*et moralis* of P. M. Belmont, bishop of Claremont (8th ed., Paris, 1899, vol. iii. p. 119) the following definition is given of *sacramentalia: “* Sacramentals are certain things or actions instituted or consecrated by the Church for the production of certain spiritual effects, and sometimes for the obtaining of a temporal effect.”

Some of the older authorities, like Caietanus and Soto, taught that sacramentals as above defined have power to produce their effects *ex opere operato, i.e.* by their own inherent virtue; others that they produce them *ex opere operantis, i.e.* through the merit and disposition of the user. But in the latter case, argues M. Belmont, what is the use of the prayers offered up over the substances; and how account for the differences of effects which by the testimony of the faithful are respectively caused by water duly blessed and by water falsely blessed? If the mere state of mind of the person using the water deter- mines the effect, then in the case of both kinds of benediction, the true and the fake alike, it would be one and the same. He therefore inclines to the opinion that there is no inherent virtue in sacramentals, but that God is moved by the prayers uttered in their consecration to produce salutary effects in those who use them. Thus he avoids on the one side the *opus operatum* view, and on the other a merely receptionist position.

The consecration of material objects and in general their use in religion and cult was consistently avoided by the Mani- cheans; not because they failed to share the universal belief of earlier ages that spirits can be inducted by means of fitting prayers and incantations into inanimate things, but because the external material world was held to be the creation of an evil demiurge and so incapable of harbouring a pure spirit. The sacramentals of the great Church were denounced by them as vehicles of the evil one; and this class of prejudice was carried to such a length that some of them eschewed even baptism with water and the sacrament of bread and wine. That they retained the laying on of hands in their spiritual baptism was an incon­sistency which their orthodox opponents did not fail to note; the human hand, argued the latter, is, like the rest of the body, no less the work of the evil creator than water, oil, bread and wine, or than the wood, metal and stone out of which altars, images and churches are made. Relics for the same reason were abhorred by the Manicheans; the Catholics defending them on the ground that the bodies of saints participate in a divine virtue and have a power of making men whole and working miracles in the same manner as had the cloak of Elijah (2 Kings ii. 14), or the corpse of Elisha (*ibid.* xiii. 21), the hem of Christ’s garment (Matt. ix. 20), Peter’s shadow (Acts v. 15), the handkerchiefs or aprons off Paul’s body *(ibid.* xix. 12). The Mani­cheans’ answer to such arguments was that miracles worked by Christ and the Apostles in the material world were only appari- tional and not real, while those of the Old Testament were satanic.

It has been argued that the sacramental rites of the Christians were largely imitated from the pagan mysteries; but for the first two hundred years this is hardly true, except perhaps in the case of certain Gnostic sects whose leaders intentionally amalgamated the new faith with old pagan ideas and rites. It is true that Gentile converts carried over into the new religion many ideas and habits of cult contracted under the old; this was inevitable, for no one lightly changes his religious habits and categories. For long generations the doctors of the Church fought bravely against such an infusion of heathen customs; thus in Latin countries we find the rule to keep New Year’s day as a fast, just because the pagans feasted on it, giving one another gifts (*strenae,* Fr. *étrennes)* and taking omens for the coming year. But in the 4th century this puritanic zeal gave way; and this and other pagan feasts were taken over by the Church; a century earlier in Asia Minor Gregory the Thau­maturge was actively transforming into shrines and cult of martyrs the temples and idolatrous rites of heroes and demigods. In proportion as such conversion was facile and rapid, it was probably imperfect.

That baptism is called the Seal (σφραγts), and Illumination (φωτισμos) in the 2nd century has been set down to the influence

of the pagan mysteries; but as a matter of fact the former term is a metaphor from military discipline, and the idea con­veyed in the latter that *gnosis or* imparting of divine love is an illumining of the soul is found both in the Old and New Testaments. Nor because the pagans regarded the close meetings of the Christians usually held in private houses as mysteries in which incest and cannibalism were rife, does it follow that the Christians themselves accepted the comparison. On the contrary, as a thousand passages in the earlier apologists attest, they viewed the pagan mysteries with horror and detestation. Nor were they so solicitous, as it is pretended, to conceal from the authorities what they did and said in their liturgical meetings. The Christians@@1 of Bithynia were evidently quite frank about them to Pliny (c. 112), and Justin in his Apology reveals everything to a pagan emperor (c. 150). That catechumens could not participate in the *agapē or* love-feast (of which in this epoch the Eucharist was merely an episode) does not give to those feasts the character of a Greek mystery. The uncircumcized proselyte was similarly excluded from the Paschal meal on which the Eucharist was largely modelled, even though it may not have been in any way a continuation of the same. Baptism and the agape took their rise in Palestine, and in their origin certainly owed little or nothing to outside influences. For both there can be found Jewish models, if necessary. The sacred feasts of the Essenes and Therapeutae in particular, as de- scribed by Josephus and Philo, closely resembled the Eucharistic agapé.

Undeniably Clement of Alexandria and Origen apply the language of the Greek mysteries to Christian *gnosis* and life. “ These are,” says Clement, “ divine mysteries, hidden from most and revealed to the few who can receive them.” And Origen compares them to the sacred vessels, and would have them “ guarded secretly behind the veil of the conscience and not lightly produced before the public.” He who so produces them “ dances out the word of the true philosophy,”—a technical description of the profanation of the mysteries. It is not even safe, according to these two fathers, to commit too much to writing; and Clement undertakes not to reveal in writing many secrets known to the initiated among his readers; otherwise the indiscreet eye of the heathen may rest on them, and he will have cast his pearls before swine. But we may discount most such talk in these writers as bellettristic pedantry, copied as a rule from Philo of Alexandria, their literary model. In the latter’s description of the *Therapeutae* (ed. Mangey, ii. 475) we read how each ascetic had “ in his house a room in which in solitude they celebrated the mysteries of the holy life, introducing nothing therein, either to drink or to eat, nor anything else necessary for the uses of the flesh.” And in scores of other passages Philo dwells on “ the ineffable mysteries ” of Jewish faith and allegory. He even writes thus: “ O ye initiated ones, with purified sense of hearing, shall ye accept in your souls these truly sacred mysteries, nor divulge them to any of the uninitiated. . . . I have been initiated by Moses the friend of God in the great mysteries.” But because he uses the language of the Greek mysteries, Philo never imitated the thing itself; and he is ever ready to denounce it in the bitterest terms. Clement and Origen really meant no more than he. At a later period, however, the difficulty of screening the rites of baptism and Eucharist from the eyes of catechumens and from their ears the creeds and liturgies—a difficulty which had ever been formidable and which after the overthrow of paganism must have become insurmountable—seems to have provoked not only a great outpouring on the part of the Christian rhetors, like Basil, Chrysostom, the Gregories and the Cyrils, of phrases borrowed from the Greek mysteries, but perhaps an actual use of precautions. Thus the bishop of Rome, Julius (c. 340), complained (Athanasius, *Apol. cont. Arian.* 31, Migne 25,300) that a court of law had not been cleared of catechumens, Jews and pagans, in a case where the legal discussion introduced the topic of the table of Christ; and the preachers of the 4th and

@@@1 Perhaps, however, Pliny refers only to the renegades among them.