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CONCORDIA SEMINARY

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP
OF THE ANTE - NICENE CHURCH

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE SEMINARY FACULTY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

DEPARTMENT OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

BY

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I. N. I.

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CHRISTIAN WORSHIP OF THE ANTE - NICENE CHURCH

(Outline)

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CHRISTIAN WORSHIP OF THE ANTE - NICENE CHURCH

"Worship is man's response to God's revelation of Himself."¹ In this sense worship consists of divine revelation and public response. This paper is devoted to the latter aspect of worship. It is the purpose of this paper to study the early origins of man's outward response to the revealed truths of Christianity; how the form of Christian worship was influenced by the Old Testament worship, how it received its indelible color from the Blood of Calvary, and how it began to develop into the highest and most beautiful of the aesthetic arts by the time the Christian religion became a 'religio licita' by Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 A.D.

The liturgical and ritualistic character of divine worship has had a very early origin and has been acceptable to God from the very first age of the world. The true believers in God have never confined their feelings of adoration and praise or their prayers and supplications to their hearts only, but have from the first given vent to them in words and songs as well as outward actions and signs. The

1. Andrew W. Blackwood, The Fine Art of Public Worship, p. 14.

first recorded utterance of Eve, after she and Adam had been driven from the Garden and from 'face to face' communication with God, were audible words of praise and thanksgiving. She remembered God's promise of a Savior from sin and sincerely believed that her first son, Cain, was He. She therefore exclaimed at his birth: "I have gotten a man from the Lord"; (Gen. 4, 1)

Other external signs of worship mentioned in Genesis are the following: Cain and Abel's offering of the first-fruits of the land and of cattle in sacrifice to God, (Gen. 4, 3 - 5). Noah made a distinction between the clean and unclean animals in offering up sacrifices to God, (Gen. 7, 2; 8, 20). Abraham likewise offered up sacrifices, and was prepared to prove his obedience and love to God to the extent of offering up his only son, Isaac, (Gen. 22, 1 - 14). The rite of circumcision was ordained as the external sign of God's covenant with His people, (Gen. 17, 10 - 14). Solemn benedictions were bestowed (Gen. 27, 27 - 29; 28, 1 - 4) accompanied by the imposition of hands, (Gen. 28, 9 - 20). The sacred character of burial was recognized, (Gen. 23, 17 - 20). There were ceremonial washings and change of dress before participation in prayer and sacrifice to God, (Gen. 35, 2. 3). Holy oil was used for dedications, (Gen. 28, 18; 35, 14). Solemn vows were taken before God, (Gen. 28, 20 - 22).

The above are a few of the outward expressions of divine worship participated in by the patriarchs. In the course of time these outward expressions became fixed and

formed the basis of the formal manner of worship commanded by God in the Ceremonial Law given to Moses.

With the Mosaic or Levitical dispensation begins a new era in the history of liturgical worship. The chief characteristic of this form of worship was its exactness and minuteness of detail. God regulated everything.

Scripture contains but few complete extracts of the Mosaic liturgical verbal forms. In Numbers 4, 22 - 26 is an account of the priestly benediction: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace". (It is interesting to note that it was Martin Luther who again reintroduced this beautiful Benediction into the liturgy of the Church in his 'Formula Missa' and his 'Deutsche Messe')

Deut. 24, 3 - 10 contains the liturgical words used in the offering of the firstfruits to God. Similar to this form was the form used in offering the tithe, (Deut. 24, 13 - 15).

The form of words used by Moses at the removing and resting of the ark are recorded in Num. 10, 35. 36.

These references regarding the liturgical forms used in the Levitical system of worship are all that are found in Scripture. These forms were continued in the forms used in the Temple worship. Some of the ordinances and incidents of

the Levitical worship were types of various Christian services, especially of the Holy Eucharist.

The liturgical element in worship was greatly enhanced by the introduction of the Temple services. As time went on they were elaborated and embellished, especially by the choral element. The wonderful songs of the Psalter were sung by a large choir of trained voices and were accompanied by trained musicians which alone numbered four thousand persons. David's contribution to the liturgical element of the Temple worship has been summarized thus: ²

"He set singers also before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs.

He beautified their feasts, and set in order the solemn times until the end, that they might praise His holy name, and that the temple might sound from morning."

Soloman firmly established and continued the contributions of his father, David.

"He appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required", (II Chron. 8, 14).

A full and detailed study of all the various parts of the liturgical worship of the Temple is a work in itself, and therefore cannot be covered in this paper. Enough evidence has been given to show that the Temple worship was very rich in ceremonial.

It is not surprising to find that relatively few of the rites and ceremonies of the Temple were carried over into the worship of the early Christians. The Temple with its

2. Ecclesiasticus 48, 9. 10.

sacrificial form of worship was symbolical of the Old Covenant. In the fulness of time God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to become the perfect Sacrifice for all people for all times. All the rites and ceremonies of the Temple were but "shadows of things to come". The Temple had served its purpose and its usefulness was now past.

From an historical point of view, there were chiefly two reasons why Christian worship was but little influenced by the formal Temple worship. First, the majority of the Jews of the Diaspora had never witnessed the worship of the Temple and the Gentile Converts regarded the Temple and its worship with but little consideration; secondly, the Temple was destroyed by the Romans forty years after our Savior's Resurrection, and with it were destroyed all its rites and ceremonies.

The form of worship common in the Jewish Synagogue, however, had a tremendous influence in the formation of the Christian cultus. "The Synagogue became the cradle of the Church".³ "There is nothing to suggest that they (the early Christians) had any liturgical theories to which they made their practice conform; they certainly created no new worship-forms of their own; all that they did was to take over, chiefly from the parent religion in Palestine, certain simple and familiar forms, or models, which they found adequate for their needs."⁴

3. Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, p. 431.

4. A. B. Macdonald, Christian Worship in the Primitive Church, p. 3.

The Synagogue was the accustomed place where the Jews worshipped at the time of Christ. Little is known of the origin of this institution beside the fact that it had its beginning some time during the Jewish Diaspora. At the time of the New Testament a Synagogue was to be found in all centers populated by the Jews all over the Roman Empire. Our Lord Himself, "as His custom was", had worshipped regularly in the Synagogues; St. Paul as a rule went first to the Synagogue when he came to a new city; and the Jewish Christians loved the Synagogue and its ways, where they had worshipped and been taught from early childhood. It is therefore not strange that the early Christians modeled their form of worship after that of the Synagogue when it became necessary for them to sever their connections with the Synagogue itself because of Jewish antagonism.

The structure of the Jewish Synagogue was not elaborate. It was a rectangular building of stone, flat-roofed, and generally orientated that it would face Jerusalem. Various decorations were traced on the lintels over the doors, such as a seven-branched candlestick, an open flower between two Paschal lambs, or vine leaves with bunches of grapes, or, as at Capernaum, a pot of manna between representations of Aaron's rod. The plan of the interior was also very simple. Two double colonades divided the interior into the main body and two aisles. In the front was the "Ark" which contained the sacred books, facing the people with their backs toward the Ark, sat the elders and notable personages. In

the middle of the Synagogue was the "Bima", or elevated platform, on which was the "Luach", or lectern, from which the reader read the selections from Scripture while standing. The one who preached or delivered an address sat while doing so. On the same platform was also the "Methurgeman" who either interpreted or repeated aloud what was being said by the preacher.

The sanctity of the Synagogue as a place set aside for the worship of God was strictly observed. "The Synagogue must not be made a thoroughfare. We must not behave lightly in it. We may not joke, laugh, eat, talk, dress, nor resort there for shelter from sun or rain..... Under certain circumstances, also, the poor and strangers may be fed there. But, in general, the Synagogue must be regarded as consecrated to God."⁵

The weekly Sabbath, the pledge between Israel and God, was faithfully kept by the devoted Jews. Careful preparations were made on the night before. "The Sabbath lamp was lighted; the festive garments put on; the table provided with the best which the family could afford".⁶ After this meal was finished, the "Kiddush" was piously celebrated. The "Kiddush" "consisted of religious discussion followed by a simple meal of common bread and wine mixed with water, the cup being passed from one to another,

5. Tos., Megill. ed., Z. III, 7 and Pes. 101 a in Edersheim, op. cit., p. 437.

6. Ibid., p. 437.

and prayer offered." ⁷

On the morning of the Sabbath the Jews hastened to the Synagogue, reverently participated in the Divine Service, and with lingering steps returned to their homes. The Rabbinic Rule demanded this.

The Synagogue Service itself had a twofold character: liturgical and instructive. Its structure may briefly be outlined as follows:

1. The Liturgical Section:

- a. The Invocation - contained two set prayers.
- b. The Creed or "Shema" - from Deut. 6, 4 - 9; 11, 13 - 21; and Num. 15, 37 - 41.
- c. The Prayer and congregational "Amen".

2. The Instructive Section:

- a. The reading of the Torah.
- b. The reading from the Prophets.
- c. The address.

