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BAPTISMAL REFERENCES

IN FIRST PETER

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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June 1958

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through Christ's blood.

This thesis assumes two things: First, that the entire First Epistle of Peter was written by St. Peter himself; Second, that the Epistle was written in the fall of 63 A. D.

In organizing the thesis, the first consideration was an analysis of First Peter as a baptismal study. Here the important facts are presented

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this thesis is to determine and interpret the specific and implied baptismal references within First Peter. This purpose also includes a presentation of the viewpoints of scholars who designate First Peter 1:3-4:11 as a baptismal homily.

The comparatively recent studies on First Peter as a baptismal homily, notably those by F. W. Beare, H. Windisch, and H. Preisker, partially prompted my acceptance of this topic as a Bachelor of Divinity thesis. The realization that First Peter contains many practical insights into the important doctrine of Holy Baptism also served as a stimulation for this study.

The specific limitations of the thesis are those passages which refer to or imply Holy Baptism within the baptismal homily, 1:3-4:11. It does not intend to present a thorough treatment on the doctrine of Holy Baptism, but only to analyze and present those aspects of baptism found in First Peter. A treatment of the covenant terminology in First Peter seemed necessary to complete an appreciation of the significance of baptism as the means by which man enters the new covenant established through Christ's blood.

This thesis assumes two things: first, that the entire First Epistle of Peter was written by St. Peter himself; second, that the Epistle was written in the fall of 63 A. D.

In organizing the thesis, the first consideration was an analysis of First Peter as a baptismal homily. Here the important facts are presented

which substantiate this view. The third chapter is devoted to the covenant terminology of the baptismal sermon as the framework for the whole sermon, showing that through baptism man enters into a covenant relationship with God. In the fourth chapter the specific references to baptism are discussed, including the Old Testament reflections within the references. The fifth chapter lists and discusses the implied baptismal references which are evident within the homily. The last chapter contains summary conclusions.

The major sources used and incorporated into the thesis were lexicons, concordances, theological word books, commentaries, and theologies. Grammatical considerations are included whenever necessary. The interpretation of the baptismal references was made with the help of these tools.

First Peter cannot be conclusively proved to be a baptismal homily; however, the content of the Epistle reads as a baptismal sermon written for newly converted and baptized Christians. With the exception of Preisker those who favor this interpretation of First Peter divide it into the baptismal sermon, 1:3-4:11, and the apostolic letter, 4:12-5:14. If the first section is considered a separate work, its theme is the nature and significance of the Christian life. Beare describes it as

an explication of the significance of Baptism as the sacrament of regeneration, a body of instruction and exhortation respecting the character and conduct which should accompany and flow from their profession of Christian faith, and from the spiritual experiences into which they have entered.

CHAPTER II

CONSTRUCTION OF FIRST PETER

The general content and structure of First Peter have led some scholars to consider 1:3-4:11 as a baptismal homily. Those who particularly emphasize this interpretation of First Peter are the following: R. Perdelwitz was the first to present this view in his essay, written in 1911, "Die Mysterienreligion und das Problem des ersten Petrusbriefes," (the writer was not able to obtain a copy of it). Perdelwitz's view was supported by C. Streeter in his remarks on First Peter in The Primitive Church. H. Windisch in Die Katholischen Briefe, in Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, XV, also adopts the interpretation. The most elaborate attempt to present First Peter as a baptismal service was done by H. Preisker in the appendix to Windisch's book. F. W. Beare also presents First Peter as a baptismal sermon in his book, The First Epistle of Peter. F. Cross, in I Peter A Paschal Liturgy, sees a baptismal setting for the Epistle.

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an exposition of the significance of Baptism as the sacrament of regeneration, a body of instruction and exhortation respecting the character and conduct which should accompany and flow from their profession of Christian faith, and from the spiritual experience into which they have entered.

Beare furthermore points out.

A plain statement of the meaning of the sacrament and of the nature of the Christian life, with its ideals, its perils, its joys, and its unfailing resources--this is what the occasion requires and it is precisely this that the Epistle sets forth.¹

Selwyn, who sees strong baptismal influences in First Peter but not as a homily, describes the aim of the Epistle as a "teaching Epistle." He says:

And the teaching which it gives must be understood in the widest sense, as embracing not only what is commonly called doctrine but also ethics or principles and canons of conduct governing the practical life of Christians in the Church and in the world.²

A further look at the content of 1:3-4:11 reveals many references and allusions to baptism and to a baptismal service. The specific references to baptism are 1:3,23, where it is spoken of as a "rebirth"; 2:24, through baptism we are "dead to sin"; 3:21, baptism is pictured as an antitype of the Flood and as a "pledge" of a good conscience to God. The Greek text also contains many implied references which are considered in Chapter V of this thesis. Chapters 1:3-4:11 also contain many indications of original catechetical instructions, which would be meaningful to those who had just received the instruction and were baptized. Ps. 34, quoted in First Peter 2:3; 3:10-12, is considered part of the original baptismal instruction. The Haustafeln in 2:11-3:12 strongly reflect such instruction. There is also evidence of an early baptismal creed in 3:18-22, which describes the second person of the Trinity.

According to those who advocate First Peter as a baptismal homily, the last portion of the Epistle is an appended letter. Beare considers Peter

¹Francis Wright Beare, The First Epistle of Peter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), pp. 52-53.

²Edward Gordon Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd, 1955), p. 64.

the author of the epistolary letter who was encouraged to write to the congregations in the face of a recent persecution against the Church.³

Beare further comments, "This latter part of the book is truly epistolary in form and in content, and to this the address (1:1-2) and the closing greetings (5:12-14) properly belong."⁴ Streeter also proposes that the reason for the appended letter was the outbreak of persecution.⁵ Windisch is of the same opinion.⁵

One of the main reasons, if not the first, to divide the Epistle into two parts is the different emphasis on suffering in 1:3-4:11 and 4:12-5:14. It is maintained that the first part speaks only of the possibility of suffering in the future, while the last part speaks of a present persecution being waged against the Christians.⁷ Beare summarizes the thinking of the scholars who advocate this two sided emphasis on suffering when he says that in 1:3-4:11 the "problem of suffering is not the central theme, but is raised and dealt with only in relation to a general exposition of the nature of the Christian life."⁸ Concerning 4:12ff he says:

³Beare, op. cit., p. 28.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

⁵Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Primitive Church (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), p. 130.

⁶Hans Windisch, Die Katholischen Briefe, in Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Herbert Preisker (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1951), XV, 82.

⁷References to suffering in 1:3-4:11 are 1:6,7, "if perhaps you did suffer"; 1:11, points to sufferings destined for Christ; 3:13, "if you should suffer for righteousness' sake." References in 4:12-5:14 are 4:12, "fiery ordeal that is raging among you"; 4:13, "are sharing in the sufferings of Christ"; 4:14-16, the present possibility of suffering as Christians; 4:19, "are suffering according to God's will"; 5:9, "you are paying the same price in terms of suffering as your brethren in the world"; 5:10, "having suffered a little."

⁸Beare, op. cit., p. 6.

