

a *Grace Notes* course

History of the Christian Church

By Philip Schaff

VOLUME 1. First Period – Apostolic Christianity¹

Chapter 9: Worship in the Apostolic Age

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1.51 The Synagogue

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As the Christian Church rests historically on the Jewish Church, so Christian worship and the congregational organization rest on that of the synagogue, and cannot be well understood without it.

The synagogue was and is still an institution of immense conservative power. It was the local centre of the religious and social life of the Jews, as the temple of Jerusalem was the centre of their national life. It was a school as well as a church, and the nursery and guardian of all that is peculiar in this peculiar people. It dates probably from the age of the captivity and of Ezra. It was fully organized at the time of Christ and the apostles, and used by them as a basis of their public instruction. It survived the temple, and continues to this day unaltered in its essential features, the chief nursery and protection of the Jewish nationality and religion.

The term "synagogue" (like our word church) signifies first the congregation, then also the building where the congregation meet for public worship. Every town, however small, had a synagogue, or at least a place of prayer in a private house or in the open air (usually near a river or the sea-shore, on account of the ceremonial washings). Ten men were sufficient to constitute a religious assembly. "Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." To erect a synagogue was considered a work of piety and public usefulness. In large cities, as Alexandria and Rome, there were many; in Jerusalem, about four hundred for the various sects and the Hellenists from different countries.

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1. The building was a plain, rectangular hall of no peculiar style of architecture, and in its inner arrangement somewhat resembling the Tabernacle and the Temple. It had benches, the higher ones ("the uppermost seats") for the elders and richer members, a reading-desk or pulpit, and a wooden ark or closet for the sacred rolls (called "Copheret" or Mercy Seat, also "Aaron"). The last corresponded to the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple. A sacred light was kept burning as a symbol of the divine law, in imitation of the light in the Temple, but there is no mention made of it in the Talmud. Other lamps were brought in by devout worshippers at the beginning of the Sabbath (Friday evening). Alms-boxes were provided near the door, as in the Temple, one for the poor in Jerusalem, another for local charities. Paul imitated the example by collecting alms for the poor Christians in Jerusalem.

There was no artistic (except vegetable) ornamentation; for the second commandment strictly forbids all images of the Deity as idolatrous. In this, as in many other respects, the Mohammedan mosque, with its severe iconoclastic simplicity, is a second edition of the synagogue. The building was erected on the most elevated spot of the neighborhood, and no house was allowed to overtop it. In the absence of a commanding site, a tall pole from the roof rendered it conspicuous.

2. Organization.—Every synagogue had a president, a number of elders (Zekenim) equal in rank, a reader and interpreter, one or more envoys or clerks, called "messengers" (Sheliach), and a sexton or beadle (Chazzan) for the humbler mechanical services. There were also deacons (Gabae zedaka) for the collection of alms in money and produce. Ten or more wealthy men at leisure, called Batlanim, represented the congregation at every service. Each synagogue formed an independent republic, but kept up a regular correspondence with other synagogues. It was also a civil and religious court, and had power to excommunicate and to scourge offenders.

3. Worship.—It was simple, but rather long, and embraced three elements, devotional, didactic, and ritualistic. It included prayer, song, reading, and exposition of the Scripture, the rite of circumcision, and ceremonial washings. The bloody sacrifices were confined to the temple and ceased with its destruction; they were fulfilled in the eternal sacrifice on the cross. The prayers and songs were chiefly taken from the Psalter, which may be called the first liturgy and hymn book. The opening prayer was called the Shema or Keriath Shema, and consisted of two introductory benedictions, the reading of the Ten Commandments (afterward abandoned) and several sections of the Pentateuch, namely, Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Num. 15:37–41. Then followed the eighteen prayers and benedictions (Berachoth). This is one of them:

"Bestow peace, happiness, blessing, grace, mercy, and compassion upon us and upon the whole of Israel, thy people. Our Father, bless us all unitedly with the light of thy countenance, for in the light of thy countenance didst thou give to us, O Lord our God, the law of life, loving-kindness, justice, blessing, compassion, life, and peace. May it please thee to bless thy people Israel at all times, and in every moment, with peace. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who blesses thy people Israel with peace."