The customs which were carried over from the Synagogue worship into the Christian worship have been summarized by Dr. William Maxwell thus: Scripture lections (I Tim. 4, 13; I Thess. 5, 27; Col. 4, 16); Psalms and hymns (I Cor. 14, 26; Eph. 5, 19; Col. 3, 16); common prayers (Acts 2, 42; I Tim. 2, 1. 2); people's 'Amens' (I Cor. 14, 26; Acts 20, 7); a confession of faith, not necessarily the formal recitation of a creed (I Cor. 15, 1 - 4; I Tim. 6, 12); and perhaps almsgiving (I Cor. 16, 1. 2; II Cor. 9, 10 - 13). ⁸

7. William Maxwell, An Outline of Christian Worship, p. 5.
8. Ibid, p. 4.

Just to what an extent Christian worship followed that of the Synagogue is a matter of opinion rather than of fact. It is certain that Christian worship was not a duplicate of the Synagogue worship. The spirit of the new religion could never be contained in the formal order of the old religion. "The new wine was bound to break through the old wine's skins".⁹

The formal worship of the Christians was bound up and centered in the Holy Eucharist. It became the focal point around which all other Christian rites and ceremonies centered. "The Eucharist was to sum up and supercede the older rites and sacrifices; and it has been from the first the central Christian Sacrament, not significant only, but efficacious."¹⁰

Membership into the close circle of the followers of Christ was closely guarded. Those who sought to join themselves to the Christians were required to give a confession of their faith and submit to an initiation ceremony known as the ἁγισμὸς, or seal. This ceremony consisted of two parts, that of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and that of the Laying on of Hands.

Christian Baptism was alluded to by anticipation when our Savior said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God", (John 3, 5). But it was not instituted by Him un-

9. W. G. Polack, Lecture on The History of Worship.

10. Walter H. Frere, The Principles of Religious Ceremonial, p. 50.

til the immediate eve of His ascension when He gave this commission to His Apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (Matt. 28, 19).

Below are the instances of the administration of baptism recorded in the New Testament:

Recipients.	Agent.	Authority.
About three thousand persons ...	St. Peter	Acts 2,41
Many Samaritans	St. Philip	8,12
Simon the socerer	St. Philip	8,13
The Ethiopian Eunuch	St. Philip	8,38
Saul	Ananias	9,18
Cornelius and others	Not named	10,47.48
Lydia and her household	St. Paul	16,15
The jailor of Philippi & family.	St. Paul	16,33
Many Corinthians	Not named	18,8
Certain disciples at Ephesus ...	St. Paul	19,5
Crispus and Gaius	St. Paul	ICor. 1,14
The household of Stephanas	St. Paul	1,16

After an examination of these accounts, it is evident that the Candidates for Baptism were adults, children, and infants. The heads of households often received Baptism along with his entire family.

In the early period of the Apostolic Age there was so great a sense of urgency in view of the expected return of Christ that little preparation was required of the Candidates before their initiation, and the rite could be performed at any time. Most of the converts were from Judaism and they naturally were well acquainted with the fundamentals of the Christian religion. It was necessary, of course, that they be convinced that Jesus Christ was the Promised Messiah of

of the Old Testament and that He was the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, but that was about all; there was therefore no need for a period of long instruction.

Toward the end of the Apostolic Age, however, when many Gentiles were added to the Church, it was judged to be necessary that a course of instruction be taken and a period of moral and spiritual probation be undergone before the candidates be received into full Church membership. This gave rise to the "Catechumenate" which often lasted for three years.

Even as strict requirements were demanded for membership into the Church, so a firm stand was taken in disciplining those members who wilfully continued in open sin. Jesus laid down the principle which was to be followed when He said: "but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican", (Matt. 18, 17). The Apostle Paul requires of the Congregation at Corinth: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person", (I Cor. 5, 13).

During our Savior's visible sojourn here upon earth there was no need for special houses of worship. Jesus preached His Gospel of Forgiveness wherever He was and whenever He had an opportunity: in houses, in the Synagogues, in the Temple, on the streets, on the sea-shore, in the fields, in the wilderness, and on the mountainsides. As yet there was no open break between the followers of Christ and the Jews. For some time after Jesus' Resurrection the early

Christians continued this practice, but when open opposition arose, they were forced to conduct their services else-where. At times public halls were rented as at the time of the Pentecost Miracle (Acts 1², 13).. At other times the Christians gathered in private dwellings which was generally the case when they celebrated the Holy Eucharist, (Acts 12, 12). Paul even greets the "Church which was in the house of Nymphas in his Epistle to the Colosians (Col. 4, 15). In I Cor. 16, 19, mention is made of a Church or Congregation in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Other places of worship mentioned in the New Testament were sites along the banks of rivers, (Acts 16, 13), and on the sea-shore, (Acts 21, 5).

Soon after the Christians (were ^{left} put out of) the Synagogue, they began to observe the First Day of the week instead of the Sabbath. They were led to do this in commemoration of our Savior's Resurrection from the dead, yet no Divine or apostolic command demanded this change. Some authorities in the field of the History of Liturgical Worship think that the observance of Sunday may have been among the unrecorded directions given by Jesus to His disciples during the forty days before His ascension, (Acts 1, 3). The writer of the Book of the Acts reports that at Troas "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them" (Acts 20, 7). The Apostle Paul recommends systematic almsgiving upon the same day: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," (I Cor. 16, 2). It appears that this was

the sense in which the Apostle St. John used the word when he wrote: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1, 10).

The Christian Church from its earliest beginnings has continued the liturgical idea of rites and ceremonies. Proper decorum has always been a mark of Christian worship which is also in conformity to Paul's admonition: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14, 40). "Religious ceremonial has existed from the very first beginnings of Christian services"¹¹. Some of the most evident and important of the rites and ceremonies are listed below:

Benediction: The New Testament records two ritual actions used by Jesus in connection with Benediction on different occasions:

1. The imposition of hands.

"Then were brought unto Him little children, that He should put His hands on them, and pray
And He laid His hands on them, and departed thence."
Matt. 19, 13. 15

2. The elevation of hands.

"And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them."
Luke 24, 50.

Several other formulae of Benediction occur in the later books of the New Testament, two of which have been incorporated into English Liturgies.

1. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (II Cor. 13, 14).

This Benediction occurs at the beginning of the 'anaphora' in

11. Ibid., p. 49.

the Clementine and other Eastern Liturgies, and has been included in the Order of Matins and of Vespers in the New Lutheran Hymnal.

2. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4, 7).

The Creed: The New Testament does not contain a formal creed in the sense in which this term is used today. Yet it does contain fragments of creeds in various forms and certain indications that some kind of a formal creed was known already in Apostolic times. "Though it may seem more probable that the Apostles' Creed was the result of a silent growth and very gradual formation corresponding to the ever-changing environments and needs of the Christian congregations, especially over against the heretics, there is no sufficient reason why the apostles themselves should not have been instrumental in its formulation, nor why, with the exception of a number of minor later additions, its original form should not have been essentially what it is to-day." ¹² The following passages seem to indicate the existence of a creed:

Acts 8, 27: "And Philip said (to the Ethiopian eunuch who wished to be baptized), If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

I Cor. 15, 3-5: St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians, said: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that

12. Concordia Triglotta, Historical Introduction, p. 10.

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve."

Rom. 6, 17: "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."

II Tim. 1, 13: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus".

Heb. 10, 23: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering".

Hymns: The word 'hymn' (ὕμνος), and the verb 'to sing hymns' (ὕμνιζεν), occur several times in the New Testament. The hymn in which our Savior and His Disciples joined in after the institution and reception of the Holy Eucharist in the Upper Room, (Matt. 26, 30; Mark 14, 26), may have been Psalms 115, 116, 117, 118, which formed the second part of the Hallel, and were sung by every Jewish family at the conclusion of the Paschal Supper.

Paul and Silas joined in "singing hymns unto God" at midnight when they were imprisoned at Philippi, (Acts 16, 25).

There are two passages in the Epistles in which hymns are enumerated as something distinct from Psalms:

Eph. 5, 19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

Col. 3, 16: "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

There are good grounds for believing that there exist embedded in the text of the New Testament actual fragments of

of some of the earliest Christian hymns as distinguished from the recognized and inspired Psalms and Canticles of Holy Scripture. The original Greek of these passages has been written in beautiful poetic fashion. In order to show the metrical rythm of these passages, the original Greek text with an English translation has been given below.

1. The first is a fragment of an Advent hymn as contained in Romans 13, 11, 12.:

Ῥοκ ἡμῶν ἡδὴ	'This the hour already
ἔξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι,	to waken out of sleep,
νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον	for nearer now
ἡμῶν ἢ σωτηρία	is our salvation
ἢ ὅτε ἐπίστεύσαμεν	than when we believed;
ἡ νὺξ προέκοπεν,	the night is far spent,
ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν.	the day is nigh at hand.'