The passage which immediately follows (4:12ff) breathes an entirely different atmosphere. The style is direct and simple. There are no carefully constructed periods or nicely balanced rhythms and antitheses, such as mark the preceding discourse. It has the quick and nervous language of a letter written in haste and under tension, without care for elaborations of style or loftiness of diction, to a flock that is undergoing the actual ravages of persecution. The situation envisaged is definite, and stands forth in vivid clarity. Suffering is no longer contemplated as a vague possibility for which Christians must always be prepared; it has become a stark actuality in the "fiery ordeal" which is putting their faith to the test. . . . ⁹

Preisker, in distinction to the other scholars mentioned, maintains that the whole Epistle of First Peter is one continuous worship service, with 1:3-4:11 being a baptismal service for the candidates and 4:12-5:11 a closing service for the whole congregation, the old and the newly baptized. ¹⁰ Preisker comments,

In ihm hat ein urchristlicher Gottesdienst einer Taufgemeinde (1,3-4,11) seine schriftliche Fixierung gefunden, der mit dem Schlussgottesdienst der Gesamtgemeinde (4,12 bis 5,11) endet. Dann liegt hier das älteste Dokument eines urchristlichen Gottesdienstes vor. ¹¹

Preisker explains the different emphasis on suffering in the Epistle by the two different audiences in the worship service. ¹² Addressing the baptismal candidates in 1:3-4:11 the preacher could only speak of the possibility of suffering for they had not as yet experienced sufferings as Christians. ¹³ From 4:12 on there begins the closing portion of the service when the newly baptized join the rest of the congregation, and here sufferings could not be spoken of as mere possibilities because the

⁹Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁰Windisch, op. cit., edited by Preisker, p. 157.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 160.

¹³Ibid.

older members had suffered for their faith.¹⁴ Preisker does not accept the view that 4:12ff is due to a later event because he doubts whether Peter would append a letter to an out-of-date situation and not rewrite the whole thing.¹⁵

In viewing First Peter as a worship service in conjunction with a baptism, Preisker places the actual act of baptism between 1:21 and 1:22.¹⁶ He makes this assertion on the fact that sanctification of souls is spoken of as a future act in 1:3-21 and as a perfect act in 1:22.¹⁷ Through the act of baptism their souls had been purified into the new life (1:22).

Cross, in his book, I Peter A Paschal Liturgy, says that the setting of First Peter is

apparently that of a Paschal Vigil, and that what we have in I Peter is not "ordinary" Baptism . . . but the Baptismal rite of Easter, the most solemn act of liturgical worship in the year. What I Peter gives us is the part of the Celebrant. . . .¹⁸

Selwyn sets the date of First Peter in the year 63 A. D. or the first half of 64 A. D., which means that it could have reached the communities addressed in time to be read at the Easter festival of the following year.¹⁹ Thus the epistle could have been read at the Paschal celebrations, as Cross maintains, of which baptism was a part.

As Beare suggests, the outline of the Epistle as a whole may be as

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 156.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 157-58.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 160-61.

¹⁸F. L. Cross, I Peter A Paschal Liturgy (London: A. R. Mowbray and Company, Limited, 1954), p. 38.

¹⁹Selwyn, op. cit., p. 62.

follows:²⁰

- I. The Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. The Baptismal Discourse (1:3-4:11)
- III. The Letter Proper (4:12-5:11)
- IV. The Closing Greetings (5:12-14)

Also following Beare's suggestion, an example of the content of the baptismal discourse may be as follows:²¹

- A. The Exordium. A panegyric on regeneration and the glories of the Gospel (vv. 3-12).
- B. The Body of the Discourse in three parts:
 - Part I. The fundamental Moral Demands of the New Life (1:3-2:10):
holiness, based on the knowledge of God as Father and a Judge and of Christ as Redeemer (1:13-21); and love, the proper fruit of the holiness and immortality which belong to the new life, the bond of a sacred fellowship of priestly service to God, whereof Christ is the center (1:22-2:10).
 - Part II. The Attitude and Conduct becoming to Christians in a pagan environment (The Haustafel) (2:11-3:12).
 - Part III. A Commendation of the life of goodness, as (1) the best safeguard against harsh treatment, or (2) if suffering nevertheless is inflicted, giving it a meaning akin to the meaning of the sufferings of Christ (vicarious and redemptive) (3:13-4:6).
- C. The Peroration. A final exhortation to love and mutual service, concluding with a doxology (4:7-11).

In summary, First Peter cannot be conclusively proved to be a baptismal homily; however, on the basis of its content and several internal factors it does read like a baptismal sermon. In brief, its content speaks of man's rebirth, his entrance into a new relationship with God through Christ, the nature of this relationship, and man's obligations to God, to his fellow believers, and to the pagan world in

²⁰Beare, op. cit., p. 9.

²¹Ibid., p. 52.

which he lives. The other factors which suggest a baptismal sermon are the specific baptismal references, indications of baptismal instruction, and the apparent two sided emphasis on suffering. The writer maintains that the sum of these factors presents a plausible explanation for First Peter as a baptismal homily.

The use of the word "covenant" is found scattered throughout the First Peter epistle. Although the word for "covenant," *diatheke*, does not appear, the allusions to the covenant contain all the essential elements of a baptismal relationship with God as pictured in the New Testament. The words and concepts treated in First Peter are the establishment of a new covenant, the new Israel, covenant obligations, and the covenantal relationship of the baptized Christians.

It must be noted that when we speak of a baptismal homily, the use of the word "homily" implies a sermon given to the people and the nature of the type of sermon is determined through baptism. In baptism believers become the recipients of God through the washing with water and also heirs of eternal life. These elements of baptism are portrayed in First Peter which are indicative of a baptismal relationship with God.

In the relationship between God and man in the Old Testament, there were covenants which were referred to as the covenant with Noah, the second with Abraham, and the third with the whole people of Israel at Sinai (Ex. 24:1-8). It is fitting in the third covenant that Peter refers in his Epistle. The writer maintains:

The baptismal relationship here [1:1-2] is the covenant made on Sinai which is significant due to the thought, so prominent in this epistle, of righteousness as recapitulating, though on another and a higher plane, the history of the chosen people. In that story

First Peter, The Apostolic Epistles of the Great Church Fathers, trans. by the Catholic Biblical Association, 1954, pp. 15-17.

CHAPTER III

COVENANT TERMINOLOGY

The use of covenant terminology is found scattered throughout the first two chapters of First Peter. Although the word for "covenant," $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\acute{\eta}\kappa\eta$, does not occur, the allusions to the covenant contain all the essential elements of a covenant relationship with God as pictured in the Old Testament. The essential elements treated in First Peter are the establishment of a new covenant, the new Israel, covenant obligations, and the covenant blessing of an eternal inheritance.

If First Peter 1:3-4:11 is taken as a baptismal homily, the use of covenant terminology aptly describes both the means and the nature of the "new life" which is entered through baptism. In baptism believers become the children of God through the atoning work of Christ and also heirs of eternal life. These effects of baptism are portrayed in First Peter within the framework of a covenant relationship with God.

In the covenants between God and men in the Old Testament, three covenants are generally referred to--one with Noah, the second with Abraham, and the third with the whole people of Israel at Sinai (Ex. 24).¹ It is mainly to the third covenant that Peter refers in his Epistle.

Selwyn comments:

The Apostle's allusion here [1:1-2] to the Covenant made on Sinai affords an important clue to the thought, so prominent in this Epistle, of Christianity as recapitulating, though on another and a higher plane, the history of the Chosen People. In that story

¹Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), pp. 66-67.

the Covenant sacrifice marks a decisive moment in the making of Israel; it is to be followed, after the wanderings in the wilderness, by their entrance into the land of Canaan which God gives them as their inheritance or possession; and it is on that soil that the varied drama of Israel's life is unfolded in the Old Testament. St. Peter follows a similar order in his first two chapters. The mention of the New Covenant [1:1-2] prepares the way for the teaching about the new inheritance in i. 3-25, and that again for the doctrine of the new Israel in ii. 1-10.²

A New Covenant Established

The establishing of the new covenant for the New Testament Church is based on the three-fold work of God given in First Peter 1:2, "in accordance with the Foreknowledge of God, but the sanctifying activity of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood." "The primary import of the three clauses is to open up clearly at the outset of the Epistle the transcendent origin, nature, and purpose of the Church and its life."³ The activity of God is here expressed in terms of the Trinity and may be an echo of the Trinitarian baptismal formula used in the ancient church.⁴

These three prepositional phrases in 1:2 are governed by the entire salutation (1:1-2).⁵ They are related to the apostolate of Peter, to the election of the dispersed sojourners, and to the grace and peace which the apostle prays may be theirs. The fact that the readers are Christians, that they are in a covenant relationship with God, is ascribed to the

²Edward Gordon Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. 1955), p. 68.