These benedictions are traced in the Mishnah to the one hundred and twenty elders of the Great Synagogue. They were no doubt of gradual growth, some dating from the Maccabean struggles, some from the Roman ascendancy. The prayers were offered by a reader, and the congregation responded "Amen." This custom passed into the Christian church.

The didactic and homiletical part of worship was based on the Hebrew Scriptures. A lesson from the Law (called parasha), and one from the Prophets (haphthara) were read in the original, and followed by a paraphrase or

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commentary and homily (midrash) in the vernacular Aramaic or Greek. A benediction and the "Amen" of the people closed the service.

As there was no proper priesthood outside of Jerusalem, any Jew of age might get up to read the lessons, offer prayer, and address the congregation. Jesus and the apostles availed themselves of this democratic privilege to preach the gospel, as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. The strong didactic element which distinguished this service from all heathen forms of worship, had the effect of familiarizing the Jews of all grades, even down to the servant-girls, with their religion, and raising them far above the heathen. At the same time it attracted proselytes who longed for a purer and more spiritual worship.

The days of public service were the Sabbath, Monday, and Thursday; the hours of prayer the third (9 A.M.), the sixth (noon), and the ninth (3 P.M.).

The sexes were divided by a low wall or screen, the men on the one side, the women on the other, as they are still in the East (and in some parts of Europe). The people stood during prayer with their faces turned to Jerusalem.

1.52 Christian Worship.

Christian worship, or cultus, is the public adoration of God in the name of Christ; the celebration of the communion of believers as a congregation with their heavenly Head, for the glory of the Lord, and for the promotion and enjoyment of spiritual life. While it aims primarily at the devotion and edification of the church itself, it has at the same time a missionary character, and attracts the outside world. This was the case on the Day of Pentecost when Christian worship in its distinctive character first appeared.

As our Lord himself in his youth and manhood worshipped in the synagogue and the temple, so did his early disciples as long as they were tolerated. Even Paul preached

Christ in the synagogues of Damascus, Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Amphipolis, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus. He "reasoned with the Jews every Sabbath in the synagogues" which furnished him a pulpit and an audience.

The Jewish Christians, at least in Palestine, conformed as closely as possible to the venerable forms of the cultus of their fathers, which in truth were divinely ordained, and were an expressive type of the Christian worship. So far as we know, they scrupulously observed the Sabbath, the annual Jewish feasts, the hours of daily prayer, and the whole Mosaic ritual, and celebrated, in addition to these, the Christian Sunday, the death and the resurrection of the Lord, and the holy Supper. But this union was gradually weakened by the stubborn opposition of the Jews, and was at last entirely broken by the destruction of the temple, except among the Ebionites and Nazarenes.

In the Gentile-Christian congregations founded by Paul, the worship took from the beginning a more independent form. The essential elements of the Old Testament service were transferred, indeed, but divested of their national legal character, and transformed by the spirit of the gospel. Thus the Jewish Sabbath passed into the Christian Sunday; the typical Passover and Pentecost became feasts of the death and resurrection of Christ, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; the bloody sacrifices gave place to the thankful remembrance and appropriation of the one, all-sufficient, and eternal sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and to the personal offering of prayer, intercession, and entire self-consecration to the service of the Redeemer; on the ruins of the temple made without hands arose the never ceasing worship of the omnipresent God in spirit and in truth. So early as the close of the apostolic period this more free and spiritual cultus of Christianity had no doubt become well nigh universal; yet many Jewish elements,

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especially in the Eastern church, remain to this day.