- ^{EPHESIANS 5:14}
2. 1 Timothy 3, 16, contains a frggment of a Hymn on Penitence:

Ἐγείρε ὁ καθεύδων,	'Awake thou that sleepest,
καὶ ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν,	and arise from the dead,
καὶ ἐπιφάσει σοὶ ὁ Χριστός.	and Christ shall give thee light.'

possibly used on New Year's Day

- ^{1 Tim 3:16}
~~Ephesians 5, 14~~, contains a fragment of a Hymn or Antiphonal Composition on Christ:

[Θεὸς οὐ] ὅς	'Who
ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί,	was manifest in the flesh
ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι,	justified in the Spirit,
ὤφθη ἰσχυρίοις,	seen of angels,
ἔκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν	preached unto the Gentiles,

ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ believed on in the world,
 ἠνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ. received up into glory.'

4. II Timothy 2, 11 - 13 is another fragment on Christ:

Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος·	'It is a faithful saying:
Ἐὶ θανάτῳ ἕλθομεν, καὶ	If we be dead with Him, we
ζήσομεν·	shall also live with Him;
εἰ ὑπομένομεν, καὶ	if we suffer, we shall also
κυβερνήσομεν·	reign with Him;
εἰ ἄρνησθε, καὶ ἐκεῖνος	if we deny Him, he also
ἄρνησεται ἡμᾶς·	will deny us;
εἰ ἄπιστοί ἐσθε, ἐκεῖνος	if we believe not, yet He
πιστὸς μένει·	abideth faithful;
ἄρνησάσθαι ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται.	He cannot deny Himself.'

The Kiss of Peace: The Apostles refer a number of times to the kiss as an emblem of Christian love and peace:

Rom. 16, 16: "Salute one another with an holy kiss."
 I Cor. 16, 20: "Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."
 II Cor. 13, 12: "Greet one another with an holy kiss."
 I Thess. 5, 26: "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."
 I Pet. 5, 14: "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity."

It does not appear that any liturgical position was attached to this kiss, but the epithet 'holy' always applied to it by the Apostle Paul indicates that it was not merely the ordinary Eastern mode of salutation, but that it partook of a religious character, and we find it from the very earliest post-scriptural times associated with the approach to the Holy Eucharist. Its Eucharistic connections can hardly fail to have been suggested by these words of our Lord:

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembreth that thy brother hath ought against thee;

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift". (Matt. 5, 24).

This kiss gave the expression of the feeling of Christian harmony and unity.

Marriage: The attitude of the New Testament in regard to marriage is that it is a religious union to be kept indissoluble, but nowhere does it attach any religious ceremony to the rite itself. Jesus sanctioned the marriage rite, however, when He attended the Marriage at Cana. (Jesus on marriage, cf. Mark 10, 9; Paul on marriage, cf. I Cor. 7, 39).

Offerings: Concerning the principle of weekly Sunday collections, or offerings, for charitable purposes, Paul writes to the Churches of Corinth and Galatia: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Cor. 16, 1. 2).

The Agape or Love Feast: "The love-feast, or agape, was a common meal, at which the first Christians met together in token of love and brotherly kindness. It was partly of a religious, partly of a social, but not of sacramental character."¹³

It is evident that this feast was closely attached to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. In the course of time,

13. F. E. Warren, The Liturgy and Ritual of the Ante-Nicene Church, p. 32.

gross abuses crept into the agape. The Apostle Paul warns against these abuses in his Letter to the Corinthians. (I Cor. 11, 21)

Public Prayer: The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the duty of public Christian worship, says: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." (Heb. 10, 25). St. Paul delivered certain ordinances or traditions to the Corinthians, and praised them for keeping them (I Cor. 11, 2); but we do not know what these ordinances were. They included:

The uncovering of men's heads in prayer,	I Cor. 11, 4.
The covering or veiling of women in prayer,	" " 5
The use of a language understood by the people,	I Cor. 14, 19.
The prohibition of women from speaking in church,	I Cor. 14, 34.
And, generally speaking, decency and order,	" " 40.

Vestments: The New Testament contains no allusions to any distinctive dress as worn by either the Apostles or their associates.

Unction of the Sick: Two passages of the New Testament mention the anointing of the sick. Whether this was a religious ceremonial or a hygienic practice cannot be determined. The two passages referred to are: Mark 6, 13 and James 5, 14. 15.

Holy Eucharist: The New Testament contains four records of the institution of the Eucharist: Matt. 26, 26 - 28; Mark 14, 22 - 24; Luke 22, 19. 20; I Cor. 11, 23 - 26. It is evident

from these passages that this service was to be celebrated frequently. Two practices were common in Apostolic times: daily and weekly reception of the Lord's Supper. The former was the practice of the first Christians immediately after the Day of Pentecost.

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2, 46).

The latter was the practice at Troas, where the Eucharist apparently formed part of the Sunday as distinguished from the week-day service.

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them." (Acts 20, 7).

There can be no doubt that communion in both kinds was the will of our Savior at the time of His institution. That this was also the opinion of the Apostles, compare: I Cor. 10, 21; I Cor. 11, 27 - 29.

From this study of worship during the Apostolic Age it is evident that it was during this period that the embryo of all Christian worship formed. "All the essential elements of future growth were there indeed from the beginning, as they are in the acorn or the egg."¹⁴ The development of a complete liturgical service came gradually "according to the genius of the nation in which the Church was planted".¹⁵ For the Apostles to have made a complete liturgy would have defeated their purpose. They were interested in laying down the principles which were to be followed in later worship.

III. Christian Worship of the Post-Apostolic Era

The Apostolic Church had carefully followed the command of Christ to preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. In conformity to this command, the Apostles labored first among the Jews, but as a nation the Jews did not accept the Gospel, instead became bitter and passionate opponents of the Christian Church. After Emperor Hadrian, in A.D. 117, issued an imperial edict forbidding the religious practices of the Jews, they could no longer directly persecute the Christians. They therefore retaliated by circulating horrible calumnies on Jesus Christ and His followers. In so doing they stirred up the antagonism of the Roman officials against the Christians.

The Graeco-Roman pagan world directed their first onslaught against the Christians by means of literary opposition; but this scheme failed completely.

The next step taken by the Roman government to eradicate the rapid spread of Christianity was relentless persecution. Emperor Nero, 37-68, had set the example by killing many hundreds of Christians and cruelly torturing many others. Emperor Trajan, 98-117, by means of an imperial edict forbidding the secret assembly of Christian congregations, arrested many who failed to obey his order. Emperor

Hadrian, 117-138, pursued the general policy of his predecessor. Antonius Pius, 138-161, though mild in nature, was forced to continue the persecution because of public prejudice against the Christians. It was during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, 161-180, that fierce persecution broke out in many of the localities of the Roman Empire. The first general, systematic persecution of the Church took place during the reign of Decius, 249-251, and Valerian, 253-260. It was popular belief that the Christians were responsible for the calamities which befell the Empire during this time and fierce hatred broke out against them. The last violent attempt to eradicate the Christians was made by Diocletian, 284-305. In 303 he issued three edicts against the Christians in rapid succession: the first ordered the destruction of all Christian buildings; the second demanded the imprisonment of all bishops and presbyters; the third subjected all Christians to torture. A fourth edict of 304 offered a simple alternative of apostacy or death. During the "Great Persecution" some of the Christians "lapsed", others gave up their religious books and were therefore called "traitors". After these severe persecutions were past, some of those weak Christians who had deserted the Church sought to rejoin. This gave occasion for several important schisms: the Meletian Schism in Alexandria; the Schism of Heraclius in Rome; and the Donatist Schism in Carthage.

There were also struggles within the Church itself.

Gnosticism threatened to undermine the teachings of the of the Gospel by means of speculative reason. The fanatic asceticism and enthusiasm of the Montanists threatened to set aside the teachings of Christ and His Apostles in favor of personal visions and dreams. The peace of the Church was also disturbed by ecclesiastical strifes, such as the Easter or Quartodeciman Controversy, and the Anabaptist Controversy, involving the validity of Baptism performed by heretics.

The beginning of Christianity was made in violent days, and yet the Church flourished and spread rapidly. Through these turbulent days the Church finally emerged triumphant. The battle was won "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah" (Zech. 4, 6).

It is necessary to keep this historic background in mind in order to appreciate the contributions made to liturgical worship by the faithful even in these trying days.

Places of Worship:

The Christians of the sub-Apostolic period continued the practice of the Apostles to worship in private homes and in the open country. When persecution broke out they withdrew to dens and caves in the side of hills. In later times they conducted their services in the small chapels in the catacombs, or burial vaults, outside the city walls.

The Catacombs were subterranean^e burial vaults, often of considerable size. Niches were cut into the walls of the underground corridors just wide and deep enough to contain the corpses. The body was sometimes embalmed in Oriental

fashion; but in general it was simply clothed in a tunic and winding sheet, and covered with a coating of plaster. This covering of plaster was probably more effective than anything else in preserving the air of the catacomb from contamination, though the "locus", which contained the body, was tightly sealed with a plate of stone or by several tiles. Sometimes graves were made under the floor itself. Odd spaces in the walls too short for adults were often utilized for the "loculi" of children. The arch and the wall above and below the tomb being plastered, afforded room for painting, but apart from this there were rarely any decorations in the corridors. At the entrance of some of the catacombs at the beginning of the various corridors were larger crypts which were used for burial services and in general for the celebration of the Eucharist at regular times. "Notwithstanding their limited size, they are rightly regarded as subterranean chapels intended for more or less public use. They open generally with a broad entrance upon the corridor, so that a number of worshippers might have been accommodated in the latter. The accommodations were sometimes still further increased by a second chapel opening directly opposite the principle one; it is supposed that this was occupied by the women." ¹⁶ These early chapels were marked by great simplicity in the means of decoration and are thereby distinguished from those which were constructed after the peace of the Church.

