CHAPTER V

THE CLASSICAL SHAPE OF THE LITURGY: (II) THE EUCHARIST

IN this chapter we shall study what may be called the skeleton of that 'four-action shape' of the eucharist whose first century origins we have just investigated. We shall examine this here, so far as may be, simply in its sequence rather than in its meaning. We have seen that the liturgical eucharist, as it emerged from its association with a meal in the 'Lord's supper', consisted always of four essential acts, all of which were derived from the jewish customs of the *chabûrah* supper: (1) The offertory, the 'taking' of bread and wine, which in its original form in the four-action shape was probably derived from the bringing of contributions in kind for the *chabûrah* meal. (2) The prayer, with its preliminary dialogue of invitation, derived directly from the *berakah* or thanksgiving which closed the *chabûrah* meal. (3) The fraction, or breaking of the bread, derived from the jewish grace before all meals. (4) The communion, derived from the distribution of the broken bread at the beginning and the cup of blessing at the end of the supper of every jewish *chabûrah*. The liturgical eucharist consisted simply of those particular things in the ordinary *chabûrah* customs to which our Lord at the last supper had attached a new meaning for the future. These had been detached from the rest of the *chabûrah* ritual and perpetuated independently. To these the primitive church added a preliminary greeting and kiss, and a single final phrase of dismissal. This is the whole of the pre-Nicene eucharist.

The Pre-Nicene Eucharist

The proceedings began, like those of the synaxis, with a greeting exchanged between the president and the *ecclesia*. And just as the greeting at the synaxis, 'The Lord be with you', had reference to the first item of the liturgy, the lesson from the Law, so the greeting at the eucharist referred directly to the first thing at the eucharist, the kiss of peace. At the eucharist the holy church is alone with God and not mingled with the world (represented by the enquirers and the unconfirmed catechumens present at the synaxis). And so the invariable formula at the beginning of the eucharist is not 'The Lord be with you' but 'Peace be unto you', the greeting of the Lord to His own.[1] By the fourth century, if not before, this had been elaborated a little in most churches on this particular occasion, to 'The peace of God be with you all' (in Syria), or 'The peace of the Lord be always with you' (in the West). The church answered, as always, 'And

[1] John xx. 19.

with thy spirit'. And again, because at the eucharist the holy church is separated 'out of the world',[1] the wish can be fulfilled. The peace of Christ is 'not as the world giveth', but from *within*. And so the persecuted church manifested its peace within itself by the exchange of the kiss of peace enjoined in the New Testament, the bishop with the clergy around the throne, and laymen with laymen and women with women in the congregation.[2]

One or more deacons now spread a linen cloth which covered the whole altar. This preparatory act, which is mentioned at this point, before the offertory, by more than one early writer,[3] soon received various mystical interpretations, such as that which saw in it a likeness to the preparation of the linen grave-clothes for the Body of the Lord on the first Good Friday evening.[4] But it is in reality a merely utilitarian preparation, 'spreading the table-cloth' when the table is first wanted, to receive the oblation. The Eastern rites have now removed it to the very beginning of the liturgy and changed the old plain linen cloth for the elaborately embroidered two silk cloths of the *antiminsion* and the *eilēton*. But it still survives in the Roman rite at its original point, as the spreading of the plain linen corporal by the deacon before the offertory of the bread and wine. In some such homely form this little ceremony must go back to the very beginnings of the liturgical eucharist.

These are preliminaries. The eucharist itself now follows, a single clear swift action in four movements, with an uninterrupted ascent from the offertory to the communion, which ends decisively at its climax.

The bishop is still seated on his throne behind the altar, across which he faces the people. His presbyters are seated in a semi-circle around him. All present have brought with them, each for himself or herself, a little loaf of bread and probably a little wine in a flask. (By a touching local custom at Rome after the peace of the church, the orphans of the choir-school maintained by the charity of the Pope, who had nothing of their own to bring, always provided the water to be mingled with the wine in the chalice.) These oblations of the people, and any other offerings in kind which might be made, the deacons now bring up to the front of the altar, and arrange upon it from the people's side of it. The bishop rises and moves forward a few paces from the throne to stand behind the altar, where he faces the people with a deacon on either hand and his presbyters grouped around and behind him. He adds his own oblation of bread and wine to those of the people before him on the altar, and so (presumably) do the presbyters. (It may be that at this point the bishop and presbyters rinsed their hands with a ewer held by a deacon, even in pre-Nicene times, though the custom is first attested only by S. Cyril of Jerusalem in A.D. 348.)

[1] John xvii. 6. [2] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, xviii. 4.
[3] *E.g.* Optatus of Milevis, *adv. Donatistas*, vi. 2 (Africa *c.* A.D. 360).
[4] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catecheses* v. (*ed.* Mingana, *p.* 86), Asia Minor *c.* A.D. 410 (*cf. p.* 282).

The bishop and presbyters then laid their hands in silence upon the oblations. There followed the brief dialogue of invitation, followed by the bishop's eucharistic prayer, which always ended with a solemn doxology, to which the people answered 'Amen.'

The bishop then broke some of the Bread and made his own communion, while the deacons broke the remainder of the Bread upon the table, and the 'concelebrant' presbyters around him broke Bread which had been held before them on little glass dishes or linen cloths by deacons during the recitation of the prayer by the bishop. (It may be that even in pre-Nicene times the bishop invited the church to communion with the words 'Holy things for the holy', but again this custom is first certainly attested by Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century, though there may be an allusion to it by Hippolytus at Rome in the early third century.[1])

There followed the communion, first of the clergy, seemingly behind the altar, and then of all the people before it. Nobody knelt to receive communion, and to the words of administration each replied 'Amen.'

After the communion followed the cleansing of the vessels, and then a deacon dismissed the *ecclesia* with a brief formula indicating that the assembly was closed,—'Depart in peace' or 'Go, it is the dismissal' (*Ite missa est*), or some such phrase.

The faithful took home with them portions of the consecrated Bread from which to make their communions at home on mornings when the liturgy was not celebrated. The deacons—after the third century their assistants, the acolytes—carried portions of the Bread to all who could not be at the Sunday *ecclesia*. Other deacons (in later times acolytes) carried portions of the Bread consecrated at the bishop's eucharist to be placed in the chalice at each of the lesser eucharists celebrated under the presidency of presbyters elsewhere in the city. This was done in token of their communion with him, and as a symbol that the bishop remained the high priest and liturgical minister of his whole church, whether actually present with him at the eucharist or not.

Such was the pre-Nicene rite. It remains to consider it in detail.

1. *The Greeting and Kiss of Peace*

Like that which opens the synaxis, the greeting is not in itself much more than an intimation that the proceedings are now formally beginning, though since the *ecclesia* is emphatically a religious assembly, this takes a religious form, connected with the kiss of peace which it introduces.

The greatest pains were taken to see that this latter did not degenerate into a formality. We have noted, *e.g.*, the insistence of the *Didache* on the necessity of reconciling any fellow-christians who might be at variance with each other before they could attend the eucharist together, or 'your

[1] *On the Pascha*, iii., rebuking those who 'do not come with holiness to the holy things'.

sacrifice is defiled'.[1] The unity of the church as the Body of Christ, which ever since S. Paul's day had been understood to be of the essence of the sacrament[2], can be violated by personal disputes among its members as well as by a formal ecclesiastical schism, whose token as well as reality lies in the holding of a separate eucharist apart from the catholic communion. It was the duty of the bishop and presbyters to mediate in all such disputes between members of their own church, and regular sessions were held for this purpose by what was virtually a christian *sanhedrin* of elders (presbyters) under the christian high-priest (the bishop). The Syrian *Didascalia of the Apostles* orders them to 'Let your judgments be held on the second day of the week, that if perchance any one should contest the sentence of your words, you may have space until the sabbath to compose the matter, and may make peace between them on the Sunday.'[3] There is no little pastoral shrewdness in the extensive suggestions this document makes about the conducting of such 'courts christian', by the application of some of which our own ecclesiastical courts might be a good deal improved.

Besides adjusting disputes between parties the bishop and presbyters had to judge accusations against individuals, for the penalty of grave or notorious sin was excommunication. The senior deacon formally acted as accuser in such cases, a function which still survives among the various duties of Anglican archdeacons.

By the terms of the gospel itself every christian was bound to accept the arbitration and discipline of the *ecclesia* upon pain of excommunication.[4] It is one of S. Paul's chief reproaches against the Corinthians that they had forsaken this evangelical discipline to go to law with one another before the courts of the pagan state.[5] Pagans were not admitted either as witnesses or accusers before these christian tribunals;[6] still less could they be judges. The primitive church took with the utmost seriousness the 'separateness' of the holy church in its inner life from the pagan world out of which it had been redeemed. The corporate discipline of the personal lives of its members was a part of the supernatural life of the church as the Body of Christ, in which the world could have no part at all.

It is a striking instance—one among many—of the way in which the liturgy was regarded as the solemn putting into act before God of the whole christian living of the church's members, that all this care for the interior charity and good living of those members found its expression and test week by week in the giving of the liturgical kiss of peace among the faithful before the eucharist. In the East in the third century the deacon from beside the bishop's throne cried aloud, while the kiss was actually being exchanged, 'Is there any man that keepeth aught against his fellow?'—as a final precaution so that even at the last moment the bishop might

[1] *Did.*, xiv. 2, *p.* 91.
[2] 1 Cor. x. 17.
[3] *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ii. 45, *ed.* Connolly, *p.* 111 (Syria, ? before A.D. 250).
[4] Matt. xviii. 17.
[5] 1 Cor. vi. 1.
[6] *Didascalia Apostolorum*, *ed. cit. p.* 109.

make peace between them.[1] By the fourth century this question had become stereotyped into the warning by the deacon, 'Let none keep rancour against any! Let none (give the kiss) in hypocrisy!' which survived in some of the Eastern rites for centuries, even after the actual giving of the kiss had been abandoned. In connection with the offertory and the kiss of peace which preceded it, more than one of the fathers cites Matt. v. 23, 'If thou art offering thy gift unto the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee . . .'[2] Whatever its original application in the gospel, the liturgical offertory was the only christian observance to which it could be literally applied.

The kiss of peace as a sign of respect or friendship was as ancient among the jews as Isaac's blessing of Jacob and the latter's reconciliation with Esau. The church inherited it from judaism in her ceremonial in more than one connection. Thus it was given to a newly consecrated bishop at his enthronement, not only by his clergy but by every confirmed member of his new church, before he offered the eucharist with them for the first time as their high-priest.[3] The bishop himself gave the kiss to each new christian whom he admitted to the order of laity by confirmation, immediately after signing him on the forehead with the chrism which conveyed the gift of the Spirit.[4] Here again the kiss is the symbol of that 'fellowship of the Holy Ghost', of which the 'communion' of the church is only the consequence and the outward sign. Until that moment the neophyte had never been permitted to exchange the kiss of peace with any of the faithful,[5] because he was not yet of the Body of Christ, and so had not yet received the Spirit, and by consequence could neither give nor receive the peace of Christ.

In our Lord's time among the jews the kiss was a courteous preliminary to any ceremonious meal, whose omission could be a cause for remark.[6] As such it may well have been in use at the Lord's supper in the early days at Jerusalem, if not at the last supper itself. S. Paul refers to it more than once as a token of christian communion, but without direct reference to the eucharist, though its use at the liturgy in his day can hardly be doubted.[7] In the second century and after, the kiss had its most frequent and significant christian use as the immediate preparation for the eucharist, the

[1] *Ibid. p.* 117.
[2] *Cf.* Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.*, iv. xviii. 1; Cyril of Jer., *Cat.* xxiii. 3, etc.
[3] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, iv. 1. [4] *Ibid.* xxii. 3. [5] *Ibid.* xviii. 3.
[6] Luke vii. 45.
[7] Rom. xvi. 6; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; *cf.* 1 Pet. v. 14. Lietzmann (*op. cit. p.* 229) draws a striking picture. 'We are at Corinth at a meeting of the congregation. A letter from the Apostle is being read out and draws near its end. . . . And then rings out the liturgical phrase, "Greet one another with the holy kiss. All the saints kiss you also in Christian communion"—and the Corinthians kiss one another—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all!"—"And with thy spirit" answers the church. The letter is ended and the Lord's supper begins.' (This over-strains the evidence a good deal, but it probably represents something like the truth.)

token of that 'unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' which for S. Paul is the very foundation of the fact that there is 'One Body'.[1]

Justin is the first author who actually states that the kiss is the preliminary to the offertory,[2] where we find the kiss placed also by Hippolytus at Rome some sixty years later.[3] It was evidently a fixed and settled part of the liturgical tradition that it should come at this point of the rite at Rome as elsewhere in pre-Nicene times. It illustrates the fragmentary and haphazard nature of the evidence with which we have to deal that the kiss does not happen to be mentioned again in Roman documents for almost exactly two hundred years after Hippolytus; and that then we find its position has been shifted in the local Roman rite from before the offertory to before the communion, a position where it had an equal appropriateness, but which was contrary to all primitive precedent.