1.53 The Several Parts of Worship.

The several parts of public worship in the time of the apostles were as follows:

1. The **PREACHING** of the gospel. This appears in the first period mostly in the form of a missionary address to the unconverted; that is, a simple, living presentation of the main facts of the life of Jesus, with practical exhortation to repentance and conversion. Christ crucified and risen was the luminous centre, whence a sanctifying light was shed on all the relations of life. Gushing forth from a full heart, this preaching went to the heart; and springing from an inward life, it kindled life—a new, divine life—in the susceptible hearers. It was revival preaching in the purest sense. Of this primitive Christian testimony several examples from Peter and Paul are preserved in the Acts of the Apostles.

The Epistles also may be regarded in the wider sense as sermons, addressed, however, to believers, and designed to nourish the Christian life already planted.

2. The **READING** of portions of the Old Testament, with practical exposition and application; transferred from the Jewish synagogue into the Christian church. To these were added in due time lessons from the New Testament; that is, from the canonical Gospels and the apostolic Epistles, most of which were addressed to whole congregations and originally intended for public use. After the death of the apostles their writings became doubly important to the church, as a substitute for their oral instruction and exhortation, and were much more used in worship than the Old Testament.

3. **PRAYER**, in its various forms of petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. This descended likewise from Judaism, and in fact belongs essentially even to all heathen religions; but now it began to be offered in childlike confidence to a reconciled Father in

the name of Jesus, and for all classes and conditions, even for enemies and persecutors. The first Christians accompanied every important act of their public and private life with this holy rite, and Paul exhorts his readers to "pray without ceasing." On solemn occasions they joined fasting with prayer, as a help to devotion, though it is nowhere directly enjoined in the New Testament.

They prayed freely from the heart, as they were moved by the Spirit, according to special needs and circumstances. We have an example in the fourth chapter of Acts. There is no trace of a uniform and exclusive liturgy; it would be inconsistent with the vitality and liberty of the apostolic churches. At the same time the frequent use of psalms and short forms of devotion, as the Lord's Prayer, may be inferred with certainty from the Jewish custom, from the Lord's direction respecting his model prayer, from the strong sense of fellowship among the first Christians, and finally from the liturgical spirit of the ancient church, which could not have so generally prevailed both in the East and the West without some apostolic and post-apostolic precedent. The oldest forms are the Eucharistic prayers of the Didache, and the petition for rulers in the first Epistle of Clement, which contrasts most beautifully with the cruel hostility of Nero and Domitian.

4. The **SONG**, a form of prayer, in the festive dress of poetry and the elevated language of inspiration, raising the congregation to the highest pitch of devotion, and giving it a part in the heavenly harmonies of the saints. This passed immediately, with the psalms of the Old Testament, those inexhaustible treasures of spiritual experience, edification, and comfort, from the temple and the synagogue into the Christian church.

The Lord himself inaugurated psalmody into the new covenant at the institution of the holy Supper, and Paul expressly enjoined the singing of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," as a means of social edification. But to this precious inheritance from the past,

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whose full value was now for the first time understood in the light of the New Testament revelation, the church, in the enthusiasm of her first love, added original, specifically Christian psalms, hymns, doxologies, and benedictions, which afforded the richest material for Sacred poetry and music in succeeding centuries; the song of the heavenly hosts, for example, at the birth of the Saviour; the "Nunc dimittis" of Simeon; the "Magnificat" of the Virgin Mary; the "Benedictus" of Zacharias; the thanksgiving of Peter after his miraculous deliverance; the speaking with tongues in the apostolic churches, which, whether song or prayer, was always in the elevated language of enthusiasm; the fragments of hymns scattered through the Epistles; and the lyrical and liturgical passages, the doxologies and antiphonies of the Apocalypse.

5. CONFESSION OF FAITH. All the above-mentioned acts of worship are also acts of faith. The first express confession of faith is the testimony of Peter, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. The next is the trinitarian baptismal formula. Out of this gradually grew the so-called Apostles' Creed, which is also trinitarian in structure, but gives the confession of Christ the central and largest place. Though not traceable in its present shape above the fourth century, and found in the second and third in different longer or shorter forms, it is in substance altogether apostolic, and exhibits an incomparable summary of the leading facts in the revelation of the triune God from the creation of the world to the resurrection of the body; and that in a form intelligible to all, and admirably suited for public worship and catechetical use. We shall return to it more fully in the second period.

