

CONFIRMATION - AN ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of Divinity
Rhodes University

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
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December 1966

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance in the preparation of this thesis:

Prof. W.D. Maxwell for his encouragement and constructive criticism both in matters of theology and style.

Prof. P.B. Hinchliff for the loan of books and for reading and criticising the second chapter.

The Rev. Basil Moore for his encouragement and assistance.
Mrs. Stirk for the typing and Margaret Knight, Kyle Hayes, and Mrs. van Rooyen for the roneoing.

Finally, my parents whose sacrifices made my studies possible.

ALAN MAKER
GRAHAMSTOWN, 1966

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CONFIRMATION - AN ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER 1

BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Intelligently to discuss Christian initiatory rites we must begin with baptism. In recent years many scholars have attempted a critical re-assessment of baptism based upon a renewed exegetical study of the New Testament. This chapter is written in the light of that work.

Most theologians are agreed upon the cardinal importance of baptism. Calvin is generally representative in saying, "Baptism is a sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the society of the Church, in order that, being incorporated into Christ, we may be numbered among the children of God".¹ Wheeler Robinson, a Baptist theologian, asserts that, "Baptism is the door of entrance to the Church".²

The two dominical sacraments differ sharply in exterior form but are closely similar in interior meaning, for each alike are profoundly associated with our Lord's passion, death, and victory. This has long been recognised of the Eucharist, but in spite of the clear teaching of St. Paul and the early Fathers it has been lost for centuries in the Church's teaching concerning baptism. Flemington and Lampe, therefore, represent a re-discovery when they state that;

"Christian baptism in the New Testament embodied the kerygma: it was a "prophetic symbol" expressing, and in some sense re-enacting, what God has done for all in Christ for men's salvation." 3 AND

"In baptism and the eucharist the action of God in Christ, accomplished once and for all, is represented and actualised for the believer". 4

1 Inst. 4.15.1

2 Baptist Principles, p.18, quoted by D. Baillie, Theology of the Sacraments, Faber, London, 1957, p.80

3 Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism. SPCK, London, 1948, p.137

4 G.W.H. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit, Longmans, London, 1951, p.52

With this re-discovery we shall be primarily concerned in this chapter.

1. JESUS AND HIS BAPTISM

Fundamental to the understanding of Christian baptism is its relationship to our Lord. For example, it may be asked, "If baptism were instituted by Jesus, why did he not baptize during his ministry?" Or again, "If baptism is for the remission of sins, why did Jesus, the sinless Son of God, have to be baptized?"

Such questions compel us to re-examine the origins of Christian baptism and these are found in part in external forms in use long before the earthy ministry of Jesus began.

Circumcision was the seal of the covenant made by God to Abraham and his seed (Genesis 17), and from the time of Isaac every Hebrew boy was circumcised when he was eight days old (Genesis 21:4). Circumcision at this age showed that God's election came before man's response, indeed, before there is any possibility of this response. St. Luke tells of the circumcision of Jesus when he was eight days old. (Luke 2:21).

The origin of proselyte baptism has not yet been traced, but Jeremias¹ shows convincingly that it was practised before the time of the New Testament. Converts to Judaism were first circumcised, and a week later they were baptized. As they came out of the water they put on new Jewish clothes, received a new Jewish name, and were legally regarded as Israelites one day old. Baptism was usually self-administered except small children or slaves.

John's baptism differed from proselyte baptism in two respects - he baptized Jews and he baptized them. Jews were baptized to show that something more than their membership of the old Israel was required if they were to share in the Kingdom of the Messiah.²

1 J. Jeremias, Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries, SCM, p.24 ff.

2 John Heron, Christian Initiation, Studia Liturgica, Volume 1, No. 1

John the Baptist was the leader of a campaign to re-awaken the Jewish people. It was an attempt to re-assert the religion of the prophets, which the legalism of much post-exilic Judaism had submerged. John's work therefore provided a fiery preparation for the work Jesus came to do.

All the Evangelists mark Jesus' baptism by John as the beginning of his earthly ministry and the moment in which he becomes aware of his status. They regard John as the prophetic forerunner of the Messiah - he is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight".¹ Malachi expressed the expectation of a forerunner to the Messiah,² and in later Judaism Elijah becomes this forerunner whose task is to call the people to repentance before the coming of the Messiah.³

The Evangelists faced grave difficulties in explaining why Jesus had to go to John for baptism because John's baptism was for the remission of sins. St. Mark alone is not embarrassed by this. He makes it clear that his account of Jesus' baptism comes ultimately from our Lord's own lips.⁴ As we shall see the 'voice from heaven' designates Jesus as the Suffering Servant/Messiah whose task is to create the new Messianic Community. Thus the significance of Jesus' coming to John for baptism is that he should be anointed by 'Elijah' for his mission.⁵

Many scholars assert that Jesus was baptized by John because he was a Jew who believed that he was involved in the sinfulness of his own people. By submitting himself to baptism he identified himself publicly with them in their sinful situation (in this he was willy-nilly involved, for he could not separate himself from his times). There is a great truth in this assertion, but it does not contain the whole significance of Jesus' baptism. If it did then the baptism of John for the remission of sins would mark the admission into the community of the redeemed. John would be the creator of the new community of the

1 Mark 1:3 cf. Matt. 3:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23, cited from Isaiah 40:3

2 4:5

3 Eccles. 48:10 ff. cf. 1 Enoch 90:31, 89:52, 90:9

4 Flemington, op cit. p.22

5 Acts 10:38

redeemed, and Jesus would merely have come to complete John's work. The task of the Servant/Messiah is to create the new community, the new Israel, into which shall be gathered all those who commit themselves to him.¹

The significance of baptism to Jesus is the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him. Jesus understood himself to be anointed by God as his Messiah. Thus 'the voice from heaven' is important. The Marcan version reads, "Thou art my beloved Son, with thee I am well pleased". (1:11b)² Some manuscripts change this to read: "Thou art my beloved Son, today have I begotten thee".³ If this reading is correct then the 'voice' is quoting a Royal Psalm, Psalm 2. Cullman dismisses this view and argues that the latter part of the 'voice's' utterance refers to Isaiah 42:1, which is the beginning of the first Servant Song. Thus, he holds, Jesus is identified with the Servant of Yahweh,⁴

But need we make such a sharp distinction here between Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1 as being mutually exclusive sources? Is it not possible that the 'voice' is an echo of both these passages.⁵ The Jews did not identify the Messiah with the Suffering Servant, but regarded him as one who would restore the political integrity of Israel and lead her to world dominance. That he should suffer and be vindicated was not part of their idea. Jesus, however, was now told unequivocally what his mission was, to be the Servant Messiah.

The primary reason why Jesus submitted to John's baptism now becomes clear. The others who came to John came to be baptized for the remission of their own sins, but when Jesus was baptized he recognized that this was his anointing by God for his mission of redemption.

a. JESUS AS THE SERVANT OF YAHWEH

What are the leading ideas of the Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah?

1 See below p.9 ff.

2 Parallels - Matthew 3:17b, Luke 3:22b

3 D, with other witnesses from the so-called western text

4 Cullman, Baptism in the New Testament, SCM, Letchworth, 1950, pp 16-17

5 Lampe, op cit, p. 36-37

Sellers, CQR, Volume 161, 1960, p.402

The first Song¹ tells of the Servant's endowment with the Spirit of Yahweh as part of his equipment to 'bring forth right religion'. Wishpat (right religion) is not something announced but established. The verb yosi also indicates the establishing of something. Yahweh's right religion is to be established upon the earth among the nations. The second Song² clarifies the task of the Servant. He is to be a 'light to the nations', the bearer of Yahweh's true religion to the whole world. The 'true religion' is here the establishment of the true Israel. The third Song³ emphasises the Servant's inspiration by the Spirit of Yahweh. This enables him by disciplined listening to God to face and overcome all the suffering and persecution that might befall him. A note of confident hope is struck. The Servant trusts that Yahweh will vindicate him through his bringing to pass his prophetic message. The fourth Song⁴ tells of the terrible afflictions that the Servant will have to endure, but this suffering is part of Yahweh's purpose. He does not suffer for his own sins - "he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth".⁵ He is to suffer for the sins of his fellow-countrymen - 'the many'.⁶ This Song does not end in suffering but in vindication. Yahweh will vindicate his Servant whose sufferings will persuade 'the many' to recognise their sins and turn again to Yahweh. The hope of all the Songs is for a nationally and religiously restored Israel through which even the heathen will accept Yahweh's religion.

The servant will achieve this restoration of Israel by offering himself as an asham (guilt-offering) before Yahweh.⁷ The purpose of the asham in Old Testament religion was to restore the community destroyed by sin to the worship of Yahweh, or to restore the sinful individual to the purified community. Normally the sinful individual brought his own offering so that he would be restored to the true community of Yahweh. The unique action of the Servant is that he,

1 Isaiah 42:1-4 2 .49:1-7 3 50:4-11 4 53:1-12

5 Isaiah 53:9b

6 53:11 should read 'the many' and not simply 'many' as in the RSV, the article is omitted in poetical style. It refers to the community as contrasted with the individual and so means 'all'.

(cf. Mowinckel, He that Cometh, Blackwell, Oxford, 1956, p.202 n.1)

7 53:10

the one without sin, gave himself as a guilt-offering on behalf of the guilty people to create a new community, purified for the worship of Yahweh.¹ The Servant is not to be thought of as an example to the community but as the creator of the new community of the redeemed.

The Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism. This endowment of the Spirit is part of the ebed-Yahweh's equipment. It also stands at the beginning of the mission of Jesus. We can conclude from this that his preaching was consequent upon and associated with his mission as the ebed-Yahweh.² This is also a feature of the ebed-Yahweh in the Old Testament. We have seen that the 'voice from heaven' accompanying the bestowal of the Spirit upon our Lord quotes the first verse of the first Servant Song. It is reasonable to conclude that Jesus was conscious that he had been endowed with the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission of the ebed-Yahweh.

Does the New Testament see Jesus' mission as the creation of a new community?

All the Evangelists record John the Baptist as saying that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit.³ This shows that the Evangelists accepted a common tradition that the fulfillment of the mission of the ebed-Yahweh is his baptizing 'the many' with the Holy Spirit. Acts⁴ records this fulfillment taking place at Pentecost fifty days after the Resurrection. Many modern scholars doubt the historicity of this chapter.⁵ Davies shows that the Evangelists, including Luke, imply that the Ascension took place on the evening of the Resurrection.⁶

How are we to interpret the 'forty days' in Acts 1? Firstly, Davies shows that the Transfiguration narrative⁷ is a prefigurement of the Ascension⁸ and this leads to the conclusion that the 'forty days'

1 For a full discussion of sacrifice in the Old Testament see Yerkes, Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religion and Early Judaism, A & C Black, London, 1953

2 Acts 10:38

3 Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:26, 33

4 Chapter 2

5 esp. J.G. Davies, He Ascended into Heaven, Lutterworth, London, 1958

6 Luke 24:51, Mark 16:19, John 20:17

7 Luke 9

8 Davies, op cit., pp. 39-40

has a symbolic or typological meaning. Secondly, the rest of the New Testament knows nothing of the 'forty days'. St. Paul lists himself as one of the witnesses of the Resurrection.¹ By any New Testament chronology Jesus' appearance to St. Paul must have been post-Ascension, but Paul sees no difference between his experience and that of Peter and the twelve.

St. John states that the bestowal of the Spirit is consequent upon the Ascension - "The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified".² Jesus' first action after greeting the disciples on Easter Day is to breathe on them saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit".³ The implication is that the Ascension had already taken place. When Jesus sees Mary at the tomb he tells her not to touch him, "For I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God".⁴ Eight days later he is with the disciples and asks Thomas to put his hands into his wounds.⁵ This implies that the Ascension was an accomplished fact.

Davies states that Matthew also implies the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on Easter Day. This gains much support from Jesus' last command to the disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: and lo I am with you always to the close of the age".⁶ This reference to baptizing in the name of the Holy Spirit is most surprising. Many modern scholars assert that because of this these are not the ipsissima verba of Christ, but Matthew does mention the Holy Spirit on other occasions in his Gospel - once in connexion with Jesus' birth,⁷ once at Jesus' baptism,⁸ and twice in the saying about sin against the Holy Spirit.⁹ Apart from the reference to the Holy Spirit

1 1 Corinthians 15:5-8

2 7:3-9

3 20:22

4 20:17

5 20:20, 27

6 Matt. 28:19-20

7 Matt. 1:18, 20

8 Matt. 3:11

9 Matt. 12:31-32

and Jesus' baptism we seem to be left with nothing by which we could interpret Jesus' command. The sense of this text seems to be that as Jesus received the Holy Spirit at baptism, so will all those whom the disciples baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son. Thus this implies that the Spirit had already been given not only to Jesus but also to 'the many'.

The typology of the Ascension of Elijah strongly influences Luke's account of Jesus' Ascension in Acts.¹ Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit to be upon him, and immediately this promise is fulfilled he performs twice as many miracles as Elijah had done. In Acts our Lord promises the disciples power when the Holy Spirit descends upon them. Acts is a record of the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the Apostles empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts is not to an individual as in Kings but to a group. St. John relates how Jesus confronted the disciples when they were together and breathed the Holy Spirit upon them. Similarly in Acts all the disciples are gathered together in one place when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon them. St. Luke uses the symbolism of Pentecost rather than that of Elijah's Ascension to reinforce the idea that the Holy Spirit is a 'group possession', and the possession of each individual within the group.

Pentecost is closely associated with the offering of the first-fruits in the Old Testament.² The ritual of the offering made during Passover week is mentioned only in Leviticus 23:10-14. As the first the first-fruits represent the whole - the whole harvest is consecrated in them.³ Analogous to this, the Israelites must offer the firstborn, human or animal, to God so that the totality may be offered to him to secure His favour.

Pentecost, the feast of weeks, falls fifty days after the offering of the first-fruits. It is the fulfillment of Yahweh's promise

1 11 Kings 2 cf. Acts 1

2 Exodus 22:29 f., 34:19 f.

3 JOHS Pedersen, Israel, OUP, London, 1947, pp. 300 ff.

in the offering of the first-fruits. Thus the two festivals are intimately related.

St. Luke does not mention the first-fruits, but St. Paul, his close companion, was familiar with this idea, "If the dough offered as first-fruits is holy, so is the whole lump".¹ Christ as the second Adam begins the new creation. He is the firstborn who must be offered to God so that the new race, of which he is the founder, may draw its life from his offering. At the Ascension Christ offered his manhood to the Father.² As the first-fruits are fulfilled at Pentecost so St. Luke sees the Ascension fulfilled at the new Pentecost - "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear".³ Christ's work is completed in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the community of the new age created by the firstborn offers its worship to God through the Holy Spirit.

Not only is Christ the creator of this new community, but also he is its sustainer through the Holy Spirit. The New Testament bears frequent witness to his continuing presence, "Lo, I am with you always even to the close of the age".⁴ "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them".⁵ "I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you".⁶

b. JESUS THE MESSIAH

"Christ" is the transliteration of the Greek Χριστός which is the translation of the Hebrew ham-mashiah and the Aramaic meshiba. It means 'the Anointed One'. The 'voice from heaven' at Jesus' baptism echoed Psalm 2:7 and this indicates that Jesus conceived his mission as that of the long-awaited Messiah. What did this title involve?

Ham-mashiah is a shortened form of mesiah YHWH (Yahweh's Anointed) referring to the reigning king of Israel. The conception of the Messiah was derived from the ideal of kingship in ancient Israel.⁷

1 Romans 11:16

2 The theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews

3 Acts 2:33

4 Matthew 28:20

5 Matthew 18:20

6 John 14:18

7 Mowinckel, op cit., p.21 ff.

Although Israel borrowed this conception from her neighbours she did not take over unaltered Canaanite religion nor the sacral kingship that went with it. In Yahwism the king was not regarded as a god. The Israelites anointed their king. This was a cultic act which ratified the king's status as Yahweh's chosen one. It also conveyed extraordinary 'holy' or 'divine' faculties or qualities. The king's supernatural powers¹ are the result of Yahweh's Spirit coming upon him at his anointing. When David was anointed 'the spirit of Yahweh came mightily upon him'.² Saul's first act after his anointing was to prophesy among the band of prophets because 'the spirit of God came mightily upon him'.³ Israel will live in peace under Yahweh's Anointed and will enjoy fertility of man and beast and crop, long life, victory over her enemies and ideal social relations within the community.⁴

Nowinckel sums up the relationship between king and people:

"The entire soul of the society is embodied in the king in a special way: and, in particular, the ancestor lives on through him. Land and people are his household and family, just as the family is the household of the ancestor or household-father".⁵

Therefore the king should reflect in himself the highest ideals of the people. He should bring these ideals to reality in himself and in his people. The Jews believed that the people would become what the king was. If he were righteous, godly and pious, so would they be. If he turned away from Yahweh, and did not worship Him according to His custom or worshipped foreign gods, then the people would be accounted ungodly and impious. This is the principle by which the kings were judged in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. Israel's 'salvation' was utterly dependent upon the king and his endowment with the spirit of Yahweh.

The kings never rose to the high standard expected of them. Yahweh's 'promises and the king's 'promises to Yahweh to be a righteous ruler though renewed annually at the enthronement festivals⁶ were

1 Sam. 10:1 ff., 11:6 f., 11 Sam. 14:17 f., 23:1 f., Psalm 2:7
 2 1 Sam. 16:13
 3 1 Sam. 10:9 f.
 4 Lam. 4:20, 11 Sam. 14:14, Psalm 72:6, 16
 5 Nowinckel, op cit., p.69-70. 6, Psalm 101

never fulfilled. Therefore a hope grew that somewhere in the future Israel would have a king who would be the righteous Anointed One. While the monarchy still stood as an institution, this was never an Eschatological hope, but was centred on some actual historical personage who would fulfill and realize this hope which was essentially of this world. Thus the hope of the famous 'messianic' passage in Isaiah 9:1-6 about the coming child, probably refers to the anticipated birth of a prince who would come to the throne and fulfill this great hope.¹ The community hoped for the Anointed One.

When the kingdom collapsed in 586 B.C. this hope became specifically future. The main features of the new hope were the political deliverance of Israel² and the restoration of the Davidic dynasty to fulfill the hopes of the restored community.³ The prophets look forward to the restoration of Israel as a political and religious entity achieving the universal worship of Yahweh.⁴

The political and religious hopes of Israel were never separated - "it is through the glorification of Israel, that the glorification of Yahweh is achieved".⁵ The Messiah is the ideal Davidic king who will reign in the restored Israel as Yahweh's Chosen One. He is not thought of as having no successors. They are specifically mentioned in Jeremiah 23:1 ff. as the 'good shepherds' who will rule over the people.

We have seen that the ideal king's supernatural powers came from his endowment with Yahweh's Spirit. This is also true of the future king of the restored community. As the embodiment of the people the king's endowment with the Spirit of Yahweh signifies that in him Yahweh constitutes and 'blesses' the new community. This community will be endowed with the Spirit in and with the coming king.

The hope of the land will thus be realized when Yahweh fulfills His promise,

"And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. You shall dwell in the land which I gave

1 For a full discussion of this see Mowinckel, op cit., pp. 102-110

2 Isa. 9:3, 10:27, 14:25, 52:2, Jere. 30:8, Ezekiel 34:27

3 Jere. 3:18, 31:37, 33:7, Ezekiel 37:22, Isa. 4:2, 7:10-17, 8:8-10 etc

4 especially Zechariah

5 Mowinckel, op cit., p.149

to your fathers: you shall be my people and I shall be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses: and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations".¹

Joel echoes this promise in his prophecy.² The hope is still of this world. The vision is of an endless period of blessedness for Israel and the evangelization of the world to the religion of Yahweh.

The great prophets proclaimed that the national and religious restoration of Israel was the work of Yahweh done through a human instrument within history. The inter-Testamental literature came to regard the act of Yahweh in Deutero-Isaiah as something absolute beyond which nothing can go. It becomes the eschaton, that which will come to pass in the 'latter days'.³ Here we find the dualism of a world of evil on earth and the world of blessedness beyond. Satan rules over this world and Yahweh over the world to come.

Early Judaism conceived the Messiah as the founder of the new Davidic dynasty. This implies his eventual death, because he was to have successors.⁴ Under the influence of the more transcendental concept of the 'Son of man' Jewish thought came to conceive the Messiah as the ruler of the millennial kingdom.⁵ At the end of the millenium he would die.⁶ Under the influence of the notion of two aeons the Messiah came to be thought of as eternal, and this was the dominant conception of the Messiah at the time of Jesus, as the New Testament bears witness to the fact that the idea of a dying Messiah was impossible for Jews to accept.⁷

The work of the Messiah is to establish a new community (of this world or beyond this world) over which he is to rule. This

1 Ezekiel 36:27 ff.

2 2:28

3 Isa. 2:2, Jere. 23:26, 30:24, 48:47, Ezek. 38:16, Hos. 3:5, Mic.4:1

4 Jeremiah 23:1 ff.

5 11 Esdras 7 ff.

6 11 Esdras 7:29

7 Matt. 16:21 ff., Mark 6:31, 9:31 ff., Luke 24:20 ff.

eschatological Messiah will be endowed with the Spirit of Yahweh for his mission.¹

Jesus understood his baptism as his anointing by God to be his Messiah. The ebed-Yahweh was endowed with the Holy Spirit as was the Messiah. The 'voice from heaven' shows that Jesus regarded himself as a unique combination of the ebed-Yahweh and the Messiah. He sees that an essential part of his mission is to suffer and to die and to be 'glorified'. He would accomplish this work in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Messianic community will be created by and share in his suffering and vindication. Also because of his suffering and vindication the community will share in his bestowal with the Holy Spirit, or as John the Baptist says, "He will baptize with the Holy Spirit".²

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was essential to the communal hope associated with the coming of the Messiah. There can be no Messianic community until this is fulfilled. Only after the Spirit has been given to the disciples do they understand themselves to be the community of the Messiah or the 'body of Christ'. His work as the ebed-Messiah is only completed in the creation of the Spirit-filled Messianic community.

It is into this Spirit-filled community that we are baptized. Jesus' endowment with the Spirit at his baptism inaugurated his Messianic work. This baptism was completed by his death, resurrection, glorification and the general outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the new community was created. Christian baptism is the rite that marks our entry into this Spirit-filled community. Our baptism is the way in which we share his Messianic accomplishments. We are baptized with water and the Holy Spirit, i.e., for the remission of sins and entry into the Spirit-filled community of the Messiah.

1 Ps. Sol. 17:42, 1 Enoch 44:3

2 Luke 3:16 cf. Matthew 3:11

On two occasions Jesus speaks of his 'baptism' as the end of his mission. St. Mark records his saying to James and John, "Can ye be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"¹ St. Luke makes this equivalence in our Lord's mind between baptism and the end of his mission even clearer, "I have a baptism to be baptized with: and how I am straitened until it be accomplished".²

Flemington suggests that here Jesus sees his death as the beginning of a wider ministry, one that is not tied to his presence on earth.³ Cullmann is explicit:

"It is he, Jesus, who will not only baptize individual men with water like John the Baptist, but will complete the general baptism, for all men, once for all, at the moment of his atoning death".⁴

The Church recognized from the beginning that Jesus' vicarious atoning work is a baptism. Thus John Heron writes, with percipiense even clearer than Flemington and Cullmann, for he includes the Pauline emphasis upon our Lord's Resurrection:

"This 'one baptism' underlies every administration of the sacrament in the Church. His Cross, death, burial and descent into Hades form the nadir of the one baptism, which began with his descent from heaven and ended only with his resurrection and ascension to the Father".⁵

To Heron's statement I would add that the general outpouring of the Holy Spirit completes our Lord's one baptism which creates the new community. Jesus' 'one baptism' underlies our baptism through which we are admitted into the new community and are filled with the Holy Spirit.

2. OUR BAPTISM⁶

The purpose of the commission Jesus gave to his disciples was to gather together into one body the people of the new covenant.