It seems likely that in making this, the only change (as distinct from insertions) in the primitive order of the liturgy which the Roman rite has ever undergone, the Roman church was following an innovation first made in the African churches, where the kiss is attested as coming before the communion towards the end of the fourth century.[4] By then the African churches had also adopted the custom (? from Jerusalem) of reciting the Lord's prayer between the fraction and the communion. Coming as it did in the African liturgy as the practical fulfilment of the clause '. . . as we forgive them that trespass against us', the kiss acquired a special fittingness as a preliminary to communion. This was less obvious in the contemporary rite of Rome, where the use of the Lord's prayer in the eucharistic liturgy (at all events at this point) does not seem to have come in until the time of S. Gregory I. (*c.* A.D. 595). When Rome thus tardily followed the rest of christendom in adopting this custom, the *Pater noster* was inserted, not as in Africa after the fraction, but as at Jerusalem, between the eucharistic prayer and the fraction. The Roman kiss of peace was thus permanently separated from that clause of the Lord's prayer which had first attracted the kiss to this end of the rite from its original position before the offertory.[5]

[1] Eph. iv. 3 and 4. [2] *Ap.* I. 65. [3] *Ap. Trad.*, iv. 1.
[4] Augustine, *Ep.* lix. (*al.* cxlix.), *cf. Sermon* vi.
[5] In Africa *c.* A.D. 400 the order was eucharistic prayer, fraction, Lord's prayer, kiss, communion. At Rome it was eucharistic prayer (Lord's prayer introduced by S. Gregory), fraction, kiss, communion. It is one instance of a variation brought about by the independent adoption of the same customs by different churches at various times, of which we shall meet many instances. The only difficulty is to be sure when Africa first inserted the Lord's prayer into the eucharist. Elsewhere it is first certainly attested by S. Cyril at Jerusalem in A.D. 348. But certain phrases of S. Cyprian's have led many authors to take it for granted that it was already used after the eucharistic prayer at Carthage in the third century. To me it seems that this is precisely what both Cyprian and Tertullian do *not* say, or even hint at, in their very full treatises on the Lord's prayer. Tertullian mentions the kiss in the liturgy *c.* A.D. 210 as 'the seal of prayer' (*de Orat.* 18). But it is impossible to be sure whether by this he means of the Lord's prayer (in or out of the eucharist) or of the intercessory prayers at the end of the synaxis (which immediately preceded the kiss when synaxis and eucharist were celebrated together) or of the eucharistic prayer.

In any case Rome appears to have adopted this new position for the kiss before the communion not very long before A.D. 416, when the matter is brought to our knowledge by a letter from Pope Innocent I to his neighbour, bishop Decentius of Gubbio, urging that other Italian churches near Rome (which still retained the kiss in its original position before the offertory) ought to conform to current Roman practice on this and other points. The Pope gives the rather odd reason for placing the kiss in its new position, after the fraction, that 'by the kiss of peace the people affirm their assent to all that has been done in the celebration of the mysteries.' Had he said, as S. Augustine had done, that the kiss of charity is a good preparation for communion it would have been more convincing.[1]

In the East also the primitive position of the kiss has been altered, though not to the same position as at Rome; and the evidence suggests that the Eastern change was made before it was made in the West. The kiss is found *after* the offertory, instead of before it, at Jerusalem in A.D. 348. But at Antioch it still remained in its original position in the time of Chrysostom[2] (*c.* A.D. 385). The Jerusalem customs must have been spreading northwards in Syria in Chrysostom's time, however, for not only does the Antiochene rite of the fifth century place the kiss *after* the offertory as at Jerusalem, but in the (generally Antiochene) rite of Mopsuestia in southern Asia Minor as described by its bishop Theodore (*c.* A.D. 410), the kiss there also has been transferred to after the offertory[3]. (This is not the only Jerusalem custom which Mopsuestia had by then adopted.) At some point in the fifth or sixth century the new Jerusalem fashions were adopted at Constantinople, and from that royal church spread far and wide over the East. Only the native churches of Egypt still keep the kiss in its original place before the offertory.

In the West the Mozarabic rite in Spain adopted the Byzantine position for the kiss along with a certain amount of other Byzantine practice, probably in the sixth century, as a result of the temporary occupation of Spain by Byzantine forces under Justinian. Before the ninth century Milan

In the vision of the contemporary martyr Saturus, told in his own words in the *Passion of Perpetua, etc.* 12, the kiss seems to be the end of a synaxis, not the preliminary to communion. But in the nature of things such evidence cannot be conclusive. On the whole it seems more likely than not that in pre-Nicene times African practice, like that of Rome, conformed to the universal use elsewhere and placed the kiss before the offertory.

[1] This letter has been strangely misunderstood by modern commentators who, with their minds full of the competition of the Roman and 'Gallican' rites in the seventh century—there is no evidence that the latter existed as a recognised entity in A.D. 416—attempt to persuade us that Pope Innocent is here defending antique Roman customs against the encroachments of 'Gallican' novelties even in his own province. I fear the Pope is doing nothing so respectable. On the contrary, he is trying to force Roman innovations on old-fashioned country churches in Italy, which had kept to the old ways once common to Rome and themselves.

[2] *de Compunctione*, i. 3, and so in *Ap. Const.*, viii. But *Ap. Const.*, ii. places it after the offertory, as at Jerusalem.

[3] Theodore, *Catecheses*, v. (*ed.* Mingana, *p.* 92).

had followed Rome in placing the kiss itself before the communion, though to this day the Milanese deacon still proclaims *Pacem habete*—'Have peace (one with another)'—at the ancient place before the offertory. In the Celtic churches, to judge by the *Stowe Missal*, the kiss came at the Roman and African place, before the communion. I know of no evidence as to when these remoter Western churches adopted this Roman custom, but it must have been very early, for there is no tradition of any other usage among them.

So it comes about that while vestiges, at least, of the apostolic kiss of peace are still found all over catholic christendom (except in the Anglican rites) it now stands in its primitive position only among the Copts and Abyssinians.

2. *The Offertory*

Some 'taking' of bread and wine before they could be blessed would seem a physical necessity in any eucharistic rite. But such a mere necessary preparation for consecration is not at all the same thing as the offertory of the liturgical tradition, which is itself a ritual act with a significance of its own. It is an integral and original part of the whole eucharistic action, not a preliminary to it, like the kiss of peace. This is not to say that its significance has always been sharply distinguished from that of what followed upon it. The offertory, the prayer and the communion are closely connected moments in a single continuous action, and each only finds its proper meaning as a part of the whole. Nevertheless, from before the end of the first century the offertory was understood to have a meaning of its own, without which the primitive significance of the whole eucharist would be not incomplete but actually destroyed.

The first extant document which describes the offertory in any detail is, once more, the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, and even this leaves one important point obscure. 'To (the bishop) then let the deacons bring up the oblation (*prosphora*), and he with all the presbyters laying his hand on the oblation shall say "eucharistising" thus . . .' and there follow the dialogue and prayer.[1] The bread and wine are here called 'the oblation' *before* they have been 'eucharistised' by the bishop's prayer. Elsewhere in the same work they are so called even before they have been 'brought up' by the deacons or so much as brought into the *ecclesia* at all. Those about to be baptised and confirmed are told 'It is right for every one to bring his *prosphora*' with him to his initiation, to offer for himself at the 'midnight mass' of Easter which followed.[2] This is a point of some importance in discerning the particular sense in which the offertory was originally regarded as an 'offering.'

Attempts have been made to see in this idea of the bread and wine as something 'offered' to God a quite recent development in Hippolytus'

[1] *Ap. Trad.*, iv. 2. [2] *Ibid.* xx. 10.

time, due to a resurgence of jewish influence.[1] There is no evidence for such 'judaising' in the later second century, and in point of fact Hippolytus' description of the offertory and the terms it uses takes us no further than that of Justin at Rome sixty years before him. Justin says, 'When we have ended (the intercessions) we salute one another with a kiss. Then bread is "offered" (*prospheretai*, perhaps better translated here 'presented') to the president and a cup of water mingled with wine.'[2] Justin does not mention the deacons by their title here, or the imposition of hands on the oblation, but in so summary a description for pagan readers there is no particular reason why he should. He does use the technical term *prospheretai*, and if its sense is here ambiguous, he is certainly not unaware of its technical meaning. In another work intended for christian readers he interprets the words of Malachi i. 11—'In every place incense shall be offered unto My Name and a pure *offering*' as referring to the eucharist. He explains the last words as 'The sacrifices which are offered (*prospheromenōn*) to God by us gentiles, that is the bread of the eucharist and cup likewise of the eucharist.'[3] Thus though he habitually prefers the term 'sacrifice' (*thusia*), which he uses some half-a-dozen times over of the eucharist, to that of *prosphora*, he is quite clear that there is a real 'offering' in the rite, specifically of the bread and wine; and he uses this technical word for the liturgical offertory.

Sixty years again before Justin in the last years of the first century A.D. Clement had written from Rome that the 'bishop's office' is to 'offer the gifts' (*prospherein ta dōra*).[4] Does this mean that what for Hippolytus a century and a quarter later was the 'liturgy' of the deacon at the offertory had been performed in Clement's day by the bishop? Not at all. In Hippolytus' prayer for the consecration of a bishop, the 'liturgy' of the bishop's 'high-priesthood'—(the office of the bishop is thus described by Clement also)[5]—is defined precisely as in Clement's epistle, as being 'to offer to Thee the gifts (*prospherein ta dōra*) of Thy holy church.'[6] But in Hippolytus' prayer for the ordination of a deacon his functions are defined with equal precision in relation to those of the bishop, as being 'to bring up (*anapherein*) that which is offered (*prospherein*) to Thee by Thine ordained high-priest'.[7] The Greek terminology concerning the oblation (*prosphora*) is throughout the pre-Nicene period quite clear, and does not (as a rule) vary from one writer to another. The communicant 'brings' (*prosenegkein*) the *prosphora*; the deacon 'presents' it or 'brings it up' (*anapherein*); the bishop 'offers' (*prospherein*) it.[8] The *prosphora* itself is at all points 'the

[1] G. P. Wetter, *Altchristlichen Liturgien* (t. ii. *Das christliche Opfer*. Göttingen, 1922–5) is the chief statement of this view. Lietzmann (*op. cit. pp.* 181 *sqq.*) takes a somewhat similar line, but *pp.* 226 *sq.* appears to follow a rather different argument. (It is almost incredible, but neither argument mentions Justin or Clement.)

[2] *Ap.* I. 65. [3] *Dialogue*, 41. [4] 1 *Clem.* 44.

[5] *Ibid.* 40. [6] *Ap. Trad.*, iii. 4. [7] *Ibid.* ix. 11.

[8] *Cf.* Canons 1, 2 and 3 of the Council of Ancyra, *c.* A.D. 314.

gifts of Thy holy church', but the 'liturgies' of each order in connection with it are proper to each order and not interchangeable.[1] It is the special eucharistic 'liturgy' of each order which distinguishes it and constitutes it a separate 'order' in the organic Body of Christ. Thus Hippolytus can lay it down: 'Let a widow be instituted by being named only and then let her be reckoned among the enrolled widows. But she shall not be ordained (by the laying on of hands) for she does not offer the oblation nor has she a "liturgy". *But ordination (cheirotonia) is for the clergy on account of their "liturgy"*. But the widow is instituted for prayer and this is ⟨a function⟩ of all ⟨christians⟩.'[2]

It is worth noting that Clement implies that our Lord Himself had laid down how He wished the 'oblations and liturgies' at the eucharist to be performed, and emphasises the fact that these latter are different for the different 'orders' (*tagmata*).[3] Whatever we may think of the truth of his first statement, it certainly implies that such arrangements and ideas went back at Rome for a considerable time before Clement wrote (A.D. 96)—long enough for even the leader of the Roman christians to have forgotten when and how they originated. Such ideas and arrangements in their precision are very hard indeed to fit in with a eucharist celebrated in combination with a supper. They presuppose in their elaboration the liturgical eucharist and the arrangement of the *ecclesia* in a liturgical assembly, not at a supper table. There is here an indication that at Rome—at all events—the ordinance of the liturgical eucharist apart from the agape was achieved in the first, the apostolic, christian generation.