6. Finally, the administration of the **SACRAMENTS**, or sacred rites instituted by Christ, by which, under appropriate symbols and visible signs, spiritual gifts and invisible grace are represented, sealed, and applied to the worthy participators.

The two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the antitypes of circumcision and the Passover under the Old Testament, were instituted by Christ as efficacious signs, pledges, and means of the grace of the new covenant. They are related to each other as regeneration and sanctification, or as the beginning and the growth of the Christian life. The other religious rites mentioned in the New Testament, as confirmation and ordination, cannot be ranked in dignity with the sacraments, as they are not commanded by Christ.

1.54 Baptism.

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1. The IDEA of Baptism. It was solemnly instituted by Christ, shortly before his ascension, to be performed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It took the place of circumcision as a sign and seal of church membership. It is the outward mark of Christian discipleship, the rite of initiation into the covenant of grace. It is the sacrament of repentance (conversion), of remission of sins, and of regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the nature of the case it is to be received but once. It incorporates the penitent sinner in the visible church, and entitles him to all the privileges, and binds him to all the duties of this communion. Where the condition of repentance and faith is wanting, the blessing (as in the case of the holy Supper, and the preaching of the Word) is turned into a curse, and what God designs as a savor of life unto life becomes, by the

unfaithfulness of man, a savor of death unto death.

The necessity of baptism for salvation has been inferred from John 3:5 and Mark 16:16; but while we are bound to God's ordinances, God himself is free and can save whomsoever and by whatsoever means he pleases. The church has always held the principle that the mere want of the sacrament does not condemn, but only the contempt. Otherwise all unbaptized infants that die in infancy would be lost. This horrible doctrine was indeed inferred by St. Augustine and the Roman church, from the supposed absolute necessity of baptism, but is in direct conflict with the spirit of the gospel and Christ's treatment of children, to whom belongs the kingdom of heaven.

The first administration of this sacrament in its full Christian sense took place on the birthday of the church, after the first independent preaching of the apostles. The baptism of John was more of a negative sort, and only preparatory to the baptism with the Holy Spirit. In theory Christian baptism is preceded by conversion, that is the human act of turning from sin to God in repentance and faith, and followed by regeneration, that is the divine act of forgiveness of sin and inward cleansing and renewal.

In practice the outward sign and inward state and effect do not always coincide; in Simon Magus we have an example of the baptism of water without that of the Spirit, and in Cornelius an example of the communication of the Spirit before the application of the water. In the case of infants, conversion, as a conscious act of the will, is impossible and unnecessary. In adults the solemn ordinance was preceded by the preaching of the gospel, or a brief instruction in its main facts, and then followed by more thorough inculcation of the apostolic doctrine. Later, when great caution became necessary in receiving proselytes, the period of catechetical instruction and probation was considerably lengthened.

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2. The usual FORM of baptism was immersion. This is inferred from the original meaning of the Greek *baptivzein*; from the analogy of John's baptism in the Jordan; from the apostles' comparison of the sacred rite with the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, with the escape of the ark from the flood, with a cleansing and refreshing bath, and with burial and resurrection; finally, from the general custom of the ancient church which prevails in the East to this day.

Sprinkling, also, or copious pouring rather, was practiced at an early day with sick and dying persons, and in all such cases where total or partial immersion was impracticable. Some writers suppose that this was the case even in the first baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost; for Jerusalem was poorly supplied with water and private baths; the Kedron is a small creek and dry in summer; but there are a number of pools and cisterns there.

Hellenistic usage allows to the relevant expressions sometimes the wider sense of washing, bathing, sprinkling, and ceremonial cleansing. Unquestionably, immersion expresses the idea of baptism, as a purification and renovation of the whole man, more completely than pouring or sprinkling; but it is not in keeping with the genius of the gospel to limit the operation of the Holy Spirit by the quantity or the quality of the water or the mode of its application. Water is absolutely necessary to baptism, as an appropriate symbol of the purifying and regenerating energy of the Holy Spirit; but whether the water be in large quantity or small, cold or warm, fresh or salt, from river, cistern, or spring, is relatively immaterial, and cannot affect the validity of the ordinance.

