exerted through the personal relationship with a Christian and must in principle be just as applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the non-Christian marriage partner as to the child of the marriage.

In what sense can we speak of a claim by God, operative in this case (and possibly in certain others) but not in that of all children? Surely He lays His claim on all and all owe life to the Creator who is holy. Yet this verse introduces a differentiating factor as between one child and another. The difference is that owing to the specially significant relationship with a Christian, God's claim in this instance can be and is directly lodged and asserted. This applies to the whole of a Christian's life, to all that he formerly reckoned as his own and at his own disposal; to all, in fact, that is commonly brought under the heading of Christian stewardship—time, money, the body (now the temple of the Holy Spirit) and here as we see, the marital relationship and its bodily fruit. The heathen partner might be immoral but *as partner in the marriage union* he is claimed by God and proper marital relationships with him are not to be thought of as unclean. "Man and wife are part of each other, in such a sense . . . that the sanctification of the one includes the other so far as their wedlock is concerned."<sup>19</sup> The marriage union is one which the Christian partner can and must offer in view of the fact that God has hallowed it. Thus the objective status of holiness accorded to the unbelieving marriage partner issues in immediate ethical implications for the believer.

Similarly, what is attributed in a non-moral sense to the child has moral implications for his Christian parent. In regard to this child God can assert His claim from the outset because it is a life born and entrusted to the care of a believer. Though the latter may not prejudge the child's own choice when years of responsibility are reached, he has for a few years the opportunity of shaping the child's life. It is salutary for him to remember that parentage, which seems to make a child so much one's own, makes it God's, makes it "holy," and this fact stands against any selfish counter-claim in terms of one's own ideas and ambitions for the child. Parental possessiveness always carries dangers with it but in the case of a Christian it may take on a peculiarly serious

aspect in conflict with the prior claim which God asserts. The latter reinforces every other consideration which summons a Christian to offer his child to God and to make the sustained effort involved in bringing him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Unfortunately for our present discussion, Paul was simply concerned here to meet the practical question as to whether a newly converted person could continue in marital relationships with an unbelieving partner. It was not to his point to follow up the theological implications and to answer all the questions raised for us by the attribution of a status of holiness to the child or the unbelieving parent. Has this status an absolute quality about it or is it so tied to the relationship with the Christian that if the relationship ceased the status would be nullified (as, for example, if the heathen partner divorced his Christian wife)? If it is a qualified status on what terms could the child forfeit it? If we answer, by lapsing into heathenism or immorality, we recall immediately that these things did not disqualify his non-Christian parent. If on the other hand the status, once accorded, becomes absolute, what of its bearing on original sin? It is of the nature of original sin that it is derivative. May it be countered as such by a holiness which is derivative, proceeding from a relationship with one who is a believer in Christ? Again, if the status is absolute is it further transmissible through the child when he too becomes a husband and a father though he may never have become a believer? Some will feel like answering that this last question at least has an air of artificiality about it and that this arises from the fact that Paul was employing a primitive concept of holiness at this point, a holiness formal rather than qualitative. For those who cannot dismiss the problem in those terms the questions are plainly there, created but not answered by the apostle's advice to his Corinthian enquirers.

One thing seems clear. Paul presents us with a difficulty somewhat similar to that raised by the doctrine of election, though not of the same gravity. Some have followed the doctrine of election through to what they felt was its logical conclusion or concomitant, a doctrine of reprobation. If some men are elected to salvation it seemed to follow that others are not and that these latter must be predestinated to condemnation. To this most of us reply that a conclusion so preposterous stands self-condemned, whether logical or not. But we now have to ask ourselves about the apparent implications of 1 *Corinthians* vii. 14. Certain persons come to a status of holiness solely through their relationship with a believer. It seems to follow that a husband not blessed with a believing wife and a child not blessed with a believing parent do

not enjoy that status unless they arrive at it by some other way. This evidently implies a distinction between one child and another, a position not so impossible of acceptance as the election-reprobation nexus, but still a difficult one to get acclimatised to. Is the difficulty a valid one or does it simply remind us of the effort needed to penetrate and come to terms with certain aspects of Biblical thought? Our democratic instincts rebel against the idea that anyone, theologically speaking, should be born with a silver spoon in his mouth. Paul evidently felt no such qualms and if we are to follow him we shall have to get used to language and ideas that have hitherto been foreign to many of us, as we are having to do in the matter of baptism.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 1910, pp. 69, 89, 93, 115, 145, 157, 191.

<sup>2</sup> By Rev. G. J. M. Pearce, 28th August, 1959.

<sup>3</sup> W Telfer, *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa*, 1955, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Some would speak of these children as members, not of the Church but of the congregation or of "the Christian community". But neither of these terms identifies them as distinct from baptised Church members who are also members of the congregation and the Christian community. "Catechumen" and "catechumenate" have this merit at least, that they indicate the learner status quite specifically.

<sup>5</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 3. Art. *Catechumenate*.

<sup>6</sup> Lietzmann, *The Era of the Church Fathers*, 1951, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> J. P. Christopher, *The First Catechetical Instruction of Augustine*, 1952, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *1 Corinthians* (Cambridge Greek Testament), 1937, p. 113.

<sup>9</sup> An interesting discussion of this point was embodied in the appendix to the London (Baptist) Confession of 1677. See McGlothlin, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

<sup>10</sup> My attention has been drawn to the argument of P. Feine and others that *1 Corinthians* vii. 14 makes it virtually impossible to suppose that Infant Baptism was practised at Corinth since the practice would have presupposed an "uncleanness" which is ruled out by Paul's teaching in this passage. If this argument is valid the verse is not merely useless but embarrassing to paedo-Baptist apologetic.

<sup>11</sup> Cited by G. G. Findlay, *Expositor's Greek Testament*, 1904, p. 827.

<sup>12</sup> G. G. Findlay, *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> J. K. S. Reid, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, 1950, p. 216. (Art. SANCTITY, SANCTIFICATION).

<sup>14</sup> I am indebted to Dr. G. R. Beasley-Murray for calling my attention to this and to the argument referred to in Footnote 10.

<sup>15</sup> *Epistle to the Romans*, (Moffatt Commentary), 1938, p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> *An die Korinther I and II* (Handbuch zum neuen Testament), 1931, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> St. John Parry, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>19</sup> Findlay, *op. cit.*, p. 826.