

1. The Apostolic period, during which everything necessary to the Church's organization and working was established and begun, but nothing was brought to maturity. Then comes

2. The Sub-Apostolic period, during which, as an acute writer has shrewdly said, "Church history as it were passes through a tunnel;"* when under the deep shadow cast by bitter persecution Christianity was slowly, surely, painfully developing in silence and obscurity. Then comes

3. The Post-Apostolic age, which may be roughly said to begin with the 3rd century, when we see the Church spread all over the world in fully organized condition.

Now, when we turn to discover the actual practice of the Christian Church, with regard to Worship, during these three periods, for information with regard to the Apostolic age we have recourse to the historical record of the New Testament. There we find nothing in any way responding to a code of liturgical rules, to a Book of Common Prayer, or to a Directory of Public Worship. We find, however

1. That Christ, and His Apostles after Him, attended public Worship in the Temple at Jerusalem, which shows conclusively that sacerdotal and sacrificial ceremonial in worship is *not necessarily repugnant* to the mind of Christ or to the genius of Christianity.

2. That Christ, before His death, instituted a rite which He committed to His Apostles to be done "as His Memorial." This rite included the consecration of bread and wine as Christ's Body and Blood, and the eating and drinking of the same.

3.—That, besides assembling at the Temple worship, the Christians of the Apostolic age met together *on their own account* for worship, apparently in private houses. No details of this worship are recorded for us. But we find reference, and not more than reference, to the facts that these assemblies were held sometimes, at all events, on (i) the first day of the week; and (ii) that a rite, "the Breaking of the Bread," was practised during them.

4. Although the historical statements of the New Testament give us little more than references to the fact that Christians *did* practice common worship, and to one or two particulars connected with it, the prophetic book with which the New Testament Canon closes gives us a description of heavenly worship, which may not be inaccurately called Christian worship, for it shows us the heavenly host in adoration *after* the establishment of the New Covenant between God and man, by the mediation of Christ. This worship centres round a Throne and an Altar; in the midst of the Throne is seen a Lamb as it had been slain, yet living, the sacramental emblem of Jesus Christ, Who was dead, slain as the propitiatory victim for the sins of the world, yet Who is alive for evermore. To the Altar an Angel advances, and offers incense; round about the throne elders in priestly garb, the hosts of the redeemed, angels innumerable, living creatures of mystic form, fall prostrate and adore, while songs of rapturous adoration rise to the Thrice Holy, and to the Victim Lamb, the *Salutaris Hostia*.

It is plain that from the meagre records of the practice of the Apostolic age, and from the mystic visions of the Apocalypse, no man, or body of men, could have elaborated a system of worship; yet the fact is undeniable that directly we get certain information about the Christian Church we find it in possession of a system of worship, obviously not originated from Scripture, but to which the New Testament Scriptures bear favorable witness.

*Dr. C. Salmon in his sermon "The Historic Claims of Episcopacy" (1886). The same line of thought is found in the same writer's "Introduction to the New Testament."

In a document which belongs, I suppose, to the tunnel period of Church History, to the sub-apostolic age, I mean "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," we find a remarkable allusion to Christian Worship (I quote from Cap. xiv. —See Dean Spence's edition, p. 62):

"Now on the Lord's day when ye are assembled together break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, in order that your Sacrifice may be pure. But let no one that hath a difference with his friend come together with you until they be reconciled, that your Sacrifice may not be profaned. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord, 'At every place and time offer Me a pure Sacrifice; for I am a great King, saith the Lord, and My Name is wonderful amongst the Gentiles.'"
[Of course the reference here is to the words of Malachi i., 11 and 14.]

We see two things unmistakably:

1. At the time the "Teaching" was written, the Lord's Day was the day of worship.

2. The Rite instituted by Christ on the eve of His Passion, the Eucharist, is set forth by the writer of the "Teaching" as a *Sacrifice*, and as the special rite of the Day.