3. As to the SUBJECTS of baptism: the apostolic origin of infant baptism is denied not only by the Baptists, but also by many paedobaptist divines. The Baptists assert that infant baptism is contrary to the idea of the sacrament itself, and accordingly, an unscriptural corruption. For baptism, say

they, necessarily presupposes the preaching of the gospel on the part of the church, and repentance and faith on the part of the candidate for the ordinance; and as infants can neither understand preaching, nor repent and believe, they are not proper subjects for baptism, which is intended only for adult converts. It is true, the apostolic church was a missionary church, and had first to establish a mother community, in the bosom of which alone the grace of baptism can be improved by a Christian education.

Even under the old covenant circumcision was first performed on the adult Abraham; and so all Christian missionaries in heathen lands now begin with preaching, and baptizing adults. True, the New Testament contains no express command to baptize infants; such a command would not agree with the free spirit of the gospel. Nor was there any compulsory or general infant baptism before the union of church and state; Constantine, the first Christian emperor, delayed his baptism till his deathbed (as many now delay their repentance); and even after Constantine there were examples of eminent teachers, as Gregory Nazianzus, Augustine, Chrysostom, who were not baptized before their conversion in early manhood, although they had Christian mothers.

But still less does the New Testament forbid infant baptism; as it might be expected to do in view of the universal custom of the Jews, to admit their children by circumcision on the eighth day after birth into the fellowship of the old covenant.

On the contrary, we have presumptive and positive arguments for the apostolic origin and character of infant baptism, first, in the fact that circumcision as truly prefigured baptism, as the Passover the holy Supper; then in the organic relation between Christian parents and children; in the nature of the new covenant, which is even more comprehensive than the old; in the universal virtue of Christ, as the Redeemer of all sexes, classes, and

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ages, and especially in the import of his own infancy, which has redeemed and sanctified the infantile age; in his express invitation to children, whom he assures of a title to the kingdom of heaven, and whom, therefore, he certainly would not leave without the sign and seal of such membership; in the words, of institution, which plainly look to the Christianizing, not merely of individuals, but of whole nations, including, of course, the children; in the express declaration of Peter at the first administration of the ordinance, that this promise of forgiveness of sins and of the Holy Spirit was to the Jews "and to their children;"

In the five instances in the New Testament of the baptism of whole families, where the presence of children in most of the cases is far more probable than the absence of children in all; and finally, in the universal practice of the early church, against which the isolated protest of Tertullian proves no more, than his other eccentricities and Montanistic peculiarities; on the contrary, his violent protest implies the prevailing practice of infant baptism. He advised delay of baptism as a measure of prudence, lest the baptized by sinning again might forever forfeit the benefit of this ordinance; but he nowhere denies the apostolic origin or right of early baptism.

We must add, however, that infant baptism is unmeaning, and its practice a profanation, except on the condition of Christian parentage or guardianship, and under the guarantee of a Christian education. And it needs to be completed by an act of personal consecration, in which the child, after due instruction in the gospel, intelligently and freely confesses Christ, devotes himself to his service, and is thereupon solemnly admitted to the full communion of the church and to the sacrament of the holy Supper. The earliest traces of confirmation are supposed to be found in the apostolic practice of laying on hands, or symbolically imparting the Holy Spirit. after baptism.

1.55 The Lord's Supper.

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which could be said on behalf of the rational, refined, spiritual construction was urged with a union of the utmost acuteness and gentleness by the sober-minded Swiss.")