1 Mark 10:38

2 Luke 12:50

3 Flemington, *op cit.*, p.32

4 Cullmann, *op cit.*, p.19

5 Heron, *Studia Liturgica*, Volume 1, Number 1

6 References to Baptism and the Laying on of Hands in Acts will be discussed in Chapter 2

These elect of God needed a new sign and seal to replace the old. The old was Jewish circumcision, the new was Christian Baptism, "prepared for by late Jewish baptismal practices, stimulated by the baptism of John, and made necessary by the mission command of the risen Lord".¹

The passages in Acts all indicate that baptism was the appointed way of admission into the Christian community. After the proclamation of the kerygma the people ask, "What shall we do?" and the answer is "Repent and be baptized".² By baptism the converts join the little community created by the 'one baptism' of our Lord.

Explicit references to baptism in the letters of St. Paul are comparatively few, but they are intensely illuminating and focus upon its centrality and effects. As Flemington says,

"For St. Paul a Christian's baptism was something to be remembered. At certain stages in the argument of the epistles he cannot draw out the inner meaning of some elements of the Christian faith and experience more effectively than by recalling his readers to the moment of their baptism and by emphasizing certain implications of the act by which they were incorporated into the body of Christ".³

In 1 Corinthians 1:17, for example, we find evidence in St. Paul's thought of the indissoluble unity between the atoning work of Christ and the baptism by which their effects are applied so that the believer cannot forbear to exclaim that he is 'in Christ'. The Corinthians had early split into factions: they were saying, 'I am of Paul: I am of Apollos, ' but St. Paul answers their schismatic and uncouth dogmatism by saying, "Was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" There could never be a baptism in the name of Paul or of anyone else but Jesus, for he alone is the Anointed One of God who established the new community by his 'one baptism'. Therefore in St. Paul's mind the true effect of baptism is that every believer should shout out exultantly, "I am of Christ".

1 Stauffer, New Testament Theology, SCM, London, 1955, p.160

2 Acts 3:44 f.

3 Flemington, op cit., p.53

Often St. Paul uses the image of two ages to illustrate the change effected in a Christian at his baptism. He passes from one age to another - from the age of bondage to sin to the age of grace: from the age of Adam to the age of Christ.¹ The sacrament of baptism is the dividing line between these ages. At baptism the convert renounces the past which belongs to sin, and goes forward by faith into the aeon which belongs to salvation and justice.²

Possibly the Pauline passage most important for the doctrine of baptism is Romans 6:1 ff. Here St. Paul specifically speaks of descending into and rising out of the water. He has been concerned to answer a question about the all-sufficiency of grace - "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" But to ask this question, he says, is wholly to misapprehend the meaning of baptism. When a Christian is baptized he dies to sin, so how can he possibly continue to live in sin? In a vivid and unforgettable passage Karl Barth describes what he believes to be St. Paul's idea of baptism and displays the eternal contemporaneity of the rite with the Cross and Resurrection for those who receive it:

"This happening in his (the candidate's) participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ: that is, the fact that at a particular time and place, in the year A.D. 30 outside Jerusalem on the Cross at Golgotha, not Jesus Christ alone, but also with him this particular individual died eternally, and that in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, not Jesus Christ alone, but also this particular individual rose from the dead for evermore".³

Barth over-exaggerates his point and seems to substitute history for the work of the present living Christ: This is the basic falseness of this dramatic assertion.

When St. Paul says that we are 'in Adam' he means that we all belong to the same organism. Because we are all human beings we are part of the one body, which through its head, Adam, stands under

1 Romans 6 ff.

2 Baptism in the New Testament, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1964, article by D. Mollat, Baptismal Symbolism in St. Paul, p.63

3 Karl Barth, The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism, SCM, London, 1948, p.11

the rule of sin and the condemnation of death. That which is true for the head must also be true for the members of the body. We are now no longer 'in Adam', but by Baptism are incorporated 'into Christ', i.e. we become parts of the 'body of Christ' - "For in one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free men, and were all watered with one Spirit".¹ Thus what is true for the head of the body is true for all its members.² When the candidate is plunged into the water he is being buried with Christ. For a moment he remains beneath the water, but then he emerges triumphantly, being raised with Christ Jesus his Lord.³

This theme of dying to sin and rising to newness of life by baptism is constant in the teaching of St. Paul. In Galatians he writes, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires".⁴ In Colossians he writes, "And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead".⁵

Thus through baptism we enter the new age which began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the glorification of our Lord. Baptism effects a completely new creation, "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has passed away, behold the new has come".⁶ We have 'put off' the old man and 'put on' the new man, and this new man is the creation of Christ. Thus no longer are we free to sin as we please but now walk 'in newness ^{of} life' which is the life of the Spirit.⁷

These ideas are by no means peculiar to St. Paul. In the Johannine writings baptism is the means whereby, through the outward use of water and the inward operation of the Holy Spirit, a man is born from above.⁸ Flemington believes that the water and the blood mentioned

1 1 Corinthians 12:13

2 Nygren, Commentary on Romans, SCM, London, 1952, pp.232-3

3 Flemington, op cit., p.59

4 5:24

5 2:12

6 11 Corinthians 5:17

7 Galatians 5:25

8 John 3:5

in verse 6 of the difficult passage 1 John 5:5-8 do not refer to the Baptism of each individual believer, but to the baptism of Jesus himself. But he goes on to say, "We may nevertheless allow a secondary reference to that rite of Christian baptism, which, for each believer, was the counterpart of our Lord's own baptism".¹ Thus we have linked together in the closest possible relationship the blood-baptism of Jesus with the water-baptism of each individual believer.

Here then is not a notion invented by St. Paul, but a doctrine basic to the Christian faith and held throughout the early Church. In Hebrews the outward washing of baptism is a visible sign of the inward cleansing of the individual from sin, which could only be accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ:² 1 Peter, regarded by many notable scholars to be a baptismal homily, also underlines certain aspects mentioned by St. Paul especially the centrality to baptism of the cross³ and the emphasis on resurrection.⁴

We may therefore conclude that the New Testament writers were in agreement that Baptism was the way that our Lord had ordained for us to enter into his Body the Church. In baptism we share in the Messianic achievements of our Lord. Too much emphasis is sometimes placed on his death on the Cross so that his rising again, glorification and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit are forgotten. We must avoid this error, for all are of paramount importance.⁵

3. INFANT BAPTISM

Is what has been stated above about baptism applicable to children? The debate between those for and against infant baptism has been carried on for years: but it is necessary at this point to try to achieve some certainty, as it will in due course be seen to be important in our discussion of Confirmation.

1 Flemington, op cit., p.88

2 10:22

3 2:24, 3:18, 4:1

4 1:3

5 W.D. Maxwell's article in Studia Liturgica, Volume 1, No.2 emphasizes the importance for Baptism of the Resurrection.

It is generally agreed that the New Testament contains no specific mention of infant baptism. We must remember that the Church in New Testament times was a missionary one, and converts to Christianity were mostly adults. In Jewish proselyte baptism the children of the proselyte were baptized as well, but children born to a proselyte subsequent to his baptism were not baptized, they simply had to be circumcised. There seems to be an analogy to this in 1 Corinthians 7:14 "For the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy". Many writers point out that it is possible in New Testament times that the children of Christians were not baptized at all, either in infancy or when they reached a responsible age. We must always bear in mind, for example, that the New Testament nowhere mentions the baptism of adults born of parents already Christians and brought up by them. This is an argument from silence and as such is very precarious.

Opportunities for the baptism of children could arise when a whole household was converted to Christianity. Stauffer made a study of the Old Testament and found there that the word oikos was used with a variety of emphasis. In the Old Testament oikos referred not only to children in addition to adults, but often had special reference to children, especially the very small children present. When we read of the destruction of the city of Nob in 1 Samuel¹ even the children and the sucklings were not spared. When Elkanah travelled to Shiloh to make his sacrifice he usually took his whole household with him, but as an exception he did not take Hannah when she was weaning her child. In the New Testament the word oikos appears at an early date in the Corinthian correspondence (c 54 A.D.), and it must have had the same meaning there as in the Old Testament.

1 22:19

If only adults had been baptized St. Paul and St. Luke would not have used the word oikos.¹

After his sermon at Pentecost Peter calls on all to repent and be baptized, saying, "For the promise is to you and to your children"² Who are these children? They are not future generations, suggests Jeremias,³ because an expectation of the time was of an imminent end of the world. Thus there would be no future generations. The children, therefore, are the children of those listening to St. Peter. Acts 2:39 is a call to have the children baptized. According to Jeremias we have here an early example of the practice of infant baptism in the New Testament. Again this is a precarious argument from silence.

St. Paul thought of Christian baptism as the counterpart in some way of Jewish circumcision.⁴ Thus as circumcision was the sign of entry into the old covenant, so baptism was the sign of entry into the new. When we read of whole households being baptized because of the faith of the head of the family⁵ we must take into account the contemporary notion, Jewish and non-Jewish, of the solidarity of the family.

Possibly a main cause of our difficulties about infant baptism is the notion of atomistic individualism that pervades modern thought and which was foreign to Greek and Jewish thought alike. This continually persuades us that what is of importance is my salvation or damnation, and that this is wholly a matter of my personal decision at my conversion through God working in me. Such a view leaves no real place for the Church or the sacraments.⁶ We must continually bear in mind that baptism is less for the benefit of the individual than for the sake of the Church. J.K.S. Reid says:

1 Quoted by Jeremias, op cit., p.20
 2 Acts 2:39
 3 Jeremias, op cit., p.40
 4 Colossians 2:11-12
 5 Acts 16:15, 33, 18:8, 1 Cor. 1:16
 6 T.W. Manson, article in SJT Volume 3, 1949, p.388

"It occurs not that A and B and C should be delivered from final loss, but that there may always be a Church to bear witness to Jesus Christ. Baptism is thus the divine method of recruitment. It is in this way that Acts 2:47 comes to life in our day - through and by means of holy baptism, the Lord adds to the Church such as should be saved".¹

After Abraham for a period of about twenty centuries children were accepted without question into the covenant community of Israel, and, if they were children of Jewish parents, from the time of their birth. Marcel continues:

"Through twenty centuries not only of tradition and ritual, but religious and theological thought fashioned by the promises and prescriptions of the covenant of grace, which is the foundation doctrine of the Old Testament, confirmed in all points by the New, owed their organic character to this covenant. The silence of the New Testament regarding the baptism of children militates in favour of rather than against this practice. To overthrow notions so vital, impressed for more than 2,000 years on the soul of the people, to withdraw from children the sacrament of admission into the covenant, the Apostolic Church ought to have received from the Lord an explicit prohibition, so revolutionary in itself that a record of it would have been preserved in the New Testament. But not only does the eternal covenant remain intact in the New Testament, but also in Jesus Christ it reaches its fulfillment. Had Jesus wished the reception of children into this covenant to be discontinued, he would have said so to kill any doubt".²

Barth in his pamphlet makes a tremendous plea for the Church to discontinue its practice of infant baptism - "It is a wound in the body of the Church and weakness for the baptized".³ Barth contends that faith must be present in the neophyte before Baptism and that there is a cognitive element in the sacrament. Cullmann denies this and says that what happens at baptism is the setting of the individual within the body of Christ by God. The individual is at this moment passive - it is God who acts. Flemington supports this argument by saying:

"May it not be that those who make their insistence on the necessity of faith a reason for denying any objective efficacy in infant baptism are themselves betraying a lack of faith concerning the method of divine revelation and the power of God to fulfill His own promises".⁴

1 J.K.S. Reid, article in SJT Volume 2, 1948, p.169

2 Marcel, The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism, James Clarke, London, 1953, p.190

3 Barth, op cit., p.40

4 Flemington, op cit., p.136

He also quotes a passage from Bernard Lord Manning's book Why not Abandon the Church (pp. 47-48):

"In baptism the main thing is not what men do, but what God has done. It is a sign that Christ claims all men as his own and that he has redeemed them to a new way of life. This is why we baptize children ... The water of baptism declares that they are already entitled to all God's mercies to men in the passion of Christ".¹

Baptism is more than a rite, - it is a sovereign act of God. Moreover faith is not entirely absent from baptism, because baptism, properly administered, is administered within and before the company of the faithful. The Church is the Spirit-filled society, and it is the faith of this society in the promises of God which is present at each baptism.

This view is supported by many writers, but we may conclude this section by quoting Motherspoon:

"In the general view of Christians (infant baptism) is a necessary consequence - they cannot think of themselves on one plane of existence and their children on another: they in Christ and their children left behind in the world: they called and their children ignored. On the contrary they are convinced that birth of Christian parents - nay, that birth within Christendom - is a call to be Christ's. Neither can they think of the Church without the children, far less excluding children".²

4. CONCLUSION

Baptism is the door of entrance to the Church which is the new Spirit-filled community created by Christ, the ebed-Messiah. In our baptism we become sharers of Christ's Messianic achievements. We are incorporated into his Body, the Spirit-filled Church, and thus receive the Holy Spirit. Children are not excluded from this community, but are welcomed as Christ welcomed the little children of his day.

1 Flemington, op cit., p.136

2 Motherspoon, Religious Values in the Sacraments, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1928, p.167

CHAPTER 2.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN
INITIATORY RITE UP TO ITS DISINTEGRATION

The Use of "Seal" in the New Testament

The word *σφραγίς* refers to the stone in a signet ring or to the design or inscription it bears. Eventually it came to mean a mark of authentication, guarantee, or ownership. The verb *σφραγίζω* means to set a seal upon a document and thereby give it authority. It also means to ratify, affirm, attest, or to set a mark of ownership upon something.

In ancient times the use of one's personal seal as a mark of ownership on one's possessions was extremely common. Cattle, slaves, and prisoners of war were branded with the mark of ownership. In the later Empire, soldiers were branded with a mark of recognition to prevent them from deserting. Each soldier was marked with the Emperor's sign. From this it is not a great leap to the devotee being marked with the sign of the god whom he worships and serves. Christians believed that they were the soldiers of Christ and therefore they should bear his mark. Apart from being the god's soldiers the devotees of the ancient religions often thought of themselves as the god's slaves who must wear a sign of ownership. The Christian also thought of himself as his God's slave: St. Paul tells us that we have all been bought with a price.¹

The Old Testament contains numerous descriptions of the wearing of badges of office or signs. Prophets wore a mark.² In later times the sign of Yahweh was worn as a phylactery on the hand and forehead of each Jew.³ God set His mark upon Cain,⁴ the man who murdered his brother. God's mark was on the lintels of the houses

1 1 Cor. 6:20. 7:23

2 1 Kings 20:41. Zechariah 13:6, Isaiah 44:5

3 Deut. 6:8, 11:18, Exodus 13:9

4 Genesis 4:15

of the Israelites to protect His people.¹ A relevant and important passage here from the Old Testament is Ezekiel 9:4-6. The angel of the Lord sets the mark tau on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry for the abominations done in Jerusalem. They will be spared the wrath of God. The seal will be their protection and the means by which they will be recognised on the Day of Judgement. The author of the Apocalypse takes up this vision and sees the sealing of the servants of God on their foreheads before the avenging angels are allowed to begin their work.

In three passages St. Paul teaches that baptism is the seal of the Spirit.² God has firmly established us in Christ and has anointed us with the Holy Spirit in baptism, sealing us with the Holy Spirit as our means of assurance that He will recognise us as His own on the Day of Redemption, when God redeems His own possessions.³

J.B. Lightfoot doubted whether St. Paul directly connected this sealing with the rite of baptism,⁴ but J.C. Lambert, opposing him, interprets the seal in the sense in which it is used in Romans 4:11.⁵ Here it is used to describe the circumcision of Abraham, an outward sign and proof of a spiritual reality which has already been accomplished by other means. Wargman argues that the seal of the Spirit in its truest sense is a synonym for baptism.⁶

St. Paul teaches that in their baptism Christians receive the mark or sign of the Spirit. God sets His mark of ownership upon them. This stamp or mark is the presence and activity of the indwelling Spirit of God. It is not accessible to human inspection in this age, but it is the sign by which those who belong to God will

1 Exodus 12:13, 22

2 11 Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, 4:30

3 Eph. 1:13 f.

4 Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, pt. 1, Vol.1, p.226, n.9

5 J.C. Lambert, The Sacraments of the New Testament, p.167, 176, 182.

6 Wargman, The Doctrine of Confirmation, Longmans, London, 1897 p.75

be recognised on the Day of Judgement.¹

The rabbis spoke of circumcision as a seal. It is the divinely appointed sign of the individual's position within the Covenant community, e.g. the prayer at the circumcision of a child: "Blessed be he who sanctified His beloved from the womb and put His ordinance upon his flesh, and sealed his offering with the sign of a holy Covenant".² Circumcision is not called a seal in the Old Testament, but in Jewish usage 'seal' was regularly applied to it, e.g. "The seal of circumcision is in your flesh as it was sealed in the flesh of Abraham".³ AND "Ye shall not eat of the passover until the seal of Abraham be in your flesh".⁴ In Romans 4:11 St. Paul writes, "He (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was still in uncircumcision". For Abraham circumcision was the seal on something already achieved, like the seal on a document which authenticates a transaction already completed. Baptism is the seal of the new covenant as circumcision was of the old, but baptism is not a physical mark on the flesh, it is an invisible inward sealing by the Spirit of God.

In 11 Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13 and 4:30 St. Paul is not referring to some other unction or rite such as Confirmation whereby the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the convert. He is reminding his readers that through their baptism they became sharers in the achievements of our Lord's One Baptism, members of His Messianic Community.⁵

CONFIRMATION IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE?

The likelihood that the laying on of hands was a regular feature of baptism in the apostolic Church is attested rather by the

1 11 Tim. 2:19

2 Quoted by Sanday and Headlam, Romans, ICC, p.107

3 Targum Cant. iii.8

4 Shemoth R.19

5 Mollat, op cit., p.80

Lampe, op cit., p.6

tradition of the Church in post-New Testament times than by direct New Testament evidence. St. Luke's apparently inconsistent account of the practice of baptism in the Apostolic Age has given rise to many serious problems. The picture that he draws of the method by which converts were admitted into the Church appears at times to be self-contradictory. Is this really so?

We have seen that the work of the Messiah was to create the new community of God. This was accomplished by the atoning work of our Lord culminating in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon his disciples. St. Luke sees the work of the Holy Spirit as the furtherance of this Spirit-filled community's world-wide mission. The disciples received the Spirit in a dramatic fashion at Pentecost. Immediately afterwards they went out of the Upper Room speaking in tongues to the amazement of the populace. St. Peter proclaimed the kerygma and that day 3,000 people were added to the Church. At every such turning point in the history of the Church's mission something of the nature of a Pentecostal manifestation of the Spirit recurs in St. Luke's writings. This is the key to the interpretation of the apparently conflicting narratives in Acts.¹

St. Luke does not tell us that hands were laid upon the 3,000 converted at Pentecost. Rackham believes that although the Holy Spirit is present in baptism in some way, the giving of the Spirit is not identical with baptism. He claims that in New Testament times the Spirit was given by the laying on of apostolic hands. He assumes that in this particular instance this rite is not mentioned simply because it was so commonplace that St. Luke saw no need to describe it.² From the context, however, St. Peter promised the Holy Spirit to those who repented and were baptized, and we are

1 Lampe, op cit., p.72

2 Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles, Methuen, London, 1901, p.33
This is typical of the old Anglican view concerned to defend Confirmation.

certainly to infer that they did receive him in baptism as they became members of the Church.

Mason, Wirgman, and others take the story of Peter and John going to lay hands on the Samaritans whom Philip had baptized as evidence that no-one but an apostle could administer the rite by which the Spirit was conferred. They conclude that the Apostolic Church practised the sacrament of Confirmation either as a regular part of the initiatory ceremony or as a distinct rite administered some time after baptism. Foakes Jackson goes so far as to say that baptism in the name of Jesus was not enough, the Spirit must be given by the apostolic laying on of hands.¹

If the laying on of hands was regarded as the indispensable means by which the Spirit is conferred, is it not strange that St. Paul never alludes to it? This rite is not one of the ministerial charismata St. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12:4-10. It is impossible to conceive that he as an apostle confirmed those Corinthians whom he thanked God he did not baptize!

If, on the other hand, the laying on of hands was such a commonplace rite that St. Luke found no need specifically to mention it, then, logically, we must assume that the baptism of the Ethiopian by Philip included laying on of hands. If this is so, why was it necessary for Peter and John to travel to Samaria to confirm those whom Philip had baptized?

Calvin strongly disagreed with those who used the narrative of the laying on of hands on the Samaritans as a proof of the efficacy of this rite:-

"They (the Papalists) are not afraid to break out into this sacrilegious speech, that they are but half Christians upon whom hands have not yet been laid. This is not tolerable now, because, whereas this was a sign which lasted only for a time, they made it a continual law in the Church as if they had the Spirit in readiness to give to whomsoever they would.

1. Foakes Jackson, The Acts of the Apostles, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1931, p.72

"Let us remember that the laying on of hands was the instrument of God, at such time as he gave the visible graces of the Spirit to his, and that since the Church was deprived of such rites, it is only a vain visor without any substance".¹

Why did Peter and John lay hands on the Samaritans whom Philip had baptized? Philip had taken the unprecedented step of baptizing non-Jews. Peter and John went to Samaria to investigate the matter. The conversion of the Samaritans was one of the major turning points in the history of the Church's expansion. Because they had been the bitter enemies of the Jews for so long they needed to be assured that they were acceptable within the Christian community which was centred in Jerusalem. They could not be certain of this until leading members of the Church had been sent to bless their work (cf. Barnabas' mission to Antioch in Acts 11:20 ff.). When they were accepted officially as members of the Spirit-filled community they received the Holy Spirit.

The story of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch is another controversial passage.² Dix claims that baptism in water without the baptism of the Holy Spirit was so outrageous to one early Christian writer that he inserted a special miracle to correct matters.³ The Western Text reads, "And when they were come out of the water the Holy Spirit fell upon the eunuch and the angel of the Lord caught Philip away to Azotus". In the Textus Receptus, however, the Holy Spirit is mentioned immediately after the eunuch's baptism. He snatches Philip away instead of descending upon the eunuch.

St. Luke describes the eunuch as going away 'rejoicing'. This may not be merely descriptive writing, but Luke could have inserted it to show that the eunuch possessed the Holy Spirit. *Χαρις* is associated with the Spirit in Acts 13:52 and 1 Thess. 1:6. It is a 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. 5:22). In I Peter, regarded by modern scholarship to be a baptismal homily, it is mentioned as a product of

1 Commentary on Acts of the Apostles, edited by H. Beveridge, Eerdmans, Michigan, p.339-40. Calvin's view of Confirmation will be discussed in Chapter 4.

2 Acts 8:39

3 Dix, The Theology of Confirmation in relation to Baptism, A & C Black, Westminster, 1946, p.18

faith.¹

Ananias laid hands upon St. Paul.² Dix argues that this was St. Paul's ordination as a prophet,³ but the weight of Old Testament evidence is against this assertion. When prophets were commissioned they were anointed, and it is likely that the Christian Church would have continued this practice. St. Paul did not 'prophesy' after his ordination.

St. Paul's conversion was a great turning point in the life of the Church. Our Lord sent Ananias to him to commission him as an apostle. St. Paul received the Spirit and went out to preach with tremendous power. He was to become the focal force of the Gentile mission.

Peter baptized Cornelius after he had received the Holy Spirit.⁴ The consensus of modern scholarship⁵ is that the Spirit descending upon Cornelius constituted a Pentecost of the Gentile world. St. Peter was not sure whether he should baptize this Gentile, but after the Spirit had descended upon him, St. Peter said, "Can anyone forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"⁶ Clearly this story is a turning point in St. Luke's narrative. It marks the beginning of the Christian mission to the Gentile world. At such an important moment in the life of the Church the Spirit descends upon Cornelius in the same way as he had come upon the apostles at Pentecost - St. Peter calls attention to this fact in Acts 10:47, 11:15.