This unique series of documents, Clement, Justin, Hippolytus, enables us to say with confidence that at Rome terminology, practice and general conception concerning the eucharist had varied in no important respect between the last quarter of the first century and the first quarter of the third. Rome was generally regarded elsewhere during this period as the model church, especially because of its conservatism, its fidelity to 'apostolic tradition' by which other churches might test their own adherence to the same standard.[4] For other local liturgical traditions we have unfortunately no such chain of evidence. All we can say is that every one of these local traditions at the earliest point at which extant documents permit us to interrogate it, reveals the same general understanding of the eucharist as an 'oblation' (*prosphora*) or 'sacrifice' (*thusia*)—something offered to God; and that the substance of the sacrifice is in every case in some sense the bread and the cup. We can detect certain differences of interpretation

[1] There were difficulties about finding different words in Latin to represent *prosenegkein*, *anapherein* and *prospherein*, but the three 'liturgies' of the orders were as clearly distinguished by Latin authors as by Greek.

[2] *Ap. Trad.*, xi. 4 and 5. [3] 1 *Clem.* 40, 41.

[4] *Cf. e.g.* Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.*, iii. 3, 2—which, whatever else it may mean (if anything) in the way of 'jurisdiction', certainly regards the Roman church in this light of a standard or norm for other churches in fidelity to tradition.

within this general conception; but to the conception itself as thus stated there is no exception whatever in any christian tradition in the second century and no hint of an alternative understanding of the rite anywhere. This is an important principle, which it is worth while to establish in detail.

To take the Eastern traditions first: For Ignatius, *c.* A.D. 115, the earliest Syrian writer extant, the eucharistic assembly of the church is *thusiasterion* 'the place of sacrifice', and 'he who is not within it is deprived of the bread.'[1] We have already noted the threefold application of the word *thusia*, 'sacrifice', to the eucharist by the (probably) Syrian *Didache* (xiv.) at a later point in the second century. If this be not Syrian, then it must be regarded as the earliest evidence on the eucharist in Egypt. But if the *Didache* is Syrian, then the earliest Egyptian writer on the eucharist whose evidence has survived is Clement of Alexandria (*c.* A.D. 208). He denounces those Encratite heretics 'who use bread and water for the oblation (*prosphora*) contrary to the rule of the church'.[2] The early liturgical tradition of Asia Minor and the apostolic churches there is quite unknown to us (one of the most serious of all the many handicaps under which the study of early liturgy has to be carried on). It seems probable, however, that we get some inkling of this Asian tradition at second hand from S. Irenaeus of Lyons *c.* A.D. 185, who had learnt his faith from Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna forty years or so before Irenaeus wrote his book *Against the Heresies*. He is most conveniently treated among Western writers. But if he witnesses to it, the tradition of Asia differed nothing in essentials, though perhaps something in interpretation, from that which we find elsewhere. It is a confirmation of this agreement, though a regrettably late one, that the first statement on the general conception of the eucharist from an Asian author, by Firmilian, bishop of the important church of Caesarea in Cappadocia in A.D. 256, speaks of an erratic prophetess in Cappadocia *c.* A.D. 220 who had 'pretended to consecrate bread and do the eucharist and *offer the sacrifice* to the Lord' with a novel but not unimpressive sort of eucharistic prayer.[3]

In the West, we have already glanced at the Roman evidence of Clement, Justin and Hippolytus, and the next witness there is Irenaeus in Gaul, with his Eastern upbringing and Roman associations. He speaks of our Lord as 'Instructing His disciples to *offer* to God the first-fruits of His own creation, not as though He had need of them, but that they themselves might be neither unfruitful nor ungrateful, He took that bread which cometh of the (material) creation and gave thanks saying, This is My Body. And the cup likewise, which is (taken) from created things, like ourselves, He acknowledged for His own Blood, and taught the new *oblation* of the New Covenant. Which the church learning by tradition from the apostles, throughout all the world she *offers* to God, even to Him Who provides us with our own

[1] Ignatius, *Eph.* v. 2.
[2] *Stromateis*, I. 19.
[3] *ap.* Cyprian, *Ep.* 75, 10.

food, the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Covenant. . . . We ought to make *oblation* to God and be found pleasing to God our creator in all things, with a right belief and a faith unfeigned, a firm hope and a burning charity, *offering* first-fruits of those things which are His creatures. . . . We *offer* unto Him what is His own, thus fittingly proclaiming the communion and unity of flesh and spirit. For as the bread (which comes) from the earth receiving the invocation of God is no more common bread but eucharist, composed of two realities, an earthly and a heavenly; so our bodies receiving the eucharist are no more corruptible, having the hope of eternal resurrection. . . . He wills that we *offer* our gift at the altar frequently and without intermission. There is therefore an altar in heaven, for thither are our prayers and *oblations* directed.'[1]

Unmistakably, Irenaeus regards the eucharist as an 'oblation' offered to God, but it is as well to note the particular sense in which he emphasises its sacrificial character. Primarily it is for him a sacrifice of 'first-fruits', acknowledging the Creator's bounty in providing our earthly food, rather than as 're-calling' the sacrifice of Calvary in the Pauline fashion. It is true that Irenaeus has not the least hesitation in saying that 'The mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God and becomes the eucharist of *the Body and Blood* of Christ';[2] and similar teaching is to be found in the passage above. There is, too, the significant addition of the words 'in the New Covenant' to 'the first-fruits of His own gifts'. Irenaeus is clear, also, that the death of Christ was itself a sacrifice, of which the abortive sacrifice of Isaac by his own father was a type.[3] But when all is said and done, he never quite puts these two ideas together or calls the eucharist outright the offering or the 're-calling' of Christ's sacrifice.

It is conceivable that the particular errors of the Gnostic sects he is directly combating (which all taught that the material creation is radically evil) have something to do with the emphasis which Irenaeus lays on the eucharistic offering as the 'first-fruits of creation'. But it seems also that this is only an emphasis on an authentic strain of primitive tradition, which lies behind his teaching that 'we offer unto Him that which is His own', 'the first-fruits of His own gifts.' This does not happen to be represented in the New Testament in direct connection with the eucharist. But there are in the New Testament passages like 'Giving thanks (*eucharistountes*) at all times for all things in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father',[4] and 'Through Him, therefore, we present a sacrifice (*anapheromen thusian*) of praise continually to God',[5] which by their very language would suggest such an understanding of the eucharist. The same idea is expressed to this day in the Roman canon: 'We offer to Thy glorious majesty *of Thine own gifts and bounties* . . . the holy bread of eternal life

[1] Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.*, iv. xvii. 4—xviii. 6.
[2] *Ibid.* v. ii. 3.
[3] *Ibid.* iv. v. 4.
[4] Eph. v. 20.
[5] Heb. xiii. 15.

and the cup of perpetual salvation.' What is striking is that the same idea almost in the same words is still found also at the same point of the eucharistic prayer of the *Liturgy of S. Basil*, which probably comes originally from Asia Minor.[1] Such a coincidence in the later liturgical traditions of Rome and Asia Minor (which had little later contact with each other) with the teaching of a second century father who had close relations with both these regions can hardly be accidental. We must not forget, either, that the jewish *berakah*, from which all eucharistic prayers are ultimately derived, did give thanks to God for His natural bounty in its first paragraph, as well as for the blessings of the Covenant in its second.

In Africa, Tertullian soon after A.D. 200 is quite explicit that the eucharist is a *sacrificium*;[2] that the material of the sacrifice is the *oblationes* brought by the people;[3] and that 'the bread which He took and gave to His disciples He made His own very Body by saying (*dicendo*) This is My Body.'[4] But only once does Tertullian come near Irenaeus' central thought of the christian sacrifices as being taken from created things, when he reminds Marcion (who regarded matter as the work of an imperfect 'Creator' different from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) that our Lord 'to this day has not repudiated the water of the Creator wherein He cleanses His own; nor His oil, wherewith He anoints His own (in confirmation); nor the mingling of honey and milk wherewith He feeds their infancy; nor bread, whereby He makes His own very Body to be present. Even in His own sacraments He has need of the beggarly elements of the Creator.'[5]

Yet though the conception and the terms of sacrifice are applied by Tertullian to the eucharist, we get no theory of the nature of that sacrifice from him. It is only with Cyprian in the next generation (*c.* A.D. 255) that the African doctrine is fully stated. For him, as for Tertullian, the matter of the sacrifice is the oblations brought by the people. Thus he rebukes a wealthy woman 'who comest to the *dominicum* (Lord's sacrifice) without a sacrifice, who takest thy share (*i.e.*, makes her communion) from the sacrifice offered by the poor.'[6] But for Cyprian the whole question of *how* the eucharist is constituted a sacrifice is as clear-cut and completely settled as it is for a post-Tridentine theologian: 'Since we make mention of His passion in all our sacrifices, *for the passion is the Lord's sacrifice which we offer*, we ought to do nothing else than what He did (at the last supper).'[7]

There is no reason whatever to suppose that Cyprian was the inventor of this way of defining the eucharistic sacrifice, or in any intentional way its partisan. But he proved its most influential propagator. Cyprian is the most attractive of all pre-Nicene authors, and so far as the West was concerned always the most widely read in later times. His explanation of the

[1] Brightman, L. E. W., *p.* 329, *l.* 6.
[2] *de Orat.*, 18.
[3] *de Corona*, 4.
[4] *adv. Marcion.*, IV. 40.
[5] *Ibid.* I. 14.
[6] *de Op. et Eleemos.* 15; *cf. Epp.* i. 2; xii. 2; xxxiii. 1, etc., etc.
[7] *Ep.* lxiii, 17.

sacrifice has a simplicity which recommended it to popular devotional thought, and that sort of logical directness and unity which has always appealed to Western theologians. It is not surprising that what may for convenience be called the 'Cyprianic' doctrine of the sacrifice came to prevail in the West, almost to the exclusion of that line of thought which is prominent in Irenaeus. The teaching of Cyril of Jerusalem led to a similar development along the single 'Cyprianic' line of thought in later Eastern teaching about the eucharistic sacrifice, though the Easterns hardly reached the same precision in their understanding of the matter as the later Westerns.

It would be misleading, as I see the matter, rigidly to divide early eucharistic teaching into an Eastern or 'Irenaean' and a Western or 'Cyprianic' doctrine, or to suppose that Irenaeus himself was importing anything alien or novel into current Western teaching in his own day, in his emphasis on the 'sacrifice of first-fruits'. There is an older witness than either Irenaeus or Cyprian to the original balance of Western eucharistic doctrine—Justin. He speaks of the eucharist as the 'pure sacrifice' of christians, 'as well for the "re-calling" (before God, *anamnēsis*) of their sustenance both in food and drink, wherein is made also the memorial (*memnētai*) of the passion which the Son of God suffered for them.'[1] Irenaeus and Cyprian each develop one half of this double interpretation of the eucharist, not in opposition to but in isolation from the other. But it is an interesting fact that the earliest Western eucharistic prayer, that of Hippolytus, a professed follower of Irenaeus, already makes the 'Cyprianic' doctrine the more prominent of the two aspects of the matter a generation before Cyprian wrote. Evidently Irenaeus is emphasising a side of tradition which theologians generally were beginning in his day to leave out of account. But there is the enduring witness of the Roman canon and of the *Liturgy of S. Basil* that in the East and in the West alike the 'Irenaean' doctrine did not wholly die out, though it passed out of current theological teaching. The liturgical tradition, partly through its conservatism and partly by its unspecialised appeal and practical interest for the rank and file of christians, does as a rule succeed in remaining broader in its scope than the tradition of theology. It preserves in combination different ideas, some of which theological theory sometimes prefers to ignore for the sake of securing neat and smooth explanations.