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The sacrament of the holy Supper was instituted by Christ under the most solemn circumstances, when he was about to offer himself a sacrifice for the salvation of the world. It is the feast of the thankful remembrance and appropriation of his atoning death, and of the living union of believers with him, and their communion among themselves. As the Passover kept in lively remembrance the miraculous deliverance from the land of bondage, and at the same time pointed forward to the Lamb of God; so the Eucharist represents, seals, and applies the now accomplished redemption from sin and death until the end of time.

Here the deepest mystery of Christianity is embodied ever anew, and the story of the cross reproduced before us. Here the miraculous feeding of the five thousand is spiritually perpetuated. Here Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, and is yet truly present in his church to the end of the world, gives his own body and blood, sacrificed for us, that is, his very self, his life and the virtue of his atoning death, as spiritual food, as the true bread from heaven, to all who, with due self-examination, come hungering and thirsting to the heavenly feast. The communion has therefore been always regarded as the inmost sanctuary of Christian worship.

In the apostolic period the Eucharist was celebrated daily in connection with a simple meal of brotherly love (agape), in which the Christians, in communion with their common Redeemer, forgot all distinctions of rank, wealth, and culture, and felt themselves to be members of one family of God. But this childlike exhibition of brotherly unity became more and more difficult as the church

increased, and led to all sorts of abuses, such as we find rebuked in the Corinthians by Paul. The love feasts, therefore, which indeed were no more enjoined by law than the community of goods at Jerusalem, were gradually severed from the Eucharist, and in the course of the second and third centuries gradually disappeared.

The apostle requires the Christians to prepare themselves for the Lord's Supper by self-examination, or earnest inquiry whether they have repentance and faith, without which they cannot receive the blessing from the sacrament, but rather provoke judgment from God. This caution gave rise to the appropriate custom of holding special preparatory exercises for the holy communion.

In the course of time this holy feast of love has become the subject of bitter controversy, like the sacrament of baptism and even the Person of Christ himself. Three conflicting theories—transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and spiritual presence of Christ—have been deduced from as many interpretations of the simple words of institution ("This is my body," etc.), which could hardly have been misunderstood by the apostles in the personal presence of their Lord, and in remembrance of his warning against carnal misconception of his discourse on the eating of his flesh.

The Eucharistic controversies in the middle ages and during the sixteenth century are among the most unedifying and barren in the history of Christianity. And yet they cannot have been in vain. The different theories represent elements of truth which have become obscured or perverted by scholastic subtleties, but may be purified and combined.

The Lord's Supper is:

- (1) a commemorative ordinance, a memorial of Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross;
- (2) a feast of living union of believers with the Saviour, whereby they truly, that is spiritually and by faith, receive

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Christ, with all his benefits, and are nourished with his life unto life eternal;

- (3) a communion of believers with one another as members of the same mystical body of Christ;
- (4) a Eucharist or thank offering of our persons and services to Christ, who died for us that we might live for him.

Fortunately, the blessing of the holy communion does not depend upon the scholastic interpretation and understanding of the words of institution, but upon the promise of the Lord and upon childlike faith in him. And therefore, even now, Christians of different denominations and holding different opinions can unite around the table of their common Lord and Saviour, and feel one with him and in him.

1.56 Sacred Places

Although, as the omnipresent Spirit, God may be worshipped in all places of the universe, which is his temple, yet our finite, sensuous nature, and the need of united devotion, require special localities or sanctuaries consecrated to his worship. The first Christians, after the example of the Lord, frequented the temple at Jerusalem and the synagogues, so long as their relation to the Mosaic economy allowed. But besides this, they assembled also from the first in private houses, especially for the communion and the love feast. The church itself was founded, on the day of Pentecost, in the upper room of an humble dwelling.

The prominent members and first converts, as Mary, the mother of John Mark in Jerusalem, Cornelius in Caesarea, Lydia in Philippi, Jason in Thessalonica, Justus in Corinth, Priscilla in Ephesus, Philemon in Colosse, gladly opened their houses for social worship. In larger cities, as in Rome, the Christian community divided itself into several such assemblies at private houses, which, however, are always addressed in the epistles as a unit.

