

CURRENT THEOLOGY

TEN YEARS' WORK ON BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION: 1945-1955

It is not intended here to give a complete bibliography of all the writings that have appeared on baptism and confirmation during the span of ten years, but to select those which seem to the writer to have advanced (or retarded) the understanding of the two sacraments and their place in the revelation of Christ. Many secondary articles and books have been neglected when they seemed merely to put forward ideas which had already been exploited by someone else. The writer is quite conscious that he will have omitted some important items from his survey, but he can at least plead that he too has done ten years' work on baptism and confirmation.

If one were to select, perhaps the most important single event of the period which has opened up new horizons has been the revival of typological exegesis and the consequent interest in those patristic texts where antiquity was busy with the Old Testament foreshadowings of the two sacraments. In the Pesch *Compendium* (in the edition of 1936) the only *OT* text that is used in the discussion of baptism and confirmation is the passage from Ez 36:25 about the outpouring of clean water. Zwingli (*Corp. Ref.* 4, 171) and Calvin (*Inst.* 4, 14, 21 and 4, 16, 3) had stood for the substantial identity of the two covenants and the two Testaments, and Catholic theologians were forced for a spell to look studiously away from the Old Testament; but time has brought the opportunity for a more balanced appraisal, and that has begun to be made in our own time.

What is also of significance is that this period of ten years has seen the renovation of the paschal vigil in the liturgy of the Church, and it is interesting to see how at the same time the theologians have progressed in their understanding of the ancient ritual which enshrines the mystery of baptism. Looking back, one finds at the very outset a straightforward commentary on the rite, as it was practised by Cyril of Jerusalem, in the study of Père J. Daniélou, S.J., on the symbolism of the baptismal rites.¹ This was the very first article to appear in *Dieu vivant* and bears upon it the marks of those early days of the liberation of France. It is a pity that its learned

¹ "Le symbolisme des rites baptismaux," *Dieu vivant* 1 (1945) 17-43. Père Daniélou returned to the subject with his "Traversée de la Mer rouge et baptême aux premiers siècles," *Recherches de science religieuse* 33 (1946) 402-30, in which he followed out the Red-Sea baptism idea through the Fathers from Tertullian onwards. It is noticeable, however, that Tertullian does not present the escape from Egypt as being the chief or exclusive prefiguring of the sacrament of baptism.

author did not go behind the "entry into paradise" theme, which is prominent in Cyril's explanation of baptism, to bring out the earlier idea that baptism was a crossing of the Jordan and an entry into the promised land, an idea which is entrenched in many of the earlier writings of the Fathers. Justin, Tertullian, Origen, and Hippolytus give this interpretation of Joshua's crossing of the Jordan;² Tertullian says that Marcion accepted it; one of the Odes of Solomon is devoted to expounding it; and there is some possibility that it goes back to the Gospel of Matthew.³ Once this equation is established, it is an easy transition that makes the promised land turn into paradise, and then other points of resemblance, such as nakedness of the candidates for baptism and the paradisiacal condition of Adam, come into the tradition; it does not seem, however, that the paradise motif is so well supported in early times as that of the promised land. Cyril's own share in developing the symbolic understanding of baptism will no doubt be fully dealt with in the forthcoming translation of his *Catecheses* by Frs. L. McCauley and A. A. Stephenson, S.J.

It was the end of the Israelite wanderings, when they came to cross the Jordan and enter the promised land, rather than the beginning, when they passed through the Red Sea, which impressed itself upon the early Christians as a type of their baptism. This can be seen from Origen (*In Jn.* 6, 45; *GCS* 10, 154) and Hippolytus (*Ref. haer.* 5, 7, 40-41; *GCS* 26, 88-89), both of whom settle on the fact that the Israelites crossed the Jordan on Nisan 10, and, after Joshua (who is called Jesus in the LXX) had circumcised those who had been born during the forty-two years of the wanderings, kept the Pasch in the promised land on Nisan 14, the manna ceasing about that time. It is true that Hippolytus is describing at this point the beliefs of the Naasenes, but from his words it is clear that they are here dependent on the belief of the orthodox; they cite *Jn* 3:5 in this connection and are clearly using the fact that the Church had already started the custom of baptizing

² I have discussed these texts in *Early Christian Baptism and the Creed* (London, 1950; hereafter referred to as *EBC*) on pp. 55 and 171-72.

³ It has recently come to be realized that one of the aims of Matthew's Gospel is to present Christ as the prophet like unto, but greater than, Moses who was promised in *Dt* 18:15. (It is taken for granted in a work such as A. M. Farrer's *St. Matthew and St. Mark* [London, 1954] pp. 177-79, and elsewhere; the ancient evidence for the importance of this idea in the very primitive preaching can be found in *Acts* 3:22 and 7:37. H. Riesenfeld has even claimed that "to flee from the wrath to come" is a reference to the exodus from Egypt; cf. "La signification du baptême johannique," *Dieu vivant* 13 [1949] 36.) Now Moses bade farewell to the Israelites on a mountain overlooking Jordan just before their entry into the promised land. To me it seems hardly accidental that Matthew chose, among all the stories of the resurrection, to tell that one in which Christ, on a mountain, gave His followers the command to enter the promised land by baptism.

her catechumens just before the celebration of the Christian Pasch on Easter Sunday. What is surprising is that Jos 4:19—5:10 does not appear as a compulsory Scripture lesson in any liturgy for those days.^{3a} By the time the Western liturgies were composed, the memory of this typology had faded and it had been supplanted by that of the escape from Egypt, as I have argued elsewhere. In the *Commentary on Joshua* of Procopius of Gaza (PG 87/1, 1009–1012) the ideas survive, and it may be that in some Oriental liturgy they may have had a longer life than in the West. There the influence of 1 Cor 10:2, with its reference to the Israelites being “dipped” in the cloud and in the sea, was allowed to operate without attention being paid to the complementary Pauline passage in Col 2:11–12, where our entry by baptism into Christ’s death and resurrection is said to be a circumcision carried out by Christ. If Paul did not mean to associate by these words the act of Joshua with Christian baptism, he at least gave plenty of excuse for Origen and the others who did make that association.

The place which the restored Easter Vigil has assumed in the liturgical life of our parishes makes this question of the symbolism of the baptismal rite and of its surroundings a matter of much greater importance than it used to be. It is therefore useful to find that a study of the epiclesis in the blessing of the font has been made by a German priest.⁴ This is all the more necessary since there are some anthropologists who profess to find in the ceremony a phallic rite, offering in evidence the prayer: “Qui hanc aquam regenerandis hominibus praeeparatam arcana sui luminis admixtione fecundet, ut sanctificatione concepta ab immaculato divini fontis utero in novam renata creaturam progenies caelestis emergat. . . .” It is true that our present Missal substitutes *numinis* for *luminis*, but it is equally true that the mss. of the old Gelasian read *luminis* without any variation, and it is hard to see how a prayer which immediately precedes the immersion of the candle in the font could have said anything else. The difficulty therefore remains. Dr. Stommel does not devote his whole work to a solution but he leaves the elements of a solution lying about in his workshop. Thus it can be said that the candle typifies Christ our Lord, and the font, Jordan. As He sanctified the Jordan at His baptism, so the candle is placed in the water as a sign of its sanctification. Further, there are early traditions in Justin, the *Codex Vercellensis* at Mt 3:17, and several apocryphal gospels that fire appeared upon the Jordan at the time of Christ’s baptism.⁵ Some ancient

^{3a} Since writing the above, I find that part of the Joshua passage is prescribed for Easter Eve in the *Lectionary of Luxeuil*.