Apollos had been baptized by John the Baptist and was called a man *ἄνθρωπος τῆς πνεύματος*,⁷ yet he did not receive Christian baptism or any sign of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit.

1 1 Peter 4:13

2 Acts 9:17

3 Dix, op cit., p.18

4 Acts 10:44 f

5 Lampe, op cit., p.66

Rackham, op cit., p.159

F.H. Chase, The Credibility of the Acts of the Apostles, London 1902, p.79

6 Acts 10:47

7 Acts 18:25

Rackham suggests that the story of the laying on of hands upon the disciples of John at Ephesus shows that the same was done for Apollos.¹ Lampe, however, believes that a direct command from Jesus was deemed to have conferred the Holy Spirit upon Apollos because he was ranked extremely high among the apostles.² The Corinthians regarded him as approximately equal to Peter and Paul.

The disciples of John at Ephesus were re-baptized and received the laying on of hands from St. Paul.³ The establishment of the Christian Church at the important city of Ephesus was a momentous event in the history of the expansion of the Christian Church. Ephesus was to become the centre of the Gentile mission and St. Paul seems to have made it his headquarters. These first converts became the nucleus of the Church at Ephesus. After they had been admitted into the New Israel they were made sharers in the active ministry of the Church by St. Paul's laying hands on them.

CONCLUSION

The New Testament regards baptism as the appointed means of entrance into the Church. In baptism the convert receives the Holy Spirit - no particular moment or action within the rite is regarded as conferring the Holy Spirit. Baptism is being born again of water and the Spirit.⁴ The New Testament knows no Christian baptism which is baptism in water only and is a mere preliminary to some other ceremony of the imparting of the Holy Spirit which follows it. There is nothing in the New Testament to suggest that any chrismation took place, though in James we read of the anointing of the sick with oil.⁵

THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

Justin Martyr describes very carefully the practices of the early Christian Church to present to the pagan world an adequate and self-explanatory picture.

1 Rackham, op cit., p.343
 2 Lampe, op cit., p.66
 3 Acts 19:1-7
 4 John 3:3-8
 5 James 5:14

Ratcliffe¹ believes that Justin's description of the Christian initiatory rites shows that at this early stage of the development of Christian practice there were two rites, viz. baptism and confirmation. The question facing Justin is, What makes a man a Christian? Ratcliffe argues that to a pagan Justin answers with a description of water-baptism carefully avoiding any mention of the Holy Spirit to evade any accusations of magic. When he answers Trypho the Jew he can tell of the Spirit, but he does not say when or how the Christian receives him. Unfortunately Justin left no teaching for catechumens.

The lack of information does not prevent Ratcliffe from 'hazarding a guess'. This seems to be an extremely dangerous thing to do after 2,000 years. Justin says that the Spirit descended upon Jesus after his baptism. In this Ratcliffe sees ground for believing that the Christian receives the Spirit after his baptism in water, hence there is a distinction between baptism and confirmation in Justin's teaching.

When did this confirmation take place? Justin refers to prayers being said in common for the Christians gathered at the service of baptism and for the newly-baptized. Ratcliffe guesses that in the prayers for the newly-baptized there were prayers that the power of the Holy Spirit be conferred upon them. Bethune-Baker suggests that not only was a prayer said for the power of the Holy Spirit, but also hands were laid upon them.² Carrington, formerly the Archbishop of Quebec, supports this view saying that it was Justin's reluctance to explain the mysteries of the Christian Church to pagans that prevented him from mentioning the laying on of hands.³

1 E.C. Ratcliffe, Justin Martyr and Confirmation, Theology, April, 1948.

2 Bethune-Baker, The Early History of Christian Doctrine, Methuen, London, 1903, p.380-1

3 Archbishop of Quebec, Justin Martyr and Confirmation, Theology, Dec. 1949

All this is speculation, argument from silence. These writers have all started with the presupposition that baptism and confirmation have always been two separate rites and have then tried to read into Justin Martyr's works justification for their views. The Archbishop of Quebec is particularly guilty of this. At one point he argues that there is no reason to suppose because Justin does not mention the laying on of hands that it did not take place. Later he goes to great lengths to prove that because no mention is made of the reading of the Scriptures at the baptismal services they did not take place on a Sunday. Using his previous argument it would be logical to say that because Justin does not mention the reading of Scriptures there is no reason to suppose that they were not read.

He also claims that the whole assembly of Christians was not present at the baptism but at the confirmation. Justin writes, "They are brought by us"¹ Who are the 'us'? Justin does not reveal this, but ^{he} is explaining Christian practices so we can assume that members of the Christian community who could attend were present at the baptismal services.

Justin's writings contain no evidence that he believed the Holy Spirit to be conferred on converts by any other method than baptism in water.

Irenaeus believed that baptism cleanses the soul as well as the body, bestowing the Spirit as an earnest of resurrection.

"We have received baptism for the remission of sins in the name of God the Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was incarnate and died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit of God. And thus Baptism is the seal of eternal life and new birth unto God".²

1. Ante Nicene Library, Volume 2 page 59
2. Haer. 5:11:2

In Dem. 41 f. Irenaeus does speak of the Holy Spirit being received through the laying on of hands by the apostles, but he does not indicate that this was the practice of the Church of his time.

H.J. Lawlor¹ claims that Irenaeus distinguishes the grace of baptism from the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that this reveals that the Christian initiatory rite had two parts in Irenaeus' time.

Lawlor bases his contention on a passage which reads:

"For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of that laver which leads to incorruption: But our souls by means of the Spirit. Wherefore both are necessary, since both contribute toward the life of God, our Lord compassionating that erring Samaritan woman by pointing out, and promising her living water so that she should thirst no more, nor occupy herself in acquiring the refreshing water springing up to eternal life."²

There does not appear to be any suggestion here of two different graces, but rather Irenaeus places emphasis on the necessity of the cleansing of both body and soul and the imparting of incorruption which is done by baptism. In another passage he writes:

In the Christian believer "there continually abides the Holy Spirit who was given by him in baptism ... For this soul has a resurrection in them that believe, the body receiving the soul again, and along with it, by the power of the Holy Spirit, being raised up and entering the Kingdom of God".³

Irenaeus does speak of the anointing of Jesus and his followers:

"The Son as being God received from the Father, that is from God, the throne of the everlasting kingdom, and the oil of anointing above his fellows. The oil of anointing is the Spirit, wherewith he has been anointed, and his fellows are prophets and righteous men and all who receive the fellowship of the Kingdom".⁴

Irenaeus also says that Christians are to be saved by 'partaking of his unction'.⁵ This does not refer to a physical act of anointing with oil, but refers to the One Baptism of our Lord in which

1 Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics, edited by J. Hastings, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1911; Vol. 1V, pp. 1-8
 2 Haer. /:8:1, 2
 3 Dem. 42
 4 Dem. 47
 5 Haer. 3:9:3

we all become sharers through our own baptism. Kelly¹ says that there are no clear pointers to the existence of a separate rite for the bestowal of the Spirit in Irenaeus or other contemporary writers.

We turn our attention briefly to the East. Clement of Alexandria taught that baptism imprints a seal or stamp which is in fact the Spirit, the image of God.² He does not hint anywhere that the spirit is conferred through unction or the laying on of hands so that we can reasonably infer that he regarded baptism itself as mediating the Spirit.

Origen stresses the inward significance and the spiritual efficacy of baptism. In it the Christian is united with Christ in his death and resurrection.³ It is the unique means of obtaining remission of sins:⁴ it frees us from the power of the devil and makes us members of the Church.⁵ His normal teaching is that the Spirit is received in baptism.⁶ Passages such as Acts 8:14-17 seem to confuse him and he distinguishes between the 'grace and regeneration of baptism' and the gift of the Holy Spirit mediated by apostolic hands. Commenting on this passage he writes, "In the Acts of the Apostles through the laying on of hands the Holy Ghost was given in baptism".⁷ He does not, however, suggest that this was the practice of his time or that the Christian initiatory rite was separated into two parts.

The earliest Western document we possess containing a full account of the liturgy of initiation is the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, representing the practice at Rome towards the end of the 2nd century. Hippolytus associates the remission of sins and the reception of the Holy Spirit with baptism, but he also gives valuable information concerning the importance of other ceremonies associated

- 1 Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, A & C Black, London, 1958, p.195
- 2 Excerpta Theod. 86.2
- 3 Hom. in Ierem. 19:14
- 4 Exhort. ad Mart. 30
- 5 Hom. in Exod. 5:5
- 6 de Princ. 2:10.7
- 7 ibid. 1:3:2

with the initiatory rite, viz. the laying on of hands with prayer and unction. Dix argues that the Spirit is conferred through the chrismation because the threefold Matthaean invocation is reserved until this point.¹ Is this really so? The candidate answers three sets of questions concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit respectively. After each set of questions he is immersed. He is thus immersed three times, firstly in the name of the Father, secondly in the name of the Son, and finally in the name of the Holy Spirit. Surely this is the threefold invocation used here at the baptism in water even though it is separated in this way.

It is not easy to find a systematic treatment of the subject in Tertullian's writings. He regarded baptism as necessary for salvation. Its effects include remission of sins, liberation from death, rebirth, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.² Later, however, he changes his mind. In Chapters 6-8 of De Baptismo he gives the order of ceremonies as immersion-unction-laying on of hands. In the water the candidate is prepared for the Holy Spirit, but receives him in the laying on of hands. The unction is the consecration of the newly-baptized person. The relevant passages of Tertullian read:-

"Not that in the waters we obtain the Holy Spirit, but in the water (under the influence of) the angel we are cleansed and prepared for the Holy Spirit".³

"After this when we have issued from the font, we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction "

"The unctions runs (down our flesh) carnally, but profits spiritually, in the same way as the act of baptism itself too is carnal, in that we are plunged in water, the effect is spiritual, in that we are freed from sins".⁴

"In the next place the hand is laid on us, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit through the words of benediction".⁵

1 Dix, op cit., p. 12 f.
 2 De Bapt. 1:18, c. Marc. 1:28
 3 de Bapt. Chapter 6.
 4 ibid. Chapter 7.
 5. ibid. Chapter 8.

Dix says that for Tertullian baptismum does not only mean baptism in water. The whole rite together is baptismum.¹ He claims that Tertullian regarded the unction as bestowing the Holy Spirit, but de. Bapt. Chapter 8, quoted above, seems to ascribe the gift of the Spirit to the laying on of hands.

Tertullian gives us clear evidence of a complexity of rites which together comprise the Christian initiatory ceremony. As theologians placed emphasis on one or other of these rites so conflicts arose as to when the Holy Spirit was conferred. Novatian taught that the Spirit is the active force which we receive in baptism, regenerating and dwelling in us with his personal presence, giving us a foretaste of eternal life and preparing us for immortality.² The contemporary view at Rome, however, identified the gift of the Spirit with the rites which followed baptism in water. Novatian was baptized by affusion on what he thought to be his death-bed, but he was not later sealed by the bishop. Pope Cornelius attacked him for this, saying, "Since he failed to obtain this, how could he have obtained the Holy Spirit?". This theology probably lay behind Pope Stephen's willingness to recognise the validity of schismatical baptism. Baptism slowly began to lose its full significance whilst the importance of the laying on of hands and chrismation increased.

Cyprian strongly opposed the recognition of schismatical baptism, but his own position was ambiguous. He taught that through baptism the convert is reborn to newness of life, and this is the result of the Spirit's descent:

"The Spirit is received in baptism, and when they have been baptized and have obtained the Holy Spirit converts draw near to drink the Lord's cup." 3

The new emphasis on post-baptismal rites influences him very much at other times:

1 Dix, op cit., p. 16 f.
 2 De. Trin. 29
 3. Ep. 62.8

"They who are baptized in the Church are brought to the prelates of the Church, and by our prayers and the imposition of hands obtain the Holy Spirit, and are perfected with the Lord's seal". 1

Cyril of Jerusalem gives an account of 4th century Palestinian teaching on baptism. Baptism is the bath (λουτρόν) of regeneration in which we are washed with water and the Holy Spirit. The newly-baptized receive remission of all sins committed before baptism. It conveys the blessing of sanctification which Cyril describes as the illumination and deification of the believer's soul, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, putting on of the new man, spiritual rebirth and salvation. Baptism impresses a seal upon the believer's soul. This sealing takes place at the very moment of baptism and as a result of it the baptized person enjoys the presence of the Holy Spirit. Just as Christ after his baptism received the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, so the oil with which newly-baptized Christians are anointed symbolizes the Spirit who sanctifies them. Cyril sees the whole rite as one and does not ascribe the conferring of the Holy Spirit to any particular part of it.²

As we proceed the witness becomes even less unanimous.

Although confirmation and consignation were increasing in importance many of the Fathers still ascribed the gift of the Holy Spirit to baptism. Athanasius maintained that the Spirit is granted to those who believe and are reborn in the bath of regeneration.³ Jerome taught that baptism and the Spirit are inseparable.⁴ Theodore believed that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at the same time as we receive baptism, for it is he who regenerates us and is the first fruits of our perfection.⁵

Confirmation and consignation, while still closely associated with baptism, were, however, clearly distinguished from it in the 4th

1. Ep. 72.9
 2. for Cyril's teaching see Palmer, Sacraments and worship, D.L. & T., London, 1957, pp. 13-25.
 3. Ad Serap. 1:4
 4. Dial. c. Lucif. 6:9
 5. In Gal. 2:16

and 5th centuries. As the newly-baptized Christian emerged from the waters of baptism he was anointed with scented oil at the same time receiving the laying on of hands. In the East the anointing was regarded as the most important action, but in the West both were regarded as of equal importance.

Many Eastern Fathers, for example, taught that through chrismation, with or without the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit was bestowed on the newly-baptized. In the Liturgy of Sarapion there is a special prayer asking God to grant divine and heavenly power to the oil of chrism, so that those who have already taken the bath of regeneration may also receive the Spirit.¹ Gregory of Nyssa insists that if the Christian is to lay hold on Christ and possess the Spirit, he must first be anointed with myrrh.²

There seems to have been a considerable amount of confusion and variety in attempts to set out the theology of baptism and confirmation and consignation. So long as the initiatory sacrament remained one and unbroken the differing views posed no serious problem. Once, however, unction and the laying on of hands were detached from baptism in water, the problem of where the Spirit was received and the relative importance of the various rites became an increasingly urgent one.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE RITE

In the East immersion, chrismation, the laying on of hands, and first communion have never been separated - the initiatory rite has remained one and unbroken.³ Our concern, therefore, is with the disintegration of the rite in the West. Several rites were in use in the West, but the Roman rite predominated by the 12th century and was in use throughout the Western world except in Milan.

1 25:2

2 Adv. Maced. 16

3. The Eastern Church's practice will be discussed in Chapter 4.

We derive our information concerning the Roman rite from the Apostolic Traditions, the Ordo Romanus XI, and the Hadrianum. All these include the initiatory rites with those belonging to Lent, Holy Week, and Easter Eve. This shows that initiation took place at the Paschal vigil after a period of preparation extending over the last few weeks of Lent. The Gelasian Sacramentary has a rubric for a second occasion for initiation: "On the eve of Pentecost ye shall celebrate baptism as on the night of the holy Pascha".¹ There is a similar rubric in the Ordo Romanus XI: "This foregoing order of baptism is to be observed in just the same way on the Sabbath on Pentecost as on the Holy Sabbath of the Pascha".²

This practice was observed at least from the time of Siricius who in 382 denounced the widespread practice of allowing initiation on Christmas Day, the Epiphany, or the feasts of the apostles and martyrs. He asserted that only on the Lord's Pascha and at Pentecost should the general sacrament of baptism be given to those who had been converted to Christianity.³ This view was upheld by Gregory II (died 731), "Be it known that the sacrament of holy baptism is not to be given except at the feast of Easter and of Pentecost save to those who in peril of death must be assisted by any such remedies, lest they perish eternally".⁴ Nicholas I, 866, wrote, "Therefore the special or solemn times of the year, at which baptisms are celebrated, according to the canons, are two, namely, Easter and Pentecost".⁵

By the 7th century the majority of those being initiated were infants. Infant baptism had been practised from the earliest days of Christianity. Justin Martyr speaks of many who 'have been

1. n. 592

2. n. 105 see Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, SPCK, London, 1960 for all quotations from these liturgies

3. Ep. Ad. Himerium 2

4. Ep. 18

6. Resp. ad Bulgaros, 69

for a full discussion of this see Fisher, Christian Initiation Baptism in the Medieval West, SPCK, London, 1965

Christ's disciples from childhood'.¹ Irenaeus speaks of 'infants and children, boys and youths and old men;' who 'are born again of God'.² Tertullian betrays that infant baptism was the vogue by his efforts to prevent it. In Cyprian's day it was the custom to baptize infants within a few days of their birth.³

The word infantes does not always refer to small children, but often to those who are 'young in the faith'. In the Gelasian Sacramentary, however, it is used in its natural sense. After the Creed, for example, an acolyte holds one of the candidates on his left arm.⁴ The Ordo Romanus XI instructs parents to take their children out of the church and keep them under supervision until the conclusion of the Mass.⁵

As initiates were mostly infants the term 'catechize' lost its original meaning of 'instruct'. At the redditio symboli the Gelasian Sacramentary has this rubric: "Early in the morning the infants make their return of the Creed. First you catechize them, laying a hand on their heads" ⁶ One would expect words of instruction to follow but they do not. words of exorcism, beginning with the formula, "Be not deceived, Satan" are used.

Tertullian's writings contain the earliest description of the consecration of the water of Baptism: "All waters therefore in virtue of the pristine privilege of their origins, do, after invocation of God, attain the sacramental power of sanctification".⁷ This was introduced when the Church stopped baptizing out of doors in living or running water. The closing words of the long prayer in the Gelasian Sacramentary show that the main purpose is to effect a real presence of the Holy Spirit in the water: "May the power of Thy Holy

1 Apol. 15
 2 Haer. 11:22.4
 3 Ep. LV111
 4 n.311
 5 n.73
 6 n.419
 7 de Bapt. 1V.4

Spirit descend into all the water of this font and make the whole substance of this water fruitful with regenerating power".¹

This prayer makes it clear that the coincidentalness of the Holy Spirit with the water is sought so that those who are baptized therein may receive not merely a physical washing, but also be cleansed spiritually and reborn by the Holy Spirit as new creatures. There is no mention, however, that the candidate receives the Holy Spirit in the waters of baptism. The one moment in the Gelasian rite when the candidate is said to receive the Holy Spirit is at the 'sealing':

"Then the Sevenfold Spirit is given to them by the bishop. To seal them, he places his hands upon them with these words:

"Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast made thy servants to be regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, and hast given them remission of all their sins, do thou, Lord pour upon them Thy Holy Spirit the Paraclete"²

The Gelasian Sacramentary and the Ordo Romanus XI place an unction of the candidate's head with chrism by a presbyter immediately after the immersion.³ The gift of 'salvation unto eternal life in Christ Jesus' is ascribed to this anointing. The gift of the Holy Spirit follows. First communion completes the service.

If infants were not expected to survive until either the next Paschal or Pentecostal vigil they were baptized by a presbyter and received their first communion. If they survived they were sealed by a bishop later.

The service did not change much from the 6th to the 12th century when it started to disintegrate.

1. n.92
2. n.95
3. n.94: n.96-97

THE SHORTENING OF THE INTERVAL BETWEEN BIRTH AND BAPTISM

As we have seen, converts were baptized only at the Paschal and Pentecostal vigils unless they were close to death. The belief grew in the Church that one should be baptized as close to birth as possible because the longer a person remained unbaptized the greater was the risk that he would die without being born again of water and the Spirit. He would thus be deprived of entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Parents living near the Cathedral city presented their children to the bishop for confirmation on the day of their baptism on Easter Day or Pentecost. There was a chance, however, that children born between these two festivals would not live to see the next.

The Council of Rouen, 1072, insisted that baptism should be administered only on the eves of Easter and Pentecost, but baptism should not be withheld from infants at any time on whatever day it was requested. The Council made no mention of restricting this privilege to those in danger of death - because of the high infant mortality rate every infant must have been regarded as being in danger of death. Bernard of Saintes (1141-66) ordered newly-born infants to be brought to Baptism with all possible haste. The Councils of Bourges (1255) and Cognac (1259) allowed infants to be baptized at any time.

In England, the Council of London (1237) strongly condemned the parental fear that their children might die before the next great festival and decreed that the ancient practice should be maintained. In 1279, however, Archbishop Peckham ordered that only those infants born within one week of Easter Day or Pentecost should be made to wait for initiation until those days. He relaxed this rule because he felt that young children were liable to die suddenly and simple parents could not be expected to administer a valid baptism in an emergency. Peckham's ruling implies that children should be baptized within one week of birth because of the danger of death.

The Constitutions of Padua required parents to bring their children to the local clergy to be baptized within eight days of birth (1339). Synods at Avignon (1337), Beziers (1342), and Chartres (1355) ordered the baptism of new-born infants within twenty-four hours of birth, 'without delay', 'as soon as possible' respectively. Later councils decreed that infants should be baptized within a week of birth, e.g. Milan (1565), Genoa (1574). Eventually this rule was universally applied because they believed that those who died unbaptized would not only be deprived of entry into the Kingdom of God, but will also suffer eternal punishment for their original sin.

Baptism was commonly administered within a few days of birth and first communion was deferred until the infant reached years of discretion. The bishop rarely attended baptismal services because his diocese was too large. Long before the barbarian invasions, the bishop was a man consecrated to rule a given territory corresponding to the Roman civitas. The bishop's authority was almost always associated with a city behind whose ramparts he had his cathedral. But as Christianity penetrated the countryside his authority became more extensive by the addition of a country suburb. The diocese of Nantes, for example, covered 3,800 square miles and that of Bourges 9,290 square miles.¹

1 Daniel-Rops, Cathedral and Crusade, Dent, London, 1957, p.231

THE SEPARATION OF FIRST COMMUNION FROM INITIATION

Because in the West the bishop was regarded as the only true minister of confirmation it was impossible to make confirmation available to all children on the day of their baptism. There was no question of preventing children from receiving their first communion on the day of their baptism because they had not been confirmed.

In the 11th century a controversy arose over the eucharist. Realism gained a slow victory over Symbolism. Paschasius Radbertus, 844, had taught that the substance of the bread and wine used in the eucharist was inwardly and effectively changed into the flesh and blood of Christ. Berengar, 1059, was forced to declare that the bread and wine placed on the altar, after consecration, were not merely the sacramental but also the true body and blood of our Lord, and that sensibly, not only in a sacrament, they were handled and broken by the hands of the priests, and crushed by the teeth of the faithful. As these views came to be widely held it is not surprising that the Church began to be uneasy about offering communion to those who might not be able to swallow the host.

Infants were given communion sub specie sanguinis only to prevent this disaster. Paschal 11 (died 1118), Abbot of Cluny, wrote, "We know that bread by itself and wine by itself were given by the Lord. That this custom should always be maintained in the Holy Church we teach and enjoin, except in the case of infants and sick persons who cannot swallow bread". In 1121 William of Champeaux wrote that "to little children just baptized only the chalice is given, because they cannot assimilate bread, and in the chalice they receive Christ entire. But the chalice must be given to them, because, as it is impossible to enter life without baptism so is it impossible without this life-giving viaticum."1

1 both quoted by Fisher, op cit., p.102

Realism's triumph led to a growing disinclination to allow any layman to communicate from the chalice for fear that a drop might be spilt. This uneasiness eventually led to the discontinuing of the practice of communicating infants sub specie sanguinis. As early as the 13th century it was common for laymen to communicate sub specie corporis only. Infant communion slowly died out. The Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215) linked first communion with the attainment of years of discretion, without defining this phrase. In this it was followed by the Councils of Toulouse (1229) and Albi (1254). The Council of Bayeaux (1300) was prepared to allow children to communicate at the age of seven years or older. The Council of Trent declared that infants lacking the use of reason were under no obligation to receive communion, since, having been regenerated through the laver of Baptism and incorporated into Christ, they could not in infancy lose the grace of sons of God which they had received at baptism.¹

THE LENGTHENING OF THE INTERVAL BETWEEN BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

As we have seen the Church encouraged the baptism of infants as soon after birth as possible. It was still believed that a baptized child was eligible for confirmation in its infancy. But, as time passed, an increasing number of those baptized in infancy were not confirmed until they were very much older. Why was confirmation deferred?