16. Walter Lawrie, Monuments of the Early Church, p. 26.

Throughout the Roman Empire Christianity was for a long time a proscribed religion. As has been pointed out in the beginning of this section, a number of edicts were issued by various Emperors prohibiting Christian worship, and though the penal laws were left at times to slumber, they were liable at any time to be waked and put into force; hence it was the Christians' object to worship God as unobtrusively as possible. It is therefore not surprising that but few places of public worship were built during this time.

This fact is born out by an accusation made by Minucius Felix, who among other charges against the Christians, mentions that they had no churches or altars. This was a cruel charge to be brought against the Christians by their heathen opponents, because, though it was true, yet, so far as it was true, it was due to the persecutions of heathenism, and the necessity of avoiding publicity. However, Minucius Felix defends the non-existence among Christians of churches and altars on other grounds, and in a passage of such spiritual beauty, that we quote it in length:

'But do you think that we conceal what we worship if we have not temples and altars? And yet what image of God shall I make, since, if you think rightly, man himself is the image of God? What temple shall I build Him, when the whole world, fashioned by His work, cannot receive Him? And when I, a man, dwell far and wide shall I shut up the might of so great majesty within one little building? Were it not better that He should be dedicated in our minds, consecrated in our inmost heart? Shall I offer victims and sacrifices to the Lord, such as He has produced for my use, that I should throw back to Him His own gifts?

17. Octavius, capp. xxv.; P.L., tom. iii. col. 339, in Warren, op. cit., p. 67.

And yet, not all emperors were filled with the blood-thirsty hatred of Nero and Diocletian toward the Christians. Some of the Emperors as Alexander Serverus, 222-235, were more lenient, or, they did not insist on widespread persecution throughout the entire empire. We therefore find that certain halls and buildings set aside especially for Divine Worship, existed as early as the last half of the second century. A number of the early Church Fathers allude to these places of worship and call them by various names. St. Cyprian, for example, reproached a rich woman for coming into the "Lord's house" (dominicum) without a sacrifice.¹⁸ Churches are also mentioned by Tertullian¹⁹ and Origen²⁰ under the names of "ecclesia" and "domus Dei". Both Eusebius²¹ and Optatus²² refer to the existence of many churches in Rome and elsewhere at the beginning of the fourth century; and Constantine, in his letter to Eusebius on the subject of building Christian Churches, refers to the small size and the ruin of previously existing sacred buildings.²³

The Basilica: The earliest church buildings were modeled after the private Roman house and the style of architecture is therefore known as "basilic". This is what we would expect, for the Christians up to this time when they

18. Lib. de opere et eleemosynis, cap. xv; P.L., tom. iv. col. 614, in Warren, op. cit., p. 67.

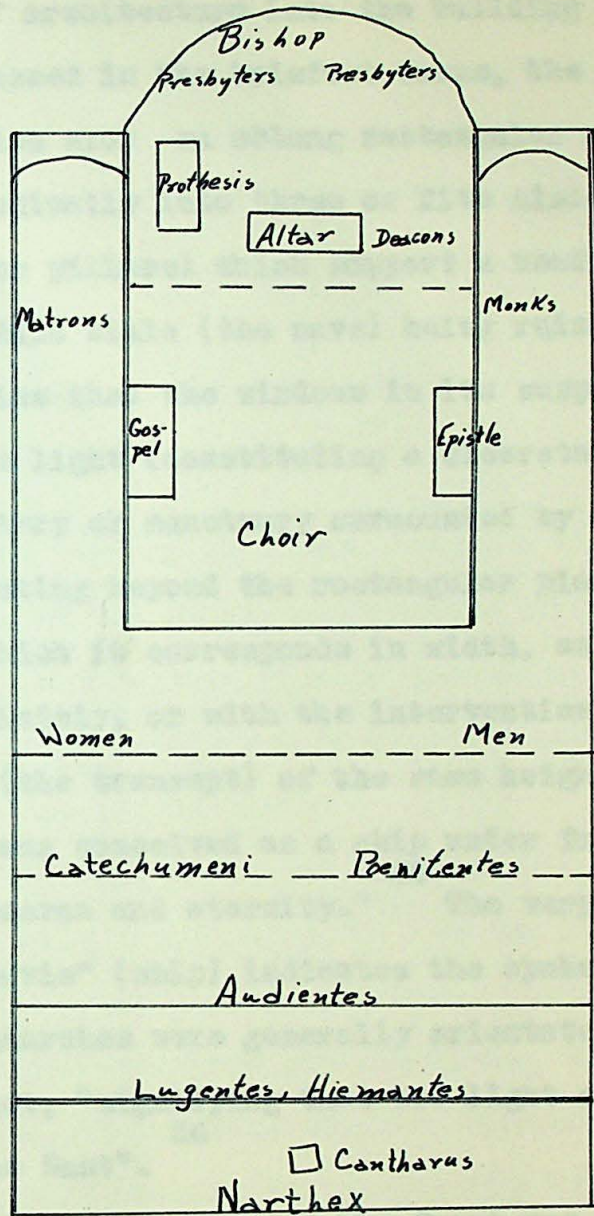
19. De Idololatria, cap. vii; P.L., tom. i. col. 699, ibid.

20. Hom. x in Librum Jesu Nave, #3; P.G., tom. xli. col. 881, ibid.

21. Hist. Eccles., lib. x. capp. li, lli; ibid.

22. De Schismate Donatistarum, lib. li. cap. 4; P.L., tom. xl. col. 951; ibid., p. 68.

23. Theodoret, Hist. Eccles., lib. i. cap. 14, ibid.



Plan of the later Basilica

built their own special places of worship, celebrated their services in private dwellings. Now they simply carried over this style of architecture into the building of their churches.

"Expressed in the briefest terms, the characteristics of the basilica are: an oblong rectangular ground plan divided longitudinally into three or five aisles by rows of columns (or pillars) which support a wooden roof, the roof above the middle aisle (the nave) being raised so much above the side aisles that the windows in its supporting walls admit air and light (constituting a clearstory); a half circular presbytery or sanctuary surmounted by a half dome (the apse), projecting beyond the rectangular plan, facing the nave, with which it corresponds in width, and adjoining it either immediately, or with the intervention of a trans-²⁴verse aisle (the transept) of the same height as the nave".

"The church was conceived as a ship under full sail, riding²⁵ forward to heaven and eternity." The very name "nave" from the Latin "navis" (ship) indicates the symbolical conception.

The churches were generally orientated so that they faced the East, "signifying that the light of the Gospel²⁶ came from the East".

Inside the apse toward the front was the altar, which had in earlier days of household-worship been a domestic table (τράπεζα), but now had become a cube of wood, or stone, or precious metal, raised from the floor by four short

24. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 91.

25. P.E. Kretzmann, Christian Art, p. 29.

26. Ibid.

legs. It was covered with a linen cloth at the time of the Eucharist, and carried nothing but a paten, or plate, for the bread, and a chalice for the wine.

Also in the apse on either side of the altar were seats for the bishop and his presbyters. In front of the altar to the left and right were "amboes" or lecterns: one for the reading of the Gospel and the other for the reading of the Epistle.

We gain this information from the "Didascalis"^a, where in chapter xli, p. 65, we read:²⁷

"Let a place be reserved for the presbyters in the midst of the eastern part of the house, and let the throne of the bishop be placed amongst them; let the presbyters sit with him, but also at the other eastern side of the house let the laymen sit; for thus it is required that the presbyters should sit at the eastern side of the house with the bishop, and afterward the laymen, and next the women; that when ye stand to pray the rulers may stand first and afterward the laymen, and then the women also, for toward the east it is required that ye should pray."

From this quotation and from another statement made²⁸ in the "Apostolic Church Order", we see that a distinction was made between the laymen and women. This principle was no doubt carried over from the Synagogue, and was a reminder of the general principle of the New Testament that women were not to be equal to men as far as worship and teaching was concerned.

That the altar was regarded as the principal piece of furniture in the church, may be seen from the following excerpts

27. Warren, op. cit., p. 44.

28. "When the Master asked for the bread and cup, and blessed them, saying, 'This is my body and my blood,' He did not allow women to be standing with us." Canon 26, p. 236.

from the early writers.

St. Ignatius, writing to the Ephesians, says: 29

"Let no man be deceived. If any one be not within (the precincts) of the altar, he taketh the bread of God".

30

Writing to the Magnesians, he says:

"Hasten to come together all of you as to one temple even God; as to one altar, even to one Jesus Christ."

31

Writing to the Trallians, he says:

"He that is within (the precincts of) the altar is clean; he that doeth aught without the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacon, this man is not clean in his conscience."

32

Writing to the Philadelphians, he says:

"Be ye careful, therefore, to observe one Eucharist (~~of~~ there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup unto union in his blood; there is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow-servants), that whatsoever ye do, ye may do it after God."