The detailed consideration of the doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice in the various early local traditions has led us away from our immediate subject, the offertory in practice, as an integral part of the eucharistic action. But the establishment of the fact that this whole action was everywhere regarded as in some sense the offering to God of the bread and wine is not

[1] *Dialogue* 117. *Cf. Ap.* I. 13 and 67. There is a similarity of language (*eph hois prospherometha*) in these two passages to that of Hippolytus *Ap. Trad.*, iv. 11 (*prospheromen . . . eph hois*) with an important difference of meaning.

at all irrelevant to the interpretation of its initial movement, the offertory, by which that meaning was directly expressed in the rite.

Irenaeus applied to the liturgical offertory the words of our Lord about the widow's mite—'That poor widow the church casts in all her life (*panta ton bion*, Luke xxi. 4) into the treasury of God.'[1] Thus he stated epigrammatically the essential meaning of this part of the rite. Each communicant from the bishop to the newly confirmed gave *himself* under the forms of bread and wine to God, as God gives Himself to them under the same forms. In the united oblations of all her members the Body of Christ, the church, gave herself to *become* the Body of Christ, the sacrament, in order that receiving again the symbol of herself now transformed and hallowed, she might be truly that which by nature she is, the Body of Christ, and each of her members members of Christ. In this self-giving the order of laity no less than that of the deacons or the high-priestly celebrant had its own indispensable function in the vital act of the Body. The layman brought the sacrifice of himself, of which he is the priest. The deacon, the 'servant' of the whole body, 'presented' all together in the Person of Christ, as Ignatius reminds us. The high-priest, the bishop, 'offered' all together, for he alone can speak for the whole Body. In Christ, as His Body, the church is 'accepted' by God 'in the Beloved'. Its sacrifice of itself is taken up into His sacrifice of Himself.[2] On this way of regarding the matter the bishop can no more fulfil the layman's function for him (he fulfils it on his own behalf by adding one *prosphora* for himself to the people's offerings on the altar) than the layman can fulfil that of the bishop.

The whole rite was a true corporate offering by the church in its hierarchic completeness of the church in its organic unity, so much so that the penalty of mortal sin for members of every order was that they were forbidden to 'offer', each according to the liturgy of his own order. The sinful layman was 'forbidden to offer',[3] just as the unfrocked deacon was forbidden to 'present',[4] and the deposed bishop was forbidden to celebrate (*prospherein*) where we should have said 'forbidden to receive communion.' The primitive layman's communion, no less than that of the bishop, is the consummation of his 'liturgy' in the offering of the christian sacrifice.

The offertory in the original view of the rite is therefore something much more than a ceremonial action, the placing of bread and wine upon the altar by the clergy as an inevitable preparation for communion. It is as the later liturgies continued to call it—even when it had lost all outward signs of its primitive meaning—the 'rational worship' by free reasonable

[1] *Adv. Haer.*, IV. xviii. 2.
[2] Eph. i. 6.
[3] Cyprian, *Ep.* xvi. 14.
[4] *Cf.* Council of Ancyra, *Can.* 2. Suspended deacons are 'to cease from all their holy liturgy, that of presenting (*anapherein*) the bread or the cup, or proclaiming' (*sc.* the 'biddings' in church). *Cf. Can.* 5, repentant but suspended laymen may be present at the eucharist 'without a *prosphora*', and *therefore* without communicating.

creatures of their Creator, a self-sacrificial act by which each christian comes to his being as a member of Christ in the 're-calling' before God of the self-sacrificial offering of Christ on Calvary. 'There you are upon the table', says S. Augustine to the newly confirmed communicants at the Easter liturgy, 'there you are in the chalice.'[1]

In the primitive rite this self-offering was expressed by *action* in the offertory, simply by the silent setting of the church's offerings by the church's servants (the deacons) upon the altar, which in the early symbolism was itself thought of as representing Christ.[2] The recital of an offertory *prayer* by the celebrant, accompanying and in some sort expressing the meaning of this action of the church (and in much later thought usurping its importance in the rite), does not appear to have been thought of anywhere much before the end of the fourth century.[3] It is of a piece with the usual conservatism of the Roman rite that even after such a prayer had been introduced at Rome, it should have been whispered—as it is to-day—not said aloud, in deference to the tradition that the real offering was the *act* of the people through the deacons, from which nothing should distract attention.[4] The celebrant's part at the most was to 'commend' the oblation made by the church to God, not to make it himself. Our Lord's 'taking' of bread and wine at the last supper was done without comment; and it is this action of His, done by the whole church, His Body, which the liturgy perpetuates in the offertory.

The offertory is not, of course, the eucharistic oblation itself, any more than the last supper was itself the sacrifice of Christ. It is directed to that oblation as its pledge and starting-point, just as the last supper looks forward to the offering on Calvary. The offering of themselves by the members of Christ could not be acceptable to God unless taken up into the offering of Himself by Christ in consecration and communion.

Nevertheless, though this distinction can readily be made in theory, it is one which is easier to see than to express by the actual prayers of the liturgy. The primitive rites had nothing corresponding to an offertory prayer at the moment of the offertory, but the meaning of the offertory

[1] Augustine, *Serm.* 229.

[2] Heb. xiii. 10; Ignatius, *Magnesians*, vii; Optatus of Milevis, *contra Donatistas*, vi. 1.

[3] The earliest reference to such a prayer which I have noted is in the letter of Pope Innocent I to Decentius (A.D. 416) where 'the prayer which commends the oblations to God' seems to refer to something on the lines of the offertory *secretae* of the later sacramentaries, where such a 'commendation' is their normal tenor. (It was not necessarily a variable prayer in A.D. 416.) *Cf. p.* 500 *sq.*

[4] *Cf.* for the East, Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Cat.* V. (*ed. cit. pp.* 87 *sq.*). 'These things (*sc.* the offertory by the deacons) take place while all are silent . . . every one must look at the bringing up and spreading forth of such a great and wonderful object with a quiet and reverential fear, and a silent noiseless prayer. . . . When we see the oblation on the table . . . great silence falls on those present'. Theodore's idea of the offertory has certain novel developments, but this much is traditional. *Cf. p.* 283.

was nevertheless formally expressed in words in '*the*' prayer, the eucharistic prayer itself. 'We offer to Thee' says the earliest known formula of the eucharistic prayer, that of the Western Hippolytus, 'the bread and the cup'. 'We *have* offered the bread' says the next earliest, that of the Eastern Sarapion, looking back to the offertory action and interpreting it. Such clauses of the eucharistic prayers, detached in this way from the action they define, are apt to seem to our modern Anglican notions[1]—which have been moulded by one particular mediaeval Western emphasis—quite out of place in what we call the 'prayer of consecration', a phrase which really states only one aspect of the matter. The '*eucharistic*' prayer was originally intended to embrace in its single statement the meaning of the whole rite, from the offertory to the effects of receiving communion.

One may go further, I think, and say that a survey of the actual offertory prayers which later came into use all over christendom suggests that an opposite difficulty was found in framing such prayers, *viz.*, to avoid using phrases which are equally out of place by anticipating the effects of consecration and communion at the offertory.[2] The offertory prayers which ultimately depend on the Syrian liturgical tradition save themselves from this mistake by turning their attention to the offerers rather than the offering, though they betray their late date by identifying the 'offerers' with the clergy and especially the celebrant, rather than with the church as a whole.[3] But the very remarkable, not to say disconcerting, notions which were already being attached to the offertory by popular devotion in the East by about A.D. 400,[4] are an indication of the difficulties which can arise even when the liturgical tradition itself is discreet. The genuinely Roman offertory prayers, the *secretae*, never became a public—an audible—part of the rite. They are as a rule sober, if rather vague, 'commendations' of the people's offerings to God, whose terms amply repay careful examination.[5] If more attention had been paid to their careful theological language in the middle ages, fourteenth-fifteenth century Latin teaching would have been less open to objections, and sixteenth century protestant reactions might have been less indefensibly sweeping.

But elsewhere, where the new notion of 'offertory prayers' was accepted with less reserve, the results are not fortunate. Thus the invariable prayers at the offertory of the host and chalice in the present Roman missal (which

[1] I do *not* mean specifically 'Anglo-catholic.'

[2] Certain liturgists, enthusiasts for the modern 'liturgical movement' (*cf. e.g.* Dom Vandeur, *La Sainte Messe, notes sur la Liturgie*, 1924) have gone so far as to accept as right such an anticipation at the offertory, to which they have given the curious name of 'le petit canon'. It need hardly be said that such exaggerations are as destructive of the real interpretation of the eucharist as the previous neglect of the meaning of the offertory against which such writers are in reaction. There have been signs of a similar lack of balance in one or two Anglican writers, anxious to emphasise the 'sociological values' of the offertory. These are there, and it is right that they should be brought out; but not at the expense of the essential meaning of the rite as a whole.

[3] *Cf. p.* 495. [4] *Cf. p.* 284 *sq.* [5] *Cf.* those on *p.* 496.

are tenth-eleventh century 'Gallican' intrusions into the original Roman offertory) speak of the unconsecrated bread and wine as 'this immaculate victim' and 'the cup of salvation', precisely as the Roman canon speaks of them after consecration. Other Gallican offertory prayers are equally confusing from the standpoint of theology. The old Egyptian offertory prayer (whose language suggests a date towards the end of the fourth century) runs thus: 'Master Lord Jesus Christ . . . make Thy face to shine upon this bread and this cup, which we have set upon Thy table. Bless them, hallow them, sanctify and change them, that this bread may become indeed Thy holy Body and the mixture in this cup indeed Thy precious Blood. And may they become to us all for participation and healing and salvation.'[1] This is nothing less than a complete anticipation of the whole eucharistic prayer at the offertory. The truth is that offertory and consecration and communion are so intricately connected as parts of a single action that it is exceedingly difficult to express their meaning separately. The primitive church was not on the wrong lines in putting its whole interpretation of the rite into the single formula of 'the' eucharistic prayer.

All this, however, leaves one important practical point obscure, as unfortunately it is left by the available evidence. We know that all over christendom the layman originally brought his *prosphora* of bread and wine with him to the *ecclesia*; that was a chief part of his 'liturgy'. We know, too, that the deacons 'presented' these offerings upon the altar; that was a chief part of their 'liturgy'. What we do not know, as regards the pre-Nicene church generally, is when and how the deacons received them from the laity.

From the fourth century and onwards East and West differed considerably on this point in practice, and the difference is ultimately responsible for all the most important structural differences between the later Eastern and Western rites. In the East in later times it was the custom for the laity to bring their oblations to the sacristy or to a special table in the church before the service began (*i.e.*, as a rule before the synaxis). The deacons fetched them from there when they were wanted at the offertory (the beginning of the eucharist proper). This little ceremony soon developed into one of the chief points of 'ritual splendour' in the Syrian-Byzantine rites, and became the 'Great Entrance'. In the West the laity made their offerings for themselves at the chancel rail at the beginning of the eucharist proper. Each man and woman came forward to lay their own offerings of bread in a linen cloth or a silver dish (called the *offertorium*) held by a deacon, and to pour their own flasks of wine into a great two-handled silver cup (called the *scyphus* or the *ansa*) held by another deacon. When the laity had made their offerings, each man for himself, the deacons bore them up and placed them on the altar.

The difference between these two ways of receiving the people's

[1] Brightman, L. E. W., *p.* 148; *cf. p.* 124.

offerings may seem a mere question of convenience, something quite trifling; and so in itself it is. But if any young liturgical student seeking a useful subject for research should undertake to trace the actual process of development of structural differences between the Eastern and Western rites since the fourth century (and it needs more investigation than it has received), he will find that they all hinge upon this different development of the offertory in the two halves of christendom. And if he should go further and seek to understand the much more sundering differences of *ethos* between the two types of rite (and without that he will never understand the religion of those who use them, or learn anything worth knowing from either) he will find himself on point after point being led back by his analysis to this trivial original difference between East and West in their treatment of the people's offerings, between receiving them in the sacristy beforehand and receiving them at the chancel at the offertory. There is this much to be said for the impossible ideal of rigid uniformity of rite, that without it christians unconsciously grow to pray and so to believe somewhat differently, and mutual charity becomes increasingly difficult. There are differences of ideas about the liturgy (and so about the one eucharist) lying behind the contrast of the long and complicated Byzantine *prothesis* with the mere laying of a host upon the paten by the Western sacristan without prayer or ceremony of any sort whatever—just so that it shall be there when the priest uncovers the vessels. We find on the one hand the gorgeous Eastern 'Great Entrance' while the choir sings the thrilling *Cherubikon* and the people prostrate in adoration, and on the other the pouring of a little wine into the chalice by the Western priest at the altar with a muttered prayer while the choir sings a snippet of a psalm and the people sit. There is a difference—to take another sort of instance—between the *reasons why* the East came to substitute a 'holy loaf' for the domestic bread of the people's offering as the actual matter of the sacrament, and the West (centuries later) brought in the unleavened wafer, thin and round and white[1]. All these differences and a dozen others, which are not simply of ecclesiastical practice and rite, but of commonly held ideas about the eucharist, and above all of eucharistic *devotion* in the minds and hearts of the ordinary churchgoing christians of the Eastern and Western churches—all of them eventually find their roots in this little difference between the collection of the offerings beforehand in the sacristy in the East and the collection of them at the offertory in front of the altar in the West. Which is the original practice, or were there always two?