Parents were apathetic. The Constitutions of Richard Poore (c.1217) declared that if a child had not been confirmed before the age of five, his parents would be denied entry into the Church until he was confirmed. The Council of Worcester (1240) threatened parents with the same punishment if their children were not confirmed by the age of one, but this was modified because of practical difficulties, "provided they had access to a bishop or that it was well-known he has passing

1 quoted by Fisher, op cit., p.106

through the vicinity".¹

There was no unanimity about the age-limit - for Richard of Chichester it was one (1246), the Councils of Winchester (1262) and Exeter (1287) declared it to be three: the Council of Durham (1249) felt it should be seven. Neither could Continental Christians agree and differing age-limits were set - usually seven years and under. The Council of Cologne (1280), however, set the limit at seven years or older and this rule was common in the 16th century.

Parents largely ignored the severe penalties laid down for failing to have their children confirmed. To stop this apathy it was decreed that nobody should be admitted to the eucharist, except when in danger of death, unless they had been confirmed. Archbishop Peckham enforced this decree at the Council of Lambeth in 1281.² Its purpose was not to prevent people coming to the Lord's table, but to encourage them to be confirmed.

The Church regarded confirmation highly. This can be seen in the writings of some of the Fathers. Clement of Rome wrote:

"All therefore must hasten without delay to be reborn to God and finally to be sealed by the bishop, that is receive the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit, because for every man the hour of his departure from this life is uncertain. But when he has been regenerated by water, he must also afterwards be confirmed by the bishop, as we have said with the grace of the sevenfold Spirit, because otherwise he will not be able to be a perfect Christian, nor have his dwelling place among the perfect, if he has remained unconfirmed not of necessity but through his own carelessness or of his own choice".³

Quoting the False Decretals, Thomas Aquinas writes, "For all the faithful should, after baptism, receive the Holy Spirit by the imposition of the bishop's hands, that they might become perfect Christians".⁴

1 quoted by Fisher, op cit., p.122

2 Wirgman, op cit., p.335

3 quoted by Fisher, op cit., p.126

4 Summa Theologica, Part III, Q.72, art.11

Many scholars felt that confirmation bestowed no new gift but added something to a gift already bestowed in baptism. Peter Lombard said that the Holy Spirit given in confirmation for strength also had been given in baptism for the remission of sins. As medieval theologians strove to express the niceties of their beliefs many less zealous parents, hearing that their children had received the Holy Spirit in baptism, did not feel it necessary to have their children confirmed to increase the grace which they had already received.

Another reason for the lengthening of the interval between baptism and confirmation was the shortage of bishops. We have seen that the medieval dioceses were extremely large and the bishops found it difficult to visit each town and village regularly.

Many bishops were deeply involved in public affairs because they were the best educated men in the community. In England, for example, the 14th century bishop might have risen to promotion from ability he displayed as canon or dean of a cathedral, he might have been a monk, but in the majority of cases he rose through the royal civil service. A lay chancellor was appointed first in England in 1340, but during the greater part of the century the chancellor was an ecclesiastic. Bishop William of Wykeham, for example, was of humble birth. He attended only the Winchester grammar school and he began life as the clerk of the constable of Winchester. He entered the royal service and became the head of the office of works. He was also a privy councillor. As a reward for his services he was elected bishop in 1367 by which time he had accumulated a number of prebends all over England, the deanery of St. Martin-le-Grand and the Archdeaconery of Lincoln.¹

1 Leanesly, A History of the Medieval Church, Methuen, London, 1947, pp. 192 ff.

The king or emperor often appointed senior clergy as missi with the task of supervising the execution of royal commands. Especially famous for this was Charlemagne. He sent out missi dominici to supervise the conduct of the nobles. The Empire was divided into districts and every year two missi, one layman and one clergyman, were sent out to each district. They acted with the counts, and frequently against them, for the administration of justice: they watched the work of the judges and themselves held a court: they took steps for the improvement of ecclesiastical affairs: and they inspected the monasteries. Charles did not appoint as missi vassals who had no land, but rather archbishops, bishops, and abbots with dukes and earls.¹

Bishops were thus too busy to attend Confirmation services, or indeed were absent from their dioceses - in England in 1433, for example, Archbishop Chichele admitted that he had been absent from the Privy Council on no more than 33 days in 11 years.² In 14th century England it was held the canonical right of the bishop to visit his whole clergy every three years, but most bishops could not cover their dioceses and attend to their other duties in that time, and in ^{MANY} sees visitation was infrequent as can be seen from the following story:

"Anselm, therefore, set out from Wissant early on the morrow, and came after certain days to St. Omer, where he was received with joy by clergy and monks, and detained for five days: during which time, at the prayers of the canons, he consecrated an altar. After which there came to him certain honourable men of those parts, kneeling at his feet and beseeching him to confirm their children by the laying on of hands and the anointing with sacred oil. To whom he made answer forthwith: "Not only will I gladly receive those for whom ye pray, but others also who present themselves shall not be rejected". They, marvelling at the great man's benignity in so easy a condescension, were rejoiced above measure and gave him thanks: and, when their children had been confirmed, they forthwith filled the whole city with the words which they had received from his lips. Then might ye see men and women, great and small, pouring forth from their houses and outrunning each other in their haste to reach our lodging and share in so great a sacrament: for it was now many

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- 1 Strayer & Munro, The Middle Ages, Appleton, Century, Crofts, New York, 1959, p.96
Cambridge Medieval History, volume 4, p.682.
- 2 R.L. Storey, Diocesan Administration in the 15th Century, St. Anthony's Hall Publications, London, 1959, p.5

years since any bishop had suffered himself to be employed in any such office among them".¹

The disintegration of the rite could possibly have been prevented had the Church increased the number of its bishops. This was not easy to do as the existing bishops did not approve of such action. The Church could have allowed presbyters to conduct the whole service. St. Augustine speaks of a child being taken to the presbyters and it 'was baptized, sanctified, anointed, and received the imposition of the hand'.² This practice was widespread in Gaul and Spain but the Italian bishops disapproved - their dioceses were smaller and being many in number they could outvote the others. Innocent I declared that presbyters had 'no right to sign the brow with the same oil, which is reserved to the bishops alone, when they impart the Spirit, the Paraclete'.³ Gregory the Great, however, gave presbyters permission to anoint candidates not only on the breast but also on the forehead in the event of there being no bishop available.⁴

In the East the problem did not arise as presbyters anointed candidates with oil that had been consecrated by the bishop, and themselves laid on hands.

All these factors led to the extension of the interval between baptism and confirmation. The Church grew accustomed to children being confirmed beyond infancy. The Reformers had begun to criticise the Church's insistence on the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit.⁵ The Church was thus forced to clarify her position. The Council of Cologne, 1536, forbade confirmation under the age of seven on the ground that 'before an infant has reached the seventh year of his life, he will understand little or nothing of what is done, much less remember it'. The Councils of Milan (1565),

1 quoted by Coulton, Life in the Middle Ages, Vol.1, Cambridge, 1910, p.14

2 Sermo cccxxiv

3 Ep. xxv

4 Ep. iv. 26.

5 See chapter 4 below

and Sorrento (1584) supported this view. Very soon it became the accepted rule of practice throughout the west.

The reasons for the disintegration of the Christian initiatory rite were not theological but practical. The Church, however, faced with a fait accompli soon found theological reasons to justify her position. Fisher gives an example of the reasoning behind the theological explanation for the existence of a separated initiatory rite:

"Infants are not now presented for Confirmation: therefore infants do not need confirmation: the Church normally gives confirmation to adolescents: therefore the grace conveyed by confirmation must be the spiritual strength particularly needed by those entering adolescence".¹

1 Fisher, op cit., p.139

CHAPTER 3

SOME MODERN VIEWS ON CONFIRMATION - PART 1

The following two chapters will deal with the theology of confirmation from the disintegration of the initiatory rite to the present day. This chapter will be concerned with those who accept or have fallen heir to a disintegrated initiatory rite: their problem today is to decide (1) when the gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred upon the Christian: or, (2) if they accept that he is given at baptism, to decide what happens at confirmation.

1. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Encyclopaedia defines confirmation as 'a sacrament in which the Holy Spirit is given to those already baptized in order to make them strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Christ.'¹

The service begins with the bishop standing facing those to be confirmed with his hands joined before his breast, and saying, "May the Holy Ghost come upon you, and the power of the most high keep you from sins". "Then, with his hands extended towards the persons to be confirmed, he says, 'Almighty, everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them the remission of all their sins, send forth upon them thy sevenfold Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, from heaven.'" This is regarded as a general imposition of hands, and, says Davis, indicates that the bishop is going to hand on to them the Holy Spirit.² The use of the imperative emitte does not assist us, however, to decide whether the Holy Spirit is sent forth at the moment of this general laying on of hands or at a later moment in the ceremony.

Afterwards the candidates go up in turn for the anointing, which Davis regards as a threefold sign. First, the bishop lays his hands on the candidate. Davis interprets this as a gesture of commissioning, a giving of power and authority to the candidate appointing him to the status of witness to Christ. We may ask whether it is really necessary

1 Catholic Encyclopaedia, p.214

2 C. Davis, The Making of a Christian, Sheed and Ward, London, 1964, p.140 ff.

for a child to wait until the age of discretion to be elevated to the status of 'witness to Christ'? There is no age-limit to witnessing to Christ. Children witness to their Lord within the bounds of their conception of him at their particular age. This is all that is required of any Christian, that he live according to his understanding of the mysteries of Christ.

After the laying on of the bishop's hands the second action or sign is consecration with chrism. "It is a sign," says Davis, "that we are penetrated with the Spirit and made like to Christ, the Anointed. Its sweet smell reminds us that we must spread the knowledge of Christ abroad everywhere, like a perfume."¹ But nowhere in the rite do we find this indicated, and this interpretation seems to be simply flowery rhetoric. The third action is the tracing of the sign of the Cross. "The Cross," says Davis, "is the sign of suffering: we must be prepared to suffer for Christ with the strength given by the Holy Spirit. The Cross is the sign of victory: Christ saved the world through the Cross. The Cross is the sign of glory: sealed with the sign of Christ we are marked out for glory."² But making the sign of the Cross always means this. It has no special significance at confirmation. The anointing is the central action and to make the sign of the Cross when doing so is simply a seemly way of applying the oil. In his commentary on the chrismation Davis should have used the rich inheritance of the Scriptures, and focused on the central act. He would then have seen that in the Scriptures anointing is for kingship and healing, neither of which he mentions but which the action implies.

The words accompanying the threefold sign of the anointing are, "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost".

The laying on of hands and the chrismation then are the focal point of the rite. That there had been a long controversy over their relative importance can be seen from a decretal of Innocent III, 1204, which gives the primacy to the laying on of hands:

1 Davis, *op cit.*, p.141

2 *ibid.*, p.141

"By the unction of the forehead with chrism is denoted the imposition of hands, which is otherwise called confirmation, because by this means the Holy Spirit is bestowed for increase and strength. Hence while a simple priest may perform other unctions, this ought not to be administered by anyone but a high priest, that is to say, a bishop, seeing as it is recorded of the apostles alone, whose vicars the bishops are, that they conferred the Holy Spirit by the imposition of hands".¹

After the chrismation the bishop "strikes him (each candidate) lightly on the cheek, saying, 'Peace be with you!'. This is a short form of the ancient kiss of peace and "is intended to be a sign of love and affection from the bishop as he welcomes us as new workers in the field of Christ".² In the thirteenth century Durandus misinterpreted this gesture as a slap, giving it the symbolism of the blows and suffering we must undergo in the service of Christ. The words 'Peace be with you' show the error of Durandus. In a book on the Second Vatican Council, Crichton writes, "Something will have to be done about the vestigial kiss of peace (the tap on the cheek), and in view of the difficulty of the bishop giving it to each candidate it looks as if it will have to go. It cannot be said to be exactly a live symbol".³

This is followed by a prayer for the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of those who have been confirmed:

"O God, who didst give to thine Apostles the Holy Spirit, and didst ordain that by them and their successors he should be delivered to the rest of the faithful, look mercifully on the service of our humility: and grant to those whose foreheads we have anointed with the holy Chrism, and signed with the sign of the holy cross, that the same Holy Spirit coming down upon them may by his gracious indwelling fashion their hearts to be a temple of his glory".

The service concludes with the bishop's blessing: "May the Lord bless you out of Zion, that you may see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of your life, and have life everlasting".

The Council of Trent decreed that the bishop alone was the ordinary minister of the sacrament. Under exceptional circumstances a priest may be the extraordinary minister, provided that he obtain special delegation from the pope. This dispensation has been given to missionaries working in countries where there are no bishops or where there is little likelihood that a bishop would visit the mission station.

Many Reformers attacked the practice of confirmation - e.g.,

1 Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, article by H. Thurston, Vol.4, p.8
 2 Davis, op cit., p.141-2
 3 Crichton, The Church's Worship, Chapman, London, 1964, p:173

Calvin referred (not in very good taste) to those who practised chrismation as 'greasers'¹ - holding that such confirmation was an outrage to the Holy Spirit.

In defence of Roman Catholic practice the Council of Trent declared: "In confirmation a character is imprinted in the soul, i.e., a certain spiritual and indelible sign, on account of which the sacrament cannot be repeated".² The Council does not tell us, however, whether the sacrament was directly or indirectly instituted by Christ.

In 1907 the Inquisition condemned as an error the following statement:

"There is no proof that the rite of confirmation was employed by the apostles, while the formal distinction between the two sacraments, baptism and confirmation, has no place in the history of primitive Christianity".

The effects of confirmation are held by Roman Catholics to be threefold. Confirmation imparts

- "(1) an increase of sanctifying grace which makes the recipient a perfect Christian.
- "(2) a special sacramental grace consisting of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and notably in the strength and courage to confess boldly the name of Christ.
- "(3) an indelible character by reason of which the sacrament cannot be received again by the same person".³

Davis has made a more recent statement of the Roman Catholic position and has perpetuated all the confusions that arise from regarding baptism as incomplete and confirmation as its complement. Having fallen heir to a disintegrated rite Davis tries theologically to justify this position, but fails to be true to the teaching of the New Testament. He writes,

"Confirmation completes baptism by giving the baptized their full status and responsibility as Christian witnesses before the world. The baptized are already members of the Church, but confirmation constitutes a further commissioning. Drawing out the implication of baptism it expressly marks out the person as a messenger of Christ and herald of the Gospel: it confers an adult status upon him, with the duty of bearing fearless testimony before men to the Christian mystery he shares and to Christ's Church of which he is a member. Since the biblical revelation ascribes in a special way to the Holy Spirit the work of constituting a man as a prophet or spokesman of God, this sacrament is rightly seen as the gift of the Holy Spirit. It deepens the hold of God's bestowal of the Spirit through Christ on the Christian and

1 Calvin's view is discussed in the next chapter

2 Session vii, Canon 9

3 Catholic Encyclopaedia, p.214 ff.

constitutes a further sacramentalization of that grace by joining the person more intimately to the life and work of the Church." 1

We shall see in the following chapter how Calvin and other Reformers tried to remove these confusions and be true to the teaching of the Scriptures and the practice of the early Church.

2. A.J. MASON

Mason, an Anglican writing towards the end of the last century, contends that baptism, while it bestows regeneration and the forgiveness of sins, joins us to the body of Christ, and gives us a share in his divine and human natures, does not bestow on us the gift of the Holy Spirit. He holds that the effects of baptism are the work of the Spirit from without: the gift of the Spirit is reserved until confirmation, e.g., in Scripture the Samaritan converts, baptized but not yet confirmed, had not received the Holy Spirit, "For he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized..... When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of apostles' hands..."²

Such a theology, however, means that Christian baptism is no more than a repetition of the baptism of John. Mason does not believe that the Spirit is given in baptism, but that it is only a preliminary and prophetic rite. Yet in the New Testament what distinguishes Christian baptism from the baptism of John is that it is baptism with water and the spirit: these two aspects are inseparable. Christian baptism is not a prophetic rite: it is our incorporation into Christ, the door of entrance into the Spirit-filled community, and as we enter the Spirit is given to each one.³

Mason now turns to the Fathers to gain support for his view. Irenaeus interprets the unspiritual character of the Corinthians to their not having received, as he supposes, the laying on of hands.⁴ St. Augustine says, "When you were exorcized it was the grinding of you. When you were baptized it was your moistening. When you received the fire of the Holy Ghost, it was the baking of you".⁵ It is difficult to see how this statement supports Mason's conclusions - St. Augustine's

1 Crisis for Baptism, edited by Basil S. Moss, SCM, London, 1965, article by Charles Davis, p.111

2 Acts 8:16-18, cf., above pp. 27-28

3 1 Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27-28

4 Haer, 4:63

5 serm. cclxxi

utterance is more homiletic rhetoric than theological assertion. Mason quotes de Sacramentis, commonly attributed to St. Ambrose, St.

Augustine's teacher, "After the font it remains that the perfecting be done, when, in response, to the bishop's invocation, the Holy Spirit is poured upon you."¹ This we are to note, however, was written before the initiatory rite was irrevocably separated and it describes a rite at which the bishop both baptizes and confirms.

Mason asserts that when the Fathers associated the gift of the Holy Spirit with baptism, baptism invariably included what we know as confirmation, e.g., Cyprian teaches that the effect of baptism is that a man is 'made fit to receive the Holy Spirit'. This refers to baptism in water without the laying on of hands. Earlier Cyprian had written that 'by means of baptism the Holy Spirit is received!'. This must refer to the whole rite of baptism in water and the laying on of hands, otherwise Cyprian's two statements would conflict.

Many modern writers, like Mason, have tried to select from the large body of patristic literature on baptism such statements as support their own particular theories. The witness of the Fathers taken as a whole was confused and varied, and, as the rite of admission into the Church was still one whole, absolute precision and unity of teaching were hardly to be expected. As Lampe remarks,

"It is not therefore surprising to find that, for example, Mason and Umberg were able to find plenty of authority for the view that the gift of the indwelling Spirit is bestowed by means of the laying on of hands, and not by water-baptism, Wirgman was not less easily able to show that the Fathers taught that the indwelling presence of the Spirit was conferred by water-baptism and that an increase of grace was given for spiritual progress by the laying on of hands, while Thornton finds it equally possible to demonstrate that in the teaching of the Fathers the indwelling of the Spirit is regarded as being withheld until confirmation which he associates particularly with anointing".²

3. A.P. WIRGMAN³

Wirgman is here selected as representative of much Anglican opinion, and he has been frequently quoted in subsequent writing. He believes that the indwelling presence of the Spirit is conferred on the candidate by baptism with water and that an increase of grace is given for

1 iii.ii.8 (both quoted by Mason)

2 Lampe, op cit., p.195

3 The Doctrine of Confirmation, Longmans, London, 1897

spiritual progress by the laying on of hands.

He teaches that through baptism we are born again into the new life of the second Adam and receive from our union with him the gift of a new nature filled with the indwelling presence of the Spirit. The sevenfold gifts are sown in our hearts, although 'the maturity of their manifestation is deferred until we receive the Holy Spirit' in our confirmation.¹ It is difficult to understand how he arrives at this conclusion - one wonders how he knows this as it certainly is not scriptural and not consistently empirically evident.

Wirgman contends that there are two distinct actions in our Lord's baptism - his immersion and the subsequent descent of the Holy Spirit upon him. He argues that the descent of the Spirit on Jesus was both his confirmation and ordination, "for all priesthood and ministry are centred upon him who is 'a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.'" Wirgman believes that not only was the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit given to our Lord, but he also received the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit in all their fulness and he was ordained for his office and work of Prophet, Priest, and King.² The Scriptures, however, do not tell us that Jesus received the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as well as his sevenfold gifts in all their fulness, because Scripture does not make any distinction between the two gifts.

Turning to the witness of Acts, Wirgman says that the Samaritans received a valid baptism from Philip and thus the indwelling presence of the Spirit, but they lacked confirmation. "The gift of baptism is expressed by our Lord's words, 'I am come that they may have life'. The gifts of confirmation are suggested by his further words, 'And that they might have it more abundantly.'"³ Wirgman argues that they received confirmation from Peter and John and thus were given the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit to enable them to enjoy abundant life and to exercise their royal priesthood. Wirgman's exegesis, if it may be called that, shows a remarkable ability to re-interpret Scripture to fit his own views. It is more likely that Peter and John went to Samaria to assure the Samaritans that they were accepted within the Christian Church which had its centre in the capital of their implacable enemy, the Jews.⁴

1 Wirgman, op cit., p.83

2 ibid. p.43-52

3 ibid. p.64

4 see above Chapter 2, p.28

In passages of Tertullian's writings which we have studied above,¹ Wirgman finds that Tertullian appears to deny that the indwelling Spirit is received in baptism, and, if this is true Tertullian's teaching is unscriptural. But in Wirgman's interpretation Tertullian teaches that the special gifts of the Spirit were not given in baptism but afterwards through the laying on of hands and prayer. He believes that Tertullian accepts that the indwelling presence of the Spirit is given in baptism.² As we have seen above, Tertullian regarded the initiatory rite as one whole, and it is futile to try to break it up into parts.

Wirgman opposes Mason who teaches that Cyprian believed that the Holy Spirit is not poured out upon men as God's temples until confirmation and that baptism only fits them for the subsequent reception of the Spirit in confirmation. Cyprian writes, "There can be no baptism without the Spirit".³ Wirgman claims that Cyprian does not connect the gift of the indwelling Spirit with confirmation, but teaches that by baptism a man becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit, and in confirmation the gifts of the Holy Spirit are 'poured out upon the temple'.⁴ This is another strange notion without Scriptural warrant.

Irenaeus, quoting 1 Cor. 6:11, writes, "When do we bear the image of the Heavenly? Doubtless when he (the apostle) says, 'Ye have been washed believing in the name of the Lord and receiving his Spirit.'"⁵ He teaches, according to Wirgman, that the indwelling Spirit dwells in the members of Christ by virtue of their baptism and the gifts of confirmation are an increase of grace.⁶

Wirgman interprets Cyril of Jerusalem as distinguishing between the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism and those gifts of endowment and ministry which belong to confirmation. Cyril alludes to Joshua being given the Spirit of wisdom for his office as leader of Israel,⁷ after Moses had laid hands on him. Wirgman argues that Wisdom is one of the sevenfold gifts of confirmation and so Cyril's use of this illustration points distinctly to the fact that he is dealing with subsequent gifts of endowment rather than with the baptismal gift of the indwelling Spirit.⁸ Cyril, however,

1 see above p.35-36

3 Ep. 74.5

5 Adv. Haer. 5:11

7 catech. 16.26

2 Wirgman, op cit., p.112

4 Wirgman, op cit., p.120-1

6 Wirgman, op cit., p.125

8 Wirgman, op cit., p.179

regards the initiatory rite as one whole, and it is futile to try to make such distinctions on the basis of his Catecheses, which are didactical explanations of the mysteries of the Christian faith and mystery.

