

The Holy Communion in the Early Church

EARLY LETTERS AND TRACTS.

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IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH.

THIS Bishop of Antioch on his way to martyrdom wrote seven letters, the genuineness of which has been established by Zahn and Lightfoot. He sent these from Smyrna and Troas. As he suffered under Trajan, he cannot have perished later than 117 A.D., probably in 115 A.D.

The Lord's Supper holds a central position in his letters, and it is described in various ways. In his letter to the Ephesians (20) he speaks of "*breaking one Loaf*" (*hena arton klontes*) in connection with this service. Here we have, as in the *Didache*, the "*breaking of the Loaf*" (*he Klasis tou artou*) of Acts ii. 42. The word *Eucharist* is still used in the general sense of thanksgiving. See Ephesians 13. "Be eager to assemble more frequently for God's *thanksgiving* and for praise." The expression here "*eucharist of God*," from the order of the Greek words appears to mean the general service of thanksgiving to God. There may be an indirect allusion to the Holy Communion, as Lightfoot said. But the emphasis is on the gathering together, "for when you frequently meet together the powers of Satan are destroyed."

The Ephesians are simply directed here to have more church services, which, doubtless, would include the Communion, but not necessarily (see 1 Cor. xi. 18). In Phil. iv. the word is used of the Communion. "Be earnest in your use of *the one Eucharist*, for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, *and one cup of His Blood* unto (our) unity." (*hen poterion eis henosin tou haimatos autou*). It is also called "*Eucharist*" in Smyrnaeans (vii). "These passages in Ignatius are the earliest instances of *Eucharistia* applied to

the Holy Communion, except perhaps the "*Teaching of the Apostles*, 9," is Lightfoot's comment. We shall say more about this when dealing with Justin Martyr's references, Apol. i. 64, 65.¹

In this passage Ignatius rebukes the Philadelphians for their divisions and the act of separating from the Bishop, the Presbytery and Deacons. That is why he spoke of "One Eucharist," to mark their unity. In that undeveloped stage of Church life every small district had its own clergy. There seems to have been no common church life, no such officer as a Diocesan Bishop. The Bishop in these epistles is simply like the Rector of a parish. Furthermore, the Communion is apparently not yet separated from the Love Feast or *Agape*. In Smyrnaeans viii, he writes, "it is not permitted to baptise or to make a Love Feast (*agapen poiein*) without the Bishop."²

Here the reference appears to be to the Communion as the other sacrament is mentioned, at least the Communion must be here included in what is known as the *Agape* or Love Feast already discussed. It is possible that Ignatius wished the *Agape* to be kept more under the control of some central authority. The Deacons, he says in Trallians (21) are not "Deacons of meats and drinks" (used at the *Agape*) but of the Church of God." His use of the expression "to make an *Agape*" is not consistent with any sacrificial notion, as is seen by the attempt to render it "sacrifice an *Agape*"! but implies that it was a feast of fellowship. In Smyrnaeans 7, Zahn with Pearson translates in a strained manner, "It were expedient for them to hold a Love Feast (*agapan*)," but the verb to love (*agapan*) here seems to govern an object understood from the previous sentence, viz. "the gift of God," or, as Lightfoot renders, "to have love."³ In a number of passages Ignatius interprets the Communion spiritually after John vi. 27: "Work not for the food that perisheth," e.g., Romans 7, "I rejoice not in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life, but I want the loaf of God which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ, Who is of the

¹ Cf. Irenaeus iv. 18, 5. Clement Alex. *Paed* 11, 2. Origen c. *Celsum* viii. 57.

² Cf. Tertullian (*de virg. vel.* 9). It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church, nor to baptise nor to offer (*nec tinguere nec offerre*).

³ "To be content" or "to acquiesce," are weak findings.

seed of David, and I want as drink His Blood which is love incorruptible."¹ Here we have John vi. 33, "the Loaf of God," and the mystical potency and sense given in vi. 54, to the "flesh and the blood" of Christ, while to guard the statement from all carnal associations, he defines that "Blood" as "love incorruptible" (that never perishes). The same view is expressed in Trallians (viii). "Recover yourselves in *faith, which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love which is the Blood of Jesus Christ.*" Here again we have the spiritual teaching of John vi. 54, while at the same time the humanity of Christ is asserted against the Docetics. The following passages are evidence of the spiritual view Ignatius held of the Communion. (1) "Faith and love are everything, to which nothing is preferred." (Smyrnaeans vi). This combination is also in Ephesians xiv. "Faith and love which is the beginning and end of life. Faith is the beginning, but love is the end. The two in unity are God." Again he says "*The blood of Jesus Christ which is joy eternal and abiding.*" (Philadelphians, Inscr.). (2) "If one be not within the precincts of the Altar he is deprived of the *Bread of God*" (Eph. v), meaning that if one absents himself from the Church service he is without the *Bread of God*. This is a spiritual term for the Communion. (3) "*Breaking one loaf, which is a medicine of immortality, an antidote to death, that we may live in Jesus Christ continually.*" (Eph. 20).