⁴ E. Stommel, *Studien zur Epiklese der römischen Taufwasserweihe* (Bonn, 1950).

⁵ Justin, *Dial.* 88; *Gospel of the Ebionites*, in Epihanianus, *Haer.* 30; also in Ephraem and others,

liturgies have an explicit reference to this event,⁶ and this rather than the fertility motif could quite reasonably be assigned as the cause and origin of our ceremonial.⁷ It may be noted that in all probability the blessing of the candle can be traced back to the time of Jerome,⁸ while recently Abbot Capelle has been arguing that the *Exultet* was composed by Ambrose.⁹ An upper time-limit for the origin of the font-ceremonial would be the origin of the blessing of the paschal candle, and certainly this does not seem to go back to apostolic times. Jerome himself in his letter to Praesidius says that he can find nothing in Scripture about the candle, and it may have been introduced into the liturgy when lamps gave place to candles, a time now hardly to be determined with precision.

There is a striking difference of view between Ignatius of Antioch, who claims (*Eph.* 18, 2) that it was the passion of Christ which sanctified the water of baptism, and later writers such as Tertullian (*Adv. Iud.* 8) and Cyril (*Cat.* 3, 11), for whom it is the contact of Christ's body with the Jordan at His baptism which is thought to have sanctified the waters. Ignatius must have been so full of the Pauline idea that we are baptized into Christ's death that he looked for no other way of sanctifying or cleansing the hostile element of water when it was to be used for baptism. The permanent setting-aside of hallowed baptismal water, as distinct from the practice of baptizing in streams and on the seashore, can only have come with the construction of permanent baptisteries. The late Gregory Dix put this in the third century.¹⁰ The article, *Baptisterium*, in the new *Reallexikon*¹¹ does not produce any evidence earlier than the doubtful phrase in Tertullian (*De cor.* 3) for the use of a distinct building, even though the fragment of Melito's sermon on

⁶ Denzinger, *Ritus orientalium* 1 (Würzburg, 1863) 297 and 342. See also *Patrologia orientalis* 1, 279.

⁷ Dölger was in favour of accepting as the underlying idea of the rite this imitation of the fire upon the Jordan at Christ's baptism. Stommel brings evidence to show that the original form of the rite was in all probability the plunging of several candles, or at least two, into the font and the holding of them in the water so that the flame burned almost at water-level. Stommel also shows that, if the Christians girded at the pagans—as they did—for their fertility cults, they could not easily have engaged in one themselves. Thus, H. Usener's charge, originally made in *Das Weihnachtsfest* 1 (Bonn, 1888) 174, must be considered to fall to the ground.

⁸ So G. Morin in *Revue bénédictine* 8 (1891) 20-22; 9 (1892) 392-97; also in *Bull. anc. litt. chrét.*, 1913, pp. 52-60. Morin's vindication of the authenticity of the letter of Jerome to Praesidius refusing to write for him a *laus cerei* is now generally accepted. Its date is 384.

⁹ In *Miscellanea Mercati* 1 (Rome, 1946) 219-46. B. Fischer has challenged Capelle in *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 2 (Regensburg, 1952) 61-74. The debate continues.

¹⁰ *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* (London, 1938) sect. 21, note.

¹¹ *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 1 (Stuttgart, 1950) 1158-67.

baptism (not quoted in the *Lexikon*) had used the word *baptistērion* in a Christian setting as early as the middle of the previous century.¹² The *Reallexikon* has also a good article, *Baptistēs*, on the various Jewish and Jewish-Christian Baptist sects which are so troublesome to students of the early history of baptism.¹³ The Mandeans are here rightly treated as an offshoot from the Elchasaites or some other Jewish-Christian sect of the third century, and the lofty but insecure reconstructions of Reitzenstein¹⁴ are reduced to proper proportions. For a full discussion of baptism the *Reallexikon* bids us wait until the word *Taufe* is reached. Other articles on baptismal topics that will be found useful in the *Reallexikon* are *Apertio aurium* and *Apotaxis*. Now that the revision of the Ritual is a question of the day, it is vital to know what exactly some of these old ceremonies meant and how they embodied doctrines about baptism which may be misinterpreted if the unheeding hand of a reviser prunes away as useless what is in fact heavily charged with doctrinal fruit. Thus in the *apertio aurium* there may have been an attempt to christianize the Jewish "circumcision of the ears." No one knows exactly what this was, but from Stephen's jibe at the Jews (Acts 7:51) it must have meant something. Dom Botte in the article mentioned does not attempt to deal with this mystery but gives his attention to the later liturgical history of the ceremony. It may be that in a revised Ritual both ceremonies might be transposed for those baptized in infancy so as to take place at fixed points in their Christian education. The handing over of a copy of the Gospels and the renunciation of the pomps of the devil could both be made into vital moments in the educational life of a Catholic child. We have seen the value of renewing baptismal vows at Easter; perhaps now these other ceremonies could be revitalized.

Work on the baptismal formula itself has not been of great volume recently. W. Flemington in his recent discussion of the *NT* references to

¹² The fragment may be found in E. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen, 1914) p. 311. I have discussed it in *EBC*, pp. 144 and 162.

¹³ The article is by J. Thomas, author of a Louvain thesis on the Baptist movement of the early Christian centuries.

¹⁴ Reitzenstein's vogue lasted from the publication of his *Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe* (Berlin, 1929) until the works of Lady Drower became known. She had lived among the Mandeans, her husband having been a judge in Iraq during the period of British administration, and she was able to refute from direct knowledge many of the hypotheses of scholars who had no more to go upon than one or two published documents of the sect. Lady Drower is still publishing new Mandaean writings which she obtained on her travels among them or has located since her return. German theologians who appeal to the Mandeans as a way out of their difficulties seem to have paid little attention to Lady Drower's work.

baptism¹⁵ has some words of caution (p. 108) about Kirsopp Lake's attempt to debar use of the command to baptize in Mt 28:19 on textual grounds,¹⁶ but still he goes on to reject the passage because of its supposed conflict with the evidence from Acts of baptism "in the name of Jesus." This conflict I have dealt with elsewhere,¹⁷ and also with the very weak argument, brought up by Marsh and used also by Flemington, that if Christ had spoken the words, there would never have been the trouble about Cornelius that actually arose. This argument entirely ignores the state of mind of the Apostles. Being Jews, they understood everything our Lord said in terms of their existing faith until the hard logic of circumstances or His direct revelation told them to think otherwise. Hence "to make disciples of all the nations" would mean to fulfil the prophecies in Isaias (66:19-21; 11:10) or Joel (2:32) and to bring the Gentiles first into Israel by circumcision and then into the Church by baptism. Only the direct action of God was able to move Peter from this position and through him to guide the Church into a true understanding of the command originally given in Galilee.