Is there any place for unction in Wirgman's view? He says, without naming his source, that eighteen centuries ago anointing after a bath was a universal custom (this seems to be highly unlikely!), and this furnished a ready symbolism for a sacred unction at confirmation when it was administered immediately after baptism. For Christians it symbolized that 'royal priesthood of believers, whose fulness is received through the laying on of apostolic hands in confirmation'.¹ He feels that there is no necessity now to reject the use of unction which has been sanctioned by Catholic custom in all ages. 'The primitive and beautiful symbolism of the chrism cannot do injury to the Holy Ghost'.²

Wirgman contends that we do not have any direct evidence in the New Testament of the dominical institution of the sacrament of confirmation. But he follows Leo the Great's opinion that during the forty days between our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension he instituted confirmation:

"We cannot believe that the apostles and the Catholic Church after their day, would have ventured to institute and perpetuate a sacramental ordinance, whereby the special gifts of the Holy Ghost were conveyed without the distinct authority and direction of our Blessed Lord himself, whose anointing with the Holy Ghost after his baptism so clearly points to confirmation".³

This is indeed a precarious argument from silence. Modern scholarship has destroyed its very foundation. J.G. Davies has shown that the forty days between our Lord's Resurrection and his Ascension ~~are~~ not to be regarded as a period of time but symbolically.⁴ Even without Davies' argument Wirgman's view lacks any Scriptural support.

Wirgman believes that confirmation provides an augmentum ad gratiam. He argues that in baptism we are saved by the life of the second Adam, receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and partake of the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and in confirmation

1 Wirgman, op cit., p.359

2 ibid., p.363

3 ibid., p.385

4 see above Chapter 1, pp. 5-9

we receive the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit which strengthen and perfect the Christian life. Confirmation, he says, is the 'unction of the Holy One'¹, whereby the members of Christ are ordained to the royal priesthood of the Catholic Church.² "No other ordinance but confirmation can possibly be conceived as evoking the active exercise of the dormant lay priesthood of the baptized".³ We may add cynically that even confirmation does not always evoke the active exercises of the dormant lay priesthood - in many it remains dormant!

In his attempt to justify the Anglican practice of confirmation Wirgman begins with the assumption that it is an augmentum ad gratiam and then reads into the New Testament and the Fathers support for his view. Baptism, however, is not a preliminary rite to be completed in confirmation. The New Testament witness is that baptism is complete in itself.

4. DOM GREGORY DIX

Dix's view can be found in two booklets, Confirmation, or the Laying on of Hands? and the Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism.

He begins by agreeing with H.V. Martin, a Congregationalist missionary in South India, who defends the thesis that 'there is not a shred of evidence in the New Testament that water-baptism was essential to joining the apostolic Church.' Dix adds, "I could not possibly dispute his conclusion that 'baptism in the apostolic Church was primarily and fundamentally baptism in the Spirit'.⁴

Dix argues that (1) confirmation was in the Apostolic Age regularly administered before baptism in water: (2) the original material content of the rite was a baptism by affusion in oil: (3) the laying on of hands in Acts was a rite with an altogether different purpose, viz., the ordination of prophets: and (4) confirmation originated as the Christian equivalent of the circumcision imposed on Jewish proselytes and had for Christians the same importance and significance that circumcision had for the Jews, i.e., confirmation constituted the effective rite of

1 As the Anglican rite in the Book of Common Prayer omits unction, one must ask whether the Holy Spirit is given?

2 Wirgman, op cit., p.409

3 Wirgman, op cit., p.413 4 The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism, A & C Black, Westminster, 1946, p.9 (hereafter Theology)

admission to the New Covenant.¹

Dix uses the Syrian rite as evidence for his 'novel' theory. He quotes the Apostolic Didascalia (c 250 A.D.), "As of old the priests and kings were anointed in Israel, do thou in like manner with the imposition of the hand anoint the head of those who receive baptism. And afterwards - where thou thyself baptizest or thou commandest the deacons or presbyters to baptize - let a deaconness anoint the women. But let a man pronounce over them the invocation of the Divine Names in the water". This unction precedes baptism and there is no post-baptismal unction or laying on of hands. He uses the Apostolic Constitutions (c 375) which contain three different accounts of Christian initiation. In the first (iii.16.4) the bishop first anoints the head alone 'with the holy oil for a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit'. Baptism in water follows, and finally the bishop anoints the baptized with chrism. The second rite (vii.22.2) retains the order of unction-immersion-chrismation. The Holy Spirit is conferred at the pre-baptismal unction. The third rite (vii.42.1) also follows the same order but does not say explicitly where the Holy Spirit is conferred. The consecration of the pre-baptismal oil, however, includes a prayer that God may 'hallow this oil in the name of the Lord Jesus and grant spiritual grace and effectual power'. This, says Dix, is the nearest this rite comes to a prayer for the Holy Spirit, and indeed it does not appear to come very near at all!

Dix then uses Theodore of Mopsuestia's rite (c 428) which tells that the catechumen is first signed on the forehead with chrism by 'the priest'. His whole body is then anointed and this is followed by immersion. The rite concludes with the signing of the candidate on the forehead as 'an indication to you that it is in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost that the Holy Ghost descended on you also and you were anointed and received grace'.² The Spirit, says, Dix, is here given at the post-baptismal unction. These words quoted by Dix do not seem to state unequivocally that the Spirit is received at this unction, which is an indication 'that the Holy Ghost descended on you'. The use of the past tense here could indicate that the Spirit had been received before this

1 Confirmation, or the Laying on of Hands? SPCK, p.1 (hereafter Confirmation)

2 all quoted Confirmation, p.2-4

unction. In fact in all these rites quoted by Dix the tenses are confusing.

Dix believes that the Syrian texts show a continuous evolution in the rite of confirmation. It begins as a baptism by affusion in oil at the hands of the bishop. To this was early added an anointing of the whole body by subordinates. This preceded immersion and was reckoned to confer the Holy Spirit. Later a post-baptismal unction of the forehead by the bishop in the form of a cross was added, but first only in Greek Syria. By degrees association with the gift of the Spirit was transferred from the pre-baptismal unction to that which followed. Dix makes these assertions from very tenuous evidence. It is unlikely that there was such a development. The initiatory rite at that time was one whole, and the Fathers made no attempt to ascribe the conferring of the Spirit to any particular moment in the service. Kelly writes:

"There was considerable confusion between the theology of consignation, or chrismation, and that of baptism. Both rites, it would appear, were regarded as conferring the gift of the Spirit and as uniting the believer to Christ. So long as the great sacrament of initiation remained an unbroken whole, there was no serious disadvantage in this, and the confusion created no difficulty".¹

The texts upon which Dix bases his arguments are excellent examples of this confusion. All that we can say is that the Fathers believed that the Spirit was conferred in baptism. If we try to discover the moment in the rite at which the Spirit was conferred we are treading on dangerous ground.

Dix then examines the Roman rite as it is contained in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus. His conclusions are two: (1) "It is confirmation not baptism which here admits a man into the Church, the new Israel of God. Elsewhere in the Apostolic Tradition Hippolytus lays it down that catechumens may on no account pray, exchange the kiss of peace, or eat with the faithful. Even at the lections, the only part of the Church's worship they were permitted to attend, the catechumens were arranged apart by themselves. It is of course the old Jewish proscription of the uncircumcised Gentile. Each of these prohibitions are solemnly undone at confirmation". (Dix says that confirmation begins with the

¹ Kelly, op cit., p.435

rubric, "And the bishop shall lay his hand upon them invoking and saying....."). Against Dix we may say that the prohibition of catechumens from eucharistic worship is a perfectly natural and commonsense regulation, and it is difficult to understand why a Jewish source needs to be sought for it. Also in Palmer's¹ setting out of Dix's own translation of the Apostolic Tradition these prohibitions are undone only after 'they have undergone all these things', and presumably this means after the whole service, regarded as one, has been completed.

(2) Dix writes, "The actual confirmation here consists in a baptism by affusion in oil at the hands of the bishop with the baptismal invocation of the Threefold name. The accompanying imposition of the celebrant's hand only reproduces the imposition of the hand which accompanies baptism in water".² On what grounds can he say this? If, in Dix's view, the imposition of the hand by the celebrant only reproduces that imposition which accompanied baptism, it is difficult to understand how he can claim that the 'baptism by affusion in oil' confers the Holy Spirit and does not simply reproduce the exorcism before baptism. The prayer before this anointing, which Dix calls 'baptism by affusion in oil', uses these words, "Make them worthy to be filled with thy Holy Spirit". They could have already received the Spirit, and the celebrant prays that they will be worthy of such a great gift. The words which accompany the anointing are, "I anoint thee with holy oil in God the Father Almighty and Christ Jesus and the Holy Ghost". The bishop does not say, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. In the Scriptures anointing is for kingship and healing and this is what the action here implies. The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus gives no support to Dix's novel theory that the Holy Spirit is given at confirmation which is a baptism by affusion in oil.

Turning to the evidence of the New Testament Dix takes a passage in 1 Cor. 10 to illustrate St. Paul's views. "All our fathers..... were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea: and did all eat the same spiritual food....." Dix believes that there is nothing in Exodus 23:21 to suggest the idea of baptism, thus St. Paul must have seen some parallel with the Old Testament story in the Christian rite. The cloud

1 Sacraments and Worship, p.12

2 Confirmation, p.7

is the shekinah which in rabbinical literature is closely connected with the Spirit of God.¹

Dix says that had St. Paul wished to place the type of baptism in the Spirit after baptism in water there was ample warrant in Exodus for doing so. But Dix argues that for St. Paul baptism in the Spirit precedes baptism in water. This is a very tenuous argument. The conjunction and does not necessarily imply a time sequence - the two actions which it joins could be concurrent. There is no real evidence here to make us think that St. Paul thought of baptism in the Spirit as something different from baptism in water, and imparted to the convert before his immersion. The whole tenor of St. Paul's baptismal teaching runs contrary to this view. He does not bind the action of the Spirit to baptism, but recognises that the Spirit may seize upon a man and lead him to justifying faith and so to baptism.² He certainly believes that the gift of the Spirit is one aspect of being 'in Christ', and this condition is always symbolized and effected in baptism.

Dix adduces further Scriptural evidence for his theory from 1 Peter 1:2: "in sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ". Here, he argues, 'the sanctification of the Spirit' represents baptism in the Spirit and the 'sprinkling in the blood' baptism in water: and baptism in the Spirit precedes baptism in water. Lampe, however, believes that the preface of 1 Peter has very little immediate reference to Christian initiation and that Dix's exegesis is very strange and his argument not at all cogent.³

Dix now turns to a discussion of the Jewish initiatory rites which are three: (1) circumcision: (2) baptism by immersion: (3) a sacrifice of whole burnt-offering. The parallel Christian sequence in his view is: (1) confirmation: (2) baptism by immersion: (3) the baptismal mass for which the second century Christian had to bring his own *προσφορά*.

Dix argues that in the Old Testament circumcision is not merely a badge of membership, but the rite of admission into the Community of Israel. Those outside the covenant are referred to as 'uncircumcised' or 'unclean' and are subject to certain penalties, the most important of which

1 ibid. p.9

2 Lampe, op cit., p.88-9

3 ibid. p.90

is exclusion from the Passover sacrifice. Dix believes that proselytes were admitted to the Covenant community by circumcision and became in effect 'naturalised Jews'. He asserts that the baptism in water of the proselytes was one of the ordinary immersions prescribed for the removal of certain Levitical impurities.

In contrast to Dix, Heron's conclusions, based on more modern research by a group of scholars into Jewish initiatory rites and taking into account also the Qumran rite, show that after the proselytes had come out of the water of baptism, one week after their circumcision, they put on new Jewish clothes, received a new Jewish name, and were legally regarded as Jews one day old. Because there were many more female proselytes than male some of the Rabbis argued that baptism rather than circumcision was the decisive moment in the incorporation of a convert into the Jewish community. It is possible that circumcision was often omitted.¹ The complete ritual for initiation consisted of circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. Heron agrees that proselyte baptism may have started as a ceremony for the removal of certain impurities, but by New Testament times it had undoubtedly become a symbolic or ritual death and rebirth.²

Dix claims that there is no recitation of a baptismal formula in the Jewish rite of proselyte baptism. Heron, however, points out that before the proselyte is immersed he is reminded by the Rabbi of the mighty acts of God in redeeming Israel and of the obligations he had laid upon them. The candidate then responded by saying, "All that the Lord hath commanded I will do, and be obedient", and then dipped himself under the water. The 'stipulation' made by the Rabbi, and the reply by the convert and his immersing himself in water are done three times.

In his endeavour to show that the Apostolic Tradition is a Christianizing of Jewish practice, Dix tells us that there is no invocation of the Triune God at the immersion but at the 'baptism in oil'. In Hippolytus' rite, however, the candidate is asked three questions, he makes three replies, and is immersed three times, once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son, and once in the name of the Holy Spirit.

1 Heron, SJT, March, 1955

2 Heron, Studia Liturgica, Vol.1, March, 1962, p.35

This is an invocation of the Triune God even if it is separated thus.

The Jewish proselyte baptized himself. Dix quotes Easton who has pointed out that in the received text of the New Testament *παντιγυν* is twice used in the middle voice with reference to Christian baptism, and that the Western text shows St. Luke used it three times. He concludes that this bears witness to a practice in the New Testament which differed sharply from the practice of later times, but there are traces of its continued existence in the Catecheses of Theodore of Mopsuestia: "When the priest places his hand on your head and says, 'of the Father' you immerse and bow your head....."¹

Against Dix we may say that this surely means that the candidate obeyed the pressure of the priest's hand and submerged himself, or alternatively are we to suppose that the priest pushed the candidate under the water by brute force? Lampe argues that there is little evidence to show that Christians baptized themselves as Jewish proselytes did. The candidate's co-operation is hardly to be interpreted as self-baptism! Lampe does not deny that the middle voice is used in the texts quoted by Dix and Easton, but insists that their correct interpretation is 'have yourself baptized'.²

Is there really a parallel between the sacrifice of a Jewish proselyte and the neophyte's first communion as Dix would have us believe? This is a far-fetched notion. In fact many Jewish proselytes were never able to make the journey to Jerusalem to attend temple worship and make their sacrifice. Surely the most natural first action of the newly-baptized Christian would be to share in the common meal and eucharist which is at the centre of the Christian's life and worship. Lampe concludes that 'in the Apostolic Church the eucharist is not a sacrifice in any sense comparable with Jewish sacrifice, even though Hippolytus describes the bringing of a *προσφορά* by the convert for use at his first eucharist, this action has no relation to an expiatory sacrifice for the removal of ceremonial defilement'.³

Dix's conclusion is that there is a strong prima facie case for the derivation of the whole primitive Christian rite from the Jewish reception of proselytes and that this carries with it the equation of

1 Confirmation, p. 10-13

2 Lampe, op cit., p.86

3 ibid., p.87

confirmation = circumcision with all that this implies. The evidence which we have quoted from Heron's research destroys Dix's thesis. We have seen that often circumcision was omitted, and that proselyte baptism was regarded as the decisive moment in the incorporation of the individual into the Jewish community. Dix tries to read his conclusions into the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus showing that Hippolytus believed that confirmation, which is really 'baptism by affusion in oil', enables the catechumens to pray, exchange the kiss of peace, and eat with the faithful, in the same way as circumcision undoes prohibitions placed on the Gentile. We have seen that Dix fails in this endeavour.

There is no doubt that Jewish practices influenced the Christian rites, but we must not blind ourselves to the fact that in outer aspect and inner significance alike the Jewish initiatory rites are different from Christian baptism which springs from the One Baptism of our Lord. St. Paul speaks of the 'true circumcision of the spirit', but circumcision is not likened to baptism in the New Testament, it is contrasted with it.¹ The Fathers also deny this equation, e.g., 'Barnabas! explains the fulfilment in baptism of ... the type of circumcision.'² The Odes of Solomon contain the same comparison of circumcision with baptism.³ Cyril of Jerusalem points out the parallel between these two rites, and in the actual baptism in water he says that the Holy Spirit circumcises the convert.⁴

Dix believes that the pre-baptismal unction confers the Holy Spirit upon the neophyte. If this is confirmation, what are we to make of the laying on of hands in Acts? "The only obvious answer is, the 'ordination of prophets'," says Dix. He shows that the laying on of hands in Acts is closely connected with certain special forms of pneumatic excitement resulting in 'prophesying' and 'speaking with tongues'. Does this cheapen ordination? Dix does not think so because the young Church desperately needed prophets: men, women, and children could be prophets and thus fulfil Numbers 11:29: "But Moses said to him, 'Are you jealous

1 Col. 2:11 cf. John 7:22-3

2 Barn. 9.6

3 11.10

4 catech 5.6

5 Confirmation, p.19

for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"

The laying on of hands in Acts does represent an ordination, but it is not likely that it refers to an ordination of prophets. Dix has a predilection for seeking support for his views in the Old Testament, but as prophets were anointed with oil in Old Testament times and did not receive the laying on of hands,¹ the support Dix seeks derives from his own lively imagination.

Dix stresses confirmation to the detriment of baptism. He allows to baptism itself only the negative effect of purification and the remission of sins. The positive effects of the gift of the Holy Spirit and the inpouring of grace belong exclusively to the second part of Christian initiation, which he contends should be placed first. We have shown that his evidence for this based on Jewish practice is not true to the findings of modern research concerning that practice, nor to New Testament teaching on baptism.

5. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

It is difficult to discover accurately what the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa teaches and believes about confirmation. Some years ago, for example, a pamphlet called A Statement on Baptism² was issued to explain how our practice of infant baptism differed from the Baptist position. The author comes to the conclusion that the positions are not greatly dissimilar:

"Baptists often have a service of dedication for infants which is without water. That is followed by baptism with water at years of discretion. We have baptism with water for infants followed by confirmation, which, excluding the water, is very like the Baptist service in the years of discretion. The real question then is - when will you have the water?"

This statement does not tell us when or how the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the candidate, but it is clearly not at baptism. The author goes so far as to say that "in the first place infant baptism does not stand by itself in our Church practice but always with confirmation. Without confirmation it is maimed and incomplete". Calvin has strong words for those who believe that baptism without confirmation is incomplete:

1 1 Kings 19:16

2 General Assembly, 1957, Life and Work Committee, approved and distributed by General Assembly

"What is truly given in baptism, is falsely said to be given in the confirmation of it, that he may stealthily lead away the unwary from baptism. Who can now doubt that this doctrine, which dissevers the proper promises of baptism from baptism, and transfers them elsewhere, is a doctrine of Satan".¹

Since the publication of A Statement on Baptism the P.C.S.A. has clarified its teaching on baptism. The Committee on Baptism and Adherents delivered a report which was accepted at the General Assembly of 1963. This report said, inter alia, "Through the Holy Spirit given in baptism we participate in Jesus Christ. We share in his birth, life, death, and resurrection. We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, and becomes a new and risen life".²

Since then new proposed orders of service have been prepared by a committee of General Assembly. The new order for the baptism of infants does not mention our participation in Christ or our death and resurrection with him, and it does not indicate that the Spirit is received in baptism. In the order there is a short homily explaining the meaning of the sacrament:

"We become members of the new community, the Church of Christ, and dedicate ourselves wholly to his service. It is the act of God which, upon repentance, we receive the forgiveness of sin, and enter the new eternal life which Christ has made possible for us".

The Church of Scotland's Book of Common Order is not so embarrassed by the practice of infant baptism:

"The sacrament thus instituted is a sign and seal of our ingrafting into Christ: of forgiveness of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit: and of adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life. By this sacrament we are solemnly admitted into his Church, and are engaged to be the Lord's".³

In the P.C.S.A.'s new order the Holy Spirit is mentioned in an epiclesis which reads:

"O Holy Spirit, bless and sanctify this water for this holy use, that it may be to us a sign of thy redeeming grace".

But this has nothing to do with conferring the Holy Spirit upon the candidate. The Church of Scotland's epiclesis reads as follows, 'Sanctify this water to the spiritual use to which thou has ordained it,

1 Inst 4:19.8

2 Deliverances of the Sixty-second General Assembly, p.75

3 Book of Common Order, p.89

and grant that this child, now to be baptized therewith, may be born again of water and of the Holy Spirit....." A prayer after the baptism reads:

"Almighty and everlasting God, who of thine infinite
 .. mercy hast promised that thou wilt be not only our
 God, but also the God and Father of our children: we
 give thee thanks for this child now received into the
 fold of thy Church, and humbly beseech thee that thou
 Spirit may be upon him and dwell in him for ever".

The P.C.S.A.'s new order for the Confirmation of Baptized
 Persons has a prayer after the vows which reads:

"As they now offer and dedicate themselves to thee,
 may they know that thou dost accept them, and dost
 grant them the promised gift of thy Holy Spirit".

This is followed by the Lord's Prayer after which the minister lays his hands on each of the candidates' heads and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit according to the promise of the Lord". The order does not explain to which promise of the Lord this refers. The Church of Scotland's order has a prayer after the confession of faith which uses the word 'confirm' in its early sense of 'strengthen'.²

Almighty and ever-living God, strengthen these thy
 servants, we beseech thee, with the Holy Spirit the
 Comforter. 3

The South African order seems to empty baptism of its rich meaning to which St. Paul and the other New Testament writers bear testimony. The theology behind it runs contrary to the teaching of the apostles and the practice of the early Church. It is not true to the Presbyterian tradition shown to us in the Book of Common Order, and indeed appears to pursue a line unique to itself.

CONCLUSION

We must reject the theories of confirmation here discussed because they are not faithful to the teaching of the New Testament. They all teach that baptism is incomplete, believing either that only the indwelling presence of the Spirit is given or that there is no gift other than the forgiveness of sins. As we have seen, the New Testament teaches that baptism incorporates us into Christ through our sharing in his death and resurrection. We are admitted into the new community, created by his One Baptism, and walk in newness of life which is the life of the Spirit.

1 ibid., p.91

2 See below Chapter 5

3 Book of Common Order, p.102

CHAPTER 4

SOME MODERN VIEWS ON CONFIRMATION - PART 2

This chapter will be concerned with those who accept that the Holy Spirit is given in baptism. Their problem is to decide what is given in confirmation. Three solutions are given, (1) confirmation is restored to its primitive position as an integral part of the baptismal liturgy: (2) confirmation is regarded as the benediction of the Church on those who have made a profession of their faith: (3) confirmation is believed to mark a milepost in the Christian's pilgrimage, as a significant moment in his growth in grace.

1. THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

We shall first look at the Eastern rite as shown to us by St. Cyril of Jerusalem: this rite is representative of the period when adults coming in from Judaism and paganism were baptized, though some children were also baptized.

The catechumens presented themselves at the beginning of Lent to be enrolled as candidates for baptism. A date was then fixed for a general scrutiny of them by the bishop and his clergy. The bishop had inquiries made of the neighbours of each candidate about his conduct: or if the candidate was a stranger he had to show commendatory letters. If the information satisfied the bishop, the candidates were accepted and placed among the competents. During Lent they had to attend Church daily in the morning to be exorcized and hear a sermon from the bishop or someone appointed by him.

At a stated time the Traditio Symboli took place. The Creed was customarily taught by word of mouth, and not learned from a written copy. Thus Cyril has not inserted the text of it in his Catecheses.¹ After the Traditio teaching on the articles of the Creed continued until the beginning of Holy Week, when the Redditio Symboli took place. Each candidate presented himself before the bishop and recited the Belief (the text of which St. Cyril does not give), which he had learned by heart.

1 Duchesne, Christian Worship, SPCK, London, 1931, p.329

The catechumens were then carefully instructed in the doctrines of baptism and the eucharist.

On the night of Easter Eve the ceremonies of initiation took place. The candidates were met at the vestibule of the baptistery, where the service began with the candidate turning towards the west, the region of darkness, and renouncing Satan, 'as if he were really present'.

"When, then, you renounce Satan, you tread underfoot your whole contract with him, and shatter that ancient covenant with hell, and there is opened before you that paradise of God which he planted toward the East and from which our first father, for his transgression, was exiled".¹

This opening up of the paradise is symbolized by the candidate turning to the east, the region of light, and saying, "I believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit, and in one baptism of repentance". Duchesne says in his commentary that he 'recited the Creed for the second time'.² He does not differentiate between the Creed said here and the one said at the Redditio. It is at least possible, therefore, that this Creed was the one said earlier, the one the competent had learnt by heart.