Standing between sub- and distinctly post-Apostolic times we have a very remarkable testimony as to the character of Christian worship at that period. I refer to the classical passage in the First Apology of St. Justin Martyr, who suffered somewhere about A.D. 167, in which he describes Christian worship as practised in his days (probably) among Roman* Christians:

"Having ceased from prayers, we salute one another with a kiss; after which, to him who presides over the brethren bread is brought, and a cup of wine mixed with water. And he, having taken them, sends up praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the Name of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and employs much time in offering up thanks for having been deemed worthy of these things by Him; and when he hath ended the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present express their consent by saying *Amen*, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies *so be it*. He who presides having given thanks, and all the people having expressed their assent, they who are called among us Deacons, give to each of those present a portion of the Bread, and of the Wine mixed with Water, over which the thanksgiving has been made, and carry away a portion to those who are absent. And this food is called among us Eucharist. . . . For we do not receive these things as common bread and common drink, but . . . we have been taught that the food over which thanksgiving has been made by the words of prayer which came from Him [Christ. . . . is both the Flesh and Blood of that same Incarnate Jesus." [Apol. 1. 65, 66.]

This description applies to the celebration of the Liturgy after the baptism of a catechumen, but in the same Apology St. Justin gives a similar, but briefer, description of Eucharistic Worship as the service usually celebrated by Christians on "the day called Sunday."

So we come to the post-apostolic age, and as our knowledge of the Church becomes clearer and clearer we find everywhere, in every Church, a Liturgy, or form of worship, following substantially the lines laid down by St. Justin Martyr in his description. If I begin with the Gallican Churches in the far west, and passing through Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, come to the Church of Malabar in the far east, I find everywhere Liturgies, formed on precisely the same principles, differing indefinitely in details, but all universally including the same elements.

*Some however are of opinion that the description would better apply to the rites practised in the Oriental (Syrian) Churches.

(To be continued.)

ROMANISM.

[From Letter of Bishop Grafton, Fond du Lac.]

If on one side, for the recovery of Christian union, it is necessary that the non-episcopal bodies should recover the lost idea of the Christian priesthood, so it is necessary that our Roman brethren should recover the full powers of the Episcopate. The offer of union on the basis of the historic episcopate has its peace-laden message to them.

It is the supremacy of the Roman see, that is among Episcopal bodies the great cause of Christendom's divisions. A visible Church it is said must have a visible head. So it has, Christ is that head. He has gathered His Church about Him and guides it and rules over it and manifests himself in various ways to all its members in their various conditions of life. But ought not the Church *on earth* to have a head? The Church militant is only a very, very small fraction of the Church. It is not an entity by itself. Only the feet of the bride are on the earth, and the feet don't need a head clapped on to them. But surely there ought to be visible representative of the headship of Christ. Well, there is, in the Bishop of every diocese. The diocese is the unit. And the Bishop is by his office brought in contact with all his people. He is a visible representative head. The pope however is not, for only a few can see him. He is as invisible to the greater number as Christ Himself. But see how divine providence has watched over the papacy! Yes, God's Providence watches over Israel and Judah, over east and west, over Jerusalem and Rome and Canterbury. But notice how protected and guided Rome has been and what a bulwark of the faith she has been. Yes she was till by the assertion of supremacy, she violated the unity of the Episcopate. Then the spirit of worldliness took large possession of her. And God's loving providence let her have her own way, as He did Israel when it would have a King. For he waits until by her failures, she shall through His mercy learn her own sin. For leaving unity she lost her spiritual power, and half of Europe fell away from her. Losing her hold on antiquity, she has been beguiled into elevating opinions into dogmas and is no longer a bulwark of the faith. By use of the world's code in feudal times she obtained a right of sovereignty over sovereigns, and seeks now to regain her lost temporal power by an alliance with democracy and socialism. Whenever the Pope has solemnly challenged heaven for a sign, providence has answered by a warning and declared against her.

For the union of Christendom we are not to look to Rome. The papacy is the occasion of division. The mark of worldliness and spiritual blindness is upon her. She is not a centre of God's creating but of man's. For the recovery of the union of Christendom, we must look, neither to Rome, nor to dissent, but to Christ; to Christ as the Living Head—into whom we can be gathered by Apostolic fellowship which comes through the Episcopate and doctrine which is shrined in the creeds—and breaking of the bread, when the gospel sacrifice is offered of Christ's Body and Blood.

THERE are some troubles that only time can heal, and perhaps some that cannot be healed at all; but all can be helped by the great panacea, work. The curse of labor, like many other punishments, patiently borne, has been turned into one of our greatest blessings.

Keep Posted { ON CHURCH MATTER
by subscribing to the
CHURCH GUARDIAN