It is rather noticeable that neither Justin nor Hippolytus in their

[1] Incidentally, will not someone produce a thesis or tractate or treatise on the very illuminating development of this difference? All modern treatments of the matter which I have seen carry us very little further in point of mere quantity of information than Mabillon's seventeenth century dissertation *de Pane Eucharistico* in his *Analecta Vetera*, and in real understanding of the matter no further, if as far.

accounts of the Western offertory says anything which would suggest the existence at Rome in the second and third centuries of that oblation 'of the people by the people' before the altar which is such a striking feature of all the Western rites in the—let us say—fifth century. On the other hand, the Syrian *Didascalia c.* A.D. 250 says of the deacons, 'Let one stand continually by the oblations of the eucharist; and let another stand without by the door and observe those that come in. And afterwards when you offer let them minister together in the church.'[1] This does suggest that in Syria in the third century the people's *prosphorae* were handed in to a deacon before the service began; and therefore that the subsequent Eastern practice already existed *in Syria* in pre-Nicene times. Further than that I cannot see that the evidence available takes us. But Dom Bernard Capelle and a number of other Benedictine scholars have argued of late years that the whole subsequent Western practice originated as a local Roman development in the fourth century, and that the Eastern practice is the original one of the whole pre-Nicene church.

It may be so, but I confess that I am inclined to be sceptical. It is not at all the case that we have positive evidence of a change of Roman practice on this matter during the fourth century, but simply that we have no evidence at all anywhere from the pre-Nicene period as to how the layman's oblation came into the hands of the deacons, apart from the passage of the *Didascalia* just cited. This does, I think, imply the later Eastern practice in pre-Nicene Syria. But that does not by any means imply that it was then universal, even in the East. If there were then other customs at the offertory in other churches, it would not be the only point on which early Syrian peculiarities eventually spread widely, and even prevailed everywhere after the fourth century.

The first direct evidence for the subsequent Western practice is comparatively late; but then so is that for the Eastern practice, apart from the inference I have drawn from this passage of the *Didascalia.* Except for this one statement I do not recollect that any Eastern writer attests the existence of the subsequent Eastern practice at the offertory in his own rite before S. John Chrysostom at Antioch in Syria, in a work written probably about A.D. 387.[2] It happens that the first witness to the Western oblation of the people before the altar is S. Ambrose at Milan in a work written almost at the same time, to whom this practice is well-known and normal.[3] In Africa the practice appears to have been known to S. Augustine at Hippo, though his evidence as to how the oblations of the people reached the altar is not absolutely decisive. It is certainly attested as the custom there by Victor of Vita in the fifth century.[4] It is taken for granted by

[1] *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ii. 57 (*ed. cit. p.* 120).
[2] *de Compunctione*, i. 3. The reference though indirect seems certain. Cyril of Jerusalem does not describe the offertory.
[3] *Expos. in Ps.* cxviii, *Prol.* 2.
[4] *Victor Vitensis*, ii. 17.

Caesarius of Arles as the normal custom in the early sixth century in S.E. France, the first information from Gaul that we possess about the offertory. But in view of this author's habitual 'Romanising' his evidence might be discounted by some. It is, however, specifically insisted on as the traditional custom in Gaul by the exceptionally representative Council of Macon in A.D. 585.[1] It is an indication of the nature of the evidence available that none of these authors mentions the intervention of the deacons in the collection of the oblations in the West; and that all of them are earlier than the first mention of the Western custom at Rome where it is supposed to have originated. It is just such practical details which every one of the faithful knew by practice that ancient authors naturally take for granted.

But there is more to be said yet. The supposed 'Roman' custom must at one time have existed in Egypt. The deacon's thrice-repeated command to the people to bring up their offerings at the offertory still keeps its old place in the Coptic rite,[2] though for many centuries now the actual offertory has been made in Egypt at the Byzantine place, before the liturgy begins. There is evidence, too, that the 'Roman' custom prevailed in the fourth century in Asia Minor.[3] Looking at the matter closely, and despite the lack of pre-Nicene evidence which handicaps both theories in the same way, it seems unlikely that the later 'Western' rite of the offertory first arose in the fourth century. It is too deep-rooted in the ideas of the pre-Nicene fathers about the meaning of the people's oblation for that (*cf.* Irenaeus *sup.*). And it is too widespread in the East as well as the West at too early a date to be a local Roman innovation. Rather it seems (though the early evidence is too fragile for certainty either way) that there were in the pre-Nicene church two different practices, not in the moment but in the manner of the offertory, and that the Syrian practice differed from that in other churches. That a Syrian peculiarity should later have come to prevail all over the East is not unexampled. That the considerable structural variations between the Eastern and Western rites should have developed out of this trifling original difference in the treatment of the people's offerings may be surprising, but it is only an indication of the fundamental importance of the offertory for the understanding of any eucharistic rite.

[1] Council of Macon, *can.* 4; Caesarius, *Serm.* 265 (ap. S. Augustine *Spuria*). P. L. 39, 2238.

[2] Brightman, L. E. W., *p.* 164, *l.* 8.

[3] *Cf.* Brightman, L. E. W., *p.* 164, *l.* 8 for Egypt, and *p.* 525, *l.* 9 *sq.* for Asia Minor. These pieces of evidence have been challenged by E. Bishop *ap. Homilies of Narsai. ed.* Connolly, *pp.* 116 *sq.*, it seems on insufficient grounds, though he is right in his criticism of Brightman's actual statements. But *e.g.* the story about Valens' offering in Gregory Naz. *Orat.*, xliii. 52, even if it was not of bread and wine but money, as Bishop contends, was offered at the offertory, after the sermon, not before the liturgy began, and at the sanctuary rail, not in the sanctuary—which points to the subsequent 'Western', not 'Eastern', practice having prevailed at Caesarea of Cappadocia in the later fourth century.

3. *The Rinsing of the Hands*

The rinsing of the celebrant's hands before the eucharistic prayer is first mentioned by S. Cyril of Jerusalem in A.D. 348. After the fourth century this custom is found in all rites in connection with the offertory; but the utilitarian origin which has been suggested for it—to remove any soiling which might have resulted from the handling of the various oblations at the offertory—will not bear examination. The hands of the deacons who had actually disposed the oblations were left unrinsed. It was the hands of the bishops and presbyters, which had so far not come in contact with the oblations at all, which were washed, while the deacons ministered ewer, bason and towel. S. Cyril himself protests that the action is purely 'symbolic', in token of the innocence required of those who serve the christian altar (Ps. xxvi. 6), and not utilitarian, 'for we did not come into the *ecclesia* covered with dirt'.[1]

It seems such a natural little ceremony that one is rather surprised not to find it mentioned before Cyril, and outside Syria not before the end of the century. But the 'lay-out' of the evidence suggests that it is just one of those symbolic and imaginative elaborations of the rite which became natural as soon as the eucharist took on something of the nature of a 'public' cultus during the fourth century, but for which the directness and intensity of pre-Nicene concentration on the sacramental action in its naked simplicity offered no encouragement. Of such developments the Jerusalem church under S. Cyril was, as we shall see, very much a pioneer, though the rest of christendom was soon quite ready to copy them.

If the *lavabo* be older than Cyril's time, we can perhaps look for its origin (if such a natural gesture need have a particular origin) to that washing of the hands customary among the jews before 'the Thanksgiving' at the end of a meal, of which our Lord Himself made just such a symbolic use.[2] This rinsing, according to the rabbis, was not so much of utilitarian as of religious importance. The Israelite might not offer prayer without ablution, as the priests of the Temple might not approach the altar to 'liturgise' without it.[3] The *berakah* in a sense offered the preceding meal to God, and so might not be offered by one who was uncleansed. All these customary ablutions reappeared in early christian practice, whether by direct derivation from judaism or by natural instinct we cannot say. Thus the bishop approached his own 'liturgy' at the altar with the same symbolism as the jewish priest, and the christian layman washed his hands before even private prayers.[4] As soon as christian churches began to be erected with legal approval, fountains were provided in the forecourt for

[1] *Cat.* xxiii. 2. *Ap. Const.*, viii. also insists on the purely symbolic meaning, and places the lavabo *before* the offertory.

[2] John xiii. 4. [3] Exod. xxx. 20.

[4] Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad.*, xxxv. 1, 8, 10; Tertullian, *de Oratione*, 13. Both disapprove a little of the practice, but they record it.

these ritual ablutions of the laity before entering for the liturgy.[1] Their remote derivatives are to be seen in the holy-water stoups at the doors of catholic churches to-day, which combine, however, the half-utilitarian notion of the early christian ablutions before prayer with the similar but wholly religious notion of 'lustration' or purification. The *lavabo* of the celebrant before offering the eucharistic prayer, which is intended to symbolise purity of heart rather than to procure it, to this day retains the original christian emphasis.

4. *The Imposition of Hands on the Elements*

Hippolytus' rubric that after the oblation has been set upon the altar by the deacons the bishop 'with all the presbyters laying his hand on the oblation' shall proceed to the eucharistic dialogue, is not, so far as I know, paralleled elsewhere.[2] The practice bears a certain resemblance to that of the Old Testament in the case of a sin-offering on behalf of 'the whole congregation (*ecclesia*) of Israel'. There 'the congregation shall offer a young bullock . . . and bring him before the tabernacle . . . and the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bullock before the Lord and the bullock shall be killed before the Lord'; after which the 'anointed priest' is to make propitiation with its blood 'before the vail' and at the altar.[3] But a more probable origin for this imposition of hands on the oblation lies in the analogy of other such impositions of hands described by Hippolytus: (i) by all the bishops present on a bishop-elect, before that imposition by one bishop alone with the prayer which actually consecrates the elect to the episcopate; (ii) by the bishop on the heads of the candidates before baptism, with an exorcism; (iii) by the bishop on the heads of the candidates before confirmation, with a prayer for their worthiness to receive the gift of the Spirit about to be bestowed by anointing with chrism.[4] The gesture, which is a natural and universal token of blessing, would appear to be employed in all these cases to signify a preparation of *persons* to receive sacramental grace. There is nothing similar accompanying blessings of *things* (a somewhat novel extension of the idea of blessing *c.* A.D. 200) elsewhere in Hippolytus. Yet the eucharistic oblation in some sort represented the persons of the offerers, and might perhaps be treated in the same way. Or it may be outright simply a gesture for the blessing of the oblations themselves, and so the fore-runner of those signs of the cross over the oblations at this point which are found in all later rites. Its mention is in any case a confirmation of the fact that the

[1] *Cf. e.g.* Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, x. iv. 40 (*c.* A.D. 314). Western examples are found at about the same time.

[2] *Ap. Trad.*, iv. 2. The somewhat similar custom in the Milanese offertory appears to be of early mediaeval origin.

[3] Levit. iv. 13 *sq.*

[4] *Ap. Trad.*, ii. 3; xx. 8; xxii. 1. *Cf.* xix. 1 (on catechumens).

second century church saw in the offertory a ritual act with a religious significance of its own, not merely a necessary preliminary to consecration and communion.