All this had taken place at the vestibule of the baptistery, 'the outer temple'. After saying the Creed the candidate removed his clothes and went into the baptistery. On entering he took off his undergarments which 'was an image of stripping off the old man with his deeds (cf. Col. 3:9). Having stripped yourselves, you were naked, imitating Christ in this also, who was stripped naked on the Cross, and by his nakedness exposed the principalities and powers and boldly vanquished them on the tree!'³

The candidate was then anointed from head to foot with exorcized oil, and 'you were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ.'

'For cut off from the wild olive you were grafted into the good olive, and you were made to share in the prosperity of the true olive-tree. Therefore, the exorcized oil was a symbol of your participation in Christ's bounty, which puts to flight every trace of hostile influence.'⁴

He then entered the font which had been previously blessed by the bishop. Once more he confessed his faith replying to the threefold

1 1.9 (all quotations from St. Cyril taken from Palmer, Sacraments and Worship, p.14 ff.)

2 op cit., p.330

3 2.1

4 2.3

questioning of the officiating minister. After this he was plunged¹ three times into the consecrated water, 'portraying by way of likeness the three days' burial of Christ..... At one and the same moment you were dying and being born, and that saving water became at once your grave and your mother.'²

Then, coming out of the font, he was anointed with chrism.

"He (Christ) washed in the river Jordan, and having imparted the fragrance of his Godhead to the waters, he came up from them, and the Holy Spirit in the very substance of his being lighted upon him, like resting on like. So, too, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred waters, you were given an unction, the antitype of that wherewith Christ was anointed: and this is the Holy Spirit".³

"This holy ointment, after the invocation, is no longer mere, or if you prefer, ordinary ointment, but the gift of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, which becomes operative through the presence of his divinity. Now this ointment is applied symbolically to your forehead and your other senses, and while your body is anointed with visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the holy and invisible Spirit".⁴

After the anointing the candidate, turning to the east, recited the Lord's Prayer. The ceremony ended with the celebration of the eucharist in which the neophyte participated for the first time.

It is a futile exercise to try to discover at which point in the service St. Cyril regards the Holy Spirit as being conferred. He sees the rite as an unbroken whole.

Our guide to the modern practice of the Eastern Church is the Service Book compiled, edited, and translated by Isabel Hapgood. It will be seen that some changes have taken place.

The service begins with the prayers at the reception of the catechumens. These prayers include three exorcisms. The catechumen, or his sponsor for him, renounces Satan, and then the Nicene Creed, 'the Holy Symbol of the Faith', is recited.

These preliminary prayers are followed by the Office of the Holy Baptism. The deacon leads the people in the Litany whilst the officiating priest prays silently. This is followed by the prayer of consecration which includes these words:

1 Though by this we need not believe that he was taken by the back of the neck and forced under
 2 2.4
 3 3.1
 4 3.3

"But do thou, O Master of all, show this water to be the water of redemption, the water of sanctification, the purification of flesh and spirit, the loosing of bonds, the remission of sins, the illumination of the soul, the laver of regeneration, the renewal of the Spirit, the gift of adoption to Sonship, the garment of incorruption, the fountain of life. For thou hast said, O Lord: Wash ye, be ye clean; put away evil things from your souls. Thou hast bestowed upon us from on high a new birth, through water and the Spirit. Wherefore, O Lord, manifest thyself in this water, and grant that he who is baptized therein may be transformed: that he may put away from him the old man, which is corrupt through the lusts of the flesh, and that he may be clothed upon with the new man, and renewed after the image of him who created him: that being buried after the pattern of thy death, in baptism, he may, in like manner, be a partaker of thy Resurrection: and having preserved the gift of thy Holy Spirit, and increased the measure of grace committed unto him, he may receive the prize of his high calling, and be numbered with the first born whose names are written in heaven, in thee, our God and Lord, Jesus Christ".

The prayer of consecration of the holy oil follows:

"Bless also this holy oil with the power, and operation, and indwelling of thy Holy Spirit, that it may be an anointing into incorruption, an armour of righteousness, to the renewing of soul and body, to the averting of every assault of the devil, to deliverance from all evil of those who shall be anointed herewith in faith, or who are partakers thereof"

The catechumen's whole body is then anointed with the 'oil of gladness': the priest baptizes him, and clothes him with a new garment.

The Office of Holy Chrismation follows, when, after a prayer, the priest anoints the neophyte with holy chrism on the brow, the eyes, the nostrils, the lips, both ears, the breasts, the hands, and the feet: at each anointing the priest says, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit". These words imply that the gift of the Spirit has already been given, for this ceremony seals what has already been received. The neophyte then receives his first communion.

The Eastern Orthodox Church has thus kept the initiatory rite in its fullness, one and undivided. Through baptism and confirmation (or chrismation) the infant is admitted to full membership of the Church and is entitled to all the privileges that such membership entails.

2. G.W. ASHBY¹

Ashby, a South African Anglican, begins by showing that

1 Prism, April, 1962, Vol.6, No.4

confirmation in Western practice now differs greatly from the custom in the early Church in the fourth century, when the initiatory rite was one. Now the baptized infant is confirmed some years later. As it is recorded in the New Testament and early Christian usage, many who had been converted to Christianity were baptized with their whole households, and many modern scholars have said that it is impossible to envisage an Eastern household which did not include some young children.¹ Now many people who are not members of the Church and who are not remotely interested in Christianity insist on having their children baptized ('done') in infancy and later confirmed.

Ashby agrees with Lampe that Acts 8:9-24 provides extremely precarious proof of a separation in time of baptism from confirmation. He says that whatever it may mean the time-lag between baptism and the laying of hands on the Samaritans had nothing whatever to do with their reaching the age of maturity.

Ashby agrees also that historical circumstances rather than theological niceties caused the disintegration of the initiatory rite. He asserts that baptism, confirmation, and first communion belong together. He suggests that the age at which communicants' children are confirmed should be gradually reduced. The aim of this process would be to reach a point at which all babies of communicant parents were baptized, confirmed, and received their first communion at the same time. This would place a tremendous burden on the bishops, but it could be eased by allowing presbyters to administer the initiatory rites. Another solution would be to break away from the feudal pattern of large dioceses, and resort to the smaller dioceses of the early Church.

To return the initiatory rite to a unity does not preclude the need for instruction in the Christian faith. This was and must always be of cardinal importance. Ashby says that instruction could be carried on over several years and culminate in a service of renewal of baptismal vows normally every Easter Eve. The Book of Common Prayer does not provide for such a service, but one is now available in a recently published book of alternative services for Easter Eve. Easter Eve is the ideal time

1 Cullman, Flemington, Jeremias, and Heron

for such a service, but it may not be the practical one in this country. Most people take the opportunity of taking a holiday at this time and largely ignore the 'holy days'. However much we abhor this practice it is a fact which we must face. We must endeavour to find a more suitable time when the majority of people would be able to attend such a service in their home churches.

Infants would also be present at this service of renewal of baptismal vows. They would be brought by their parents who would respond on their behalf. Ashby does not give an indication at what stage an infant should be able to answer for himself. Baptism is indeed an act of the divine initiative, but at some point in the life of an individual the divine initiative should be met by human response.¹

3. JOHN CALVIN²

The English Puritans who went to meet James, King of England and Scotland, on his way from Edinburgh to London presented him with the Millenary Petition. One of its clauses contained a plea for the abolition of confirmation, an echo of the demand of some of the Reformers.

For Luther confirmation was a Church-instituted ceremony, a blessing, having no very real theological connection with baptism.

"(Instead of this) we seek sacraments which have been divinely instituted, and among these we see no reason for numbering confirmation. For to constitute a sacrament there must be above all things else a word of divine promise, by which faith may be exercised. But we read nowhere that Christ ever gave a promise concerning confirmation: although he laid hands on many and included the laying on of hands among the signs in the last chapter of Mark: 'they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them: they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover'. (16:18) Yet no one has applied this to a sacrament, for this is not possible.

"For this reason it is sufficient to regard confirmation as a certain Churchly rite or sacramental ceremony, similar to other ceremonies, such as the blessing of water and the like".³

Melanchthon believed that in the primitive Church confirmation had consisted of catechetical questioning of the candidates: it had in view a public ratification of their faith, accompanied by a solemn

1 We shall return to this in Chapter 5

2 Institutes 4:19.4 ff.

3 Luther's Works, American Edition, Muhlenburg Press, Philadelphia, 1959, Vol.36, p.92

blessing.¹

The Confessio Helvetica recognized penance, holy orders, and matrimony as divine ordinances, but not sacraments. Confirmation, however, is excluded.

"As for confirmation and extreme unction, we hold them to be human inventions with which the Church can dispense without doing any damage: and we in fact make no use of them in our Churches, for they involve certain things to which we cannot accord the slightest approval".²

Calvin begins by reviewing the position as it must have been shortly after the disintegration of the initiatory rite, but which he wrongly regarded to be the practice of the primitive Church. Those who had been baptized in infancy sat among the catechumens to learn the great truths of the Christian faith. At the end of boyhood they were brought by their parents to the bishop who examined them in the Catechism. When the bishop had approved of the candidates' knowledge of the faith he laid his hands upon them in blessing. Calvin quotes Leo 1 as saying, "If anyone returns from heretics, let him not be baptized again, but let that which was there wanting to him - viz., the virtue of the Spirit, be conferred by the laying on of hands by the bishop."³ Calvin says that many will take these words to support the doctrine that the gift of the Spirit is conferred at confirmation, but Leo says elsewhere, "Let not him who was baptized by heretics be rebaptized, but be confirmed by the laying on of hands with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, because he received only the form of baptism without sanctification".⁴ Calvin concludes, "This laying on of hands, which is done simply by way of benediction, I commend, and would like to see restored to its pure use in the present day".

Calvin asserts that it was a later age that ascribed the gift of the Holy Spirit to the rite of confirmation performed by unction. Calvin retorts, "But where is the word of God which promises the Holy Spirit here? Not one iota can they allege. How can they assure us that their chrism is a vehicle of the Holy Spirit? We see oil, that is, a thick, greasy liquid, but nothing more".⁵

1 Dix, Theology, p.28

2 Thurian, Consecration of the Layman, Helicon, Baltimore, 1963, p.2

3 Ep. 39

4 Ep. 77

5 Inst. 4:19:5

The Papalists supported their argument by saying that they were simply perpetuating the example of the apostles who could do nothing rash. Calvin does not deny that the apostles laid hands on people, or that through this action God poured out the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Had this ministry remained in the Church the laying on of hands would have been continued, "but since that gift has ceased to be conferred, to what end is the laying on of hands?" The Holy Spirit is still present in the Church to guide and direct her, "but the miraculous powers and manifest operations, which were distributed by the laying on of hands have ceased". Those upon whom apostolic hands had been laid showed forth the power of the Spirit immediately. This no longer happened and thus the rite should no longer be practised. This is an astounding argument from such a renowned logician. In the same way, for example, we may say that prayer is not always visibly and immediately answered, therefore the Church and individual Christians should no longer pray.

No one will deny the unique quality of the original apostles in so far as they established the Church in the power of Christ. Calvin, however, suggests that the very life of the apostolic Church possessed a nature and was marked by certain manifestations which neither could nor should be repeated in the Church's history. The apostles might have used the imposition of hands to confer the Holy Spirit, but this ministry has ended. The means of grace are solely the Word and the two Dominical Sacraments. Thurian writes,

"In such argumentation one finds both a refusal to consider the sacramental mystery, which eludes the realm of the sense experience, and a puzzling acceptance of the Church's poverty of charisms. Thereby Calvin involuntarily became the ancestor of pietism, which seeks religious emotions and will not be satisfied with the objectivity of faith and the sacraments: and he shares responsibility in the spawning of sectarian movements which seek outside the Church for charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit".¹

Calvin says that if the Holy Spirit is given in baptism for righteousness and in confirmation for increase of grace, and, if in baptism we are regenerated for life and in confirmation equipped for the contest, then baptism cannot be completed without confirmation. He

1 Thurian, op cit., p.8

hotly repudiates this argument. In baptism we are buried and rise again with Christ. We are quickened by the Spirit so that we may walk in newness of life.¹ "What is it to be equipped for contest if this is not?"² The Papalists claim that no-one can be a complete Christian until he has been 'chrismed' by the bishop. If this is true, says Calvin, then "divine wisdom, heavenly truth, the whole doctrine of Christ, only begins the Christian: it is the oil that perfects him".³ By this, he says, the Papalists condemn all the apostles and martyrs who were not fortunate enough to receive chrismation.

The Papalists hold chrismation in higher esteem than baptism because it is specially ministered by a bishop, whereas priests administer baptism. Calvin attacks this view vehemently, "What can you here say, but that they are plainly mad in thus pluming themselves on their own inventions, while in comparison with these, they carelessly condemn the sacred ordinances of God? Sacrilegious mouth! dare you oppose oil merely polluted with your fetid breath, and charmed by your muttered words to the sacrament of Christ, and compare it with water sanctified by the word of God? But even this was not enough for your improbity: you must also prefer it?"⁴

The Papalists argue that only the apostles laid on hands in New Testament times and therefore only their successors, the bishops, can continue this practice. Calvin argues that on the same grounds only bishops should be allowed to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Ananias was not an apostle yet he went to St. Paul and laid hands upon him thus restoring his sight and conferring on him the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Up to this point Calvin has been concerned with attacking the view of the Roman Catholic Church of his day. Positively, however, he pleads for the restoration of confirmation as the confessing of one's faith before the Church. From the time that he could understand, the child would be taught the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. At the age of ten he would present himself before the Church to make a

1 Romans 6:6
 2 Inst. 4:19:8
 3 ibid., 9
 4 ibid., 10

profession of his faith and to be examined in each doctrine. This practice would eliminate much ignorance and laziness in the Church and fewer people would be carried away by new and strange doctrines. If the Church is satisfied with the candidates' profession of faith, her representative would lay hands on them as a sign of benediction.

Calvin, like the other Reformers, showed himself to be the heir of medieval practice and often ignorant of the early Church's practice. The profusion of liturgical and patristic texts available to us were not available to the Reformers. Printing had only recently been invented, and the subsequent work of the collection and arrangement of texts scarcely begun. Calvin's protest was a legitimate reaction against a practice which lacked clear theological expression. Subsequent to the disintegration of the initiatory rite¹ medieval theology regarded confirmation as a sequel to and a completion of baptism. It followed in due course after parochial instruction on the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Seven Sacraments.²

Calvin accepted the medieval pattern, but denied that confirmation was a sacrament because he saw in medieval practice the danger of confirmation being regarded as the completion of baptism. He hoped to return to primitive practice, but he did not have the tools for the necessary research at his disposal. He studied the practice of the Church after the disintegration of the rite, and mistakenly accepted this as the practice of the primitive Church.

Calvin, therefore, attacks not confirmation, but a medieval distortion of primitive practice. His answer was a revision of the medieval practice of catechetical instruction of children culminating in their confirmation by the bishop. "The outcome was that, by simply taking upon themselves to set to rights an episcopal ceremony called confirmation in the Middle Ages, they (the Reformers) quite failed to rediscover what Calvin professed as 'the way of primitive Christians'.³

4. G.W.H. LAMPE

We have found Lampe's analysis of the New Testament evidence of his use of the patristic writings extremely useful. We now examine

1 see above page

2 Thurian, op cit., p.3

3 Thurian, op cit., p.4

his view of confirmation expressed in the last chapter of his book.

Lampe believes that the Holy Spirit is given in baptism. Again and again he stresses that it is difficult precisely to define, from the writings of the Fathers, the relation of the gift of the Spirit to baptism and confirmation. What they say about the 'seal' and the laying on of hands is often confused and inconsistent.

Lampe believes that there is no evidence in the New Testament or in the early Fathers to show that God's people are sealed by any other external means than baptism in water. There is no evidence of a ceremony in which a mark is placed on the candidate's flesh corresponding to circumcision in the Old Dispensation.

There is little convincing evidence in the New Testament that baptism regularly involved or included any other rite than baptism in water. Laying on of hands was practised on certain special occasions to symbolize fellowship and incorporation into a single unit of those who performed it and those who received it, e.g., the Samaritans and Peter and John as representatives of the Church at Jerusalem.¹ St. Luke regarded the ceremony as a means whereby special charismata of the Spirit appropriate to the missionary enterprise of the Church were bestowed upon certain converts so that they would share in the apostles' evangelistic task. Hebrews suggests that this rite was performed on all converts in close association with their baptism, but it is not implied that this constitutes a baptism with the spirit for which the normal baptism with water was simply a preliminary purification.²

Relatively early, he says, baptism, like all other Christian rites, was embellished with certain symbolic actions. Chrismation with the sign of the Cross marked the conclusion of the ceremony. This, he says, translated into dramatic form the New Testament teaching that in baptism the believer is made a member of Christ and a sharer in his Messianic achievements so that the Church could be described in later times by Theophilus of Antioch as the 'anointed people'. Lampe says that during the second and third century many pagans of materialistic outlook joined the Church. They failed to see the deep spiritual significance of Paul's

1 Acts 8:17, see above pp. 28-29

2 Hebrews 6:2

'seal of the Spirit' and looked rather for a magical or semi-magical sign to see them safely through to heaven. Under their influence the seal with the Cross came to be regarded as the means of the Spirit's bestowal. This belief, however, was never universal.¹

After the disintegration of the initiatory rite,² the initial gift of the Spirit tended to be assigned to baptism, while the Spirit is given in confirmation for the strengthening and equipping of the new Christian for spiritual warfare: or confirmation bestows the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit as a special endowment. It is on these grounds that Aquinas defends the practice of confirmation.³

At the reformation most of the Protestant Churches, following Luther and Calvin, rejected confirmation as a sacrament because it lacked dominical institution. The Reformers tried to restore baptism to its proper place as the sacrament of the bestowal of the Spirit, e.g., Archbishop Jewel insisted that 'baptized infants are the temples and tabernacles of the Holy Spirit'.⁴

The Reformers emphasised the catechetical rather than the sacramental aspect of confirmation. Confirmation, if it was even to be continued, now comprised the candidates' public profession of their faith, which had been a part of the early Church's initiatory rites, a prayer for their strengthening with the Holy Spirit, the increase in them of the Spirit's gifts of grace and their perseverance and increase in the Spirit until they came to the Lord's Kingdom. When the imposition of hands accompanied this prayer it was as the primitive symbol of benediction and fellowship extended to the baptized person.

Lampe says that the effect of infant baptism is primarily potential rather than actual: but nevertheless it is true that in baptism the infant is made 'a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven'. Lampe says that he receives a new status, and is admitted to membership of the society which is the Body of Christ, the special sphere of the operation of the Holy Spirit. Lampe argues that if the baptized person has been made a member of Christ it is true that he has received the Spirit which is one aspect of membership of Christ. He

1 Lampe, *op cit.*, pp 308-9

2 see above pp 22 ff.

3 S.T. 3:72.1

4 Lampe, *op cit.*, p.312

is sealed with the earnest of the Spirit 'for a day of redemption'.

This is a strange confusion of thought. He claims that the effects of baptism are primarily potential rather than actual, but then goes on to list what 'actually' happens, or what the child 'actually' becomes at baptism. He says that the infant is admitted to a new status through baptism, but baptism is not a status symbol. The New Testament remarks that we become 'new men' in Christ. Whether we baptize adults or infants we must believe that the baptized person dies and rises with Christ. The One Baptism of Jesus Christ underlies every administration of the sacrament of baptism, through which the baptized person shares in the Messianic achievements of our Lord.

Lampe says that the infant's perception of the indwelling Spirit comes gradually as he grows older, or perhaps it comes in a decisive moment of conversion. He regards confirmation as a significant point in this growth of knowledge of the indwelling presence of the Spirit. He writes,

"A vitally significant moment in this realization is that of confirmation, when the obligation of his baptismal profession is confirmed, and the benefits of baptism are in turn confirmed to him on the level of full consciousness. There is no fresh 'gift' and no fresh undertakings on his part: there is a fuller realization and actualizing of what has already been given and undertaken proleptically. A newer and fuller apprehension of Spirit is granted in answer to prayer, following the completion of baptism by the actual making of the response of faith to God's grace which was vicariously offered at baptism. Together with the other effects of baptism, the seal of the Spirit is confirmed to the believer in confirmation: he enters upon a fuller apprehension of the sealing he already possesses, but it is not bestowed in this rite, for the seal is 'Christ within', dwelling in the soul through the Holy Spirit. This seal can be sacramentally received only in baptism, but its realization is decisively advanced in confirmation".¹

Lampe again asserts the truth that the Spirit is given in baptism and not at some subsequent service. He stands opposed to those who believe that confirmation grants an increase of the Spirit, and asserts that one's knowledge and understanding of the Spirit's gift is increased at confirmation. But it is impossible to understand how the laying on of hands in confirmation will increase one's understanding of the

1 Lampe, op cit., p.319

indwelling presence of the Spirit!

Like so many other writers Lampe seems to be embarrassed by the practice of infant baptism. It is difficult to discover whether he believes that baptism is complete in itself, or whether it requires the completion of confirmation, or whether it is never completed as we are continually growing in knowledge and understanding of the indwelling of the Spirit. Baptism is complete in itself because it is the door of entrance into the Spirit-filled community created by the atoning work of Christ. It is impossible to find Scriptural warrant for much of what Lampe writes in the paragraph quoted above, e.g., 'the benefits of baptism are in turn confirmed to him on the level of full consciousness': 'he enters upon a fuller apprehension of the sealing he already possesses'. Lampe seems to perpetuate the confusion which he finds in the writings of the Fathers.

Lampe agrees with the Reformers in their abandonment of chrismation. He says that the symbolism of the use of chrism serves only to illustrate what has been done in baptism - namely, that the candidate has received the priestly and kingly status which belongs to the Church as the people of Christ - and its use is not appropriate to the confirmation of those who have been baptized long before because it relates to what was done rather than to what is being performed in confirmation.

Finally Lampe mentions only very briefly that the laying on of hands symbolises ordination to an 'apostolate' in the sense of a commission for service in the Church's mission to the world, e.g., St. Peter's laying of hands on the Samaritans,¹ the laying of hands on the Ephesians,² and the laying of hands on St. Paul.³ It is to a discussion of 'confirmation' which includes and emphasises this aspect that we now turn.

1 Acts 8:17
2 Acts 19:6
3 Acts 9:17

CONFIRMATION - A RE-ASSESSMENT

We have seen that the New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit is conferred in baptism.¹ There is nothing in Acts or in the writings of St. Paul to make us believe that baptism comprised originally any other action than immersion in water. To this action was ascribed rich meaning: remission of sins, death and resurrection with Christ, death of the old man and birth of the new man who is incorporated into Christ, admission into the Spirit-filled community created by the One Baptism of Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to each person admitted. There is evidence in Acts of an imposition of hands which took place variously at baptism or after baptism, and sometimes it was omitted altogether. At other times we read of the Holy Spirit descending on those who had neither been baptized nor received the imposition of hands, e.g., Cornelius.² This shows that God is not bound by his ordinances.

We have shown that Luke regarded the primary work of the Spirit to be the increase of the Church of Jesus Christ. Hence at every point which Luke considers to be crucial to the life and growth of the Church he tells of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, either without mediation as at Pentecost (Cornelius), or through the imposition of hands as on the Samaritans whom Philip had baptized,³ St. Paul,⁴ and the Ephesians who knew only the baptism of John.⁵ These were commissioned to the apostolic ministry to increase the Kingdom of God.⁶

Baptism, like other Christian rites, soon became embellished with additional ceremonies intended to draw out its meaning. By the time Hebrews came to be written the laying on of hands had become an important ceremony.⁷ We have seen that whatever this imposition of hands in Hebrews meant, it did not mean a ceremony for which baptism was merely a preliminary. It is possible that by this time each

1 supra Chapter 1
2 Acts 10:44
3 ibid. 8:17
4 ibid. 9:17
5 ibid. 19:6
6 supra Chapter 2
7 6:2

Christian convert was commissioned to share in the apostolic ministry of extending Christ's Kingdom, or the laying on of hands could have been the benediction of the Church on its new members, or it could refer to healing. There is no evidence to help us decide and any opinion offered would be a leap into the dark.