These passages are obviously metaphorical and signify what the altar stands for, i.e., the Holy Eucharist. The altar was therefore in earliest times regarded with highest esteem and reverence.

Pictures and images were used in the catacombs. They were also used in the early churches in spite of the early Christian prejudice against their use in connection with worship. The Christians carried over this prejudice from their Jewish ancestors who wished to guard against pagan idolatry. As early as A.D. 305 in the Council of Elvira, in Spain, it

29. cap. v., Warren, op. cit., p. 68.

30. cap. vii, Ibid.

31. cap. vii, Ibid.

32. cap. lv, Ibid.

was found necessary to forbid representations of objects of worship by paintings in churches.

Christian art followed the line and form of contemporaneous Classical art, and it also followed that art in its rapid decline after the second century. The frescos of the Roman catacombs are almost the only examples preserved to us of the paintings of the second and third centuries. In early Christian art the substance was accounted of more importance than the form of presentation. By the end of the second century we find an art as truly religious, as truly Christian, as any which was ever developed, and not the less Christian because it was couched in Classic form. It dealt already with a wide range of Biblical subjects, which, without any considerable change, remained the themes of Christian art throughout the succeeding centuries.

The decoration of the catacombs was strictly symbolical. Only a narrow choice of Biblical themes were portrayed, to the total neglect of hosts of others which were no less important, no less familiar in Christian instruction, no less dramatic and picturesque. Since the subjects dealt with were familiar to the beholders, the artist could afford to abbreviate description, and could rely upon the imagination of the beholder to depict the chief dramatic moment for the whole scene. A man floating in a chest served to recall the story of Noah as an instance of Divine deliverance. Christ touching a basket with a rod recalled the miraculous multiplication of the of the loaves and symbolized the Eucharist.

One mode of expressing the image of the departed saints was by means of the "orans" or "orant". This form designates a figure in the attitude of prayer, with arms outstretched ~~in~~ in the manner which was common to both Jews and Gentiles, and was accounted by the Church particularly significant, because it recalled the position of the Savior upon the cross. It is mainly from these representations that we gain our information regarding the vestments worn by the clergy.

Toward the close of the third century Christian painting was gradually supplanted by glass mosaic.

Public Worship

Sunday: It seems evident that toward the close of the Apostolic Age the Sunday instead of the sabbath was set aside by the Christians for their day of public worship. St. Ignatius describes Christians as no longer keeping the sabbath, but as 'living after the Lord's day (κατὰ Κυριακὴν ζωῆτες)

33

In the "Didache", people are enjoined thus:

"And on the Lord's own day, gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifices may be pure."

34

The "Didascalis" says:

"Command and remind the people that they be constant in the assembly of the church; so that ye be not hindered, but that they be constantly assembled, that no one diminish the church by not assembling, and make smaller by a member the body of Christ. It is not about others alone that a man should think, but also about himself, hearing what our Lord hath said, "He that gathereth

33. Ep. to the Magnesians, cap. lx. pp. 114, Hardman, op. cit., p. 144.

34. cap. kiv. pp. 223, 234, Ibid.

not not with me scattereth abroad." 35

The title, Κυριακή, or the Lord's day, for Sunday, occurs in the recently discovered fragment of the Gospel of St. Peter, which probably belongs to the second century. 36

That Sunday was observed in remembrance of our Savior's Resurrection, we learn from the Epistle of Barnabas, who writes: 37

"Wherefore we keep the eighth day as a day of gladness, on which also Jesus rose from the dead, and after He had appeared ascended into heaven."

Saints Days, so far as martyrs are concerned, began to be kept at a very early date. In the letter of the Smyrnaeans, describing the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, we are told how the Christians, after he had been burned to death, gathered together his bones 38

'and laid them in a suitable place, where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom, for the commemoration of those who have already fought in the contest, and for the training and preparation of those who shall do so hereafter.'

From this it is evident that the anniversaries of the deaths of martyrs were kept as early as A.D. 155. 39

St. Cyprian enjoins the presbyters and deacons:

'to note down the days of the deaths of the confessors, that the commemoration of them might be celebrated among the memorials of martyrs.'

35. Cap. xiii. pp. 68, Warren, op. cit., p. 146.

36. Solmon (G.), Intro. to the N.T., p. 584, ibid., p. 146.

37. Cap. xv. p. 261, ibid.

38. Cap. 18., ibid., p. 143.

39. Ep. xxxvii. p. 50, ibid., p. 143.

The Church Year was for the most part established already at the close of the third century. The following is a list of festivals and feasts enumerated in the Apostolic Constitutions:
40

Lent, consisting of the week before Easter, including Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Even; Easter Day; Low Sunday; Eastertide; Ascension Day and Ascensiontide; the Feast of Pentecost, with the week after it; all Sundays in the year; all Saturdays in the year are feasts, except Easter Even; and all Wednesdays and Fridays are fasts.

The Agape

It has already been shown that the Agape was a common observance in the Apostolic Age, but that even then misuses had caused the Apostles to warn against this practice. In consequence of an imperial edict against secret societies, the much suspected and maligned love-feasts were temporarily abandoned in Asia Minor. In some localities the Agape was separated from the Service of the Holy Eucharist for the same reason. But in Africa this practice was continued or had been revived in the time of Tertullian, who in his "Apology" refutes the calumnies of the pagans and writes approvingly of the act. Later, when Tertullian joined the Montanists, he lashes the practice of the love-feasts in his book "De Jejuniis" with the most stinging sarcasm. The Council of Laodicea, about the middle of the fourth century, forbade the holding of these feasts in the church, and the Second Trullan Council, in 692, renewed this prohibition. After this time, there is no further mention of the Agape.

40. Lib. v. capp. 13. 20, Warren, op. cit., p. 144.

Liturgies

The time of the origins of the early liturgies is a very much disputed matter. No record of a complete liturgy can be found in the first three Christian centuries. "There may be several reasons assigned for this," says Bingham. "One is that the Bishops at first made every one their own liturgy for the private use, as we may call it, of their own particular churches. And therefore the use of them does not extend further than the precincts of their own diocese, there was therefore little knowledge of them beyond the bounds of those churches, and not much care to preserve them but only for the use of such churches, for which they were particularly designed. Every Bishop had at first this power and privilege to compose and order the form of Divine Service for his own church."⁴¹

A general description of the Christian worship was given by Justin Martyr, in his First Apology, most probably written and addressed to the Emperor Antonius Pius in A.D. 148. Because of its importance, we are quoting it in full.

LXV.

"But we (Christians), after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented (to our teaching) lead him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the illuminated (i.e. baptized) person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our

41. Joseph Bingham, Antiq. Book xiii, chap. v, p. 602.

works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. Bread and a cup of wine mingled with water are then brought to the president of the brethren; and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the Universe, through the Name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgiving, all the people present express their consent by saying, "Amen". This word "Amen" answers in the Hebrew language to (the Greek) ἀμην (i.e. So be it). And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give each of those present the bread and wine mixed with water, over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and they carry away a portion to those who are not present.

And this food is called among us "the Eucharist", of which no one is allowed to partake but he who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ hath enjoined. For we do not receive these (elements) as common bread and common drink, but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of the word which comes from Him, and from which our blood and flesh are nourished by transmutation, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the Apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them that Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, and said, "Do this in remembrance of Me: this is My body;" and that after the same manner He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "This is My blood", and gave it to them alone. The wicked devils have also imitated this in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For you know, or can learn, that bread and cup of water are employed with certain incantations in the mystic rites which accompany the initiation of a member.

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy, and we always keep together. And we bless the Creator of all things, through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit, for all things wherewith we are supplied. And on the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets, are read, as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ceased, the president

verbally instructs and exhorts (the people) to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and offer prayers. And, as we have said before, when we have finished the prayer, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings with all his might, and the people assent, saying, "Amen", and there is a distribution to each, and a participation in the Eucharistic elements, and portions are sent to those who are not present by the deacons. And the well-to-do and the willing give what each person thinks fit, and the collection is deposited with the president, who succors orphans and widows, and those who are in want through sickness or any other cause, and those who are in prison, and the strangers sojourning among us, and, in a word, he takes care of all who are in any need. We all hold our common assembly on Sunday, because it is the first day on which God having wrought a change in darkness and chaos made it cosmos, and because Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead on the same day. For they crucified Him on the day before the day of Saturn, and on the day after Saturday, which is Sunday, He appeared to His Apostles and disciples, and taught them these things, which we have submitted to you for your consideration. 42

The following description of Christian worship was given by Pliny, Governor of Bithynia, writing to the Emperor Trajan, A.D. 112. Pliny said that he had obtained his information from certain apostates from the Christian faith

43

whom he had examined.

"They asserted that this was the sum and substance of their fault or their error; namely, that they were in the habit of meeting before dawn on a stated day, and singing alternately a hymn to Christ as to a god, and that they bound themselves by an oath not to the commission of any wicked deed, but that they would abstain from theft, and robbery, and adultery; that they would not break their word; and that they would not withhold a deposit when reclaimed. This done, it was their practice, so they said, to separate, and then to meet together again for a meal, which, however, was of the ordinary kind, and quite harmless. But even from this they had desisted after my edict; in which, in pursuance of your commands, I had forbidden the existence of clubs."

