

ently satisfying definition in the model it needs taking no further. Details such as features are unnecessary at this stage. From this model the measurements of the block of stone or wood for the final figure are then worked out and the block is ordered. The block is then 'pointed', a mechanical process which reproduces the rough form of the sketch model enlarged in the final material. From then until the completion of the work the model is referred to less and less. The features are usually left until last, as it is important that the pose of the figure should express the idea which one is attempting to convey. The facial expression of the carved features should merely emphasize that which is already there.

Having dealt in a very limited way with the approach to and the making of images for our churches, I would conclude with the plea that when we make these offerings to God in honour of his Saints, they should be worthy offerings. To be worthy, surely, they must be conceived and executed for a particular place for which they were intended. They should be an expression of the activity of the living Church, an offering of the mental and physical gifts to God which he continues to pour upon us all, even to this day.



## COMMENT

### NON-CATHOLIC BAPTISM

**M**IGHT I take up a point raised in your January number, which was devoted so sympathetically to the question of Christian Unity? It is an important point and one, I think, not much considered. The first of the questions raised by the Lutheran theologian, Dr Asmussen, in the article printed by you concerned the validity of baptism administered by non-Catholics.

He wrote as follows: 'To begin with our baptism. It is no secret that in the case of converts, baptism is usually repeated, arousing deep dismay on the Evangelical side. In my opinion there is no justification for this. There seems to be no doubt that,

in Catholic doctrine, baptism performed according to the Evangelical ritual is valid. But in practice the circumstances of a previous baptism are seldom taken into account. . . .

Thus my first question is: Does the Catholic Church really hold that an Evangelical baptism performed according to the ritual does not need to be renewed? If so, may we beg our Catholic friends to stir up public opinion within their communion in the hope of discouraging any of the clergy who may be disposed to do a thing 'they are not required to do'. (p. 301.)

This seems to me a very reasonable request, requiring at the least a completely honest answer, and I confess to finding Father Sebastian Bullough's reply to the question less than satisfactory. He begins by referring at some length to the baptismal errors of Luther, Zwingli and the Baptists, concluding from this that 'it is obvious that Protestants, if divided upon the nature of baptism, are likely to be divided regarding its performance'.

He then continues: 'Once more, we must repeat our *leitmotiv* about obedience. A non-Catholic baptism may, of course, be perfectly legitimately performed, and with the full backing of orthodox theology; but on the other hand there are cases where it is inadequately performed, or at least with doubtful adequacy, especially when the rite is performed with unorthodox theology behind it. In such cases, when a person becomes a Catholic, he is rebaptized conditionally. One cannot allow room for doubt in such a matter. If, however, there is no doubt at all about the validity of the rite, the person is not rebaptized at all, since the Church recognizes a properly performed baptism as valid, even if the notions of the baptizer were somewhat confused, because he would evidently be performing the act in obedience to the Church, even without realizing it. If it is correspondingly certain that the baptism was not conducted according to an obedience, even unwitting, to the rites of the Catholic Church, then the person is baptized unconditionally. In other words, the acceptance or not of non-Catholic baptism depends on the evidence of obedience in the baptizer; a thing often so difficult to establish as to make conditional baptism the usual course, though cases of reception into the Catholic Church without any baptism are by no means unknown. The above regulations were clearly laid down in an instruction in 1878.' (p. 309.)

Of this reply I would ask two things. (1) Does it give a balanced

account of the Catholic theological view on this matter? (2) Does it reflect practice in England?

Fr Bullough is careful not to invalidate baptism on account of the heretical views of the baptizers as such. Nevertheless he does imply that those views render baptisms performed by Protestants far more doubtful than the public decisions of the Church suggest. At the present day the case of the Oceania Methodist baptisms—no isolated case—is a commonplace of knowledge, and it is a grave understatement to admit validity 'even if the notions of the baptizer were somewhat confused'; the truth is that completely erroneous views publicly expressed do not affect the validity of the sacrament (see Fr Leeming's *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, pp. 472-5).

Further, to say that 'the acceptance or not of non-Catholic baptism depends on the evidence of obedience in the baptizer' is misleading, if not suggestive of a somewhat Cyprianic view of validity. The rite used must be that of the Church, and for most Protestant sects that is the case; furthermore, the minimum intention of 'doing what the Church does' is required. It does not seem to clarify these two precise conditions to speak generally of 'obedience to the Church'.

The Church has explicitly recognized Calvinist, Zwinglian and other baptisms as being normally valid, and consequently as a general rule converts from such groups should not be even conditionally rebaptized.

I do not doubt for a moment that 'there are cases where it (baptism) is inadequately performed', and where, consequently, conditional baptism is required. And this leads me to the second point; present practice. At least in England at the present day converts are in almost all cases automatically baptized conditionally, without any examination whatsoever of their original baptism. It is against such a practice that Dr Asmussen protests, and surely rightly and on our own principles. We are acting not as Catholics but as Donatists. There is no reason to believe that the normal Anglican baptism is invalid, and therefore a general practice of conditional baptism would seem to be imprudent and without foundation. It should only be performed where there are individual reasons for so doing. Our present practice is not a witness to Catholic truth, and adds yet another bar to conversion. The Anglican clergyman who has slowly and painfully come to

accept the invalidity of his priestly orders and applies for entry into the Church is horrified and bewildered to find his very baptism quite unnecessarily called in question.

Is it too much to ask in this matter for a more sincere application of Catholic theology and papal instructions?

ADRIAN HASTINGS



## REVIEWS

CHRIST, OUR LADY AND THE CHURCH. By M.-J. Congar, O.P. A Study in Eirenic Theology. Translated with an Introduction by Henry St John, O.P. (Longmans; 8s. 6d.)

The subtitle indicates that Fr Congar's treatment of his subject is an appeal to Protestants to look with more sympathy on the Catholic doctrines of our Lady and the Church. These doctrines, as the Catholic Church understands them, are so harmoniously connected with the doctrines of the Incarnation, as defined in Chalcedon, that it should be possible for all who accept Chalcedon to understand them sympathetically. Fr Congar sees it as nothing short of tragedy that the agreement of Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox in accepting Chalcedon has not succeeded in preventing contradictory interpretations of the meaning and implications of its definitions. As between Catholics and Protestants, surely the creation of such misunderstanding is a masterwork of the devil. 'A spirit, schismatic in the strictest sense of the word, seems to have been diabolically inspired in modern man, a spirit which looks for opposition and difference in every possible way, and turns thereby the very thing that could be shared with others in a spirit of unity into a reason for antagonism.'

Fr Henry St John, in his valuable preface, points out that such antagonism about the understanding of the consequences of the Incarnation exists much more between Catholics and Reformed Protestants, than between ourselves and the greater part of English Protestants. This, however, does not prevent Fr Congar's book having a great value in this country; for most of the difficulties felt about our doctrines by Lutherans and Calvinists contribute to maintain a certain recurring tension between Catholics and Protestants here.

Fr Congar's book, then, will have great value in helping Protestants to gain a more balanced view of the position of our Lady and the Church in the world which has been honoured by God present in the flesh. But it is also an appeal to Catholics to avoid those unfortunate