³Ibid., p. 119.

⁴Francis Wright Beare, The First Epistle of Peter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), p. 50.

⁵Ibid., pp. 49-50.

redemptive activity of the Triune God.

The first phrase, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," indicates that the origin of the Church does not lie in the aspirations and plans of men but in the eternal purpose of God. The foreknowledge of God, $\pi\rho\omicron\gamma\omega\rho\iota\varsigma$, is a demonstration of God's grace. The preposition in the compound, $\pi\rho\omicron$ --, denotes the fact that God's foreknowledge is part of His eternal counsel and plan.⁶ The readers' existence as Christians is part of God's will and purpose, embraced in the divine plan, which is the pledge of their salvation.

The second phrase, "by the sanctifying activity of the Spirit," refers to the hallowing power which the divine Spirit brings to bear upon the life of the believers. It is the Spirit who implements God's plan and brings it into being. By the Spirit's sanctifying activity the believers owe the very fact that they believe. By this phrase there is expressed the miracle wrought by the Holy Spirit, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," (I Cor. 12:3).⁷

The third phrase, "for obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood," points to the redeeming work of Christ and to the purpose of the Christian's election. These two factors are expressed in covenant terminology, namely, "sprinkling" and "obedience." Peter is quoting the covenant account in Exodus 24, where the people pledge their obedience to the Law of God, and Moses sprinkles over them the blood of oxen which had been offered in sacrifice. Exodus 24:7,8 read:

v.7. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people, and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we

⁶Selwyn, op. cit., p. 119.

⁷C. E. B. Granfield, The First Epistle of Peter (London: S C M Press, Ltd, 1954), p. 17.

do and be obedient.

v.8. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.

The word, *ῥαντισμὸν*, translated "sprinkling," is a sacrificial word and bears a two-fold meaning from the Old Testament usage. First, it can denote the act of consecration. The sprinkling of blood was part of the ritual in the consecration of priests.⁸ (Cf. Ex. 29:20-22 for consecration of Aaron and his sons.) Secondly, the sprinkling of blood was used as a purifying act, where blood was sprinkled by a priest upon a leper to cleanse him of his leprosy.⁹ (Cf. Lev. 14:6-7.) From these two references Morris says, "we get the principle that the sprinkling of blood is likely to signify the entry into a new state marked by cleansing from previous defilement and consecration to a holy purpose."¹⁰

The second covenant term in the third phrase is "obedience." Election involves duty and responsibility as well as privilege. In Ex. 24:7 the people's response to the first covenant is given, "all that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient." This did not imply that obedience gained for them the love of God, but rather "their part was an unconditional surrender to whatever might be the will of God."¹¹ The people were not chosen merely to be recipients of God's blessings, but they were to render God obedience to His commands. Refusal to obey God's commandments placed the people outside the sphere of His blessings.¹²

⁸ Ibid., p. 17.

⁹ Morris, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 73.

¹² Ibid., p. 75.

Obedience was therefore an integral part of the covenant relationship. (Cf. Ex. 19:6; Jer. 7:23; 11:3-4.)

In the new covenant established by God Christ's blood is the sign and the seal of its completion. Heb. 12:12 points to Jesus as the "mediator of the new covenant and to the blood of sprinkling." By the use of $\rho\alpha\nu\tau\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\nu$ Peter is implying that by the shedding of Christ's blood sinful mankind is both purified from their sin and consecrated to a life of obedience. The new covenant rests on the forgiveness of sins as was already foretold in the Old Testament (Jer. 31:31, 34c) and is the theme of the New Testament. Jesus Himself associates forgiveness of sins with the new covenant while instituting the Lord's Supper, Matt. 26:28, "For this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." In the act of shedding Christ's blood man is also consecrated to God to live a life of obedience.

Selwyn explains this phrase, "for obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood," by saying:

The phrase is not easy, until we realize that it summarizes, and transfers to Christianity, the ideas of obedience and of reconciliation through a sacrifice contained in Ex. xxiv., and that the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" is a synonym for God's continuing forgiveness and grace covenanted in Christ's death. With this interpretation, it sets before us the Christian ethical life as consisting in the interplay of man's endeavor after goodness with the forgiving grace of God.¹³

The New Israel

The New Israel, the New Testament Church, as depicted by Peter in his First Epistle bears all the titles given to the first Israel in their covenant relationship with God. The first term which marked the New

¹³Selwyn, op. cit., p. 67.

Testament believers as the "new" Israel is $\epsilon\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$, the "elect." Peter describes his readers as the "elect sojourners in the dispersion" in 1:1, and as a "chosen generation" in 2:9. The word $\epsilon\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ is used in the Bible "especially of those whom God has chosen from the generality of mankind and drawn to Himself."¹⁴

Divine election was a characteristic of the people of Israel as a whole. Deut. 7:6, "the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." (Cf. also Deut. 4:37; 14:2; Is. 45:4; Ps. 105:6, 43.) God had chosen Israel from among the nations to be His special people, not because they deserved it, but because He loved them with a love that was undeserved, that had its ground not in them but in Him.¹⁵

With this word "elect" Peter reminds his readers, among whom were Gentiles, that they too belong to the people of God; they have entered upon the inheritance of Israel and have a share both in its glorious privileges and in its obligations.¹⁶

Within the covenant relation the people of Israel were given other specific titles, Ex. 19:4-6:

v.4. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself.

v.5. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine,

v.6. and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

Peter now ascribes these same titles to the new Israel who have become

¹⁴William F. Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 242.

¹⁵Cranfield, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁶Ibid.

the people of God (2:10) through the covenant sealed by Christ's blood (1:2). In 2:9 Peter says they are now "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people that are God's possession."

The new Israel has another distinctive characteristic which reflects covenant background, namely, they are a "liberated people." The reference is First Peter 1:18-19:

v.18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers,

v.19. but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

The verb, ἐλυτρώθητε, aorist passive of λυτρώω, "redeem," signifies a liberation. In the Septuagint the word in its various forms is used in two contexts: (1) the redemption of property from mortgage,

λύτρα being the price payable (cf. Lev. 25 and 27); (2) the deliverance of a person or a nation from bondage (cf. Deut. 7:8).¹⁷ This word was also used in connection with the ransoming of slaves.¹⁸

The verb, λυτρώω, brought to mind God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage and from the Exile. The "Egypt" from which Peter's readers had been delivered was the aimless and useless way of life inherited from their fathers.

Intimately bound up with the Exodus from Egypt is the Passover sacrifice, which is also alluded to in First Peter 1:19. Exodus 12:5 specifies the Passover lamb as "without blemish." In First Peter 1:19 Christ is the sacrifice Lamb "without blemish and without spot" by whose blood the people of the new covenant have been liberated from their former life of slavery to sin.

¹⁷Selwyn, op. cit., p. 144.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 145.

The Exodus from Egypt was the gracious act of God toward the people, and this deliverance served as the background for the first covenant.¹⁹ In the formulating of the covenant God describes Himself as the God of the Exodus (Ex. 19:4). Thus the Exodus account served as a vivid picture for Peter's readers of their deliverance from sin in the new covenant with Christ.