42. Justin Martyr, First Apology, P.G., tom. vi. coll. 427-431, in Warren, op. cit., p. 45-47.

43. Epp., lib. x. No. 97, p. 364, in ibid., p. 44-45.

From these two descriptions we see that Christian worship in the middle of the second century consisted of:

1. Scripture reading of the Old and New Testament
2. A sermon or exhortation
3. Common prayer
4. Kiss of peace
5. The presentation
6. The Thanksgiving Prayer
7. The Consecration
8. Intercession
9. Congregational "Amen"
10. Distribution of Elements
11. Distribution of alms
12. Hymns and Psalms

The Time of celebrating the Holy Eucharist was generally
44
early in the morning. Tertullian states:

"The sacrament of the Eucharist, though it was commanded by our Lord at meal-time and to all, we take it in assemblies before daybreak, and from the hands of no others except our presidents".

Frequency of celebration: The earliest evidence points to the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday of every week.

Pliny's letter to Trajan indicates this. The "Didache"
45
orders:

"And on the Lord's day come together and break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure."
46

In the "Didascalia", it is ordered:

"Leave everything on the Lord's day, and run eagerly towards your church, for this is your glory. If not, what excuse will ye have before God for those who have not assembled on the Lord's day, to hear the Word of life, and to be nourished with the Divine food which endureth forever."

44. De Corona Militis, cap. 3; P.L., 11, 79, Warren, op. cit., p. 102.

45. Cap. xiv, # 1, ibid., p. 103.

46. Cap. xiii. p. 67, ibid., p. 104

Communion in both kinds was the common practice in the early Church. Origen describes the intending communicants as "about to eat the flesh of the Lamb, and to drink the cup of salvation."⁴⁷

The mixed chalice of wine and water is mentioned in Justin Martyr's description of the Eucharist Service.⁴⁸ Irenaeus mentions and condemns the Ebionites for rejecting the mixed chalice, and employing water only in the Eucharist.⁴⁹ St. Cyprian is positive and vehement on the subject of mixed chalice, and became very fanciful in his interpretations of his reasons for the mixed chalice. He says:⁵⁰

"We see that people are to be understood by the water, and that the blood of Christ is exhibited in the wine. When water is mixed with wine in the chalice, the people is united to Christ and the multitude of believers is coupled and joined to him in whom they have believed; while coupling and joining of water and wine is thus made in the cup of the Lord as an inseparable commixture.....Thus, in consecrating the chalice of the Lord, water alone cannot be offered, just as wine alone cannot be offered. For if any one offer wine only, the blood of Christ begins to be in existence without us. If, however, there be water only, the people begin to be in existence without Christ. But union, then the spiritual and heavenly sacrament is perfected."

Reservation was a custom observed for the following purposes:

a. For sending to the absent, or for the communion of the sick, or the newly baptized. Justin Martyr⁵¹ describes how, after those present had been communicated, the deacons bore away from the church portions of the consecrated elements to

47. Hom. in Exod., xi. 7; P.G., xii. 381; Warren, op. cit. p. 106.

48. Thesis, p. 35.

49. Contra Haeres, lib. v. cap. I; Warren, op. cit., p. 109.

50. Ep. 63, p. 108, ibid, p. 111.

51. Thesis p. 36.

those absent. St. Dionysius of Alexandria describes the death-bed communion of the aged and sick Sarapion with the reserved sacrament.⁵² St. Tharsicus, an acolyte, was bearing the reserved sacrament to some Christians in prison, during the persecution of Valerian and Gallienus, c. A.D. 256, when he was attacked and killed by a pagan mob.⁵³

b. For private use: St. Cyprian, writing against the custom of some Christians to frequent heathen games and shows, in spite of the immoralities and indecencies connected with them, denounces the profanity of the Christian worshipper, freshly dismissed from church, hastening at once to the play, and still carrying along with him, in accordance with custom, the Eucharist.⁵⁴ St. Cyprian also tells a story of a woman who tried to open her box which contained the holy gift of the Lord, but who desisted, being terrified by the fire which rose from the box.⁵⁵

c. For despatch to strangers as a token of friendship.⁵⁶

The Hours: A regulated Daily Office did not become prominent until the fourth century. The Early Christians met for vigils or all-night watches in preparation for the Eucharist on Sunday and on the anniversaries of martyrdoms. This custom was gradually reduced to a service at the time of lamp lighting and another at cock crow, with a period of rest in between. Daily prayers were said privately and at various hours according to local custom.

52. Eusebius, Hist. Eccles., lib. vi. cap. 44

53. Acta SS. Bolland, Aug., tom. iii. p. 201.

54. De Spectaculis, p. 381, Warren op. cit., p. 114.

55. De Lapsis, p. 189

56. Thesis p. 36.

Visiting the Sick: In times of sickness Christians were carried to church, if possible; for the Church was regarded as a temple of healing. If that was not possible, they were visited by deacons, who carried to them from the altar their portion of the consecrated Elements after the offering of the Eucharist. The bishop and the presbyters also waited on the sick, praying with them, and seeking to bring them spiritual and bodily comfort by means of exorcism, imposition of hands, and anointing with oil. Lay men were accustomed to minister by the same means, using oil which had been blessed by the bishop. At all times the Church remembered the sick in its prayers.

Baptism

We find an interesting general description of baptism in that of Xanthippe who came to Paul and asked him to "seal her to salvation".⁵⁷

"He led her by the hand into the house, and baptized her in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Then taking the bread of the Eucharist, he gave it to her, saying, "Let this be to thee for the remission of sins, and for the renewing of thy soul." Then the blessed Xanthippe, having received the Divine gift of holy baptism, returned to her own home, rejoicing and praising God.

The baptism of her husband, Probus, was very similar⁵⁸ and is described as follows:

"Rising early in the morning, he went to Paul, and found him baptizing many in the Name of the lifeoriginating Trinity, and said, If I am worthy, my master, to receive baptism, lo! the hour is come. Paul replied to him, My son, behold, the water is ready for the cleansing of those

57. Acts of Xanthippe, etc., p. 78, Warren, op. cit., p. 51.

58. Ibid, p. 73, ibid, p. 51.

who approach to Christ. Forthwith, then, eagerly stripping off his clothes, Paul holding his hand, he leaped into the water, saying, Jesus Christ, Son of God, and God eternal, may all my sins be done away by this water. And Paul said, We baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and then he made him partake of the Eucharist of Christ."

We notice from these and other passages that the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist was celebrated in connection with that of Baptism. At some times it was also given to little children after their baptism.

59.

The Titles of Baptism are enumerated by Warren. Justin Martyr calls it the 'water of life', and 'the illumination.' In the "Didascalia" it is called 'the seal.' In the "Acts of Paul and Thecla" it is called 'the seal of Christ;' and in "The Shepherd of Hermes", 'the seal of faith', 'the sacrament of water,' 'the enrolment of God.' It is also called 'the seal of the bath', and 'the seal of baptism'. St. Clement of Alexandria calls it 'the seal of the Lord,' a title which is also used in the "Apostolic Constitutions", and he also calls it 'grace', 'illumination,' 'the perfect work,' and 'the bath'.

Infant Baptism: That this was a general practice, we see from the language of Polycarp to the heathen procounsul.

When urged at his trial by the latter to renounce Christ, Polycarp replied:

"Fourscore and six years have I been His servant, and He hath done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King

59. Warren, op. cit., p. 54.

60. Letter of the Smyrnaeans on the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, cap. ix., Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, p. 193-206.

who saved me?"

St. Cyprian pleaded for the baptism of infants at a very early age indeed, while yet only two or three days old, not even advising delay till the eighth day, in accordance with the analogy of circumcision. He argued:

"If adults are admitted to the font, how much more should those be baptized at once who have not sinned, except so far as by natural descent from Adam they have contracted, in the moment of birth, the infection of ancient death, who for this very reason may come more easily to the remission of sins, because it is the sins of another and not their own which are remitted to them".

62

The "Apostolic Constitutions" urge:

"Baptize your children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, for He saith, "suffer little children to come into me, and forbid them not."

Profession of faith and renunciation was demanded from the candidates. Justin says that before men are regenerated they must both profess to believe the truth of those things which they had been taught, and also promise to live answerable to their knowledge.

63

Milk and Honey: Tertullian reports that on leaving the font the newly baptized tasted a mixture of milk and honey. An explanation is given in the Canons of Hippolytus, where the rite is also enjoined.

64

65

"that the newly baptized may remember that they have become as little children, whose natural food is milk and honey."