That the Christians in the apostolic age erected special houses of worship is out of the question, even on account of their persecution by Jews and Gentiles, to say nothing of their general poverty; and the transition of a whole synagogue to the new faith was no doubt very rare. As the Saviour of the world was born in a stable, and ascended to heaven from a mountain, so his apostles and their successors down to the third century, preached in the streets, the markets, on mountains, in ships, sepulchers, eaves, and deserts, and in the homes of their converts. But how many thousands of costly churches and chapels have since been built and are constantly being built in all parts of the world to the honor of the crucified Redeemer, who in the days of his humiliation had no place of his own to rest his head!

1.57 Sacred Times—The Lord's Day.

LITERATURE

GEORGE HOLDEN: *The Christian Sabbath*. London, 1825. (See ch. V.)

W. HENSTENBERG: *The Lord's Day*. Transl. from the German by James Martin, London, 1853. (Purely exegetical; defends the continental view, but advocates a better practical observance.)

JOHN T. BAYLEE: *History of the Sabbath*. London, 1857. (See chs. X. XIII.)

JAMES AUG. HESSEY: *Sunday: Its Origin, History, and Present Obligation*. Bampton Lectures, preached before the University of Oxford, London, 1860. (Defends the Dominican and moderate Anglican, as distinct both from the Continental latitudinarian, and from the Puritanic Sabbatarian, view of Sunday, with proofs from the church fathers.)

JAMES GILFILLAN: *The Sabbath viewed in the Light of Reason, Revelation, and History, with Sketches of its Literature*. Edinb. 1861, republished and widely circulated by the Am. Tract Society and the "New York Sabbath Committee," New York, 1862. (The fullest and ablest defence of the Puritan and Scotch Presbyterian theory of the Christian Sabbath, especially in its practical aspects.)

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ROBERT COX (F.S.A.): Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties. Edinb. 1853. By the same: The Literature of the Sabbath Question. Edinb. 1865, 2 vols. (Historical, literary, and liberal.)

TH. ZAHN: Geschichte des Sonntags in der alten Kirche. Hannover, 1878.

There is a very large Sabbath literature in the English language, of a popular and practical character. For the Anglo-American theory and history of the Christian Sabbath, compare the author's essay, *The Anglo-American Sabbath*, New York, 1863 (in English and German), the publications of the New York Sabbath Committee from 1857-1886, the *Sabbath Essays*, ed. by Will. C. Wood, Boston (Congreg. Publ. Soc.), 1879; and A. E. WAFFLE: *The Lord's Day*, Philad. 1886.

As every place, so is every day and hour alike sacred to God, who fills all space and all time, and can be worshipped everywhere and always. But, from the necessary limitations of our earthly life, as well as from the nature of social and public worship, springs the use of sacred seasons. The apostolic church followed in general the Jewish usage, but purged it from superstition and filled it with the spirit of faith and freedom.

1. Accordingly, the Jewish HOURS of daily prayer, particularly in the morning and evening, were observed as a matter of habit, besides the strictly private devotions which are bound to no time.

2. The LORD'S DAY took the place of the Jewish Sabbath as the weekly day of public worship. The substance remained, the form was changed. The institution of a periodical weekly day of rest for the body and the soul is rooted in our physical and moral nature, and is as old as man, dating, like marriage, from paradise. This is implied in the profound saying of our Lord: "The Sabbath is made for man."

It is incorporated in the Decalogue, the moral law, which Christ did not come to destroy, but to fulfill, and which cannot be robbed of one commandment without injury to all the rest.

At the same time the Jewish Sabbath was hedged around by many national and

ceremonial restrictions, which were not intended to be permanent, but were gradually made so prominent as to overshadow its great moral aim, and to make man subservient to the Sabbath instead of the Sabbath to man.

After the exile and in the hands of the Pharisees it became a legal bondage rather than a privilege and benediction. Christ as the Lord of the Sabbath opposed this mechanical ceremonialism and restored the true spirit and benevolent aim of the institution. When the slavish, superstitious, and self-righteous sabbatarianism of the Pharisees crept into the Galatian churches and was made a condition of justification, Paul rebuked it as a relapse into Judaism.