The forgiveness of sins is also of major importance in the concept of the new Israel. The forgiveness of sins is imparted to the people by their entrance into the new covenant with God. Forgiveness is pictured as being "presented" or "brought to God." First Peter 3:18, "For even Christ died for sin once and for all, a just man for unjust people, that He might present you to God." The atoning sacrifice of Christ brings man to God through the forgiveness of his sins. This idea is expressed elsewhere in the New Testament. Eph. 2:18, "For through him [Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." John 14:6, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The shedding of Christ's blood for man's redemption makes possible our covenant relationship with the Father.

Since Peter makes frequent use of Old Testament covenant terminology, he is undoubtedly reflecting Exodus 12, 20, 24, when he pictures forgiveness as being "presented to God." In Exodus the people were not allowed to come unto the Lord and they were extremely afraid of Him at Mt. Sinai. (Cf. Ex. 19:12; 20:18,21; 24:2.) Through the consecration with the blood of the covenant, 24:3-8, the Israelites were permitted to ascend the mountain and there behold the God of Israel and celebrate the covenant meal, 24:9-11. The willingness on God's part to permit the

¹⁹Morris, op. cit., p. 74.

representative of Israel to ascend the mountain into His presence certainly indicates God's favor and forgiveness upon the people. The opposite is true after the incident of the Golden Calf; because of their apostasy God did not dwell in their midst nor permit them to come into His presence (Ex. 33:1-3).

The reference to forgiveness of sins in First Peter 3:18 is also significant when understanding First Peter as a baptismal homily. The great blessing of baptism is the forgiveness of sins. Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Acts 2:38, "Be baptized . . . for the remission of sins." Acts 22:16, "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

Covenant Obligations

Along with the Old Testament covenant relationship with God were certain obligations or duties. The covenant was essentially an act of grace on the part of God,²⁰ but having chosen the people, God imposed upon them ethical demands which can be considered as the people's part in the covenant.

Three such obligations are reflected in First Peter. The first is the matter of obedience. Obedience is found in the people's response to God's covenant (Ex. 24:3,7), and it is demanded by God as necessary for the covenant relationship (Ex. 19:5).

Peter in his First Epistle three times refers to obedience as an essential characteristic of the people within the new covenant. The first of the three references was previously discussed as an integral part in

²⁰Ibid., p. 73.

the covenant relationship.²¹ In brief, First Peter 1:2 states that through the shedding of Christ's blood man is consecrated to live a life of obedience to God. The second reference to obedience is 1:14, the "children of obedience." The genitive, ὑπακοῆς, is the objective genitive according to Beare, rendering the clause, "children born for obedience."²² This phrase, together with the third reference, 1:22, "in obedience to the truth," point to the determining quality of the Christian life within the covenant, namely, faithful adherence to God's commandments.

The second obligation reflected in First Peter is that of "holiness." This is referred to in 1:16, διότι γέγραπται ὅτι ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε, ὅτι ἔγω ἅγιος. This is a direct quotation from Lev. 11:44,45.

v.44. For I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves and ye shall be holy; for I am holy, neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

v.45. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God, ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

The holiness of Israel was to be modeled after the holiness of God and from this the word, ἅγιος, equivalent to the Hebrew, *qados*, derives its moral content.²³ The root meaning is to "set apart, separate, for dedication to religion."²⁴ Whoever was dedicated to the God of Israel was under the obligation to conform to His essential purity and goodness; so Israel as a holy people was to reflect in its national life the moral perfection of its God. Peter likewise exhorts his readers as members of

²¹Supra, pp. 13-14.

²²Beare, op. cit., p. 71.

²³Ibid., p. 72.

²⁴Ibid.

a holy people who now serve a holy God, they should show themselves holy in every kind of intercourse with their fellowmen.

The third obligation reflected in First Peter is in First Peter 2:9. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Peter is here quoting the essential parts of Ex. 19:5,6, "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Peter expresses this third obligation, while it is inherent in the titles given to Israel in the first covenant. Peter writes, "that you should show forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." The first Israel, as a nation, were all priests within the covenant relationship with God. A priest is to serve God. All the people, however, were not expected to function as the appointed priests and offer sacrifices to God, but their obligation involved their total life as a witness of their God. This is indicated elsewhere in the Old Testament. Already at the time of Abram God was using him as a blessing and a witness to generations to come of God's gracious dealing with His people (Gen. 12:1-3). In Isaiah the Lord says of Israel, "You are my witnesses" (Is. 43:10-12). God expected the children of Israel to be witnesses of the one true God to the surrounding heathen nations. Peter echoes the same obligation when he says of God's priests of the new covenant that they should show forth the praises of their God.

Covenant Inheritance

The fourth covenant idea reflected in First Peter is that of "inheritance," κληρονομία. The word was rich in associations for those of Peter's readers who knew the Old Testament. This is the word regularly used in the Septuagint of Canaan as Israel's promised possession. (Cf. Gen. 17:3.)²⁵ In classical literature and in the vernacular of the first century it designated no more than property that changed hands after a death, and had no religious associations.²⁶

Peter used the word, κληρονομία, 1:4, in describing the inheritance of the new Israel. He transfers the meaning associated with the word to the new sphere which has been opened up for Christians. The object of their hope is not a visible Promised Land, but lies in the ultimate fellowship with God beyond the contaminations of time and beyond the context of history. The substance of their inheritance is the salvation of their souls (1:5,9). For this reason it is described as "incorruptible, and undefiled, and fadeth not away," (1:4). The new Canaan was made possible through the "resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," (1:3).

In summary, Peter in his Epistle presents the nature and significance of the Christian life and does so in the framework of a new covenant relationship with God. The Christians have entered a new life with God which has been sealed by the blood of His Son. Within this life the Christians are to live as witnesses of God, in holiness and obedience to Him, assured of an inheritance, namely, the salvation of their souls.

²⁵Selwyn, op. cit., p. 124.

²⁶Ibid., p. 71.

CHAPTER IV

SPECIFIC BAPTISMAL REFERENCES

Within the baptismal homily, First Peter 1:3-4:11, there are four specific references to baptism and four descriptions of baptism. It is described as a "rebirth" in 1:3,23; as "death to sin" in 2:24; as an antitype of the Flood in 3:21; and as a "pledge" to God in 3:21.

A Rebirth

Significantly in the first verse of the baptismal homily (1:3) there is the reference to man's rebirth or regeneration, pointing to baptism from the very beginning. It is also significant that it follows verse two which speaks of the new covenant established by God through Jesus Christ. Verse three reads, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By the greatness of His mercy He has begotten us anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Through baptism man becomes one of God's own people within the covenant.

"Blessed," εὐλογητός, opens verse three and stands as an ascription to God.¹ This is the word regularly used in the Septuagint for "praise" or "bless," especially of God or God's Name. The blessing of God was a characteristic feature of Jewish prayer.² The historical act of effecting

¹S. D. F. Salmond, The Catholic Epistles and Revelation. Vol. IV of The International Illustrated Commentary on the New Testament. Edited by Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890). p. 4.

²Edward Gordon Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd, 1955). p. 121.

man's regeneration had its motive or standard in God's mercy. "By the greatness of His mercy." God did this because of His overflowing mercy. This action by God effects mankind so fundamentally that it is a rebirth. Through his rebirth man obtains a "living hope" which is the assurance now of something which will happend later, namely, eternal life with God. God accomplished all this for mankind "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," v.3. The resurrection is "the fact which forms the living ground of Christian hope."³

The specific baptismal reference centers in the word, ἀναγεννήσας, the aorist participle of ἀναγεννάω. The word occurs only twice in the New Testament, First Peter 1:3,23. It is not found in classical Greek nor in the Septuagint.⁴

The meaning of ἀναγεννάω is to "produce again, beget again, beget anew; metaphorically: τινά, thoroughly to change the mind of one, so that he lives a new life and one conformed to the will of God, I Pet. 1:3; passively ἐκ τινος, I Pet. 1:23."⁵ The word, as well as the thought, is found also in Hermetic writings.⁶ Later Justin in his account of baptism uses ἀναγεννᾶν and ἀναγέννησις repeatedly, substituting it for γεννηθῆναι in his quotations from John 3 and confining it to baptism.⁷

³Joh. Ed. Huther, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude. Vol. III of Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Publishers, 1887), p. 209.