The presbyters clearly join in this as 'concelebrants' with the bishop. Their office had originally in itself no properly liturgical but only administrative functions, as is clear from a comparison of the early prayers for ordination with those for the bishop and deacon. But from their deputising as liturgical presidents in the absence of the bishop, they had come in the second century to acquire such functions in conjunction with him at the eucharist when he was present.[1]

5. *The Eucharistic Dialogue and Prayer*

As we have seen, the jewish *berakah* was preceded by a dialogue between the president and members of the *chabûrah*, from which the christian eucharistic dialogue is clearly derived.[2] As reported by Hippolytus[3] *c.* A.D. 215 this is already (with one slight change) in exactly that form in which it is still found in the Roman and Egyptian rites. But in the rest of the East it has been to some extent elaborated in later times. In the Byzantine rite the Pauline greeting 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ etc.'[4] has been substituted for 'The Lord be with you', as a kind of blessing of the congregation. This is not mentioned by S. Cyril of Jerusalem, but variants of a slightly different form are found in the Antiochene liturgy of *S. James* and in that of *Apostolic Constitutions*, viii. The present Byzantine form is found in the Antiochene writings of S. John Chrysostom *c.* A.D. 390, and also in the East Syrian liturgy of *SS. Addai & Mari*. It would seem therefore that the substitution of 2 Cor. xiii. 14 for 'The Lord be with you' at this point is a custom which originated at Antioch sometime in the later fourth century, and which spread thence to all countries which followed a generally Syrian type of rite. It has never been adopted outside the Syrian tradition.

The second ℣ and ℟ 'Lift up your hearts', 'We lift them up unto the Lord' appear to be of purely christian origin; the ℣ is more idiomatic in Greek than in Latin, the ℟ is more idiomatic in Latin than in Greek, which may be a sign of where they were invented. But they are found in all the Greek liturgies as well as the Latin ones, and are indeed first attested in Greek, by Hippolytus. They are quite certainly part of the primaeval

[1] This development was no doubt assisted by the fact that they had inherited from the jewish presbyters of the Sanhedrin the duty of joining in the episcopal imposition of hands at the ordination of new presbyters (not, of course, at the consecration of bishops). The presbyterate was, in both the jewish and christian view, a *corporate* body, of which the 'high-priest' (jewish and christian) was from one point of view only the president. They did not join in ordaining the deacon because the latter was the bishop's *liturgical* assistant, a sphere in which the presbyters originally had no share.

[2] *Cf. pp.* 79 *sq.* [3] *Ap. Trad.*, iv. 3. [4] 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

core of the liturgical eucharist; and their character is another slight indication that the first formation of the 'four-action shape' of this took place in bilingual Rome, and spread thence all over christendom.

They were confined strictly to use at the sacramental eucharist, unlike the other parts of the dialogue,[1] and the reason is not far to seek. They are intended to remind the *ecclesia* that the real action of the eucharist takes place beyond time in 'the age to come', where God 'has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the age to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.'[2] We shall discuss this more at length later. Here it is sufficient to have noted their eschatological character. Once again, the later Syrian rites have elaborated the primitive formula, while the Roman and Egyptian ones have kept to the original simplicity. Cyril of Jerusalem already has 'Lift up your minds' for 'your hearts'; and S. Euthymius, who wrote at Jerusalem about a century later, has 'Lift up your minds and hearts'. This has become the ordinary Syrian form. The reply is similarly 'improved upon' in some of the Syrian rites, *e.g.*, We lift them 'unto Thee, O God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Israel, O glorious King', in the liturgy of *SS. Addai and Mari.*

The third ℣ and ℟ in Hippolytus, 'Let us give thanks (*lit.* make eucharist) unto the Lord', 'It is meet and right', are clearly derived from the invitation of the president of the *chabûrah* before reciting the *berakah* after supper and the 'assent' of his company. Hippolytus' form is that laid down by the rabbis 'when there are ten in company' at the *chabûrah.* The form of the Roman rite, '. . . unto the Lord our God', which was followed by Cranmer, is that which was prescribed among the jews when there were an hundred present.[3] The survival of this ℣ and ℟ at this point would alone suffice to identify the christian eucharistic prayer with the jewish *berakah.*

I do not wish to suggest that the Syrian rites alone have had the trick of amplifying the primitive dialogue. Here for instance is the form it takes in the Mozarabic rite:

The Priest. I will go unto the altar of God.
People. Even unto the God of my joy and gladness.
The Deacon. Lend your ears unto the Lord.
People. We lend them unto the Lord.
The Priest. Lift up your hearts.
People. We lift them up unto the Lord.
The Priest. Let us give worthy thanks and praises unto our God and Lord, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.
People. It is meet and right.

It is difficult to see what is gained by such changes as these, beyond elaboration for elaboration's sake. It is worth noting that the Roman rite in

[1] *Cf. e.g. p.* 85. [2] Eph. ii. 6, 7. [3] *Berakoth, M.*, vii. 4 and 5.

the West and the Egyptian rite in the East still often coincide in such details, though there has been little contact between the Egyptian and Roman churches since the fifth century. This is because both have kept close to the original universal tradition. The Syrian rite in the East and the Gallican rites in the West tend to diverge not only from the Egyptian-Roman tradition but from one another (despite certain superficial agreements due to direct cultural and political contacts) because each has independently elaborated upon the original universal tradition.

As we shall be dealing with the eucharistic prayer separately in chapter seven, all that need be said here is that though Hippolytus' words at iv. 2, 'with all the presbyters',[1] might possibly be construed to mean that the presbyters are to say the prayer with the bishop as well as lay hands upon the oblation with him, other passages in the *Ap. Trad.*, especially the careful safeguarding of the bishop's right to phrase the eucharistic prayer as he thinks best, and even perhaps to do so *ex tempore*,[2] seem to make it clear that the bishop alone uttered the prayer. This was his 'special liturgy', and had been since apostolic times. Just as the president of the *chabûrah* alone said the *berakah* while the members of his society stood around the table in silence, so the christian president said the *eucharistia* while all the members of his church stood grouped in silence around the altar. S. Paul appears to witness to the absolute continuity of practice in this recitation of the eucharistic blessing by one alone for the rest, when he deprecates the celebrant's uttering the *eucharistia* 'in the Spirit' (*i.e.*, in the babbling of the unintelligible 'tongues' under the stress of prophetic excitement). 'Otherwise how shall he who occupies the position of a private person (*i.e.*, the layman) say Amen to thy *eucharistia* seeing he understands not what thou sayest? . . . In the *ecclesia* I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I might teach others also than ten thousand words in a "tongue".'[3]

6. *The Amen*

By an Anglican tradition which dates from the seventeenth century a special importance attaches to the 'Amen' of the laity at the end of the Prayer of Consecration, as being their share in the 'consecration' itself, the verbal exercise of their 'lay-priesthood'. Whatever the justification for this notion, it was certainly not derived from Archbishop Cranmer, who deliberately omitted any direction for the laity to respond 'Amen' to this prayer in 1552, in which he was followed by the Elizabethan and Jacobean revisers. The response of the people was not reinserted officially until 1662, though it appears to have been said in practice by the people in Charles I's time, with the encouragement of the 'high church' divines of the period.

[1] *Cf. p.* 110. [2] *Ap. Trad.*, x. 3–5. [3] 1 Cor. xiv. 16 *sq.*

Without wishing to depreciate the patristic scholarship of the Carolines, which was as a rule more extensive than deep, it must be pointed out that whatever the value and importance in itself of the practice to which they gave currency, the idea upon which they based it is by no means a safe guide to the intention of the primitive church in attaching the importance it did to the 'Amen' after the eucharistic prayer. The bishop's 'liturgy' of 'offering the gifts' exercised through that prayer was the peculiar function of his 'order'. The primitive ideal of corporate worship was not the assimilation of the office of the 'order' of laity to those of the other orders, but the combination of all the radically distinct 'liturgies' of all the orders in a single complete action of the organic Body of Christ. The primitive church attached an equally great importance to the 'Amen' of the communicant after the words of administration at communion, which the Carolines did not attempt to restore in English practice, though they reappear in Laud's Scottish Book of 1637. It is obvious, I think, that these two 'Amens' cannot have precisely that significance which the Anglican 'high church' tradition attached to the 'Amen' after the consecration, as an 'assent' by the laity to the prayer of the clergy. In all three cases 'Amen' was originally rather a proclamation of faith by the laity for themselves than a mere assent. It was in fact as much a part of the 'eschatological setting' of the eucharist as the cry 'Lift up your hearts' before the prayer began.

The word 'Amen' is Hebrew and not Greek. It was left untranslated in the liturgy after *c.* A.D. 100 because its full meaning proved to be in fact untranslatable, though attempts seem to have been made in the first century to press the Greek *alēthinos* (='genuine') into use as a substitute.[1] The Hebrew root 'MN, from which 'Amen' is derived, meant originally 'fixed', 'settled', 'steadfast', and so, 'true'. 'The Hebrew mind in its certainty of a transcendental God, fixed upon Him as the standard of truth. . . . The inability of the Hebrew mind to think of the character or nature of God apart from His actions in the world caused them to think of His truth, not as static, but as active or potentially active. God must, God would, manifest His truth to the world, for His nature demanded a vindication of itself. . . . So the truth of Jehovah came to be sighed for in exactly the same way as His mercy and His righteousness. When they were revealed, when He finally acted, the Messianic age would have dawned.'[2] It is entirely in accord with this that in the jewish translation of the Old Testament into Greek, the Hebrew 'Amen' is almost always translated by 'Would that it might be so!' (*genoito*).

We can now see what the most strongly eschatological book of the N.T. means when it applies the word as a title to our Lord Himself, 'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the source of the creation of God.'[3] In Him the truth, mercy and righteousness of God *have*

[1] *E.g.* Rev. iii. 7.
[2] Hoskyns and Davey, *op. cit.*, *p.* 35.
[3] Rev. iii. 14.

been revealed; in Him God *has* acted; in Him the Messianic 'age to come' *has* dawned. Or as S. Paul puts it, 'In Him (Jesus) all the promises of God are yea, and in Him is the Amen by us to the glory of God.'[1] In Him is vindicated the eternal faithfulness of God to His promises; in Him, too, is the perfect human response to the everlasting living 'Yea' of God. In Him, as members of His Body, we too know and accept and proclaim the 'truthfulness' of God, to His glory. That is the coming of the Kingdom of God among men. The word was perpetually upon our Lord's lips—'Amen, Amen, I say unto you . . .'—not less than sixty-three times in the gospels. As a German scholar has brilliantly remarked, 'In the "Amen" before the "I say unto you" of Jesus the whole of Christology is contained in a nutshell.'[2]

When, therefore, the christian church inherited the jewish custom of responding 'Amen' to the 'glorifying of the Name of God' at the close of doxologies and other prayers, it nevertheless did so with a considerable change of emphasis. What for the jew was a longing hope for the future coming of God's truth, was for the christian a triumphant proclamation that in Jesus, the Amen to the everlasting Yea of God, he had himself passed into the Messianic Kingdom and the world to come. It was the summary of his faith in Jesus his Redeemer, and in God his Father and King. As such it was the fitting conclusion to the last words of the christian scriptures;[3] and an equally fitting response alike to the eucharistic prayer and the words of administration, where that redemption and that fatherhood and kingship find their full actuality within time. As the conclusion of the doxology which closed the eucharistic prayer with the proclamation of the revealed majesty of One God in Three Persons, it prolonged and endorsed the tremendous affirmation 'unto all ages of ages' (or as we customarily translate it 'world without end') with an echo of the timeless worship of heaven.[4] On the whole it is not surprising that the second generation of gentile christians despaired of translating a word of such depth of meaning by the Greek *alēthinos*, with its purely negative connotation of 'what is not false', and disdaining the now superseded future reference of the Septuagint *genoito*,—'would that it were so'—ended by retaining the jewish word in which our Lord had Himself affirmed 'Amen, I say unto you' the truth of God.