61. Ep. lix, Ad Fidum de infantibus baptizandis, pp. 97-99

62. Lib. vi. cap. 15, Warren, op. cit., p. 56.

63. Apol. ii. p. 93; Warren, op. cit., p. 57.

64. De Corona, cap. iii; Adv. Marcionem, lib, i, cap. xiv; P.L., tom. ii. col. 79; tom. ii. col. 262.

65. Canon xix. # 144; Warren, p. 59.

Modes of Baptism: Two forms of baptism were common: that of immersion and that of affusion and aspersion. The account of the baptism of Probus by St. Paul seems to indicate baptism by immersion, and the large baptismal fonts which have been found likewise give evidence that this form was employed. Yet there is plenty evidence for baptism by affusion and aspersion. The validity of baptism by affusion or aspersion in the case of sick people, is defended at length by St. Cyprian, who quotes in support of it, that a person so baptized is to be recognized as a legitimate Christian, Num. viii. 7; xix. 18; Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ⁶⁶ Baptism by affusion had been recognized in the "Didache", in which it was laid down:

"But if thou hast not either, pour water thrice upon the head in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." ⁶⁷

When St. Fructuosus baptized Rogationus in prison, immersion ⁶⁸ must have been impossible.

Unction: That the rite of unction was immediately connected with the rite of baptism, is mentioned both by Tertullian and St. Cyprian. Tertullian describes the act thus:

"Then on stepping forth from the font we are anointed with consecrated oil, a custom derived from the old dispensation, in which men used to be anointed priests with oil out of a horn, since the time when Aaron was anointed by Moses; from which he is called 'a christ' from the chrism,

66. Ep. 76, #12; P.L., tom. iii. col. 1194-1196

67. Cap. vii. # 3, Warren, op. cit., p. 61.

68. Fructuosi, etc., Acta, p. 340, ibid.

that is, the unction employed. And this unction gave his name to our Lord, being spiritually performed; because He was anointed with the Spirit by God the Father, as it is said in the Acts: 'For of a truth they were gathered together in that state against thy Holy Child who thou hast anointed'. Thus too in our case, though the unction takes place in the flesh, yet it benefits us spiritually; just as in the act of baptism itself the immersion in water is a carnal transaction, but the effect is a spiritual one, namely, the deliverance from our sins."

Time for Baptism: Tertullian, while allowing that every Lord's day - in fact, every day and every hour - is suitable for the administration of baptism, points out that the festivals, firstly of Easter⁶⁹ and secondly, of Pentecost, are the most appropriate occasions.⁷⁰ To these seasons the Epiphany was added at a very early date.

Consecration of the Water: Similar to the consecration of the elements of the Eucharist, the water was consecrated for baptism.⁷¹ Tertullian said:

"The waters are made the sacrament of sanctification by the invocation of God. The Spirit immediately descends from heaven, and resting upon them, sanctifies them by Himself, and they being so sanctified, imbibe the power of sanctification."

Confirmation: The act of Confirmation was generally always closely connected to the act of baptism. Origin almost⁷² identifies these two acts in the following sentence:

In the Acts of the Apostles the Holy Spirit was given in baptism through the imposition of the hands of the Apostles."

Since these two acts were so closely connected, it is often difficult to distinguish descriptions of the two.

69. Eusibius, Hist. Eccles., v. 24., Warren, op. cit., p.63.

70. De Baptismo, cap. xx.: P.L., tom. 1, col. 1222, ibid.

71. De Baptismo, cap. xvii. P.L., tom. 1. col 1218, ibid.

72. De Principiis, lib. 1. cap. 3; P.G., xi. 147, ibid., p.77.

The following description of Baptism, Confirmation,
and first Communion, is taken from the Canons of Hippolytus: ⁷³

- #'s
112. The time is to be about cock-crow.
- 113-115. Unvesting of the candidates for baptism.
- 116-118. Consecrating of two oils by the bishop, and the delivery of them to the presbyters, viz. 'the oil of exorcism' and 'the oil of unction or thanksgiving.'
119. The candidate is directed to face westward and to renounce Satan.
120. Uction by the presbyter with the oil of exorcism.
- 121-122. The candidate faces eastward, and declares his belief in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
- 123-233. Then he enters the water, and the presbyter, laying his hand on the candidate's head, immerses him thrice, asking him each time whether he believes in the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, successively, the presbyter repeating the formula of baptism at each immersion.
134. The the presbyter anoints him with the oil of thanksgiving, in the name of the Trinity, and in the form of the cross, on the forehead, mouth, breast, whole body, head, and face.
135. The candidate is wiped, clothed, and introduced into the church/
- 136-139. The bishop lays his hands on the heads of all the recently baptized, with prayer.
- 139-140. The bishop signs each of them on the forehead with the sign of the cross, and gives to each the kiss of peace, this mutual salvation passing:
V/. The Lord be with you.
R/. And with thy spirit.
141. The kiss of peace is then exchanged between the newly baptized and all the congregation.
- 142-147. The bishop then communicates them with the reserved eucharistic elements, separately, using these formulae of administration:

V/. This is the body of Christ.
R/. Amen.
V/. This is the blood of Christ.
R/. Amen.
148. The candidates then partake of milk and honey, which have been brought in chalices by the presbyters, or, in their absence, by the deacons.

73. Hippolytus, Cannon xix., Warren, op. cit., p. 76.

The milk and honey are represented as having a double symbolism; firstly, as teaching the newly baptized that they are babes in Christ; secondly, as typifying the world to come, and the sweetness of all good things.

149. They are now designated ('Christiani perfecti').

Fasting

Fasting on Wednesday and Friday is recognized and ordered in the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles":⁷⁴

But let not your fasts be together with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth day of the week; but fast ye on the fourth day and on the preparation day (Friday)."⁷⁵

The Apostolic Constitutions contain a similar exhortation:

"We enjoin you to fast every fourth day of the week, and every day of the preparation, and bestow the surplusage of your fast upon the needy."

We learn from the writings of Tertullian that the fasts observed by the Church in his day were: (1) The Paschal Fast, which consisted in a total abstinence from food (jejunium) during the interval between Christ's passion and resurrection.⁷⁶ This was considered as obligatory upon all Christians. (2) Stationary days, Dies Stationarii, Wednesday and Friday in every week, on which a half-fast (semi-jejunium) was kept, terminating at three in the afternoon.⁷⁷ These were voluntary fasts, and observed on the authority of tradition; Wednesday being selected, because on that day the Jews took counsel to destroy Jesus; and Friday,

74. Didache, cap. viii, #1, Warren, op. cit., p. 89.

75. Apost. Con., Bk. v. cap. 20, Warren, op. cit., p. 90.

76. De Jejunii, c. 8, Bishop John, The Ancient and Modern Library of Theological Literature, p. 206.

77. De Anima, ibid. p. 207.

because that was the day of His crucifixion. ⁷⁸ (3) Xerophagiae, days on which it was usual to abstain from flesh and wine, in imitation, perhaps, of the restraint which Daniel is stated to have imposed upon himself. ⁷⁹ These fasts were not enjoined by the Church, but were voluntary exercises of piety on the part of individuals; ⁸⁰ and some of the orthodox appear to have objected to them altogether, on the ground that they were borrowed from the heathen superstitions. ⁸¹

Marriage

Though the marriage ceremony itself is nowhere prescribed in Scripture, it has from the earliest times been regarded as a religious act, and has been solemnized with religious ceremonial. ⁸² St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote:

"It is fitting for men and women who marry to form this union with the approval of the bishop, that their union may be according to the will of God, and not according to the dictates of concupiscense."

That the marriage itself was accompanied by the celebration of the Eucharist seems to be evident from a statement made by Tertullian. ⁸³

"How may we suffer to describe the happiness of that marriage in which the Church unites, and which the oblation confirms, and the benediction seals?"

78. Bishop John, op. cit., p. 207.

79. c. 10. v. 3., Ibid., p. 207.

80. De Jejuniis, c. 13., Ibid., p. 207.

81. De Jejuniis, c. 8., Ibid., p. 207.

82. Epist. ad Polycarpum, cap. 5, Warren, op. cit., p. 125.

83. Ad Uxorem, lib. ii, cap. 9; P.L., l. 1302, Ibid., p. 103.

* Duchesne, Christian Worship; p. 428. 429.: "The nuptial Mass is met with in all the Roman Sacramentaries... A description by Pope Nicolas I of a nuptial Mass occurs in his celebrated conference with the Bulgareans, held in 866. In describing the marriage ceremony itself, he states that it comprised "the celebration of Mass in the presence of the newly married, who take part in the offering and are communicated."

Choral Service

It is quite natural that the Christians of our period would follow the examples of the Christians of the Apostolic times in bringing their praise and petitions before God in songs and hymns. In the letter of Pliny to Trajan,⁸⁴ we are informed that the Christians sang a hymn "alternately to Christ as to a god." According to a tradition first found in the pages of the historian Socrates, the antiphonal mode of singing originated with St. Ignatius the Martyr, who "saw a vision of angels, praising the Holy Trinity in antiphonal hymns, and left the fashion of his vision as a custom to the Church in Antioch, whence this custom spread likewise through all the churches."⁸⁵

Ecclesiastical Discipline

Toward the close of the first Christian century, strong demands were made upon the adult candidates who wished to join the Church. A long period of careful and thorough instruction had to be undergone. The candidates were known as "catechumens". During the time of their instruction, they were permitted to advance from the place of the "audientes" (hearers) and stand in the narthex where they could also see what was being done. They were, however, not permitted to witness the celebration of the Eucharist. A close watch was kept upon the progress made by them in acquiring Christian

84. Thesis, p. 36.

85. Hist. Eccles., vi. 8., Warren, op. cit., p. 66.

knowledge, and upon the conduct of their private lives. After a certain time (often three years) had elapsed, they were examined publically ("scrutina") and admitted into Church membership by the sacrament of Holy Baptism and the laying on of hands.