⁴Selwyn, op. cit., p. 122.

⁵Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: American Book Company, c.1889), p. 36.

⁶James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), p. 31.

⁷Selwyn, op. cit., p. 123.

Ἀναγεννάω and παλιγγενεσία, "regeneration," were the words used in the Graeco-Jewish circles to signify any decisively new stage in nature, history, or personal life.⁸

Salmond indicates that the truth of ἀναγεννάω is conveyed in the New Testament in different terms.⁹ Titus 3:5, "according to His mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." James 1:18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." First John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." The same idea is also reflected in Jesus' instructions to Nicodemus, John 3:3, "verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

In First Peter 1:3 ἀναγεννάω gives a description of baptism. It is to be taken in the full sense of the new birth or begetting, and not to be deluded into the idea of rousing out of hopelessness.¹⁰ God regenerates us, creates in us a new and divine life. This is accomplished for us in the act of baptism and through the death and resurrection of Christ. As Cranfield says:

As the outward seal and sign and symbol of a particular man's being made a sharer in Christ's death, burial and resurrection (cf. Rom. 6:3-11), Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, i.e., the outward seal and sign and symbol of his being begotten again by God.¹¹

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead receives an important emphasis here also. "When God raised Jesus Christ from the dead on the first Easter morning, He transformed the whole situation of mankind--and indeed

⁸Ibid., p. 122.

⁹Salmond, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹C. E. B. Cranfield, The First Epistle of Peter (London: S C M Press Ltd, 1954), p. 22.

of the whole universe."¹² Cullmann correctly states, "The temporal center of all history, the death and resurrection of Christ, is also the center of the history of Baptism."¹³ The resurrection of Jesus is our means and guarantee of our rising from spiritual death to life. Selwyn says:

From the historical point of view, the most significant event in the rebirth or renaissance of mankind which constitutes redemption was the resurrection of Christ. For the Resurrection demonstrated that God's work of mercy in sending the Redeemer to be a sacrifice for sin was also a work of power and of judgment; in raising Jesus from the dead, God had vindicated goodness, and men could therefore set their faith and hope in Him. And these attributes of God are to be seen likewise in the life of the Church. His mercy is manifested in the renovation of human personality, which made of conversion and baptism a veritable second birth, and turned a number of hitherto separate and heterogeneous individuals, bound by no ties or loyalties to one another, into a people who knew themselves to be God's people, called out of darkness.¹⁴

The second reference to baptism as a "rebirth" occurs in First Peter 1:23, "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the living and abiding Word of God." Verse 23 is the second half of one sentence comprising vv. 22, 23. Verse 22 speaks of the sole purpose for man's rebirth and purification, namely, a true, steadfast love for the brother. Verse 23 points to the origin of man's rebirth, "the incorruptible" seed, and also the means of this rebirth, "the living and abiding Word of God." Besides the use of ἀναγεννάω, these references to the origin and means of rebirth fill out the baptismal content of this passage.

The meaning of "not corruptible but incorruptible" as the origin of rebirth hinges on the preposition, ἐκ, which denotes origin, cause.

¹²Ibid., p. 21.

¹³Oscar Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament. Translated by J. K. S. Reid (London: S C M Press, Ltd, 1954). p. 9.

¹⁴Selwyn, op. cit., p. 77.

motive, or reason.¹⁵ The word σπόρας can mean either "seed" or "sowing."¹⁶ Beare sees in this phrase no moral connotation but a contrast of permanence and impermanence.¹⁷ The natural life of man is "of corruptible seed" in the sense that it is essentially transitory, it does not spring from an immortal source. The new life of the Christian believer springs from "incorruptible seed," because it is of God's sowing and inherently immortal.

Selwyn treats the origin of man's rebirth as "God's creative grace."¹⁸ In this sense Selwyn equates the idea of "not corruptible but incorruptible" with the procreation spoken of in John 1:13, where it speaks of the sons of God, "which were born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Selwyn interprets σπόρας not as "seed" but as "sowing" in the sense of God's procreation.

The means of man's rebirth is expressed by the words, "by the living and abiding Word of God." The preposition, διὰ, is used as means or instrument.¹⁹ Grammatically the participles, "living and abiding," could be attached to either "Word" or "God," and there are differences of opinion on this. Beare prefers taking ζώντος and μένοντος with θεοῦ, although he says that they may also apply to λόγου.²⁰ Biggs, on the

¹⁵William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 234.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 770.

¹⁷Francis Wright Beare, The First Epistle of Peter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), p. 85.

¹⁸Selwyn, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁹Arndt, op. cit., p. 179.

²⁰Beare, op. cit., p. 86.

other hand, links them with λόγου.²¹ Selwyn agrees with Bigg on this point and says:

Linguistically, it seems to me that, if θεοῦ were meant to carry the weight of two such significant adjectives, it would have been placed immediately after λόγου or at the end of the sentence; coming as it does between the two adjectives it looks as though it were not intended to be emphatic.²²

Beare²³ and Selwyn interpret λόγου as referring to the Incarnation, the Logos of God.²⁴ Both claim that λόγου goes beyond the ῥῆμα in 1:25, which stands for the Gospel which was preached unto the recently converted and baptized Christians. Since First Peter reads as a baptismal homily, the writer prefers to understand λόγου as the preached Gospel which the converts heard and by which they were brought to faith. The "Good News" was the living message which God used as the means to accomplish a rebirth in the hearts of the converts. Ἀναγεννάω is used here in the same sense as in 1:3, the transforming of man's heart into something entirely new.

Death to Sin

The second specific reference to and description of baptism is "Death to Sin" in First Peter 2:24. "Who personally as a sacrifice carried our sins in his own body to the wood, that, being dead with respect to our sins, we might live to righteousness." Verse 24a represents Christ as not only the sin-offering, who bore the consequences of the sins of His people on the Cross, but as the priest who took the sins, or the sin-offering

²¹ Charles Bigg, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 123.

²² Selwyn, op. cit., p. 151.

²³ Beare, op. cit., p. 86.

²⁴ Selwyn, op. cit., p. 151.

and laid the sacrifice on the altar of the Cross. Verse 24b shows the consequence and result of Christ's act upon His followers. Through Him they have died to sin that they might live unto righteousness. In its larger context verse 24 is a part of the section addressed to the slaves or servants, vv. 18-25, where they are encouraged to take Christ as their example in suffering.

This baptismal reference centers in the verb, ἀπογενόμενοι, "having died," which is the second aorist middle participle of the verb, ἀπογίνομαι. First Peter 2:24 is the only occurrence of it in the New Testament and it does not occur in the Septuagint. Etymologically it is a compound word composed of ἀπό and γίνομαι. The basic meaning of ἀπό is separation from someone or something.²⁵ As a verb with its own meaning, γίνομαι means "come to be, become, originate."²⁶ Its compound meaning is "cease to be," or "to die."

From the writings of the first four centuries the verb was used as "depart" in the sense of death. Bigg reports the following uses: in Dan. 2:1 Theodotian uses it in the sense of "depart from"; in Herodotus and Thucydides it is put where ἀποθανεῖν might have been used, perhaps by way of euphemism; Tatian, Galen, and Plutarch use it philosophically and balance γίγνεσθαι against ἀπογίγνεσθαι, "coming to be" against "ceasing to be."²⁷

In First Peter 2:24 Bigg interprets ἀπογίνομαι as "having fallen away," or "having loosed from sins," rather than "having died to sins."²⁸

²⁵Arndt, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 157.