7. *The Lord's Prayer*

The first positive evidence for the use of the Lord's prayer at the end of the eucharistic prayer is found, once again, in S. Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 348). It is absent from the rite of *Ap. Const.* viii. and not mentioned in Chrysostom's writings at Antioch a generation later. It was therefore

[1] 2 Cor. i. 20.
[2] H. Schlier, *Theologisches Wörterbuch* (*ed.* Kittel) I. 341 (1932).
[3] Rev. xxii. 21. [4] Rev. xix. 4.

not a general Syrian custom in Cyril's time. At about the same period it appears to be missing from the Egyptian rite as represented by Sarapion. In the West it is mentioned by S. Ambrose in his *de Sacramentis*[1] vi. 24, about A.D. 395 at Milan. At about the same time it is first mentioned in Africa by S. Augustine, who early in the fifth century says that 'almost the whole world now concludes' the eucharistic prayer with this.[2] The exception he has in mind is probably Rome, where the innovation does not seem to have been accepted until the time of S. Gregory I (*c.* A.D. 595).[3] It is to be noted that in the West the position of the prayer varied slightly, a sure sign that it was accepted at different times by different churches. In Africa it came between the fraction and the communion; at Rome, when it was at length admitted, it was placed in the Jerusalem position, immediately after the eucharistic prayer itself, before the fraction. At Milan it appears to have been placed within the eucharistic prayer itself, at its close, but followed by the doxology of the eucharistic prayer and the 'Amen'. It is to be noted that while at Jerusalem the bishop and people recited the prayer together, in the West it appears to have been treated as a part of the eucharistic prayer and therefore recited by the celebrant only, the people responding with the last clause, or simply with 'Amen'. Certainly this was the case in Africa in S. Augustine's time,[4] as it was later at Rome and in Spain. In France the Syrian custom of a general recitation was adopted at some point before the end of the sixth century, but 'it is practically certain that this was not the original custom anywhere in the West.'[5]

8. *The Fraction*

Oddly enough Justin does not mention the fraction, and our first description of it is from Hippolytus. In describing the first communion of the newly confirmed he clearly states that the bishop 'breaks the bread'.[6] But in describing the ordinary Sunday eucharist he says: 'On the first day of the week the bishop, if it be possible, shall with his own hand deliver to all the people, while the deacons break the bread.'[7] The explanation of this apparent contradiction is to be found, it seems, in the description of the rite of the Papal mass in the *Ordo Romanus Primus* of the seventh-eighth century. There the Pope still breaks the Bread for his own communion and that of the clergy around him but (to save time?) the deacons who are his chief liturgical assistants break the Bread for the communion of the people

[1] That this work, the attribution of which to Ambrose has long been disputed, is really his *cf.* Dom R. H. Connolly, *Downside Review*, lxix. (Jan. 1941), *pp.* 1 *sq.*

[2] Augustine *Ep.* 59.

[3] So I interpret S. Gregory, *Ep.* ix. 12, in conjunction with John the Deacon, *Vita Greg.* ii. 20. But some have supposed that he only shifted the position of the prayer at Rome from the African position after the fraction to before it.

[4] Augustine, *Serm.* 58. 'It is recited daily at the altar and the faithful *hear* it'.

[5] W. C. Bishop, *The Mozarabic and Ambrosian Rites* (Alcuin Club Tracts, xv. 1924) *p.* 40.

[6] *Ap. Trad.*, xxiii. 5.

[7] *Ibid.* xxiv. 1.

while he makes his own communion. It is also to be noted that according to Hippolytus the concelebrant presbyters are also to 'break the Bread' which has been held before them on patens by the deacons during the bishop's recitation of the prayer, and distribute this to the people. This practice is also found surviving in the Papal mass 500 years later in the *Ordo Romanus Primus*.

The original purpose of the fraction, both at the jewish 'grace before meals' and at the last supper, was simply for distribution. But symbolism laid hold of this part of the rite even in the apostolic age. It is clear from 1 Cor. x. 17 that in S. Paul's time the fragments were all broken off a single loaf before the eyes of the assembled communicants. This is the whole point of his appeal for unity in the Corinthian church. This was still the case in the time of Ignatius who writes of 'breaking one bread' (or 'loaf', *hena arton*), again as the demonstration of the unity of the church.[1] Before the end of the second century, however, this symbolism had lost its point and another was *substituted* for it, in some churches at least, that of the 'breaking' of the Body of Christ in the passion.

The separation of the eucharist from the supper did, of course, have the effect of concentrating attention much more upon its character as a 'recalling' of the Lord's death, though this was not a new idea of its purpose. What led to the change of symbolism in the fraction was probably the practical fact that the bread was no longer broken from a single loaf but from several, rather than any change in the theoretical understanding of the rite. The increase in the numbers of communicants would have something to do with this, though the loaf could within limits be increased in size. But the custom of taking the bread for the sacrament from the people's offerings probably had more effect. These were numerous but small; when the eucharist was combined with a meal most of them would be eaten as common food, along with the other offerings in kind from which the supper was provided. But when the meal was separated from the liturgy, and yet the individual offerings of bread and wine were continued, the custom of consecrating more than one of the little loaves would impose itself, though it was not necessarily accepted by every church at the same time. But when it was, a fresh symbolism would be required, and that of the 'breaking' in the passion was natural.

There is not, however, the slightest suggestion of this in the N.T. Matt. and Mark give as the only words over the Bread 'Take, eat, this is My Body.' John expressly denies that 'a bone of Him' was broken. What S. Paul seems to have written in 1 Cor. xi. 24 was 'This is My Body which is for you' (*to hyper hymon*). But the desire for a symbolism in connection with the Bread parallel to that of the Blood 'shed for many'[2] led to the

[1] Ignatius *Eph.* xx. 1.

[2] Mark xiv. 24; Matt. xxvi. 28. Not represented in the earlier account in 1 Cor. xi. 25.

filling up of S. Paul's phrase variously in different churches, as '. . . is broken (*klōmenon*) for you', or '. . . is given (*didomenon*) for you', according to whether the emphasis was placed on the fraction or the distribution in local liturgies. The form 'which is broken for you' is already found in the Roman tradition of the prayer according to Hippolytus *c.* A.D. 215, but is not represented in Justin at Rome sixty years before. It is possible that the original reading of Hippolytus' text was 'which *will be* broken for you', phrased in the future as in the earliest extant Latin text of the Roman eucharistic prayer.[1] This points to an early recognition of the fact that the last supper was not a eucharist properly speaking, because Calvary was not yet an accomplished fact.

Other churches adopted the form 'which is given for you' or, as in Egypt, 'which is broken and distributed (*diadidomenon*) for you'; and in course of time liturgical practice thus had a reflex action on the MS. tradition of the text of 1 Cor. xi. So *e.g.*, the unique reading of this verse in the very important sixth century MS. of the N.T. *Codex Claromontanus* (D) '. . . which is broken in pieces (*thruptomenon*) for you', is otherwise found only in a liturgical text, that of the eucharistic prayer in *Ap. Const.*, viii.—proof positive of the way in which the liturgical traditions of local churches reacted on the text of the scriptures. From our modern standpoint one would rather have expected that the influence would be the other way. But in fact no ancient liturgical institution narrative is known which is simply a quotation from the scriptures. They all adapt and expand our Lord's words as reported in the N.T., sometimes very boldly. It was not so much that any superior historical authority was supposed to lie behind the continuous tradition of the recitation in the liturgy—that is a modern way of looking at the matter which would hardly have suggested itself then. There was only a strong sense that the liturgical tradition which had arisen before the scriptural narratives were canonised had its own independence, and also its own control in the shape of custom.

Cranmer used this ancient liberty in compiling the institution narrative of the rites of 1549 and 1552, which is a conflation from the various scriptural accounts. He could not foresee that by including the non-scriptural word 'broken' in the words of institution over the bread he would give occasion to the revisers of 1662 to commit the blunder of transferring the fraction from its original and universal place before the communion to a point in the middle of the eucharistic prayer. By this not only is its proper purpose as a preparation for distribution (as at the last supper) obscured by a non-scriptural symbolism, but its original character as one of the great successive acts which have together made up the 'four-action' structure of the eucharist ever since sub-apostolic times (at the latest) has been partially destroyed in our rite.

The fraction was always the point in the rite which offered most

[1] S. Ambrose, *de Sacramentis*, iv. 5.

opportunity for symbolic development. After the fourth century various complicated arrangements of the broken Bread upon the altar were evolved in the Eastern and Gallican churches, some of which were not free from superstition.[1] A more innocent and meaningful custom, which arose earlier, was that of placing a fragment of the broken Bread in the chalice, 'to show that they are not separable, that they are one in power and that they vouchsafe the same grace to those who receive them', as Theodore of Mopsuestia explains in the first account of this practice which has come down to us.[2] But it is certainly older in some form than Theodore's time (*c.* A.D. 400). It seems to me likely (but not demonstrable) that its historical origin lay in the custom of the *fermentum*. This is the name given to that fragment of the consecrated Bread brought from the bishop's eucharist to that of the presbyter celebrating the sacrament at a lesser *ecclesia* elsewhere, in token of the bishop's eucharistic presidency of his whole church. It seems that the *fermentum* was placed in the chalice by the presbyter at this point. The custom of the *fermentum*, which goes back at least to the early years of the second century, died out comparatively early in the East, probably in the fourth century; though it lasted on at Rome to the eighth or ninth century. It seems possible that when the Bread from the bishop's eucharist ceased to be brought to the Eastern presbyter to be placed in his chalice, a fragment from the Bread consecrated by the presbyter himself may have been substituted, in unthinking continuance of the old custom; and then a new symbolic meaning (in itself valuable) was afterwards found for its new form, as so often happened in liturgical history.

It was also at this point that in later times the *sanctum*, a fragment reserved from the eucharist consecrated at the last mass in that church, and brought to the altar at the offertory[3] to symbolise the perpetual identity of the sacrifice offered in the eucharist, was placed in the chalice and consumed. But this is a later custom which is not heard of before the sixth century.[4]

Having broken the Bread the bishop, in the fourth century and after, held it aloft and invited the church to communicate with the words 'Holy things unto the holy.' It is not quite easy to represent the full meaning of this in English. The Greek *hagios* and the Latin *sanctus* mean not so much

[1] *Cf.* the specimens collected by Scudamore, *Dict. of Christian Antiquities* (*ed.* Smith), I. 687 *sq.*, s.v. Fraction.

[2] *Cat.* vi. (*ed. cit. p.* 106). The whole passage is interesting as shewing that the rather elaborate form of the ceremony now found in the Eastern rites with a 'signing of the Bread with the Blood' as well as the placing of a fragment in the chalice was already fully developed at Mopsuestia, though no author before Theodore so much as mentions it. Cyril of Jerusalem does not mention the fraction at all, so that we cannot say that this particular elaboration originated at Jerusalem, but it has that sort of style. Certainly it appears to be of Syrian origin.

[3] So in Gaul. At Rome it was brought to the altar at the introit. The custom does not seem to be known in the East.

[4] The first mention of it seems to be Gregory of Tours, *de Gloria Martyrum*, 86 (*c.* A.D. 580).

what is *in itself* 'good' (which is the connotation of the English 'holy') as what 'belongs to God.' It is, for instance, in this sense that S. Paul speaks of and to his Corinthian converts as 'chosen saints' (*hagioi*) in spite of their disorders and quarrels. Perhaps the bishop's invitation can be most adequately rendered as 'The things of God for the people of God'. This places the whole emphasis where the early church placed it, on their membership of the Body of Christ and His redemption of them, and not on any sanctity of their own.

The words of this invitation are first recorded by Cyril of Jerusalem,[1] to which he says that the people replied '(There is) One holy, our Lord Jesus Christ.' The same formula of response, insisting very beautifully on the uniqueness of our Lord as the source of all human goodness, is found in the liturgies of *S. James, S. Basil, Ap. Const.* viii., *S. John Chrysostom, SS. Addai & Mari,* and the Armenian liturgy; it is also quoted by S. Gregory of Nyssa and S. Cyril of Alexandria as used in their day. But an alternative form of response quoted by Theodore of Mopsuestia,[2] 'One Holy Father, one Holy Son, one Holy Ghost' has found its way at some point into the Egyptian liturgies of *S. Mark* and *S. Cyril.*

This verbal invitation and its response do not seem to be attested at all in the West during the fourth and fifth centuries and never became general there. This suggests that the seeming reference to them in Hippolytus *On the Pascha* iii. is due to an accidental similarity of phrase and not to contemporary use of them in the third century Roman rite.[3] Like so many other details which are picturesque and touching in the developed liturgies, this is probably an innovation of the fourth century church of Jerusalem which was soon copied so widely as to appear a general tradition.