We have seen from our examination of the early liturgies that the baptismal service remained one whole. No effort was made strictly to define where or how the Spirit was received, cf. Didache. Immersion or affusion, the imposition of hands, and chrismation all together comprised the baptismal liturgy. Because the liturgies gave no clear definition on this point, some writers have been able to argue that the Spirit is given at immersion: others at the imposition of hands: and others at chrismation. While the rite remained undivided the Fathers did not have to face this problem: only when the rite disintegrated¹ did the Church try to find a solution. Several answers were thereafter given: baptism in water granted remission of sins and entry into the Church, confirmation granted the Holy Spirit: but the commonly accepted answer was that the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence was given in baptism and his sevenfold gifts were given in confirmation, which was an augmentum ad gratiam. In the modern era the Roman Catholic Church and some Anglican writers² support the augmentum ad gratiam view, whereas other Anglicans³ believe that the Holy Spirit is given at confirmation. Calvin accepted that the Spirit was given at baptism and that confirmation was the blessing of the Church on those who had completed a prescribed period of instruction and had made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ.

All these writers have succeeded in finding support for their views in the writings of the Fathers, and most of them have managed to interpret the Scriptures to fit their opinions. As long as baptism and confirmation remain separate the controversy will continue. Ashby has seen this and has urged that the two rites be joined together. The Orthodox Churches have maintained this unity through the centuries

1 vide Chapter 2, p. 36 ff.

2 e.g. Wirgman

3 e.g. Dix and Mason

and have never tried to fix the 'moment' either in baptism or the eucharist.

The New Testament evidence shows that the Spirit is conferred at baptism. St. Paul does not once mention the laying on of hands or any initiatory ceremony other than immersion in water. Other ceremonies were early added but immersion never became merely a preliminary for some more important ceremony to follow. The additional ceremonies were the imposition of hands and chrismation.

In the Old Testament times laying on of hands was used to impart a blessing, e.g., Jacob blessed the children of Joseph,¹ and in New Testament times Jesus blessed the little children.² Jesus also often laid hands on those whom he healed,³ Ananias laid hands on St. Paul who thereupon received his sight,⁴ and St. Paul laid hands on Publius who was healed.⁵

Laying on of hands was also used at ordination, e.g. Moses ordained Joshua as his successor,⁶ and rabbis used the rite when a disciple was authorised to teach.⁷ In the New Testament we read of the apostles ordaining the Seven by prayer and the imposition of hands.⁸ St. Paul wrote to Timothy to remind him of the spiritual gifts he had received when the πρεσβύτεροι laid hands on him.⁹

Anointing is an old Hebrew custom used not only in religious but also in secular life. The Hebrews anointed themselves for a festive occasion, for a joyous celebration, and for an everyday cosmetic.¹⁰ The anointing had a connotation of gladness,¹¹ e.g., the head of each guest was anointed,¹² and the rite was not practised in times of fasting or mourning.¹³ In the specifically religious sphere Jacob anointed the stone at Bethel in commemoration of his vision.¹⁴

¹ Gen. 48:14

² Matt. 19:15, Mark 10:13, 16

³ Mark 5:23, 6:5, 16:18, Luke 4:40, 13:13

⁴ Acts 9:12, 17

⁵ Acts 28:8

⁶ Numbers 27:18, 23, Deut. 34:9

⁷ HDB, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1963, p.573

⁸ Acts 6:6

⁹ 1 Tim. 4:14, 11 Tim. 1:6

¹⁰ Deut. 28:40, Ruth 3:3, Judith 16:8

¹¹ Psalm 45:7

¹² Luke 7:46

¹³ 11 Sam. 12:20, Matt. 6:17, 11 Sam. 14:2, Dan. 10:3

¹⁴ Gen. 28:18, 31:13, 35:14

The altar with its utensils and the tabernacle with its furnishing were anointed.¹

The priestly tradition tells us that Aaron was anointed² and so was the high priest.³ It is probable that prophets were also anointed.⁴ In the poetic recounting of Israel's history, the Chronicler refers to the patriarchs as 'anointed prophets'. The anointing of the king was of prime importance. It was not merely a part of the enthronement ceremonial, it was of decisive importance because it conveyed the power for the exercise of the kingly authority.⁵ We tend to think of a king simply as a ruler, a man who has very little direct concern with the well-being of his people, but Israel's king was called by God and had a pastoral responsibility. He was to protect his people by seeing that the country was ready to meet any attacks.⁶ He was the judge in disputes between his people - every subject, however humble, had the right to bring his case before the king.⁷ Israel will live in peace under the king, Yahweh's Anointed, and will enjoy fertility of man, beast, and crop, long life, victory over her enemies, and ideal social relations within the community.⁸

Turning to the New Testament, we read of the anointing of the sick with oil in James 5:14, but nowhere is there anything to suggest that a physical anointing with oil took place at baptism. All that is said there is that Christians were anointed with the Spirit at baptism,⁹ as Christ himself had been anointed with the Spirit at the beginning of his ministry.¹⁰ God 'anoints' all believers consecrating them to the service of Christ, in 11 Cor. 1:22, for example, St. Paul speaks of the divine initiative - God anoints us, seals us, and imparts to us the Holy Spirit, this is the truth which is expressed in Christian baptism.¹¹

1 Exod. 29:36, Num. 7:10, Exod. 40:10, Num. 7:1, Lev. 8:10

2 Exod. 29:7, Lev. 8:12

3 Lev. 21:10

4 1 Kings 19:16

5 1 Sam. 9:16, 16:3

6 1 Kings 12:21 f., 11 Chron. 17:2, 26:9, 15, 32:2-5

7 11 Sam. 14:15 f., 15:2, 1 Kings 3:16 ff.

8 Lam. 4:20, 11 Sam. 14:14, Psalm 72:16

9 11 Cor. 1:21 f.

10 Acts 10:38

11 Tasker, 11 Corinthians, Tyndale Press, London, 1958, p. 48-9

It is reasonable to suppose on the grounds of the Old Testament evidence that the laying on of hands and anointing symbolize both 'ordination' to the ministerial priesthood of the laity and also 'coronation' into the kingly office of those appointed to share in the Kingdom of Christ.¹ A baptized Christian shares 'in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly ministry of the Christ'.² The kingly priesthood is not simply for our own benefit, for our own sanctification, but it involves us in a pastoral care for others, as the Jewish king had a pastoral responsibility for his people. "It is therefore not a ministry in the Church, for the edification of the Church, but a priesthood of the Church for the salvation of all men".³ There is no need to make this dichotomy. Surely this ministry is both for the edification of the Church and for the salvation of all men.

In our baptism we are not each ordained priest in our own right but made sharers in the kingly priesthood of the Church, the Body of Christ, which preaches the Gospel of Christ to the world, prays for all conditions of men, and labours for the benefit and salvation of all.

We must conclude that the New Testament regards the baptismal act as a whole as the anointing of the members of the New Israel with the Holy Spirit, and this cannot be identified with any particular action or moment within it.⁴ We have inherited a disintegrated initiatory rite but there is no reason why we should now be bound by this. The New Testament knows of no ceremony called 'confirmation' separate from baptism - the convert and his family (including infant children) were baptized and received the 'anointing of the Spirit' in one service, after which they immediately received their first communion. It is to this belief and practice that we should return, and in so doing to recognize that the baptized are the anointed ones who share in the kingly priesthood of the Church.

1 1 Peter 2:9, Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6

2 Thurian, *op. cit.* p.86

3 *ibid.* p.88

4 Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, SCM, London, 1958, p.357

The word 'confirmation' has today lost the meaning it had when it was first used in Christian writings. Fisher lists the passages in the Fathers in which the word occurs.¹ He concludes that in its earliest uses its meaning is 'to establish' or 'to make sure that which is open to doubt', or 'to give assurance or certainty to a person in doubt'. He believes that it is not necessary to translate confirmare in any of these early passages as 'to strengthen'. St. Ambrose is the first of the Fathers to apply confirmare to that part of the initiatory rite now known as confirmation. In de Mysteriis 7:42, he writes,

"Unde repete quia accepisti signaculum spiritale, spiritum sapientiae et intellectus..... Signavit te deus pater, confirmavit te Christus Dominus, et dedit pignus, spiritum in cordibus tuis, sicut apostolica lectione didicisti".²

The Scriptural passage to which St. Ambrose here refers is 11 Corinthians 1:21 f. in which $\beta\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\omega\nu$ is translated by 'establishes' in the RSV and 'stablishes' in the AV and RV, thus St. Ambrose here uses confirmare to mean 'establish'.

In the fifth century confirmare was used of the episcopal laying on of hands which followed baptism or was administered to heretics at their reception into the Church. Thus the First Council of Orange (441) ordered that if a person baptized in an emergency had not been anointed with chrism, the bishop at the confirmation (in confirmatione) should be informed thereof. Fisher believes that confirmatio was not yet a technical term, because, if it had been, it would have been used in the preceding canon of the Council of Orange, where, however, the expression "to be sealed with chrism and a blessing" is used instead. The Council uses confirmatio in the sense of 'completion' as the intention of the canon is that the bishop shall supply what is lacking from initiations performed in haste in his absence.

In the Gelasian Sacramentary confirmare is not used of the post-baptismal anointing by the bishop, but occurs in a prayer used in

1 Fisher, op. cit., p.142 ff.

2 quoted by Fisher, p.142

the mass on Maundy Thursday when oil was consecrated: "O God who does bestow growth and advancement in spiritual things, who by the power of thy Holy Spirit does 'strengthen' the early endeavours of simple minds....." Fisher argues that confirmas here does not mean 'strengthen' so much as 'perfect' in the sense of completing and perfecting that which is rudimentary and inchoate.¹ In Ordo Romanus XI we read, "and the pontiff makes a prayer over them, confirming that with an invocation of the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit". Fisher continues,

"The meaning to be attributed to confirmare is placed beyond all doubt a little later when we read that the sealing with chrism must not be neglected, 'because it is at that point that every baptism is confirmed and justification made for the name of Christianity.'"

Fisher quotes Ordo Romanus I and Ordo XXXI as using confirmare to mean the administering of the chalice in the eucharist. Later Ordo XXXI states, "And so let him receive the sevenfold Holy Spirit at the hand of the pontiff and be confirmed with the sacraments of the body and blood of Jesus Christ". Similarly Alcuin wrote of the communion of the newly baptized, "he is confirmed with the Lord's body and blood". In this context it signifies the completion of the baptism and unction, and the bringing of initiation to its climax and fulfilment in the eucharist. Thus Rabanus can write, "Then the whole preceding sacrament is confirmed in him with the Lord's body and blood". But Fisher writes, "in the early ninth century it was evidently coming to be felt that the use of confirmare should be restricted to the episcopal acts after baptism."²

In conclusion Fisher writes,

"From this study of the use of the word confirmare in the patristic period and the early middle ages, the following conclusions may safely be drawn. First, although this word was used for the post-baptismal anointing and hand-laying by the bishop as far back as the fifth century, it did not become the normal word to use for this part of the initiatory rite before the ninth century. Secondly, it came into much more common use for this purpose as the influence of Ordo Romanus XI made itself felt beyond the Alps. Thirdly, until the ninth century it means 'to complete,

1 It is difficult to understand why Fisher here translates confirmas as 'strengthen' if he believes it to mean 'perfect'.

2 Fisher quotes evidence for this on p.147

consumate, make sure, or make fast', rather than 'to strengthen'. But when Alcuin's doctrine that the episcopal laying on of hands conveyed robur ad praedicandum aliis became widely accepted, and this act became generally known as confirmatio, it was not surprising that the Church should interpret confirmare as simply 'to strengthen'.¹

In modern English usage 'confirm' means to ratify, so that many believe that the Service of Confirmation is the ratification of baptismal vows. Whether we accept that confirmare means 'to complete' or 'to strengthen' it was always used in the sense of confirming a person. He was either to be 'established' in the faith or 'strengthened' by the Holy Spirit, but never did it mean that he, or anybody else, was confirming something that happened earlier. God confirms not man. Because confirmation today means 'to ratify' it is a misleading word and might with advantage be dropped. The baptismal rite should be restored to its original unity so that the infant would receive baptism and 'confirmation' at one service. The full meaning of our baptism, that it is our incorporation into Christ through our sharing in his death and resurrection, that we are admitted into the congregation of Christ's flock, and that we are anointed as sharers in the kingly priesthood of the Church, should be made clear in the words and actions of the baptismal service. The service should conclude as it always did in the early Church's liturgies with the baptized person, adult or infant, receiving his first communion. One of the privileges of being a member of Christ's body is to share in the eucharistic meal, and no-one, whatever his age, should be excluded therefrom.

Many objections have been raised against this view. Although Thurian argues that there is a baptism in water and a baptism of the Spirit (baptism and confirmation) which on no account should be separated, he objects to an infant receiving communion on the grounds of 1 Corinthians 11:29. "For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement upon himself". Thurian believes that as soon as the child is able to 'discern' the body of the Lord he should be allowed to receive communion. He continues:

1 ibid. p.148

"After a few years of biblical and liturgical formulation it would be possible and desirable to lead children up to communion through appropriate instruction on the meaning of the Lord's Supper and its role in their lives. Children approaching ten or twelve years are often more apt to grasp the objectivity of the sacrament than young people of sixteen whose new emotions may lead them to confuse the ardour of adolescence with authentic Christian piety". 1

Those who support Thurian argue that διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα means 'because he does not rightly judge' or being able 'to distinguish the Lord's meal from other meals, not regarding it as like any other meal'.² These commentators interpret 'body' to mean the elements of the eucharist rather than the Church.

Much³ modern sacramental theology does not accept this interpretation. It argues that to understand this verse we ought to study the whole passage. St. Paul admonishes the Corinthians for their disgraceful behaviour - he disapproves of their contentiousness and the divisions that exist among them.⁴ He reprimands those who gather early for the Lord's Supper and finish their feast without waiting for the latecomers, the slaves and workers who could not leave their work earlier. The early arrivers filled themselves with food and drink so that there was nothing left for the latecomers. St. Paul is concerned with their selfish disregard for others. The body of which he speaks is not only the bread but also the Church. Donald Baillie, expressing a widely approved exegesis, writes,

"In the congregation at Corinth there were cliques and factions, individual self-assertion, lack of unity and fellowship in Christ, and their rivalries and jealousies sometimes appeared even in their Christian worship. How could such a people worthily celebrate the Lord's Supper? They were failing to discern the body, they had no due sense to the body to which they belonged, the one body of Christ. They were eating and drinking as selfish individuals, instead of offering to God as one body the sacrifice of thanksgiving or joining as one family in the corporate festival of the Lord's table.

1 Thurian, *op. cit.*, p.80

2 *ICC* on 1 Corinthians, p.252

Tyndale Commentary on 1 Corinthians, p. 164

Catholic Commentary of Holy Scripture, Nelson, London, 1953, p.1095

3 Baillie, Clark, Schweizer

4 1 Cor. 11:17-19

"But without that note of unity in Christ, fellowship with each other, in the corporate life of the one body, holy communion would not be holy communion at all, and the Church would not be the Church of Christ". 1

In support of this view, Eduard Schweizer writes,

"The whole passage (1 Cor. 11:17-34) contains but one reproach: that they celebrated the Lord's Supper without waiting for the latecomers. These latecomers were those who had nothing (11:22), the slaves who were not allowed to leave early enough to arrive in time for the meeting of the Church. Paul is sober enough to understand that it is hard to be seated at a full table hungry and to wait for these poor brothers. He therefore admonishes them to eat and drink at home before going to the meeting.² For anyone who eats the bread and drinks the cup in an unworthy manner, namely, forgetting his poor and humiliated brethren and their most real earthly hunger, will be guilty against the body and blood of the Lord for these very brothers". 3

Neville Clark clearly unites the notions of the Church and the eucharistic elements expressed in this passage,

"The passage can only be understood in the light of the indissoluble connection of Christ and his Church. Paul speaks out of the heart of his own experience. He had persecuted the Church of God: but the question that had been addressed to him on the Damascus road was: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" and the overwhelming answer to his astonished cry: "Who are you, Lord?" had been 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting'. So now he can accuse the Corinthians of failure to discern the body because their conduct was a violation of the deepest meaning of the Church of Christ. To 'despise the Church of Christ and humiliate those who have nothing' (11:22) was to put to shame the Lord himself, to profane his body and blood..... Because the body has a double reference and Christ and his Church are organically one, to fail to discern the body was to be guilty of 'profaning the body and blood of our Lord': to indulge in gross misconduct at the supper and to violate the fellowship of the Church's common life was one and the same sin meriting one and the same condemnation". 4

L.S. Thornton writes that 'to discern the body' is to recognise the true pattern of the common life and our relation to it.⁵

If we interpret 'discern the body' as recognizing the Lord's Supper as different from any other meal, we should have great difficulty in explaining St. Paul's testimony that because of their failure to

1 Baillie, Theology of the Sacraments, Faber, London, 1957, p.124

2 This does not much look like fasting before communion!

3 Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ, SPCK, London, 1965, p.36
cf. Clark, An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments, SCM,
London, 1956, p.51

4 Clark, op. cit., p. 51-52

5 The Common life in the Body of Christ, Dacre, Westminster, 1942, p.343

discern the body 'many of you are weak and ill and some have died'.¹
Is there some power of 'black magic' in the eucharist that causes this to happen? This is an unlikely explanation!

The overindulgence of the few would deprive those who had nothing anyway of food and drink. Is it surprising that these unfortunate people should be weak and ill?

It is true that infants cannot fully recognise the Church or know what is happening at the eucharist, but they have been admitted to the Church through their baptism and should be entitled to the privileges of such membership. They certainly are incapable of profaning the Lord's Supper as the Corinthians did. They may not be able fully to apprehend the body, but they are part of the body which needs to be discerned.

We need to return to the practice of the early Church which baptized adult converts and all their children in a baptismal service that was one and complete. The modern Church mostly baptizes infants but in so doing it must accept that this baptism is a complete one - in water and the Spirit - if it is to be true to the Scriptural teaching. Baptism is a sovereign act of God but faith is not absent, for baptism is generally administered in the presence of a group or congregation of the faithful. God places the infant within his own community, the New Israel, created by the One Baptism of his Son and it is right for the congregation to respond, accepting its responsibility for the Christian nurture and upbringing of the child. This congregational response is present in some form or other in most modern liturgies (e.g. answering certain questions in the Methodist rite, standing during the service in the Presbyterian rite), but it is rarely sufficiently emphasised.

Accepting the union of baptism, confirmation, and first communion does not eliminate the need for catechetical instruction and the individual's own response to the divine initiative revealed in his baptism. At some stage in his life each individual must respond to God's call, either rejecting it or accepting it and offering himself

1 1 Cor. 11:30

to the service of God's Kingdom. Before he responds he needs to know what his response involves and it is with making this clear that the teaching of the Church should be concerned. Jesus said, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it". (RSV)¹ When he has counted the cost and understood the responsibilities of his commitment, each individual is ordained to take his part in the work of the Church.

THE ORDINATION OF THE LAITY TO SHARE IN THE OFFERING OF THE CHURCH

When an individual responds to the divine initiative revealed in his baptism and answers God's call to service within the Church of Christ, it would be appropriate by some rite to recognise this and to give him an express function to perform as work within the Church of Christ. What ought this to be? This question is answered in the eucharist. W.D. Maxwell has written, "The eucharist perfectly expresses the essential Christian belief. No other act of Christian worship can so completely show forth the fullness of the Faith".²

The eucharist is not simply one service among many but is central to the Christian life and worship. The earliest Christians continued worshipping in the Temple at Jerusalem but also met together to 'break bread'. We read in Acts: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers".³ And again, "And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and glorious hearts".⁴ At Troas the faithful gathered with St. Paul 'to break bread'.⁵ St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "When you meet together it is not the Lord's supper that you eat."⁶ Is it possible that the 'breaking of bread' and the 'eating of the Lord's supper' refer to two different acts? J.G. Davies thinks not and writes, "The New Testament evidence is not sufficient to support this

1 Luke 5:28

2 Maxwell, Concerning Worship, OUP, Oxford, 1948, p. 3-4

3 Acts. 2:42

4 ibid., 2:46

5 ibid., 20:7

6 1 Cor. 11:20

distinction, and, if anything, suggests an identity".¹ In

1 Corinthians 10:16, for example, we read, "The bread which we break is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"

St. Paul describes in lively terms how all the faithful were active in worship: "To sum up, my friends: when you meet for worship, each of you contributes a hymn, some instruction, an ecstatic utterance, or the interpretation of such an utterance".² (NEB)

But did the ordinary Christian take part in the eucharist? Clement of Rome sheds some light on this for us. In c 96 A.D., Clement wrote a letter from Rome to encourage the Christians at Corinth. This is an important letter which was held in great esteem by the early Church. Eusebius³ gives the following account of it, "There is one acknowledged epistle of this Clement (whom he had just identified with the friend of St. Paul in Phil. 4:3), great and admirable, which he wrote in the name of the Church at Rome to the Church at Corinth, sedition having then arisen in the latter Church. We are aware that this epistle has been publicly read in very many churches both in old times and also in our own day".⁴ The editors of the Ante-Nicene Library write that "the epistle before us thus appears to have been read in numerous churches as almost being on a level with (what are now)⁵ the canonical writings". This epistle is not a liturgical document but it does tell us that each person has a place and service in the worship of God:

"We are obliged to carry out in fullest detail what the Master has commanded us to do at stated times. He has ordered the sacrifices (προσφορᾶς)⁶ to be offered and the liturgies (λειτουργίας)⁷ accomplished, and this is not in a random or irregular fashion but at definite times and seasons.

1 The Early Christian Church, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1965, p.60

2 1 Cor. 14:26

3 Hist. Eccl. 3:16

4 ANL, Introductory note to the Epistle of Clement

5 My insertion

6 προσφορᾶ - used twice in Acts (21:26 & 24:17) to mean the sacrifice offered in the temple at Jerusalem

7 λειτουργία - at Athens a burdensome public office or duty which the rich discharged at their own expense, properly by rotation, but also by appointment or voluntarily. More generally it means "any service or function", "service", "ministration", or "help". Paul uses it in 11 Cor. 9:12 to describe "the service" of giving for "the provision of aid for God's people". He uses it again in Phil. 30 to describe the 'service' that Epaphroditus rendered him. On both occasions λειτουργία is translated "service" in the NEB

He has, moreover, himself determined, by his sovereign will where and by whom he wants them to be carried out. Thus all things are done religiously acceptable to his good pleasure, dependent on his will. Those, therefore, that make (ποιῶντες) their offerings (προσφορὰς) at the prescribed times are acceptable and blessed: For since they comply with the ordinances of the Master, they do not sin. Special functions are assigned to the high priest, special offices imposed on the priests and special ministrations fall to the Levites. The layman is bound by the rules laid down for the laity. (ὁ λαϊκὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῖς λαϊκοῖς προστάγμασιν δεδέεται)

"Each of us, brethren, must in his own place (ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι) endeavour to please God with a good conscience, reverently taking care not to deviate from the established rule of service". 1

In summary, Clement teaches that the Christian's own liturgy, the eucharist, is to be composed of the harmonious conjoining of the 'liturgies' of minister and people.

There is much that is of interest in this extract from Clement's letter. He asserts that our Lord himself established these various 'liturgies'. Whether we accept this or not we must note that these 'liturgies' had so long been established that one of the leading Christians assigned their origin to our Lord. It is possible too that he was anxious to confirm their use and so assigned their origin to Jesus. A second point of interest is the 'rules laid down for the laity'. Clement informs us that these rules existed but he does not tell us what they are, probably because he assumes that those to whom he is writing are well-acquainted with them.