²⁷Bigg, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

²⁸*Ibid.*

He says:

Thus St. Peter speaks here of the death of Christ as having for a distinct purpose that the believer should be set free from sin and brought into the new life of righteousness; but the Pauline images of death or burial with Christ do not cross his mind.²⁹

Selwyn similarly interprets ἀπογίνωμαi as an "actual abandonment of sin rather than release from guilt"; he considers St. Peter's thought purely ethical and psychological rather than parallel to Pauline theology (Rom. 6).³⁰

On the other hand ἀπογίνωμαi is taken strictly as a dying to sin, as a direct parallel to Romans 6. Beare comments:

The clause ["that, being dead with respect to our sins, we might live to righteousness."] clearly reflects dependence upon Romans 6, especially vv. 10-14, 18-19. There is some thought of "moral influence" here, but it is subordinated to the Pauline thought of the effective power which brings us through death unto a new life. The doctrine of baptism as the sacrament through which we enter into Christ's experience of death and resurrection is again brought to their remembrance. The ultimate meaning of the cross is realized in us only when we die to the old life of sin and alienation from God, and enter, united with Christ, into the new life that God causes to spring forth out of the death of the old, the regenerate life which is no longer enslaved to sin but devoted to righteousness.³¹

Salmond is of the same opinion:

The ransom, from the necessity of ourselves bearing the consequences, or legal liabilities of our sins, however, is not an end to itself. It is done with a view to the killing of the practical power of sin in us, and to our leading a new life. A death unto the sins which He bore is given here as the position into which we were brought once for all by Christ's great act of sin-bearing. Hence the use of the historical past "having died."³²

The writer prefers the interpretation of ἀπογίνωμαi as "having

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Selwyn, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

³¹Beare, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

³²Salmond, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

died" to sin, to the interpretation of "abandonment" of sin in the purely ethical sense. The former meaning is in keeping with the Biblical view of baptism as "participation in the death and resurrection of Christ," whereby we are born anew and made members of Christ's Church.³³ Prenter, while describing the Spirit's work in baptism, says, "It is truly putting the old man in us to death and by raising the new man that God fulfills the promise of forgiveness in us and truly gives us salvation in Christ."³⁴

Prenter furthermore points out:

In the sign of baptism and its significance which is realized by God himself, our life with its death and resurrection is placed in real unity with the death and resurrection of Christ and thus is born to live eternally.³⁵

St. Peter's use of ἀπογίνεσθαι is a direct parallel to the thoughts expressed in Romans 6, namely, through baptism we are dead to sin and alive unto God. Rom. 6:2, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Verse 6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Verse 7, "For he that is dead is freed from sin." Verse 11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Verse 13, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

³³Gullmann, op. cit., p. 30.

³⁴Regin Prenter, Spiritus Creator, translated by John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1953), p. 147.

³⁵Ibid., p. 157.

In the light of First Peter as a baptismal homily the preferred interpretation of ἀπογίνωμαι is "having died to sin." It coincides with the dominant theme of 1:3-4:11, namely, the creation of a new life through the covenant established by Christ, and also the obligations of these "new" people towards their fellow believers and to the Gentile world about them. The Epistle treats the nature of the Christian life, and chapter two verse twenty-four points to the initial act of having died to sin in baptism, whereby we are able to live the new life in righteousness.

Antitype of the Flood

The last two descriptions of baptism are an antitype of the Flood and a "pledge" to God, both located in chapter three verse twenty-one. "This water in baptism now saves you, too, who are the counterpart, not the removal of filth from the body but a seal of contract between a good conscience and God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Baptism as an antitype of the Flood is found in the main clause of the sentence. "This water in baptism now saves you, too, who are the counterpart, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Baptism as a pledge to God is found in the parenthesis and serves as a further explanation of the sacrament, "not the removal of filth from the body but a seal of contract between a good conscience and God."

In the description of baptism as an antitype of the Flood there is no actual theological significance but only a graphic portrayal of baptism as an event corresponding to the Flood. It corresponds in two ways: first, the water was the instrument which saved Noah (3:20) and water also saves the Christians; second, the Christians of Peter's day were the counterpart, or correspond to Noah and his family in the ark. Beare comments:

But the only things which Peter sets distinctly in the relation of type and antitype are water as preserving life in Noah's generation, and water as saving souls in Peter's own generation. The comparison, therefore, is not between the Flood and Baptism, but simply between water in one service and water in another. What antitypical water is intended is at once made clear by the appended definition, "baptism."³⁶

Grammatically several difficulties arise within the Greek construction of the sentence, ὁ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀντίτυπον ὑν σῶσει βάπτισμα. There are two points in question, what is the antecedent of the nominative ὁ, and to what does ἀντίτυπον refer in the sentence. There are those who prefer reading ὧ instead of ὁ, but the attestation for this reading is weak.³⁷ Bigg suggests "water" or "saved by water" in verse twenty as the antecedent for ὁ,³⁸ which is probably the easiest rendering. To avoid the difficulty of taking ἀντίτυπον with ὁ and with βάπτισμα, Selwyn suggests taking it in apposition to ὑμεῖς.³⁹ Following his suggestions the Greek reads, "This water in baptism now saves you, too, who are the counterpart."

The word, ἀντίτυπος, as an adjective means "corresponding to something that has gone before," as secondary to the τύπος; as a substantive it means "a copy, antitype, representation."⁴⁰ The word occurs only twice in the New Testament, in First Peter 3:21 as an adjective, and in

³⁶Beare, op. cit., p. 143.

³⁷ὧ is the reading proposed by Erasmus and favored by Hort, who regarded ὁ as a primitive error though he allowed it to stand in his text. The nominative is the reading of all the uncials (except N*) and many of the good cursives; the dative is found in a large number, probably a majority, of the inferior cursives. In spite of the weakness of attestation, the dative appears to be the true reading.

³⁸Bigg, op. cit., p. 164.

³⁹Selwyn, op. cit., p. 203.

⁴⁰Arndt, op. cit., p. 75.

Heb. 9:24 as a substantive. Following Selwyn's suggestion of taking $\alpha\nu\tau\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon\pi\omicron\nu$ in apposition to $\sigma\mu\alpha\varsigma$, the Christian believers to whom Peter is writing "correspond" to Noah and his family within the ark.

Pledge to God

The fourth and final specific reference in the baptismal homily is baptism as a "pledge" to God. This reference occurs in the parenthesis of verse twenty-one of chapter three, "not the removal of filth from the body but a seal of contract between a good conscience and God." The meaning of this reference depends upon the interpretation of the Greek word, $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\omega\tau\eta\mu\alpha$, which does not occur elsewhere as a noun in the New Testament but does as a verb meaning "to ask."⁴¹ In the Septuagint the verb form is used as "asking" and "consulting."⁴² The two contrasting thoughts in this reference are first, "not the removal of filth from the body," second, "but a seal of contract between a good conscience and God." The former shows what baptism is not, while the latter defines it. It is probable that Peter was safeguarding against a mechanical interpretation of baptism by inserting the parenthesis. Without it the sentence views water in baptism as the instrument which saves. With the parenthesis Peter points to the necessary inward side of the sacrament, the "pledging" of a good conscience to God. "The cleansing in Baptism is not physical but sacramental."⁴³

Various meanings have been attached to the word, $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\omega\tau\eta\mu\alpha$.

⁴¹Cf. Matt. 16:1; Mark 9:32; 11:29; 12:34; Luke 2:46; 6:9; 20:40; Rom. 10:20; I Cor. 14:35.