A recent discovery has thrown some light, though not much, on the use of the formula for baptizing in the early centuries. The *Prague Sacramentary* is a document of the old Gelasian family.¹⁸ Its editor makes out a good case for attributing it to an abbey in Bavaria and to a date some decades before 794, and indicates a possible connection with St. Corbinian. The interest of the *Sacramentary* for the present subject is that on Easter Eve, after the blessing of the font, it gives the triple interrogation of the candidate for baptism and then adds: "Aut si volueris: Baptizo te, N., in nomine patris, et mergit, et filii, et mergit semel, et spiritus sancti, et mergit tertio." This would appear to mean that the formula was an alternative to the interrogations. I have already discussed the evidence of the Vatican and Rheinau mss. of the old Gelasian, and this further clue does not upset the solution I had previously suggested. The Vatican and Rheinau mss. give no formula at all, but direct that baptism is to follow the interrogations. If the author of the Prague ms. had a gap in his exemplar, it might seem fitting to him to fill it with the formula and its intercalated plunges, because he thought that the author of the exemplar treated the interrogations as a substitute for the formula. This would not mean that his guess about the reason for the gap

¹⁵ W. F. Flemington, *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism* (London, 1948).

¹⁶ Lake's attack is in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* 2, 380-81.

¹⁷ *EBC*, pp. 7-26. The difficulty put by Marsh, *Origin and Significance of the NT Baptism* (Manchester, 1941) is dealt with in *EBC*, pp. 72-76.

¹⁸ *Das Präger Sakramentar*, edited by A. Dold and L. Eizenhofer (Beuron, 1949). The baptismal service is found in Vol. 2, at p. 62*.

in the exemplar was right. If, for instance, the scribe of the exemplar had omitted the formula either out of a desire to preserve the *arcana fidei* or because he thought everyone knew the words, the gap would have occurred just the same. In fact, the Vatican and Rheinau mss. both omit the formula and refer to the act of baptizing in summary fashion, and anyone who reads Martin of Braga, *De trina mersione* (now easily accessible in C. W. Barlow's fine edition¹⁹), will realize that no liturgical mss. of that period (560-580) can have had very precise directions about baptizing; for, if they had done so, the confusion he describes of single immersions and triple, single name and three names, could never have arisen. It would not be surprising if the mss. did omit the formula on purpose. Cyril is vehement in his *Catecheses* that the neophytes shall not write down the Creed,²⁰ though, had they done so, they would have spared modern scholars much ink and paper, and the absence of the words of consecration in *Addai and Mari* may be due to a similar reticence on the part of scribes who transmitted the mss. On the later treatment of the formula two articles by A. Landgraf need to be mentioned, where he shows that in medieval Scholasticism there were some who would have allowed the validity of a baptism with the form, "In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti," no reference being made to the act of baptizing.²¹

Since the appearance of *Early Baptism and the Creed*, wherein I had occasion to note that the Church did not possess a formula for renewing baptismal vows, the deficiency has been made good in the new Vigil service, and thus the contractual nature of baptism is more clearly emphasized. The *apotaxis* or renunciation had to be followed by a *syntaxis* or a committing of oneself to Christ. The earliest authority for this contractual view of baptism is 1 Pet 3:21, which I have discussed at some length before. It gave me great pleasure to read in Bo Reicke's *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism*²² a chapter devoted to this difficult text wherein this Upsala scholar worked out exactly the same conclusion from the text as I had done, in entire independence of my work, even as my work was independent of his.

¹⁹ *Martini episcopi Bracarenensis Opera omnia*, edited by C. W. Barlow (Yale, 1950)

²⁰ PG 33, 521. There is a cautionary tale in the *Spiritual Meadow* about a young priest who liked very much the chant of the words of consecration and who sang this on his way home from town to the desert as he was carrying a load of bread. The consternation which his act caused led to a suppression of the chant.

²¹ A. Landgraf, "Die Ansicht der Frühscholastik von der Zugehörigkeit des *Baptizo te* zur Taufform," *Scholastik* 17 (1942) 412-37, 531-55. This is reprinted in *Dogmengeschichte der Frühscholastik* 3/2 (Regensburg, 1955) 47-86.

²² Bo Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism* (Copenhagen, 1946). For the pertinent chapter cf. pp. 173-201.

I did not see his study until some time after the publication of my own book, and he could not have seen mine before his own work appeared. Perhaps we shall win the support of other Scripture students by this fact of our independent agreement. Reading through his work I could not help wondering, as the lines of his exposition unfolded themselves, whether he would have come upon the declaration of the First Council of Carthage, which throws so much light on this text, but which is passed over by the commentators, and I was delighted to find that he had. Both of us are indebted to G. C. Richards for the original clue to the verse, but it is significant that this clue is entirely passed over by Flemington in his treatment of this part of the *NT* teaching on baptism.

Concerning the theological systematization of the doctrine of baptism there is an important article of Père H. F. Dondaine, O.P., to record.²³ He discusses the change in point of view that has come over St. Thomas between his work on the *Sentences* (4, d.3., q.1, art.1, ad 2, for instance) and the writing of the *Summa theologiae* (3, 66, 1, c). Hugh of St. Victor is treated with much more deference in the first place than in the second; St. Thomas has in the meantime come to look upon the sacraments more as signs than as remedies, as Hugh was wont to regard them. The analogies between the seven sacraments and the seven major events or activities of bodily life now begin to engage St. Thomas to the disadvantage of the older ideas according to which the sacraments were the seven remedies for sin and defect of various kinds. The conclusion of this interestingly argued paper is that St. Thomas, going thus behind the Victorines to pick up the threads of Augustine, made possible the modern understanding of the liturgy.

In a long and persuasive essay Père Braun, O.P., dealt with the doctrine of baptism in St. John's Gospel.²⁴ He discusses the problem of John the Baptist's identification of the glorious Messiah with the suffering Lamb of God and concludes that this was due to a supernatural illumination at the moment of Christ's baptism; this ceremony then becomes the starting point whence the evangelist can indicate how the baptism which Christ offers is the fulfilment of the baptism of John.²⁵ This theme is then stated

²³ "La définition de sacrement dans la Somme théologique," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 36 (1947) 213-28.

²⁴ "Le baptême d'après le quatrième évangile," *Revue thomiste* 48 (1948) 347-93.