Ignatius, writing c 107 A.D., tells of the special liturgical functions of the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and he concludes: "Apart from these there is no elect church, no congregation of holy ones, no assembly of saints".² In passages exhorting Christians to come together to celebrate the eucharist, Ignatius emphasises the unity of the eucharistic worship:

"Do ye all come together in one place for prayer. Let there be one common supplication, one mind, one hope, with faith unblameable in Christ Jesus, than which nothing is more excellent. Do ye all, as one man, run together into the temple of God, as unto one altar, to one Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the unbegotten God". 3

1 1 Clement, 40-41, translated by Bouyer, Life and Liturgy, Sheed & Ward, London, 1956, p.33

2 Ep. ad Tralles iii.1

3 Ep. to Magnesians, vii: 1 & 2

And:

"Take ye heed, then, to have but one *εὐχαριστία*
For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and one cup to (show forth) the unity of his blood." 1

In conclusion, Dix writes,

"It was at the *Ἐκκλησία* alone that a Christian could fulfil his personal 'liturgy' that divinely given personal part in the corporate act of the Church, the eucharist which expressed before God the vital being of the church and each of its members". 2

What was the personal 'liturgy' of the laity? The answer is to be found in the offertory.

Justin Martyr describes the offertory in minimal terms:

"Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water: and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the Universe, through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks (*εὐχαριστίαν ποιῶν* 3) at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands." 4

In his argument with Trypho the Jew, Justin elaborates on the above description:

"We are now the true high priestly race of God, as God himself bears witness, saying that in every place among the Gentiles there are those bringing (*προσφέροντες*) pure sacrifices (*θυσίας*) acceptable to him.

"God therefore has long since borne witness that all sacrifices (5) offered (*offerunt*) by his name, which Jesus the Christ enjoined, namely at the *εὐχαριστία* of the bread and the cup which are presented in every place on earth by the Christians, are well pleasing to him". 6

Hippolytus of Rome gives a fuller description of the offertory. Hippolytus is a unique figure in the history of the Christian Church because he, a schismatic bishop of Rome, is honoured by the Roman Church as a saint and martyr. He was born about 160 A.D., and tradition makes him a disciple of Irenaeus. He disagreed with Pope Callistus in the Christological debate and their clash resulted in schism.

1 Ep. to Philadelphians, iv.1

2 Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, Dacre Press, London, 1945, p.21

3 *ποιῶν* is not the usual word used to describe the offering of the elements either by the celebrant or the people. Usually *προσφέρω* is used

4 1 Apol. 65

5 cf., The Mass where 'sacrifice' (*sacrificium*) and 'host' (*hostia*) and 'oblation' (*oblatio*) are used of the elements and action both before and after consecration

6 Dial. cum Trypho, 116 f.

Easton is of the opinion that Hippolytus' Apostolic Tradition is more than a source for Roman customs at the beginning of the third century, it may with equal safety be invoked for the practice of thirty or fifty years earlier. He quotes Harnack as saying,

"Here is the richest source that we in any form possess of our knowledge of the polity of the Roman church in the earliest times, and this Roman polity may, in many regards, be accepted as the polity held everywhere". 1

This is possibly an overstatement because we do not have sufficient evidence to show how widespread the influence of Rome or the Apostolic Tradition was but we can believe that it was considerable. Easton describes Hippolytus as

"dour and irascible, convinced that meticulous theology must be maintained though the heavens fell, scandalized at the mere thought of relaxing discipline, a traditionalist to his finger tip, who believed that any new idea was necessarily Satanic". 2

A man of such conservative disposition is most likely to have preserved faithfully the practice and belief of his time.

Hippolytus' prayer for the consecration of a bishop defines the bishop's work as 'to offer thee the gifts of thy Holy Church'. (προσφέρειν τὰ δῶρα: offerre dona sancta ecclesiae tuae)³ This is not something new as Clement had written earlier, "For our sin will not be small, if we eject from the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily offered the gifts". (προσενκόντας τὰ δῶρα: offerunt dona)⁴.

Hippolytus' prayer at the ordination of a deacon defines the deacon's function as 'to offer (or 'bring up') ἀναφέρειν, or offerre) in thy holy sanctuary the gifts that are offered (προσφέρειν) to thee by thine appointed high priests".⁵ In the eucharistic

1 Easton, The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, Cambridge, 1934, p.26

2 Easton, op cit., p. 19-20

3 Ap. Trad. iii.4 The Greek is from Dix, Shape of the Liturgy, and the Latin from Duchesne, Christian Worship, p. 526 ff.

4 1 Clem. 44

5 Ap. Trad. 9:11 προσφέρω means 'present', 'offer' or 'give', whereas ἀναφέρω means more specifically 'to bring forth' or 'to carry'. Offero may be translated as 'to bring before', 'to present', or 'to offer'

liturgy itself, Hippolytus writes, "And then the offering¹ is immediately brought by the deacons to the bishop."²

Justin tells Trypho that the Christians bring pure sacrifices but Hippolytus is more explicit:

"They who are to be baptized shall bring with them no other vessels than the one each shall bring for the eucharist, for it is fitting that he who is counted worthy of baptism should bring his προσφορά at that time." ³

The προσφορά is at all points 'the gifts of thy Holy Church', but the 'liturgies' of laymen, deacons, and bishops enacted within it are proper to each and not interchangeable. The layman brings (προσευγκειν) the προσφορά, the deacon 'presents' it (ἀναφέρειν), and the bishop 'offers' it (προσφέρειν).

All the early liturgical traditions regard the eucharist either as a προσφορά or Θυσία and the substance of that which is offered to God is always in some sense the bread and the cup. Bread and wine are used not simply because they were staple foods of that era but because Jesus himself used bread and wine at the Last Supper. For example, Ignatius writes, "he who is not within it (the church) is deprived of the bread",⁴ and Clement of Alexandria attacks those heretics 'who use bread and water for the oblation (προσφορά) contrary to the rule of the Church.'⁵

In Hippolytus' rite, however, the laity offered at the eucharist not only the bread and wine but also occasionally oil, cheese, and olives for eventual distribution.

The Fathers attached tremendous significance to the bringing and offering of the gifts. Irenaeus, for example, applied to the offertory our Lord's words about the widow's mite - "That poor widow the church casts in all her life into the treasury of God".⁶ Thus he

1 Duchesne does not give the Latin as far as here and no Greek text is available

2 Ap. Trad. 23:1

3 ibid., 20:10

4 Eph. 5:2

5 Stromateis 1:19

6 Adv. Haeres iv.xviii.2, cf., Luke 21:4

states epigrammatically the essential meaning of this part of the rite, viz., each communicant gives himself under the forms of bread and wine to God. In another passage, Irenaeus describes the faithful giving the firstfruits as tokens of the consecration of themselves and all their possessions to the service of God,

"The oblation (oblatio) of the church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered (offerri) throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice (sacrificium) and is acceptable to him: not that he stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers (qui offert) is himself glorified in what he does offer (offert), if his gift be accepted..... We are bound to offer (offere) to God the firstfruits of his creation....., so that man being accounted as grateful, by those things by which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honour which flows from him".¹

"But our opinion is in accordance with the eucharist, and the eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer (προσφέρομεν, offerimus) announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and the Spirit".²

St. Augustine expresses this self-oblation of the laity in vivid language to those newly confirmed, "There you are upon the table, there you are in the chalice".³ In another sermon, St. Augustine says,

"Since you are the body of Christ and his members, it is the mystery of yourselves which lies upon the Lord's Table: it is the mystery of yourselves which you receive".

("Si ergo vos estis corpus Christi et membra, mysterium vestrum in mensa Dominica positum est: mysterium vestrum accipitis".)⁴

The whole rite was a true corporate offering of the Church. This is further emphasised by the Canons of the Council of Ancyra, 314, which do not express the penalty for mortal sin as being forbidden to receive communion but as being forbidden to perform one's own 'liturgy'. The Council was held so that the Church could heal the wounds inflicted on it by the last persecution and especially to see what could be done about the delapsis. There are three extant lists of the bishops who attended the Council but they differ so considerably that we cannot be sure who was present there. What the lists do tell us

1 Adv. Haer. 4.18.1 (The Patra Logia gives no Greek for this passage, only Latin)
 2 Adv. Haer. 4:18:5
 3 Serm. 229
 4 Serm. 272

is that the bishops came from so many different provinces that the Synod of Ancyra may be considered a general council of the church of Asia Minor and Syria.

The first canon deals with priests who had lapsed:

πρεσβυτέρος τοὺς ἐπιθύσαντας, εἶτα ἀναπαλαίσχτας
μήτε ἐκ μεθόδου τινὸς ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀληθείας.....
τούτους ἔδοξε τῆς μὲν τιμῆς τῆς κατὰ τὴν καθέδραν
μετέχειν, προσφέρειν δὲ αὐτοὺς ἢ ὅλως
λειτουργεῖν τι τῶν ἱερατικῶν λειτουριῶν μὴ
ἔσειναι

"Priests who sacrificed (during the persecution), but afterwards repenting, resumed the combat not only in appearance, but in reality, shall continue to enjoy the honours of their office, but they may neither sacrifice nor preach, nor fulfil any priestly office".

The second canon deals with deacons who had lapsed,

Διακόνους ὁμοίως θύσαντας, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα,
ἀναπαλαίσαντας τὴν μὲν ἀλλήν τιμὴν ἔχειν,
πεπαισθησθαι δὲ αὐτοὺς πάσης τῆς ἱερᾶς λειτουργίας
τῆς τε τοῦ ἄρτου ἢ ποτήριον ἀναφέρειν ἢ κηρύσσειν, εἰ
μέντοι τινὲς τῶν ἐπισκόπων τούτοις συνίδοιεν καματόν
τινα ἢ ταπεινώσειν πραότητος καὶ ἐθέλοισιν πλείον τι
διδόναι ἢ ἀφαιρεῖν, ἐπ' αὐτοῖς εἶναι τὴν ἐξουσίαν.

"In the same manner, the deacons who may have sacrificed, but afterwards returned to the fight, shall keep the dignities of their office, but shall no longer fulfil any holy function (λειτουργίας), shall no longer offer (ἀναφέρειν) the bread and wine, shall no longer preach. But if any bishops, out of regard for their efforts (for their ardent penitence), and to their humiliation, wish to grant them more privileges, or to withdraw more from them, they would have power to do so".

There is considerable doubt what ἀναφέρειν means when used of the bread and the wine. Justin Martyr tells us that the deacons distributed the holy communion to the laity.¹ It is thus possible that the canon refers to this function which had not completely died out as can be seen from the 18th canon of the Council of Nicaea. However, it is more than likely that the deacons no longer distributed the consecrated bread to the laity but only the chalice.² Thus because the canon mentions the bread it must here relate to the presentation of the bread and the chalice to the celebrant at the offertory. Hippolytus uses the same word, ἀναφέρειν, to describe the deacon 'bringing up' the offerings of the people to the bishop.

1 1 Apol. 65 & 67

2 Apostolic Constitutions, Eighth Book, c.13

The fifth canon of the Council deals with laymen who have lapsed:

Ὅσοι δε ἀνήλθον μετὰ ἐσθῆτος πενθικῆς καὶ ἀναπεσόντες ἔφαγον μετὰ δὲ ὅλης τῆς ἀνακλίσεως δακρύνοντες, εἰ ἐπλήρωσαν τὸν τῆς ὑποπτώσεως τριετηῆ χρόνον, χωρὶς προσφορᾶς δεχθήτωσαν. εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔφαγον, δύο ὑποπεσόντες ἔτη τῷ πρώτῳ κοινωνησάτωσαν χωρὶς προσφορᾶς ἕνα τὸ τέλειον τῇ τετραετίᾳ λάβωσι, τοὺς δὲ ἐπισκόπους ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν τὸν τρόπον τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς δοκιμάσαντας φιλοφρονεῖσθαι ἢ πλείονα προστιθέναι χρόνον. πρὸ πάντων δὲ καὶ ὁ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐξετασέσθω, καὶ οὕτως ἢ φιλοφρονεῖσθαι ἐπιμετρεῖσθω.

"Nevertheless, those who have appeared there (that is, at the feast of the sacrifices) in mourning habits, who have been full of grief during the repast, and have wept during the whole time of the feast, shall be three years among the substrati, and then be admitted without taking part in the offering, and if they have not eaten (and have been merely present at the feast), they are to be substrati for two years, and the third year they shall take part in the offering so as to receive the complement (the holy communion) in the fourth year. The bishops shall have the power, after having tried the conduct of each, to mitigate the penalties, or to extend the time of penitence, but they must take care to inquire what has passed before and after their fall, and their clemency must be exercised accordingly".

Χωρὶς προσφορᾶς refers to those offerings presented by the faithful at the offertory. Hefele quotes Suicer ^{WHO ASSERTS} that the meaning of the canon is, "They may take part in the divine worship but not actively", that is, "they may mingle their offerings with those of the faithful".¹ Those who cannot present their offerings during the sacrifice are also excluded from receiving at communion. The whole act of worship may be called the προσφορᾶ but this name cannot be applied merely to the reception.

The problem of making provision for those who had lapsed also bothered Cyprian who writes,

"In the meanwhile, let those certain ones among you who are rash and incautious and boastful, and who do not regard man, at least fear God, knowing that, if they shall persevere still in the same course, I shall

¹ A History of the Christian Councils, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1894 p. 199-207 (From this book the canons of the Council are quoted)

use that power of admonition which the Lord bids me use: so that they meanwhile be withheld from offering (ut interim prohibeantur offerre), and have to plead their cause before me and before the confessors themselves and before all the people, when, with God's permission, we begin to be gathered once more into the bosom of the Church our Mother".¹

These early writers show that the layman had a special part in the worship of the Church, he was not simply a spectator watching the action taking place at the altar and saying his own private prayers. In the early liturgies the offertory, consecration, and communion are so intrinsically a single action that it is difficult to express their meaning separately. Dix says that the eucharistic prayer was intended to embrace in its single statement the meaning of the whole rite: from the offertory to the effects of receiving communion. Thus the layman's part was not finished after he had offered his gifts but he was involved in the whole act of worship. Maxwell, commenting on the Apostolic Constitutions, notes that these early rites knew nothing of the modern sacerdotalism of the single voice and the long service was never dull or boring because the worshippers were caught up in their corporate act of worship.² They were intensely aware that:

"Christian worship is fundamentally an oblation or offering to Almighty God, it is therefore incumbent on man to bring to it his best resources of goodness, beauty and truth. These values derive ultimately from God himself, and in Christian worship they are offered back to him, together with ourselves, our souls and bodies, and our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving".³

We know that the laity brought their own προσφορά and that the deacons presented them at the altar, but the primitive liturgies do not tell us when and how the deacons received these from the laity, this is especially true of the pre-Nicene Church.

From the fourth century the East and the West differed greatly in this respect. In the East the laity brought their gifts to the sacristy or to a special table in the church before the service began. The deacons fetched them when they were wanted at the offertory and

1 Ep. 9:4

2 Maxwell, Outline of Christian Worship, p.26 f.

3 Maxwell, Concerning Worship, p.77

this ceremony developed into the splendour of the Great Entrance. In the Orthodox Churches the displaying of the elements before consecration is still the chief ceremonial act of the service. They are, however, no longer brought by the people but are especially baked by, and for, the clergy. After an elaborate service of preparation, the elements are carried in solemn procession through the north door of the ikonostasis down the centre of the church and back through the royal door into the sanctuary to be placed on the Holy Table for consecration.

In the West this action was different. The laity made their offerings at the altar rail at the beginning of the eucharist proper. Every communicant came forward to lay his offering of bread in a linen cloth or silver dish held by a deacon and to pour his own flask of wine into a great two-handled silver cup held by another deacon. After the whole congregation had made its offerings of bread and wine, the deacons took the offerings and placed them on the Table.¹

From the 4th century, churches built in the Mediterranean provinces of the Roman Empire had a substantial screen of stone or marble dividing the nave from the altar and the apse. Only the clergy were allowed into the sanctuary. No layman might participate in the administration of the sacraments.² No psalms written by individual Christians were to be sung in church.³ Laymen were to sit 'quietly and seemly' in their places.⁴

The Roman Mass became no longer the corporate act of worship of the whole congregation but a spectacle in which the priests performed the actions and the laity watched. The Mass was said inaudibly by the priests while the laymen said their own private prayers.⁵ The present Roman practice at the offertory is for the deacon to bring the

1 The first witness to this is Ambrose at Milan towards the end of the fourth century in *Expos. in Ps. cxviii*, Prol. 2

2 *Apost. Canons*, Canon 40

3 Council of Laodicea, Canon 59

4 *Apost. Canons*, Canon 57

All quoted in *The Layman in Christian Worship*, Neil and Weber, SCM, London, 1963, article by W.H.C. Frend

5 This development is clearly traced in Hebert, *Liturgy & Society*

paten and the chalice to the celebrant from a table in the side aisle of the church on which they had been placed before the service begins. No splendid ceremonial is attached to this action.

Some have argued that the Scottish Presbyterian practice of the minister and elders bringing the elements into the church at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Upper Room is an echo of the Great Entrance of the Orthodox rites. This is impossible because there is no evidence that the early Scottish divines knew anything about Eastern practices, and nowhere do they allude to them. It is more likely that the practice was a development from the Genevan practice.¹ The more common South African Presbyterian custom is to place the elements on the Table before the service begins. They remain veiled during the Liturgy of the Word but are unveiled at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Upper Room.

The Reformers did not succeed fully in restoring the people to full participation in the eucharistic service. Many of the old responses were dropped but what is of tremendous importance is that they insisted that the rite be said audibly.² It is the modern liturgical movement that has laboured to restore the laity to full participation in the eucharist.³

The relationship between the presentation of the bread and wine and the people's self-oblation symbolized in their money-offerings has been obscured in many modern churches by the placing of the collection of the people's offerings before the sermon. Too many ministers casually refer to the offertory as the 'collection' and forget that what is collected is the people's offerings to Almighty God. These ministers tend to regard the offertory as an unfortunate necessity that disrupts the smooth running of the service. Their attitude further obscures the relationship between the offertory and the elements of bread and wine. If the collection of the offerings is placed after the sermon

1 Maxwell, The Liturgical Portions of the Genevan Service Book, Faith Press, Westminster, 1931, p. 132-3
 2 Maxwell, An Outline of Christian Worship, p. 72-118
 3 see Hebert, Liturgy and Society

at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Upper Room, then it is not an unavoidable interruption to be fitted in as inconspicuously as possible but becomes an act of self-oblation by the people,¹ as it was in the early Church. At the eucharist the money given by the people represents their offerings in kind from which the bread and wine were taken for consecration by the celebrant in the early Church's practice.

The people need once again to be taught their role in the eucharist, that they share in the προσφορά to so great an extent that St. Augustine could say, "There you are upon the table, there you are in the chalice".

The eucharist is not only the centre of our worship but also of our life in the world. "Not only at the holy Table but in his daily task he offers his skill, thoughts, desires, and will to God."² "All life must be an offering to God, typified and comprehended in worship. That is the only enduring basis upon which society can be raised".³ von Allmen, expanding this thought, writes:

"From this table - from this commemoration of the whole of salvation, from communion with the living Lord and with men who have become brothers, from this awareness of the Church, from this life-giving meal, from this secret fulfilment of all prayer - the Church goes into the world to be salt and light there, a witness to God's love and forgiveness, through knowing herself how to forgive and how to love. Here she learns what she has to become in order to be in the world what she is before God: the royal priesthood, the household of God, the bearer of Christ's sufferings and glory because she is his body and bride. By sending out the Church into the world, the Supper becomes missionary".⁴

If the Supper is the place from which the Church sets out on her mission, it is also the place to which she returns from her mission,

"loaded with her work in the world, like the disciples after the miraculous load of fish, like the Samaritan bearing the injured man to the inn which is able to welcome all who come, like Israel returning to the promised land after the hard battles of the Exodus, or like the seventy disciples returning, not to complain

1 Maxwell, Concerning Worship, p.37

2 Maxwell, Concerning Worship, p.5

3 ibid., p.6

4 unpublished study paper for the WCC Faith and Order Committee, 1965, p.49

but to rejoice with their Lord over the dethroning of Satan and his demons". 1

The laity, then, are called not only to share in the of the Lord's Supper but also in the Church's oblation in the world.

Our first step towards a re-assessment of 'confirmation' is to develop a proper doctrine of the laity's role in the eucharist.

Peter Hammond notes how important such a doctrine is:

"So long as the layman in Church remains a passive spectator of something done on his behalf by professional actors, it is likely that he will be equally passive in regard to what is done out of church. A clericalised liturgy means a clericalised apostolate. If, on the other hand, the layman has learned to accept his responsibilities as a member of an organic, priestly community, and as an active participant in the eucharist, this awareness will undoubtedly be reflected in due course in his whole attitude towards the Church and its apostolic mission in the contemporary world. The eucharist creates the community. The surest way of bringing home to the laity that they are the Church - and not the passive recipients of spiritual consolation at the hands of a professional ministry - is to make plain the full implications of the eucharistic liturgy." 2

We have seen that the present Service of Confirmation should be reunited with the baptismal liturgy of which it has formed a part from the earliest days of Christianity. We have also seen that the name 'confirmation' is misleading because in modern usage it means 'confirming what has been done previously' so that at confirmation the candidate 'confirms' the vows made at his baptism by his parents. This is not what 'confirmation' meant when the name was first used to describe those actions performed by the bishop after immersion. It was God who 'confirmed' who 'perfected' the Christian who had been baptized in water. For these reasons we have suggested that the name 'confirmation' be not used of the service at which young people commit themselves to Christ. We do not suggest that the service itself be omitted but that a new meaning be given it.

Earlier in this chapter we urged that children should be instructed thoroughly in the Scriptures and in the worship of the Church. They need to be taught from an early age the value of offering

1 ibid., p.49

2 Liturgy and Architecture, Barrie and Rockliff, London, 1960

to Jesus Christ. Children take money to Sunday School to put in the collection plate but it is rarely that they are taught that their money offerings are symbols of all that they are and all that they have. A child can only offer to God according to the knowledge and understanding of God he has at his age. No one expects an adult response from a child but no-one can deny that a child is able sincerely to offer what he has to God.

Thus a child should be taught to share in the offering of the Church by making his own offerings. His understanding of his offering will grow as he becomes older until he reaches a new appreciation of this action which fills it with a rich meaning. This does not mean that he can learn no more for a Christian's whole life is one of learning of the great depths of the Christian faith.

No one can decide arbitrarily how old a child must be before he is capable of deciding to commit his life to Christ and offer all that he has and is to him. Thurian believes that after a period of instruction explaining to them the mysteries of the Faith, young people should come forward of their own accord to offer themselves for service within the Church. This is an excellent solution but one that is unlikely to be accepted by most ministers who would probably be afraid that too few young people would come forward.

When they come to offer themselves to Christ after having been carefully instructed and having themselves counted the cost they are set aside to perform their work in the Church and as part of the Church in the world and this is to share in the corporate offering of the eucharist and from the eucharist to go out to offer themselves to Christ through serving those for whom Christ died. The Christian's (layman or clergyman) work does not end with the conclusion of the eucharistic service for he is to take the eucharist into the world in sacrificial service of his brethren.

This setting aside (ordination) of the layman to take his place in the Church would be the normal liturgical act whereby a Christian is commissioned to service in the Church. He receives the imposition of

hands as the sign of the Church's blessing and commissioning and as the sign of fellowship, and prayers are offered for the Holy Spirit to strengthen him in his resolve to give himself to the service of Christ and his fellow man.

This view removes the accusation that Sunday School and later Christian education is pointless. All Christian education should lead to this point, and should thus be full of meaning and interest to the child. His growth in grace is recognised in this service of ordination in which the candidate responds to the divine initiative revealed in his baptism and all through his life as he offers what he possesses, 'his own life from its very sources',¹ to God. The Church filled with laymen (and ministers) who have made this committal cannot but move forward against the materialistic opposition of our day.

1 Bouyer, Life and Liturgy, p.170

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