Those converts, however, whose faith became weak, or, who fell into serious sins, were excommunicated from the Church. In early times, those who had lapsed were considered as having fallen from grace and therefore could not be received back into the Church. In the course of the second century it came to be recognized that such drastic action was not according to the mind of Christ, and it was provided that reconciliation might be effected once, but only once, after the commission of grievous post-baptismal sin. Exception was made in the case of apostates, murderers, and adulterers; for them there was no return. It was Callistus, Bishop of Rome, 218-223, who made a stand against the rigorist attitude and eased the penalty upon the excommunicated. One reconciliation was now permitted to adulterers. The Church was troubled for some time by the problem of dealing with those weak Christians who in times of persecution had "lapsed" and denied the faith. The rigorists would have had them excluded forever, but they fought a losing battle. At the end of the Ante-Nicean period, it was recognized that even murderers might be reconciled when at the point of death.

"The discipline of reconciliation (exomologies), after confession had been made to the bishop, included the

wearing of sackcloth and ashes, penitential fasting, public bewailing of the sins committed, prostration before the presbyters, and kneeling before the faithful. For the period appointed by the bishop the penitential persons took their place outside with the catechumens at public worship, and were not admitted to Communion until they had fulfilled their penance." 86

Vestments

After ordination no distinctive dress was worn by the clergy. They continued to wear the ordinary "tunica" (the alb) as an undergarment. Over this they wore the "dalmatica" and sometimes in addition the "paenula", a circular coat with a hole in the center for the head. It was only by degree, as the customs of dress changed, that these garments, being retained by the clergy, became the vestments of the clergy.

As early as the ninth century, Walafrid Strabo in one of his writings stated: "In primitive times priests used to celebrate mass clothed in their ordinary dress, as some of the Orientals are reported to do even to the present day." 87

The earliest reference to a special vestment appears to be in the Canons of Hippolytus, which lay down directions 88 for a white ministerial dress:

"As soon as the bishop wishes to celebrate the mysteries let the deacons and presbyters come together to him, clad in white vestments more beautiful than all the people, and as

86. Hardman, A History of Christian Worship, p. 28.

87. De Rebus Eccles., cap. 24; P.L., cxiv. 952, Warren, op. cit., p. 150.

88. Canon xxxvii. #'s. 201, 203, pp. 118. 119., Warren, op. cit., p. 151.

splendid as possible. But good work excels all vestments. Let the readers also have festival garments....The readers also are to wear festal dresses."

In the Apostolic Constitutions, the celebrant is described as standing at the altar clad in a shining garment.
89

The Sign of the Cross

One of the customs resting solely on tradition, is that made in memory of the death of our Savior which is the sign of the cross. While the heathen ridiculed the Christians for basing their faith in Someone Who could not even save Himself but was put to death in a most shameful manner, the Christians gloried in the cross, for it was the sign of their salvation.

The sign of the cross was in constant use among the early Christians. It was traced upon the sand. It was used in connection with sacred acts such as baptism and confirmation, and while praying. It was also used as an accompaniment of the commonest actions of everyday life. The Christians thought that they saw or could see the sign of the cross almost anywhere and everywhere. Justin Martyr bade people see it in the cross masts of a ship, in the cross handle of a plough, in the shape of tools used by diggers and mechanics, in the shape of a human form as it stands erect with arms extended, and especially in the case of the extended arms of Moses while the Israelites defeated the Amalakites.

89. Apostolic Constitutions, lib. viii. cap. 12. #3.

Tertullian describes how:

"In all our travels and movements, in all our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, whatever employment occupies us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross."

In depicting mixed marriages, he asks how the Christian wife will be able to escape detection by the heathen husband, when she makes the sign of the cross over her body, or over her bed, or to banish evil thoughts,
91
or when she rises at night to pray.

92
Minucius Felix says:

"We see the sign of the cross naturally in a ship, borne along with bellying sails; we see it when the ship glides forward with outstretched oars, and when the yard is hoisted; we see it when a pure-hearted man worships God with extended arms."

Origen thought that the shape of the letter 'tau'

"bore a resemblance to the figure of the cross, and that therein was contained a prophecy of the sign which is made by Christians upon the forehead, for all the faithful make this sign in commencing any undertaking, and especially at the commencement of prayer or of reading Holy Scripture."

A two-fold symbolism is ascribed to it in the Canons of Hippolytus--firstly, as a sign of conquest over
93
Satan; secondly, as a sign of glorying in our faith.

Attitude at Prayer

The posture ordinarily assumed by the earliest Christians while engaged in the act of prayer was that of standing. This may be seen in the representations of the "orantes", in the paintings of the Roman catacombs. The figures are there depicted as standing, with arms extended

90. De Carona Militis, cap.iii; P.L.ii.80.

91. Ad Uxorem, lib. ii. cap. v.; P.L., l. 1296.

92. Octavius, cap. 29, ed. 1672, p. 287.

93. Canon xxix. #247, p. 134.

outwards and upwards.

St. Cyprian exhorts that "when we stand to pray, we should watch and join in the prayers with our whole heart."⁹⁴

Origen says beautifully:⁹⁵

"Before a man stretches out his hands to heaven he must lift up his soul heavenward. Before he raises up his eyes he must lift his spirit to God. For there can be no doubt that among a thousand possible positions of the body, outstretched hands and uplifted eyes are to be preferred above all others, so imaging forth in the body those directions of the soul which are fitting in prayer. We are of opinion that this posture should be preferred, where there is nothing to forbid it, for there are certain circumstances, such as sickness, where we may pray even sitting or lying."

But from the first, side by side with standing, kneeling or prostration was also adopted as an attitude of prayer. The Christians in this act followed the example set by our Lord Himself and by St. Stephen, St. Peter, and St. Paul.

Origen says that the posture of kneeling is necessary in confession of sin to God.⁹⁶

"It should be known that bending of the knees is necessary when anyone is about in supplication to confess his sins before God, that they may be forgiven and that he may be healed from them."

The Kiss of Peace (Osculum Pax)

The Kiss of Peace was of Apostolic origin. The custom was carried on through the centuries and continued to be a prominent ceremony in Christian worship. In the "Passion" or "Acts of St. Perpetua" we are told how the martyrs first kissed each other that they might complete

94. De Oratione Domini, p. 213, Warren, op.cit. p. 131.

95. De Oratione, cap. 31, tom. i. p. 267, ibid.

96. De Oratione, #31, tom. i. p. 267.

their martyrdom with the solemnity of the kiss. It was in early times incorporated as a formal part of the Eucharist. This is attested by some of the earliest records of Christian worship, e.g., Justin Martyr's account of the Eucharist.

98

The Kiss of Peace was also associated with the baptismal ceremony. Some of the people shrank from kissing an infant only a few days old, as an impure thing, but St. Cyprian thus argues with them in favor of the baptismal kiss:

99

"No one ought to shudder at that which God hath condescended to make. For although the infant is still fresh from its birth, yet it is not just that any one should shudder at kissing it, in giving grace and making peace; since in kissing the infant, every one of us ought, for his very religion's sake, to bethink him of the hands of God themselves, still fresh, which in some sort we are kissing in the man lately formed and freshly born, when embracing that which God hath made."

Standing at the Reading of the Gospel

Special reverence was displayed for the reading of the Gospel. The people stood, as if hearing a proclamation from their king.

100

The "Canons of Addai", third century, states:

"At the conclusion of all the Scriptures let the Gospel be read, as the seal of all the Scriptures; and let the people listen to it standing up on their feet, because it is the glad tidings of the salvation of all men."

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97. Acts of St. Perpetua, cap. xxi, Warren, op. cit. p. 119.
 98. Thesis, p. 35,
 99. St. Cyprian, Ep. 59, p. 98.
 100. Curbiton's Ancient Syriac Documents, p. 27; Maxwell, Primitive Worship: Its Origin and Growth, p. 16.

The underlying principles of all Christian worship were formed during the Anté-Nicene Period of the Christian Church. The framework of all liturgical Christian worship is clearly outlined in Justin Martyr's description of the Christian worship at his time. True, many additions and elaborations have been made during the succeeding history of the Christian Church, and some of the primitive customs have been dropped and are no longer observed, but fundamentally there has been little change.

The liturgical acts and ceremonies of this early period grew out of love of these early Christians for our Savior. They are expressions of the heart. The teachings of Christ did not fall upon unresponsive souls. We can imagine how dear these customs became to the faithful, for they retained them often to the extent of sacrificing their lives before disavowing them.

These Christian practices are part of the rich liturgical heritage which belongs to all Christians. It is a blessing of God that our dear Lutheran Church has not cast this heritage away, but has preserved it in its Common Service and other liturgical acts.

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