²⁵ This identification may have come about through the word spoken by Christ to John and recorded in Mt 3:15: "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all justice." The justice meant here is not Pauline, but rather "that which belongs to the character of the Just One." Now it is of this Just One that Isaias speaks in chapter 53, and John may have taken the hint here given, pondered on it, and then, a day or two later, have called out, "Behold the Lamb of God." (Jn 1:36 does not ascribe the cry to the day of the baptism).

more fully, according to Père Braun, in the discourse with Nicodemus and the narrative which accompanies it and which tells of Jesus engaging in baptismal activity Himself. On this view it is necessary to hold that the baptism administered by the Apostles according to Jn 4:2 was full Christian baptism. Père Braun does not shrink from this conclusion and spends much time attempting to refute the position taken up by his confrère, Père Lagrange, in dependence on Tertullian, Chrysostom, and Leo the Great, that this early ceremony was no more than the baptism of John. The case that Père Braun builds up is well argued but is not well supported by the documents. He cites Ignatius (*Eph.* 18, 2) for the view that Christ's baptism gives efficacy to the baptism of Christians, when in reality Ignatius ascribes this efficacy to the passion; he cites Justin (*Dial.* 39) for the idea that we receive in baptism our share of the gifts of the Spirit which in their plenitude were resting upon Christ at His baptism, but in the same passage Justin attributes this communication of gifts to us to the ascension of Christ, quoting the words, "He ascended on high, He gave gifts to men." Many of the other texts come from a time when the ceremony of blessing the waters of the font was already in existence and refer rather to the prototype of this blessing than to the actual institution of our Christian baptism by Christ at His own baptism. Coming to the graver difficulties such as the words in Jn 7:39 which seem to deny that Christian baptism could have begun before the passion, Père Braun would distinguish possible meanings of that saying and argue that it meant that the fulness of the Spirit had not yet been given, even though the Spirit had been given already in some measure, in the *OT* as well as during Christ's earlier years. Maldonatus is brought up in support, even though he affirms the opposite of what Tertullian and Chrysostom had said. The letter of Leo the Great rebuking the bishops of Sicily for baptizing on Epiphany and not at Easter is cited, but its argument that Christ would have instructed His disciples about baptism before His resurrection "nisi proprie voluisset intelligi regenerationis gratiam ex sua resurrectione coepisse," is not met. What is more strange is the view of Père Braun that any ritual act of Christ during His mortal life can be regarded as the institution of a sacrament.²⁶ It is hard

Now he knew that Is 53:7,11 did in fact describe the Messiah. There has been much discussion upon Mt 3:15 in recent times, but the view of the text here put forward has some very good support. The writer, after working it out for himself, found that it had already been put in an article by A. Garvie in the *Expositor*, Sixth Series, 5 (May, 1902) 374-75.

²⁶ Père Braun says: "Des lors qu'un sacrement reproduit un geste de Jésus, la question de son institution serait donc virtuellement résolue, quand bien même, faute d'une documentation évangélique assez précise, il ne nous serait pas donné, dans chaque cas particulier, de pouvoir en appeler à un ordre du Maître" (*ibid.*, p. 387).

to see why in the case of baptism it should be necessary to raise the question of this possibility, when the command to baptize is so explicit in Mt 28:19, unless perhaps there was some fear that the text in Matthew might not stand up to critical examination.

What John records at 3:15, that the Son of Man must be raised up, in order that all those who believe may have life in Him, is a saying that is subject to much critical discussion. The text that is most likely, because it is the most difficult reading, could be rendered as above, and this is what the Vulgate has, but many suppose that the words "in Him" should be taken with the verb "believe." This is against Johannine usage, for of the hundred times that John uses the verb *pisteuein*, there is not a single instance where he adds to it a phrase in the dative with the preposition *en*, unless it be this one. On the other hand, *pisteuein* occurs thirty-five times in the Gospel with the preposition *eis* following. In the very next verse (3:16) John has this turn of phrase, and it would be like him to make a subtle variation of phrase from one sentence to the next. Thus the sentence as it stands in 3:15 means that belief leads to incorporation with Christ, and thus the doctrine of Jn 1:3-4 is here carried forward a step further. That which comes to be in Christ is life; and now belief is set down as the condition required for coming-to-be-in Him, just at the end of a discourse on water and the Holy Spirit.

All discussions during these ten years on the Johannine teaching about baptism have been influenced, for good or for ill, by Cullmann's *Urchristentum und Gottesdienst*, which, in the various forms in which it has appeared since 1944, has called forth approval or disagreement from almost all writers on baptism. In the latest form²⁷ of the work (pp. 76-77) Cullmann makes it clear that he considers all attempts (such as Bultmann's) to regard the mention of water in Jn 3:5 as an interpolation as being so much waste of time, since the word is present in all the mss. and the context demands it. He has good things to say about the presence in John's writing of certain key-words which carry overtones of meaning, a device by which the evangelist is able to show how the events of Jesus' life are to be related to the life of the Church which is His body. One of these terms is "living water." To a Jew the phrase connoted the Torah; to John's audience it meant not only the water of baptism but also the Spirit, as in Jn 7:37-38. The Samaritan woman (Jn 4:10-14) may have been perplexed by the use of the phrase, but the reader of the Gospel, who had already met it in the discourse with Nicodemus, would know that the coming of the Spirit was to be mediated by a material element, just as the Word was made flesh. He would thus

²⁷ Second edition, German (Zurich, 1950).

be prepared for the completion of the idea in 7:37-39, where the Spirit is brought into relation with Christ Himself under the guise of water that flows from the body of the Savior.

When Christ goes on to speak with Nicodemus of His being "raised up," He is indicating, according to Cullmann, the connexion of His redemptive death with the sacrament of water and the Spirit, and showing how the grace of baptism depends on Calvary, even as Paul showed this in Rom 6. This connexion was already hinted at in Jn 1:28-29, where the Baptist's promise of a greater One to come is immediately followed by the acclamation of the Lamb of God. *Post hoc et propter hoc*, argues Cullmann (pp. 63-64 and 78), and one can agree that in John's work these juxtapositions are not purely accidental. Another place where the same conjunction of baptism and redemptive death is hinted at is, according to Cullmann, Jn 9:7, where the name of the pool, which means in Hebrew something like "running water," is taken to mean "the One who is sent." This play on the word is quite rabbinic in style, and is certainly not a straining of the sense, for the participle of *shalach* is near enough to the proper name to give ground for such a derivation. New light (and Jn 1:9 has already used *phōtizein*) is thus made available in the pool that bears the name of the Messiah. The debate of John the Baptist's disciples with a Jew (Jn 3:22-36) about cleansing is also brought by Cullmann into his general picture, while the washing of the feet (Jn 13:6-10) means for him the unique and unrepeatable (as in Heb 6:6) nature of baptism alongside another sacrament which may be likened to the foot-bath; but when he takes this second sacrament to be the Eucharist, he will not find many Catholics to follow him. Once it is laid down a priori that there are only two sacraments instituted by Christ, and that here is a sacramental context which speaks of baptism and one other sacrament, then Cullmann's case is sound, but his a priori is not. If this passage is taken to mean that the Apostles have already been baptized, then the old objection, raised by Maldonatus, has also to be met that Judas is said here not to be clean, and yet it seems hard to suppose that he would have been passed over in the general baptism of the Apostles. Cullmann does not consider this point and so weakens his case.