The day was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, not on the ground of a particular command, but by the free spirit of the gospel and by the power of certain great facts which he at the foundation of the Christian church. It was on that day that Christ rose from the dead; that he appeared to Mary, the disciples of Emmaus, and the assembled apostles; that he poured out his Spirit and founded the church; and that he revealed to his beloved disciple the mysteries of the future. Hence, the first day was already in the apostolic age honorably designated as "the Lord's Day."

On that day Paul met with the disciples at Troas and preached till midnight. On that day he ordered the Galatian and Corinthian Christians to make, no doubt in connection with divine service, their weekly contributions to charitable objects according to their ability. It appears, therefore, from the New Testament itself, that Sunday was observed as a day of worship, and in special commemoration of the Resurrection, whereby the work of redemption was finished.

The universal and uncontradicted Sunday observance in the second century can only be explained by the fact that it had its roots in apostolic practice. Such observance is the

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more to be appreciated as it had no support in civil legislation before the age of Constantine, and must have been connected with many inconveniences, considering the lowly social condition of the majority of Christians and their dependence upon their heathen masters and employers.

Sunday thus became, by an easy and natural transformation, the Christian Sabbath or weekly day of rest, at once answering the typical import of the Jewish Sabbath, and itself forming in turn a type of the eternal rest of the people of God in the heavenly Canaan. In the gospel dispensation the Sabbath is not a degradation, but an elevation, of the week days to a higher plane, looking to the consecration of all time and all work. It is not a legal ceremonial bondage, but rather a precious gift of grace, a privilege, a holy rest in God in the midst of the unrest of the world, a day of spiritual refreshing in communion with God and in the fellowship of the saints, a foretaste and pledge of the never-ending Sabbath in heaven.

The due observance of it, in which the churches of England, Scotland, and America, to their incalculable advantage, excel the churches of the European continent, is a wholesome school of discipline, a means of grace for the people, a safeguard of public morality and religion, a bulwark against infidelity, and a source of immeasurable blessing to the church, the state, and the family. Next to the Church and the Bible, the Lord's Day is the chief pillar of Christian society.

Besides the Christian Sunday, the Jewish Christians observed their ancient Sabbath also, till Jerusalem was destroyed. After that event, the Jewish habit continued only among the Ebionites and Nazarenes.

As Sunday was devoted to the commemoration of the Saviour's resurrection, and observed as a day of thanksgiving and joy, so, at least as early as the second century, if not sooner, Friday came to be observed as a day of repentance, with

prayer and fasting, in commemoration of the sufferings and death of Christ.

3. ANNUAL festivals. There is no injunction for their observance, direct or indirect, in the apostolic writings, as there is no basis for them in the Decalogue. But Christ observed them, and two of the festivals, the Passover and Pentecost, admitted of an easy transformation similar to that of the Jewish into the Christian Sabbath. From some hints in the Epistles, viewed in the light of the universal and uncontradicted practice of the church in the second century it may be inferred that the annual celebration of the death and the resurrection of Christ, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, originated in the apostolic age.

In truth, Christ crucified, risen, and living in the church, was the one absorbing thought of the early Christians; and as this thought expressed itself in the weekly observance of Sunday, so it would also very naturally transform the two great typical feasts of the Old Testament into the Christian Easter and Whit-Sunday. The Paschal controversies of the second century related not to the fact, but to the time of the Easter festival, and Polycarp of Smyrna and Anicet of Rome traced their customs to an unimportant difference in the practice of the apostles themselves.

Of other annual festivals, the New Testament contains not the faintest trace. Christmas came in during the fourth century by a natural development of the idea of a church year, as a sort of chronological creed of the people. The festivals of Mary, the Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs, followed gradually, as the worship of saints spread in the Nicene and post-Nicene age, until almost every day was turned first into a holy day and then into a holiday. As the saints overshadowed the Lord, the saints' days overshadowed the Lord's Day.