9. *The Communion*

This is the climax and completion of the rite for all pre-Nicene writers. Justin in his description says little about its details save (twice over) that communion was given by the deacons with no mention of the bishop and presbyters.[4] However this may be (and it strikes me as authentic early practice) Hippolytus insists more than once that the bishop shall if possible give the bread to all the communicants 'with his own hand', assisted by the presbyters. The presbyters also are to minister the chalice, 'or if there are not enough of them the deacons'. This may mark a rise in the liturgical importance of presbyters during the sixty years since Justin, due chiefly to the need for multiplying celebrants. But it may equally possibly be only a little mark of a special jealousy which Hippolytus the presbyter felt for the

[1] *Cat.* xxiii. 19.
[2] *Cat.* vi. (*ed. cit. p.* 110).
[3] I am glad of this opportunity of withdrawing my remarks on this point in *The Parish Communion, p.* 102, *n.* 4.
[4] *Ap.* I. 65, 67.

liturgical privileges of the order of deacons which comes out more than once in the *Apostolic Tradition*.

At all events the deacons retained a special connection with the administration of the chalice, even at Rome, and also the right to administer the reserved sacrament under the species of Bread, which is assigned to them by Justin. The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) in its eighteenth canon felt obliged to interfere energetically to forbid deacons in certain churches to administer communion to presbyters even at the public celebration, or to make their communion before presbyters and even before the bishop-celebrant. Evidently the deacons retained in some churches[1] their primitive position as the exclusive 'servants of the tables'[2] of the church. They were ordered for the future to receive their communion from the hands of the bishop or presbyters and after those orders; and not to sit among them in the *ecclesia* but to stand, as anciently, in token of their office as mere liturgical assistants to the higher orders.

From this period dates the beginning of the slow atrophy of the diaconate as a real 'order' in the church, especially in the West. Its proper functions in the eucharist came eventually to be regarded as purely ceremonial, to be discharged by a priest in deacon's vestments if a deacon were not available—an idea quite foreign to the notion of 'order' in the primitive church. The diaconate itself degenerated into a mere period of preparation for the responsibilities of the priesthood. The older idea of the diaconate as an 'order' in its own right was retained in the East, and also in the Roman Curia after it had disappeared in most Western churches. It is from local Roman practice that the Anglican 'archdeacon' (in practice now always in bishop's or presbyter's orders) derives the peculiar attributes and functions attached to his title, as the bishop's closest assistant in the administration of his diocese.

Hippolytus' fullest description of the administration of holy communion is in his account of the eucharist which followed upon the reception of baptism and confirmation by the catechumens. The new christians on that occasion received not only from the ordinary eucharistic chalice of wine and water, but also from a chalice of water only—'for a sign of the laver that the inner man . . . may receive the same ⟨cleansing⟩ as the body', as he explains—has this a connection with the 'living water' of John vii. 38? —and from a third chalice of mingled milk and honey (in sign of their entry into the 'promised land'; *cf. p.* 80, n. 1). His account of the actual communion runs thus:

'And when the bishop breaks the bread in distributing to each a fragment he shall say "The Bread of heaven in Christ Jesus." And he who receives shall answer, "Amen."

[1] Alexandria appears to have retained this custom of deacons giving communion to all both in Bread and Wine down to the fourth century.

[2] Acts vi. 2.

'And the presbyters—but if they are not enough the deacons also—shall hold the cups and stand by in good order and with reverence, first he that holds the water, second he who holds the milk, third he who holds the wine. And they who partake shall taste of each cup thrice, he who gives it saying: "In God the Father Almighty", and he who receives shall say: "Amen." "And in the Lord Jesus Christ", and he shall say: "Amen." "And in the Holy Spirit ⟨which is⟩ in the Holy Church"; and he shall say "Amen." '[1]

There are several points here. First, as to practice: We know from other evidence that communion was received standing, and that the clergy received before the laity. It seems that the ministers stood before the altar and that the communicants moved from one to another of them, instead of the ministers passing along a row of communicants as with us. The same practice is implied by S. Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century.[2]

Secondly, there are the words of administration. Those modern theorists who are fond of repeating that the so-called words of institution at the last supper are really words of administration find no support in the practice of the primitive church. On the contrary, that church in this the earliest full account of the eucharist places the words of institution as the central thing in the eucharistic prayer. For the words of administration it uses formulae which rather pointedly avoid the emphasis of the synoptic gospels on the Body and Blood of Jesus as such, in order to take up the Johannine allusion to 'that Bread which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world . . . he that eateth of this Bread *shall live for ever*'. It is another way of insisting that, as Ignatius of Antioch had put it a century before, the eucharistic Bread is 'the drug of immortality, the remedy that we should not die';[3] or as Irenaeus says 'Our bodies receiving the eucharist are no more corruptible, having the hope of eternal resurrection'.[4] We shall find this primitive insistence on 'the Spirit that quickeneth' in the eucharist[5] carried on after the fourth century chiefly in the Eastern liturgies, but with this great difference—that, in the fourth century and after, the Eastern theologians recognised in the 'Spirit' energising in the eucharist only the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity; the pre-Nicene centuries interpreted it with the New Testament rather of 'the latter Adam Who was made a quickening Spirit',[6] the Second Person of the Trinity Who gives Himself in the eucharist as on Calvary 'for the life of the world'[7]—the 'One Spirit into' which, says S. Paul, 'we have all been made to drink'.[8]

The threefold formula at each of the cups at the baptismal eucharist was presumably used on other occasions at the partaking of the eucharistic chalice alone. It forms the perfect climax of the rite, describing as it does the mutual compenetration of God and the soul in holy communion.

[1] *Ap. Trad.*, xxiii. 5 *sq.*
[2] *Cat.* xxiii. 22.
[3] Ignatius, *Eph.*, xx. 1.
[4] Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.*, iv. 18, 5.
[5] John vi. 63.
[6] 1 Cor. xv. 45.
[7] John vi. 51.
[8] 1 Cor. xii. 13.

This primitive recognition of what the communicant received in holy communion as 'Spirit' did not in any way exclude a thoroughgoing recognition of the fact that the consecrated Bread and Wine 'is (*esti*) the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus Who was made Flesh'.[1] No words could well be stronger, but they are echoed in their realism by every second century writer on the eucharist. It was by receiving His Body and Blood that one received the 'Spirit' of Christ. So Hippolytus concludes his eucharistic prayer with the petition 'that Thou wouldest grant to all Thy saints who partake (of the Body and Blood in holy communion) . . . that they may be fulfilled with holy Spirit.'[2] Or, as he explains his theory of communion more at length in another work: 'They are guilty of impiety against the Lord who give no care to prepare for the uniting of their bodies with His Body which He gave for us, that being united to Him we might be united to holy Spirit. For it was for this reason that the Word of God gave Himself wholly into a Body and was made Flesh, according to the phrase of the gospel—that since we were not able to partake of Him as Word, we might partake of Him as Body, fitting our flesh for His spiritual Flesh and our spirit to His Spirit so far as we can, that we might be established as likenesses of Christ . . . and through the commingling with the Spirit your members might become members of the Body of Christ, to be cherished in sanctity.'[3] Without entering on the very remarkable topics touched on in this passage, it is at least clear that Hippolytus' general theory is that one partakes of the 'Body' in order to receive of the 'Spirit' of Christ; and that by 'Spirit' in this context he means the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity rather than the Third. It is the energising of the heavenly and ascended Christ in His members on earth through His 'Spirit' thought of almost impersonally, which is here conceived as the 'effect' of holy communion. Making allowance for a certain clumsiness of phrasing due to an undeveloped terminology, I do not think that the modern communicant, or even theologian, really conceives the essence of the matter very differently, or that Hippolytus' statement of it would have been questioned by any one in his own day.[4]

But this primitive language was destined to be replaced by one more familiar to us in the fourth century, perhaps in the third. By then in East and West alike the words of administration had acquired a synoptic instead of a Johannine form: 'The Body of Christ', 'The Blood of Christ'—to each of which the communicant still replied, 'Amen.' Doubtless this was in part due to a closer grasp of Trinitarian theology by the church, which led to a greater insight into the Person and mission of God the Holy Ghost. The primitive and scriptural terminology which spoke of the heavenly Christ as 'Spirit' began to be discarded as confusing, or reinterpreted—not without some difficulty—as applying to the Third Person. This led again to

[1] Justin *Ap.* I. 65.
[2] *Ap. Trad.*, iv. 12.
[3] *On the Pascha*, iii.
[4] *Cf. pp.* 266 *sq.*

reinterpretations of the archaic language of the liturgical tradition by novel theological theories. But besides this transfer of meaning in terminology, there was, it appears, a certain change of thought, more subtle to trace but even more profound in its results, which had a great part in the matter. The old eschatological understanding of the eucharist as the irruption into time of the heavenly Christ, and of the eucharist as actualising an eternal redemption in the earthly church as Body of Christ even in this world, was replaced by a new insistence on the purely historical achievement of redemption within this world and time by Christ, at a particular moment and by particular actions in the past. We shall discuss this difficult matter more at length later. Here it is sufficient to have noted that such a change in the general way of regarding the eucharist does mark the period in which the words of administration underwent a change from a Johannine to a synoptic form, and that the two facts appear to have some relation to one another.

10. *The Ablutions*

The end of the communion marked the real end of the rite. But just as the preparing of the table by the spreading of a cloth at the beginning was done in the presence of the *ecclesia*, so the cleansing of the vessels at the close took place publicly before the dismissal. Just so the tidying of the room after the meal had been one of the prescribed customs at a *chabûrah* supper in judaism.[1] No detail of the rite was too homely to be accounted unfitting at the gathering of the household of God. Even after a formal corporate thanksgiving had come to be appended as a devotional 'extra' to the original rite of the eucharist in the fourth century, the ablution of the vessels in most churches retained its original position before the thanksgiving. In the Constantinopolitan rite they still remained in this position in the ninth century, where they are mentioned in the *Typicon* of the Patriarch Nicephorus.[2] Similarly in Egypt the canonical collection of Ebnassalus (Safi'l Fada 'il ibn 'Assal, thirteenth century) cites a constitution of the monophysite patriarch of Alexandria, 'Abdul Masitz (A.D. 1046–*c.* 1075) which indicates that in his time the ablution of the vessels in Egypt still took place after the communion and before the thanksgiving. But in Syria as represented by the liturgy of *Apostolic Constitutions*, Bk. viii., the custom had already come in before the end of the fourth century of not consuming the sacrament at the communion, but removing it to the sacristy (or the 'table of preparation') in the vessels before the thanksgiving, and performing the ablutions there after the service was over. After the tenth century this custom was generally followed in the East. Presumably the original reason was connected with reservation; but this removal of the elements to the sacristy for the thanksgiving does balance

[1] *Berakoth*, viii. 3 (*p.* 67).
[2] *Monumenta Jur. Eccl. Graec.*, ii. 341.

the other Syrian peculiarity of keeping the elements in the sacristy until they were actually wanted at the offertory.

The effect was the same in Syrian and non-Syrian rites alike; the sacramental elements were not upon the altar except during the vital sacramental action itself—from the offertory to the communion. Even when a thanksgiving had been appended to it, the church instinctively marked off the original apostolic core of the eucharist from all the devotional accretions which later ages have added to it in this simple but very effective way.

It must have been at this point of the rite, before the ablutions, that the faithful received some of the consecrated Bread to carry home with them for their communions on weekdays, and the deacons and acolytes received those portions which they were to convey to the absent and to the presbyteral eucharists elsewhere. But reservation in general is a subject only indirectly connected with the liturgy, and I have thrown what remarks I have to offer about it into a separate additional note.[1]

. . . . . .

Such was the pre-Nicene eucharist, a brief little rite which in practice, even with quite a number of communicants, would probably not take much longer than a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. Even of the items we have considered here it seems to me more probable that two—the *lavabo* and the Lord's prayer—are fourth century additions rather than genuinely primitive constituents of the Shape of the Liturgy, though the question is open to discussion. Yet its brevity and unimpressiveness must not blind us to the fact that the celebration of the eucharist was throughout the pre-Nicene period not only the very heart of the church's life and the staple of the individual christian's devotion, but also the perpetual object of a quite hysterical pagan suspicion, and from time to time of formidable police measures by an efficient totalitarian state. It is important from more than one point of view to understand clearly just how the mere practice of its celebration was regarded both by christians and by their opponents in this period. It will be convenient to study this in the next chapter, before going on to consider the eucharistic prayer and the inward or theological meaning of the rite.

[1] This has been published separately under the title of *A Detection of Aumbries* (Dacre Press, London 1942) and is not here reproduced.