This decade has seen a great debate among the Reformed Churches on the subject of child baptism.²⁸ The fires have died down now, but the

²⁸ The books and articles are very numerous. One can only mention here K. Barth, *The Teaching of the Church regarding Baptism*, tr. E. Payne (London, 1948); F. J. Leenhardt, *Le baptême chrétien* (Neuchâtel, 1946); O. Cullmann, *Die Tauflehre des Neuen Testaments* (Zurich, 1948), and also "Le baptême, agrégation au corps du Christ," *Dieu*

ashes are still smouldering. The Barthians denied that there was any Scripture warrant for the practice, a practice which interfered with their theology of justification, and answer was made to them by some that the warrant was not in Scripture but in tradition. Others, among whom Cullmann was prominent, tried to make the most of the Scripture evidence, adding to it such passages as Mt 19:14 and parallels, as if the words "Forbid them not" were a technical expression taken from the ritual of the early Church, in which baptism would have always been preceded by the ritual question: Does anything forbid this baptism? This ingenious suggestion has nothing in its favour save the Western reading of Acts 8:36-37, but here the question is put by the baptizand, whereas it is surely more probable that, if the ritual had included such a question, it would have been put by the minister. Not liking to make any appeal to tradition (which would have obvious implications for the position of the Church generally), one French Calvinist, P. C. Marcel, has recently argued²⁹ that Scripture as a whole is clear enough on the meaning of the covenant of grace, that children entered into this under the Old Law by circumcision in virtue of their parents' faith, and that baptism in the New Law was meant to be the perfect counterpart to circumcision, with all its implications. This transcendental deduction of infant baptism has won support from some, but the hesitancy remains among the French and Swiss churches of the Reform, where it has resulted in practical measures of administration.³⁰ Thus, in the French national synod of 1951 it was enacted that no pastor could be forced to baptize children, while on the other hand he was not to hinder the parents having their children baptized by another. In Switzerland a party is seeking to have the same ruling carried through, with the rider that those ministers who do not believe in infant baptism should only be placed in posts where another pastor is available. To such an extent have the views of Karl Barth and Franz Leenhardt spread among the Reformed.

vivant 11, 45-66. J. C. Didier, "Le pédobaptisme au IV siècle," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 6 (1949) 233-46, supplied some new and unnoticed texts where the urgency of baptizing the new-born is stressed; some of these texts can be found in *PG* 40, 444-45, 468, but the others were new. J. Jeremias, *Hat die Urkirche die Kindertaufe geübt?* (Göttingen, 1949), was able to supply an affirmative answer from tradition to his question.

²⁹ P. C. Marcel, *The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism*, tr. P. Edgumbe Hughes (London, 1953). Marcel argues from Dt 29:10-12 that little children were held to come under the Covenant, and that "the nation of Israel was the Church; the Christian church is the same Church" according to Acts 7:38, and in any case baptism did not according to Calvin remove original sin but only diminished it. Much else in his work represents a return to the primitive doctrine of Calvin.

³⁰ L. Vischer, "Le baptême dans l'église réformée," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 11 (1955) 311-15.

The recent debate among Protestants on the continent of Europe is but a repetition of one that went on in the England of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Dr. Bromiley in his work, *Baptism and the Anglican Reformers*,³¹ has given an admirable summary of the issues involved and of the changes of position which took place in those times. He says:

Ultimately the true basis of the Reformed retention of infant baptism was their doctrine of the election. This is, perhaps, only another way of saying that infants have a right to the sacrament because they belong to the covenant people, or are heirs of the divine promise. But it could be stated more plainly and bluntly than that. For instance, when Zwingli considered the Anabaptist argument that faith must precede baptism, he retorted that it is not faith but the election which is the ground of our adoption into the family of God.

The consequence of this view is a certain looseness of hold on the doctrine of the necessity of baptism, for the accessory is obviously of less importance than the prime fact of election. Among the Reformers it was Thomas Becon who, in order to establish some strict necessity for baptism, argued that by baptism a man was given a sign not only that he should henceforth die to sin—as most Reformers said—but actually was dead to sin.³² Cranmer hesitated and avoided the point. Cranmer also believed in some kind of real presence of Christ in baptism which he put on a parallel with his doctrine of the presence in the Eucharist.³³ Christ was the principal minister of baptism, there “to clothe and apparel us with His own self,” and in recent times Cullmann has held that “the baptism of Calvary and baptism in the Church are intimately and essentially linked; each of them alike is a divine work quite independent of human cooperation.”³⁴ The act of faith by the baptizand has no place here; it is a mere adjunct, and Christ does all. There would seem to be no point in the priest asking the candidate, *Vis baptizari?*, if he is there simply to register what has already been done by Christ.

When the Baptists say, as they sometimes do, that the Catholic Church had developed her doctrine of baptism out of Manichaeism with the help of St. Augustine, there are two ways of meeting this. Either one says that there is plenty of evidence in the Pauline epistles and early patristic works for the views on baptism which Catholics hold (and this evidence cannot be written off as Manichaean), or else one may show that the Manichees had an idea of baptism which is not ours. It is possible now to say more

³¹ London, 1953, p. 110.

³² *Works* 2 (Parker Soc., 1844) 205.

³³ *Works* 1 (Parker Soc., 1844) 304, 356.

³⁴ In the article already cited from *Dieu vivant* 11, 43–66, which was afterwards printed as a chapter of *Le baptême des enfants* (Neuchâtel-Paris, 1949).

about Manichaeism since some of their own documents are at last available.³⁵ They certainly had catechumens, and one comes upon casual references to a baptism which is hardly the same thing as the baptism known to Christians: "Receive the Holy Seal from the mind of the Church, and fulfil the commandments. The judge himself that is in the air will give thee his three gifts. The baptism of the Gods thou shalt receive in the Perfect Man. The Luminaries will make thee perfect and take thee to thy kingdom."³⁶ The three gifts are elsewhere listed as "the Image (Eikon), Love (Agape), and the holy Spirit."³⁷ One can see a very generic resemblance here with the two Christian sacraments, baptism and that "perfecting of the baptized" which is now called confirmation, but the points of difference are more obvious. Still more is this true when one finds this in a Trinitarian psalm: "Jesus the glorious is the Father, the blessed Mind of Light is the Son, the Maiden of Light is the holy Spirit. . . . Let us seal our mouth that we may find the Father, and seal our hands that we may find the Son, and guard our purity that we may find the holy Spirit. Glory to our Lord Mani through the Father, honour to his Elect through the Son, blessing to his Catechumens through the holy Spirit."³⁸