⁴²Selwyn, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 204.

Windisch considers it a "prayer for a good conscience." "Die Taufe ist dann Bitte um ein reines Gewissen oder auch Bitte mit reinem Gewissen."⁴⁴ Beare agrees with Windisch although he allows other possible interpretations.⁴⁵ Beare adds the comment:

This appears to be a reference to a part of the ritual followed in the administration of the sacrament, a prayer addressed to God by the convert, asking forgiveness and inward cleansing and the power to live in accordance with His will.⁴⁶

Kittel also renders the word as a request for a good conscience.⁴⁷ The word is also translated as "question" or "demand,"⁴⁸ and as the interrogation which is addressed to God by a good conscience.⁴⁹

Salmond also records its usage in several of the Biblical versions.⁵⁰ The Authorized Version is alone among the old English versions to interpret ἑπερωτημα as "answer." The Wycliffe version reads, "the asking of a good conscience in God." Tyndale and Cranmer used the following, "in that a good conscience consenteth to God." The Genevan version reads, "in that a good conscience maketh request to God."

Another possible meaning for ἑπερωτημα which conveys the most meaning for First Peter 3:21 in its baptismal framework is "pledge," the Latin idea of stipulatio.⁵¹ There is some evidence in papyri for the

⁴⁴Hans Windisch, Die Katholischen Briefe. in Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Herbert Preisker (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1951). XV. 73.

⁴⁵Beare, op. cit., p. 149.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Verlag Von W. Kohlhammer, 1935), p. 686.

⁴⁸Bigg, op. cit., p. 165.

⁴⁹Salmond, op. cit., p. 64.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., p. 231.

word being used for the formal question and consent which sealed a contract. This would be very suitable for the rite of baptism which included the Christian's consent of faith.⁵² The meaning would then be "a pledge of a good conscience toward God." As Selwyn says, "The idea that baptism was a seal of contract given by a good conscience towards God provides a good antithesis to the 'putting-off of the filth of the flesh.'"⁵³

The saving power in baptism is indicated in the last four words of 3:21, δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. As in 1:3 where the resurrection is the means by which God performs our "rebirth," so here the resurrection is the saving power in baptism. This is done by applying to the person baptized the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection.

In summary, the specific references to baptism within the homily present a complete theology on baptism, with the exception of a specific reference to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does receive emphasis within the homily, however, in the salutation and also in 1:10-12. In the salutation the "new" covenant is established through the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is described as a complete transformation of man, motivated by God's Word, involving a dying to sin and a new life unto righteousness, and also the pledge of a good conscience to God.

⁵²Selwyn, op. cit., p. 205.

⁵³Ibid.

CHAPTER V

IMPLIED BAPTISMAL REFERENCES

1:14, Children of Obedience

Verse 14, "As children of obedience, do not continue to pattern your life according to the lusts of your former ignorance." The implied baptismal reference occurs in the Greek phrase, ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς, "children of obedience." The genitive, ὑπακοῆς, is objective, meaning "children born for obedience."¹

There is baptismal significance in the word τέκνα, "children," reflecting the verb ἀναγεννάω, "born again," in 1:3,23. In baptism believers are born again to be the children of God; there has taken place a rebirth in their fundamental character and in this sense they are "children" once again. The term "children of" is an Hebraism and occurs in the Old Testament and many times in the New Testament.²

There are also baptismal implications in the word, ὑπακοῆς, "obedience"; because it reflects the covenant relationship between God and man which is established at baptism. "Obedience" is one of the basic

¹Francis Wright Beare, The First Epistle of Peter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), p. 71.

²Cf. Charles Bigg, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 113. In the Old Testament: τέκνα ἀπωλείας, Is. 53:4; υἱὸς θανάτου, II Sam. 12:5; in the New Testament: τέκνα ὀργῆς, Eph. 2:3; τέκνα φωτός, Eph. 5:8; τέκνα κατάρσεως, II Pet. 2:14; υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπειθείας, Eph. 2:2,6; Col. 3:6; υἱοὶ φωτός καὶ ἡμέρας, I Thess. 5:5; υἱὸς εἰρήνης, Lk. 10:6; ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, II Thess. 2:3; John 17:12.

obligations of man within the covenant as established by God through Jesus Christ, 1:2, "for obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood." One aspect of this new life of obedience to God requires that they do not continue to pattern their lives according to the lusts of their former ignorance as pagans, 1:14.

Therefore through baptism believers are "children" of the new covenant; they have entered upon a new life in a relationship with God who requires their obedience. They are "children" in respect to their young life of faith and in respect to their recent membership in God's household.

1:22, Souls Purified by Obedience to the Truth

Verse 22, "With your souls purified by obedience to the truth, for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart." The implied baptismal reference is in the first portion of the verse, τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας, "With your souls purified by obedience to the truth."

The verb, ἡγνικότες, is the perfect participle of ἁγνίσω, which means "to purify" either ceremonially or morally.³ In the Septuagint it is used of the ritual purification of worshippers or of vessels to be used in worship. (Cf. Num. 6:3; Ex. 19:10; II Chron. 31:17f.) The verb has a similar usage in the New Testament. John 11:55, "And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand, and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves." (Cf. also Acts 21:24,26; 24:18.)

³Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: American Book Company, c.1889). p. 7.

The adjective, ἁγρός, appears always to be used of moral and not ceremonial purity. The verb also is used in the moral sense in the New Testament. James 4:8 says, "purify your hearts." First John 3:3, "Everyone that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." As Beare suggests, both meanings of ἁγνίσω are represented in First Peter 1:22.⁴ He says, "The ritual purification represented by baptism is efficacious in the sphere of the moral life (cf. 3:21); in baptism, they have purified their souls."⁵

This interpretation is supported by the presence of the perfect participle which cannot suggest a process of purification or a continuing attitude, but must render the phrase, "by obedience to the truth," as a particular act.⁶ Baptism can correctly be understood as the act of obedience to the truth of God's Word by which the souls of the converts had been sanctified. Baptism is their response of faith to the proclamation of the "truth," which is the Gospel. As Selwyn suggests, the use of ἀλήθεια, "truth," is particularly appropriate to show the contrast between the truth of Christianity and the falsehood of heathenism,⁷ which Peter had just warned against in 1:14,18.

Preisker places great emphasis upon the perfect participle in verse 22, ἡγνίσκότες, "purified," by suggesting that the actual act of baptism took place between 1:21 and 1:22.⁸ Preisker bases his opinion on

⁴Beare, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁷Edward Gordon Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd, 1955), p. 149.

⁸Hans Windisch, Die Katholischen Briefe, in Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament, edited by Herbert Preisker (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1951), XV, 157.

the fact that sanctification of souls is spoken of as a future act in 1:3-21, while it is a perfect act in 1:22.⁹ Preisker considers the entire Epistle of First Peter as one continuous worship service during which the act of baptism took place.¹⁰

In summary, the act of baptism is implied in 1:22 in the perfect participle which points to a definite act that has been accomplished. By submitting to the truth of the Gospel and to the act of baptism, the Christian converts "purify" their souls.

2:2, Just-born Infants

Verse 2, "Like just-born infants yearn for the pure milk of the Word that you may grow up by it to salvation, seeing that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious." The implied baptismal reference is in the phrase, ὡς ἀρτιγέννητος βρέφη. "like just-born infants." This is the only use of ἀρτιγέννητος in the New Testament and it means "newborn."¹¹ The Apostle in the verse is urging his readers to grow to spiritual maturity by means of the milk of the Word. The picture is that of an infant craving for its Mother's milk, and so the recent converts should crave and grow in the Word.

The phrase, "like just-born infants," matches the thought of the participles used in 1:3,23 which speak of regeneration and new birth.¹²

⁹Ibid., pp. 156-57.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 157.