On the Pauline theology of baptism and its relation to present Catholic beliefs there is a useful monograph by R. Schnackenburg³⁹ which criticizes the mystery theology of Casel as applied to baptism and provides a very full exegesis of Rom 6:1-11. Not all his readers have been convinced by this exegesis, notably Fr. Gächter,⁴⁰ who has himself put forward a theory of what is meant by our being "complanted to the similitude of his death" in verse 5. Schnackenburg himself wants to make of this an organic union of the baptized with Christ, and sees in the one spirit of which all have drunken (1 Cor 12:13) an impersonal power that is not the Holy Ghost. There are difficulties here for any view, and no doubt the partisans of the revived theory of a created soul of the Church will have a contribution to

³⁵ *A Manichaean Psalm Book*, Part 2, ed. C. R. C. Allberry (Stuttgart, 1938). Although this work appeared before the war and its editor (a young Catholic scholar of great promise) was killed in action as an RAF pilot during the war, there has been little sign that theologians have reacted at all to the new material now available. It therefore deserves a notice here.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22. ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83. ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³⁹ R. Schnackenburg, *Das Heilsgeschehen bei der Taufe nach Paulus* (Munich, 1950).

⁴⁰ P. Gächter, in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 73 (1951) 491-92; 54 (1930) 88-92. Another study of Paul's baptismal theology which is also concerned with Rom 6 came from another German Catholic in the same year: H. Schwarzmann, *Zur Tauftheologie des hl. Paulus in Röm 6* (Heidelberg, 1950). Schwarzmann seems right in taking *sumphutoi* of Rom 6:5 as a noun to mean scions or grafts, while *tō homoiōmati* is taken in an active sense, "by our imitative action." Heidelberg thus seems to have the advantage of Munich.

make to the discussion. It must suffice here to have noted what has already been written.

Without much success Käsemann⁴¹ put forward the suggestion that Col 1:15–20 was taken from a baptismal liturgy, but the much more persuasive suggestion of Dr. F. L. Cross⁴² that 1 Peter was “the Celebrant’s part for the Paschal Vigil,” a combination of homily and liturgical prayer, almost convinced me, my only real disquiet being that the allusion to persecution or distress (1:6) has to become part of the bishop’s solemn opening prayer, or else be omitted, neither of which courses seems to me satisfactory. If the letter was written, as Dean Selwyn maintains,⁴³ in 63, this reference would fit in with the situation of the Christians of Galatia, Pontus, and Cappadocia, who in 62 had been very considerably shaken by the Roman defeat at the hands of the Parthians at Rhandeia and who would thus have every reason for feeling alarm and grief. If Peter is writing from Rome so that the letter will reach them in time for the Pasch of 64, it would be natural that he should give them an exposition of the mystery of baptism and its connexion with the death of the Lord. The insertion of liturgical prayers in such a letter would be appropriate, and Peter would be following the Jewish custom of sending round letters to notify a distant community in the Diaspora of the date of the forthcoming Passover. This hypothesis, which is largely that of Dean Selwyn, seems to explain all the facts better than that set out with such erudition by Dr. Cross. The last verse of the letter, which he has to treat as an addition to the text, seems to call for the kiss of peace to follow it, as the natural sequel in the liturgy to the reading of this letter to the assembled faithful. Dr. Cross, with quiet irony, notes that the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* has no article on Easter but gives six columns to Easter Island—a sufficient comment on the state of theology in 1912.

The ritual of the Syriac Church in early times required that the candidate be anointed on the head by the bishop (with imposition of hand) and then anointed on the body by deacon or deaconess before going down into the water for baptism. After this there was no further unction. The evidence for this precedence of confirmation to baptism was collected long ago by Dom R. Connolly⁴⁴ who pointed out that it must date from the early third century, if not earlier. So far it has not been used very much by theologians since that time; indeed, in the various manuals inspected for this purpose

⁴¹ E. Käsemann, *Festschrift für R. Bultmann* (Stuttgart, 1949) pp. 133–48.

⁴² F. L. Cross, *1 Peter, a Paschal Liturgy* (London, 1954).

⁴³ E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of Peter* (London, 1946) pp. 56–63.

⁴⁴ R. H. Connolly, O.S.B., *Didascalia apostolorum* (Oxford, 1929) pp. xlix-li.

I could find nothing at all about the usage, save that Fr. Lennerz⁴⁵ made mention of the evidence, as collected by Connolly, without discussing it. On the other hand, it has been exploited by non-Catholic writers such as Gregory Dix⁴⁶ and T. W. Manson. The latter⁴⁷ claims that this usage was *the* (or at least a) primitive practice of the Church. He appeals to the Cornelius episode, and thinks that Paul's conversion was a similar case of confirmation going before baptism. He finds a trace of the usage in Gal 3:2 and 4:6 and Rom 5:5, while for him the Spirit, water, and blood that bear witness (1 Jn 5:7) are linked with confirmation, baptism, and Eucharist. He has also the passage from the Testament of Levi (8, 4-10) where, in what looks like a Christian interpolation, anointing precedes washing, and the administration of bread and wine follows on both these. Prof. Manson concludes with the suggestion that the Western practice of having baptism first, arose from the influence of the mystery cults, where purification was the first step in initiation.

A weak point in Manson's case is that he makes much of the parallel between circumcision and confirmation; for in view of the very early appeal to the prototype of Christian initiation provided by the entry of Israel into the promised land (see above), one would have to conclude that the rite which was parallel to circumcision came after baptism, just as the circumcisions carried out by Joshua came after the crossing of the Jordan. Manson does not offer any way of getting round the well-known texts of Acts 2:38, 8:4-25, and 19:1-7, and so his position ought logically to limit him to saying that there were from the beginning two alternative usages, the Cornelius type and the Samaria type, to give them their historical labels. His exegesis of 1 Jn 5:7 is most unconvincing, for the preceding verse has the three elements in a different order: "This is He that cometh by water and blood and spirit." In any case there is no reason to suppose that John took the Nonconformist view that each sacrament is a witnessing to Christ, but rather should one look for a correspondence between these three witnesses and the witnesses put forward in his Gospel, especially at Jn 1:34 (water), 19:34-35 (water and blood), and 15:26 (spirit). Thus we are in the end left with the Syriac usage and the Cornelius episode (for nothing is said in Acts about Paul's confirmation either way), and it may well be that the episode at Caesarea, as it concerned a Gentile, was taken as a precedent

⁴⁵ *De sacramento confirmationis* (Rome, 1945) par. 37. See also note 62, below.

⁴⁶ G. Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism* (Westminster, 1946) p. 15.

⁴⁷ T. W. Manson, "Entry into Membership of the Early Church," *Journal of Theological Studies* 48 (1947) 25-33.

for the largely Gentile church at Antioch in early times. It is to be noted that Theodore of Mopsuestia⁴⁸ has a normal confirmation following baptism in his account of the rite, so that the anomaly, if it did exist, did not last in Syria down to his day.

The Anglican debate about the place of confirmation in the initiation of Christians I have already reported in these pages three years ago, and there is no need to recapitulate all the articles which went to the shaping of opinion at that time. It is, however, necessary to bring the story up to date. In 1955 a report⁴⁹ was issued by the Joint Committees of the Convocations of Canterbury and York, which had been deliberating for some time on the doctrinal questions which were considered relevant to the pastoral question, why there was such a disparity between the numbers presented for baptism and those who came to be confirmed. The report was not unanimous, and a minority view, subscribed by T. G. Jalland, R. O'Gorman Power, and J. D. C. Fisher, was given place after the main report (which had the support of the other twenty-six members). Pastoral questions apart, the theological issue which divided the Committee was the choice between what has come to be called the Mason-Dix view of confirmation and that put forward by Prof. Lampe in his recent book.⁵⁰ The High Church minority were in favour of the Mason-Dix view, while the majority supported Lampe. In the Minority Report one may read (p. 9) that:

The existence of a pattern of duality . . . in the Baptism of Jesus by John . . . has often been ignored or denied. A recent example of this denial may be found in Dr G. W. H. Lampe's important book *The Seal of the Spirit*. In that work an attempt is made to show not only that the Baptism of Jesus was an undifferentiated unity, but that this lack of differentiation remained characteristic of Christian initiation till at least as late as the first half of the third century. . . . In our opinion the Majority Report has attached far too great a weight to the case made out in this book, with the result that the interpretation of the evidence characteristic of the writings of Dr A. J. Mason and Dr G. A. Dix has been largely brushed aside or ignored in that document. Very recently Dr L. S. Thornton, in his *Confirmation—its place in the Baptismal Mystery*, has presented an entirely fresh examination of the whole subject, but it has appeared too late to make it possible for the Majority Report to take it into account to any extent.

The debate is therefore now between Drs. Lampe and Thornton. While revising his own book, Dr. Thornton received a copy of my note⁵¹ from

⁴⁸ *Theodore of Mopsuestia on Baptism and the Eucharist*, ed. A. Mingana (*Woodbrooke Studies* 6; 1933) p. 68.

⁴⁹ *Baptism and Confirmation To-Day* (London, 1955).

⁵⁰ G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit* (London, 1951).

⁵¹ "The Sealing at Confirmation," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 14 (1953) 273-79.

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES and made use of it in an appendix⁵² which he devoted to a refutation of Dr. Lampe's thesis. The two points which I made on the interpretation of the Fathers were concerned with the texts of Irenaeus and Hippolytus about confirmation. Dr. Lampe, replying to the criticisms of Dr. Thornton, has abandoned his appeal to Hippolytus as a witness in his favour.⁵³ Of Irenaeus he says nothing at all. Earlier, in his book (p. 141), he had claimed that Hippolytus was "an early witness for the distinction between 'regeneration by the Holy Spirit,' as the inward thing signified by water-baptism, and 'grace to serve God according to His will,' as the blessing particularly associated with the bishop's post-baptismal prayer and with the subsidiary ceremonies in which the neophyte is anointed." Thus Dr. Lampe has lost two of his principal witnesses from the second century, and many of the others are either neutral or equivocal. Justin, about whom there was such acute controversy in 1948, is now claimed by the authors of the Minority Report as one who by "his appeal to the precedents and typology of the Old Testament makes it highly probable that a rite analogous to Confirmation was in his mind."

Dr. Thornton (p. 192) takes up a hint in my article about making precise the image that was in the minds of the early Christians when they spoke of the seal. Pointing out that in Hippolytus there are two acts which are described as sealing, he says: "The human vessel is first closed against the powers of evil, then baptised into Christ . . . and finally sealed as though to enclose the precious gift just received." A text from the sermons of Eusebius of Emesa⁵⁴ speaks of the soul as *patula ad malitiam domus*, a house that has not been sealed against wickedness, thus giving an elaboration of the earlier image; one can seal a bottle to secure its contents, one can also seal the door of a house against unauthorized entry. On the other hand, a text like the laconic remark in Hermas (*Simil.* 9, 16, 3) that "the seal is the water"—a text that gives Dr. Lampe so much comfort—is most probably Jewish in origin, like so much else in Hermas,⁵⁵ and in Jewish thought the seal could be understood of the water of proselyte baptism.⁵⁶

⁵² *Confirmation—Its Place in the Baptismal Mystery* (London, 1954) pp. 188-90.

⁵³ "The Place of Confirmation in the Baptismal Mystery," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 6 (1955) 110-16.

⁵⁴ Eusebius of Emesa, *Sermons*, ed. E. Buytaert (Louvain, 1953) p. 140.

⁵⁵ I owe this general conclusion about Hermas to some unpublished work by Erik Peterson.

⁵⁶ This is not to say that I take proselyte baptism to have preceded the start of Christian baptism. I have set forth my reasons for holding that Christian baptism came first in *EBC*, pp. 1-6, and I am glad to see that Prof. T. M. Taylor, of Pittsburgh, in "The Beginnings of Jewish Proselyte Baptism," *New Testament Studies* 2 (1956) 193-98, accepts and reinforces my view.

In the time of Hermas there was much debate among the Jews whether circumcision or the proselyte bath was the real aggregation to Jewry; some maintained that it was the water that counted, and hence it would be natural for them to say that it was the water which sealed a man as a Jew, giving him that sign which marked him as one of themselves in the eyes of many of the congregation.

Dr. Nicholas Adler's *Taufe und Handauflegung*⁵⁷ was written in entire isolation from the English debate, to which it makes no reference, but it might serve as an interesting companion-work to parts of Dr. Lampe's book. Dr. Adler is concerned with the Samaria episode in Acts 8:11-17 and indirectly with the other mentions of the gift of the Spirit in Acts, a theme which occupies Dr. Lampe's fifth chapter. The conclusions reached are vastly different from the ideas of Dr. Lampe that this laying-on of hands was merely a sign of acceptance into the missionary fellowship of the Church. Remarking that the early Christians seldom shook hands, Dr. Lampe infers that if they wanted to greet some stranger they would represent their association and personal contact with the stranger by a laying-on of hands. One might ask whether it would not have been more normal for them to kiss him. Certainly the action of Ananias in laying his hands upon Paul is expressly said (Acts 9:12) to be for the purpose of restoring Paul's sight. When the words are repeated (Acts 9:17), the phrase, "The Lord Jesus sent me that you might see and be filled with Holy Spirit," carries no direct reference to the act of laying-on of hands, and in any case it would be hard to maintain that this laying-on of hands was meant to be a sign that Paul was accepted into missionary fellowship. From the retelling of this episode in Acts 22:16 we learn that Paul has to be urged to accept baptism (and so have his sins forgiven) after his sight is restored; this could scarcely mean that Ananias has already accepted him into fellowship, still less that he regarded him as already a fellow missionary, when he had not yet invoked the name of Jesus.