¹¹William F. Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 110.

R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistles St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude (Columbus: Wartburg Press, c. 1945), p. 78.

The association of this phrase with baptism lies in the concept of "rebirth," whereby the recently converted and baptized believers can be considered "babes in the faith." Beare states that the phrase could hardly be used with any appropriateness of the general body of Christians in the provinces mentioned in the salutation, which had been established some thirty years before; on the other hand, the words are wholly appropriate to describe the condition of converts who had just been received into the church by baptism.¹³

This verse, 2:2, significantly appears in the Introit for the first Sunday after Easter, Quasimodogeniti. On this Sunday the newly baptized in the early Church received Holy Communion for the first time.

In summary, the phrase does not present a doctrinal matter but a graphic picture of those who recently entered the covenant relationship with God through a "rebirth" in baptism.

2:10, God's People by Mercy

Since through baptism man enters God's covenant, there is another implied reference in 2:10. "You who were once no people are now a people of God; you who knew nothing of mercy have now experienced mercy." Through baptism mankind is born again, completely changed into a new people of God, and they also experience the mercy of God in Christ their Savior. It is only through baptism that mankind can become the people of God.

Verse 10a reflects Exodus 19:5, "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine." The covenant relationship coupled

¹³Beare, op. cit., p. 88.

with obedience made the Israelites God's own possession. Through baptism mankind enters the new covenant and becomes a "people of God." Other references to the I-Thou relationship within the Old Testament covenant are Jer. 7:23; 11:3-4; 24:7; Ezek. 11:20; 37:26-27; Zech. 8:3.

Verse 10b reflects the description of the covenant God of Exodus 33 and 34. In chapter 33 God agrees to renew the covenant with Israel and then reveals Himself to Moses. In 33:19 God proclaims His name as "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." In chapter 34, where God renews the covenant, God proclaims Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai as "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious. . . ." Baptism is the means whereby man experiences the mercy of God, when God for Christ's sake accepts him into His spiritual kingdom.

3:6, Children of Sarah

Verse 6, "Of her you have become children as you keep doing good and do not become terrified victims of intimidation." This implied reference lies in the words, $\hat{\epsilon}\varsigma\ \hat{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\theta\eta\tau\epsilon\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\nu\alpha$, "whose children you became." In its larger context it is in the section addressed to the wives, 3:1-6. In vv. 5-6 Sarah is presented as the "Mother" of all women of hope.

To be able to associate this phrase with baptism depends upon the interpretation of $\hat{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$, aorist of $\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$. Beare cites two possibilities.¹⁴ It may be taken as a timeless or gnomic aorist, which would interpret it as, "you show yourselves true daughters of Sarah." Or it could be taken as past time, "you became her daughters." In the latter sense the phrase could refer to baptism, when the believing women

¹⁴Ibid., p. 130.

embraced their faith and became members of the spiritual household.

4:3, Former Life of Evil Now a Closed Chapter

Verse 3, "For the time that has now passed was quite long enough for you to have worked out and practiced the wishes of the heathen as you walked in acts of public indecency, in the pursuit of lust, in the drinking of wine, in revelry, in drinking bouts, and lawless acts of idolatry." The implied baptismal reference in this passage lies in the three perfects, their meaning and their force. All three emphasize that the old way of life is a past thing. The three perfects are

1. παρελθούσας, perfect active participle of παρέρχομαι, "pass, pass by." The subject of this perfect is χρόνος, "time." "The time that has now passed" is set over against "the time that is left to you" (4:2). The point of this perfect is that "the conversion to Christ divides their past life which has been misdirected and misspent from their remaining days upon earth which are to be dedicated to the only true good."¹⁵

2. κατεργασθαι, perfect middle infinitive of κατεργάζομαι, "bring about, produce, work out." The direct objects of this verb are those things which characterized the former life of the readers. These evil actions are "the lusts of your former ignorance" which Peter warns against in 1:14.

3. πεπορευμένους, perfect participle of πορεύομαι, "conduct oneself, live, walk." This verb emphasized that they "practiced" the lusts of evil in their daily lives.

In summary, the three perfects emphasize the thought that the past

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 154.

life of Peter's readers is a closed chapter, and this could very clearly point to their baptism when they were born again to a new life. Beare says, "The language here indicates once again that those who are addressed stand precisely at the turning-point of life which is marked by baptism."¹⁶

The following insights on baptism are derived from these implied references. By submitting to the truth of the Gospel and to the act of baptism, the Christian converts, as children of faith and of God's household, have purified their souls, become the people of God and have received mercy. In this relationship with God their former life of evil is a closed and forgotten chapter, and they now feed and grow on the Word.

¹⁶Ibid.

The baptismal rite is not within the framework of a new covenant relationship with God. The essential elements and terminology of the original Old Testament covenant are mentioned. This new covenant was established by God through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. Those within the covenant are "God's chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's possession." They experience the forgiveness of their sins through Christ, and as members of an eternal inheritance with God in Heaven. Man's obligations are obedience to God, holiness modeled after the holiness of God, and a faithful witness of God's glory and praise to others. For New Testament Christians who enter this new relationship with God by the rite of baptism.

The specific references to baptism are the following:

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

First Peter 1:3-4:11 reads like a baptismal homily. The homily as a whole speaks of the nature of the Christian's new life. Man has entered into a new relationship with God, with the result that a complete turning about has taken place in man. Man has been reborn, and this takes place in baptism. This new beginning in one's life requires new attitudes and responsibilities toward God, toward fellow believers, and toward society in general. All of these obligations are clearly spelled out and neatly arranged within the homily. Furthermore, the homily contains four specific references to baptism and many implied references. There is also evidence within the homily of instructional material for baptismal candidates as used in the early Church.

The baptismal homily is set within the framework of a new covenant relationship with God. The essential elements and terminology of the original Old Testament covenant are mentioned. This new covenant was established by God through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. Those within the covenant are "God's chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's possession." They experience the forgiveness of their sins through Christ, and are assured of an eternal inheritance with God in Heaven. Man's obligations are obedience to God, holiness modeled after the holiness of God, and a faithful witness of God's glory and praise to others. For New Testament Christians man enters this new relationship with God by the rite of baptism.

The specific references to baptism are the following:

1. A rebirth, First Peter 1:3,23. This describes a complete transformation of man, which is of divine origin, accomplished through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and through the instrumental means of the living and abiding Word of God.

2. Death to sin, First Peter 2:24. Through baptism man dies to sin and is enabled to live the new life in righteousness.

3. Type of the Flood, First Peter 3:21. Water was the instrument which saved Noah, and water also saves the Christians in baptism. Also the Christians in Peter's day who received baptism correspond to Noah and his family in the ark.

4. Pledge to God, First Peter 3:21. Baptism is the pledge of a good conscience toward God.

The implied references to baptism are the following:

1. Children of obedience, First Peter 1:14. Through baptism believers are "children" of the new covenant; they are just beginning a new life in a relationship with God who requires their obedience.

2. Souls purified by obedience to the truth, First Peter 1:22. By submitting to the truth of the Gospel and to the act of baptism, man "purifies" his soul.

3. Just-born infants, First Peter 2:2. As an infant craves for its Mother's milk, so the newly baptized believers are led to crave and grow on the Word of God.

4. Children of Sarah, First Peter 3:6. Through baptism the believing women become the children of Sarah, the Mother of all women of hope.

5. God's people by mercy, First Peter 2:10. Baptism is the means whereby man experiences the mercy of God, when God for Christ's sake accepts him into His spiritual Kingdom as one of His own people.

6. Former life of evil now a closed chapter, First Peter 4:3.

Through baptism the old way of life has come to an end.

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