Dr. Adler was working in complete ignorance of Dr. Lampe's book, which appeared in the same year as his own, but still he provides an answer to the view of Acts 8:11-17 adopted by Dr. Lampe, finding the same view in Cremer's article in the Protestant *Realenzyklopädie*⁵⁸ on laying-on of hands. Adler points out that the Samaritans are not given this rite by Peter and John in order to bring them into fellowship, for they have been already baptized, but Peter and John are clearly understood (e.g., in the reactions

⁵⁷ *Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen* 19/3 (Münster, 1951).

⁵⁸ *Realenzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* 7^a, 389.

of Simon Magus) to be God's instruments in imparting to them the Holy Spirit. He rejects Mason's emphasis⁵⁹ on the absence of the article with the term "holy Spirit" in Acts 8:17, pointing to Lk 4:1 and 3:22, where it is indifferently put in and left out with the same phrase used of a single occasion. The only defect in his treatment that I notice is his failure to use and discuss the passage where Irenaeus quotes and interprets Acts 8:17 (*Adv. haer.* 4, 63,1; Harvey 2, 294), though that would have strengthened his case.

While Anglicans have been concerned with the relation of confirmation to baptism, the Catholic debate has been about the true nature of confirmation as seen in its proper effect. P. Rupprecht⁶⁰ (in an article I have not seen) saw in it an act of acceptance of the (spiritually) new-born child parallel to the act by which a Roman father accepted the child his wife had borne to him. It is true that baptism is a new birth and therefore the ceremony which in Roman usage came after birth might on that account be claimed as a parallel to the rite which Christians celebrated immediately after baptism, but the legal position was never the same. Thus no Christian Father will be found to say that the unconfirmed child is in the eyes of the Church an illegitimate Christian, whom the mother has borne but whom the Father does not acknowledge. In any case, by the time that the Church is liable to the influence of the Roman law (i.e., from ca. 180), there is available the evidence of Irenaeus,⁶¹ who deliberately compares baptism with the milk for babes and the reception of the Holy Spirit by laying-on of hands with the strong meat of the adult. This relationship of imperfect and perfect state is the one that becomes normal in tradition, so that the common phrase⁶² for confirming is *perficere baptizatum*.

The attempt to select as the principal effect of confirmation the active witnessing to the faith and thus to call confirmation the sacrament of Catholic Action has done good to Catholic Action but harm to the true

⁵⁹ A. J. Mason, *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism* (London, 1891) p. 19, n. 1.

⁶⁰ P. Rupprecht, O.S.B., "Die Firmung als Sakrament der Vollendung," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 127 (1947) 262-77.

⁶¹ *Adv. haer.* 4, 63, 1 (Harvey 2, 294).

⁶² One finds the term in the Council of Elvira (can. 38); in the prayer of the boy to St. Abdul Masich (*Anal. Bolland.* 5 [1886] 25): "Perfice baptismum meum"; in Aphrahat (*Patrologia syriaca* 1, 2); in Cyprian's words, "signaculo dominico consummantur" (*Ep.* 73, 9); and in Cyril of Alexandria, who speaks of "the anointing of completion" (*PG* 72, 500). Fr. de Vries, studying the traces of this sacrament among the Nestorians, *Sakramententheologie bei den Nestorianern*, in *Orientalia christiana analecta* 133 (1947) 182-89, turns up some instances of this term, notably in the so-called George of Arbela, but does not comment on their relation to the tradition of the rest of the Church. He shows truly enough that among the Nestorians in later times all memory of confirmation vanished.

notion of the sacrament, as H. Zeller remarks.⁶³ This witnessing is but one of the duties of the adult or perfect Christian, and to make of it the only one is to introduce a deformity into theology. The present law of the Church requires confirmation as a necessary condition for ordination (but not for marriage) and for one's being accepted as a sponsor at confirmation, but does not otherwise indicate what duties of the adult state are reserved for the confirmed. The legislators of the Code of 1918 were working before the liturgical revival had made itself felt, and so one cannot really expect to find much in their legislation which would bring out the true meaning of this sacrament. The use of the word *confirmatio* for this sacrament can be traced back⁶⁴ to a Council of Riez in 439, but when one recalls that St. Patrick had been seven years preaching in Ireland in that year, one can see how late this is in the development of Christian theology.

The pseudo-Melchiodes, from whom St. Thomas derived his designation of confirmation as *robur ad pugnam* (in *Sum. theol.* 3, 72, 1, c), has been responsible for the obscuring of the earlier idea of confirmation as the completion or perfecting of the baptized. It was perhaps significant that this notion of completion was given new currency in an official document of the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments⁶⁵ in 1935, though the fact seems to have passed without much notice by dogmatic theologians. The writer of the article on confirmation in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* mentions the document but still adheres to the language of fighting for one's faith.⁶⁶ Perhaps when the theology of the seven gifts has been cleared up, the position of confirmation will itself be made clear, for while fortitude is but one of the seven gifts, it looks as if to some people that is all that matters at confirmation. One cannot, of course, say that confirmation is the first infusing of these seven gifts, for they are given at baptism (according to the traditional teaching of the Church, though this is not exactly defined), but it may be possible to distinguish phases in the mode of their operation which will bring out the difference of the two sacraments.

The fixing of a seal is a completion—of a legal process, if the seal be documentary, and still more if the seal be meant to close the vessel into which the Holy Spirit has been poured. Clement of Alexandria puts the matter

⁶³ *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 71 (1949) 358, in a review of D. Koster, *Die Firmung in Glaubenssinn der Kirche*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

⁶⁵ *AAS* 27 (1935) 15: "complementum baptismatis et in quo datur plenitudo Spiritus sancti." The pastoral purpose of the decree was to urge the reception of confirmation before First Communion. The reason given was that confirmation, being the completion of baptism, should take place next in order to it.

⁶⁶ "Confirmation (effets)," *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 2 (Paris, 1953) 1412.

in exactly these terms in words that chime in with what I cited above from Dr. Thornton. The passage is in the *Eclogae propheticæ* 12,9 (GCS 17,140), where, after having cited the Pauline confirmation passage of 2 Cor 1:21, he goes on to speak of our needs and our longing for incorruption. He ends thus: "When we have emptied the soul from evils we must fill it with the good God, for it is a chosen vessel. When the empty vessel is filled, then the seal goes on to preserve this holy thing for God." It may not be so romantic to tell children that the Holy Ghost comes upon them in confirmation to enable them to retain the gifts of their baptism as it is to tell them that they are being made soldiers of Christ, but if any of them should ask what the Catechism means by saying that confirmation makes them perfect Christians, that is what one would have to tell them.

Heythrop College, Chipping Norton, Oxon.

JOSEPH CREHAN, S.J.