Lightfoot remarks: "The reference will be to the *Agape*, more especially to the eucharistic Bread, in which the *Agape* culminated and which was the chief bond of Christian union." He refers us back to Acts ii. 46, xx. 7, II, I Cor. x. 16, "where it occurs as a synonym for celebrating the eucharistic feast, apparently in all cases in conjunction with the *Agape*." Accordingly, we have two primitive titles of the Communion, "the breaking of the loaf" and "the loaf of God" in Ignatius. And in *Smyrnaeans* vii. the Eucharist or thanksgiving is mentioned along with prayer. "They abstain from eucharist and prayer."

Against these spiritual interpretations of the Communion based on John vi. is to be set *Smyrnaeans* vii. Here the heretics or schismatics are described. "They abstain from eucharist (thanksgiving) and prayer, because they do not allow the Eucharist to be the *Flesh of Our Saviour Jesus*

¹ *agape aphihartos.*

Christ which suffered for sins, and which the Father by His goodness raised again, and they speak against the gift of God." At first sight this seems to be a material explanation of the sacrament. But circumstances alter cases. Ignatius is here contending against Docetics who denied all reality to the man Christ Jesus, and regarded His person and flesh as phantasmal or imaginary. In this very letter (C. 6) he had just said, "If the Angels do not believe in the blood of Christ they too shall be judged. The whole matter is faith and love."¹ The meaning here is that those who deny the reality of the humanity or flesh of Christ have no right to share in the Eucharist, because it implies that Christ had a real not a sham body, and do not share in it, and that the service they hold is not a valid Eucharist, because it is without the sanction of the Bishop, and because they do not assemble at the "one Altar"—the Lord Jesus Christ (*Magn.* vii.). He does not identify the Bread with the Body of Christ or the Wine with the Blood, but his controversy compelled him to lay stress upon the "flesh" and "passion," and to assert that our Lord was really man and really suffered, when speaking of the Eucharist, which (we hold) was instituted for the "continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ," in other words of His Cross and Passion. For if there is no real passion, only a phantasmal one, and no real body, only a semblance, it would follow of logical necessity that there would be no Sacrament at all. As Lightfoot says, "The Eucharist implies the reality of Christ's Flesh. To those who deny this reality it has no meaning at all, to them Christ's words of institution are false. It is in no sense the flesh of Christ." As Tertullian said, "the words 'This is My Body' meant this is 'the figure' of my Body, but if there is no Body, there is no 'figure,' i.e., no semblance when there is nothing to be a semblance of (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 40.).

One must also take into account the condensed style of Ignatius, who called the Ephesians "the Martyrs' passage (*parodos*) to God" (C. xii.) because men on their way to martyrdom had to pass through their city. The context means that those who deny that there is any representation or symbol of the flesh of Christ in the Eucharist do not partake of it. The spiritual benefits that come through Christ

¹ See Trall. 8, "the bread is faith, the wine is love."

are so deeply connected with the reality of His Passion—His Flesh that suffered for us—that those who deny the latter, i.e., that the Flesh of Christ suffered for us, cannot obtain the former. Here “the flesh which suffered for us” stands for the Christ Who suffered in human nature for us, by the figure of speech called *Synecdoche*, putting the part for the whole, as “keel” (*carina*) in Latin stands for “ship,” and “roof” (*tectum*) means “house.” Otherwise, of course, it would be an incorrect expression, as it would violate the hypostatic unity of Christ. Similarly, in his controversy with the same Docetics he said: “Taking refuge in the Gospel as in the Flesh of Jesus” (Phil. 5), that is, as containing a true account of the life of Jesus, and therefore truly representative of the humanity of Jesus, just as the Eucharist is. Accordingly, we would have a parallel to the statement, “the Eucharist is the Flesh of Christ” in the other, “the Gospel is the Flesh of Christ” (Phil. 5.), and we must therefore equate the Eucharist with the Gospel if we must be literal! But his poetical and metaphorical style is against this, e.g., he says “the new leaven which is Jesus Christ” (Mag. x.), and he calls his guards “leopards.” The spiritual meaning of the Lord’s gift, and the real sacrifice of His Life are brought out in John vi. 51—“The Bread which I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world.” There would have been no real gift, if there had not been at one time real flesh. But this the Docetics denied in the days of Ignatius, and still earlier.

Again, union with Christ is the text of Ignatius. The Eucharist is the means of such union (see Phil. 4. “*one cup of His Blood unto (our) unity*”) but without “faith which is the flesh of the Lord and without love which is the Blood of Jesus Christ” (Trall. viii.), there is no union with Christ. So he brings us back to the ethical and the spiritual. How remote the mind of Ignatius was from material things is shown by his description of the “Blood” of Christ as “love incorruptible” (Rom. vii.). This spiritual explanation of the Flesh and Blood as Faith and Love is against any materialistic interpretation of the sacrament. The two parts of the sacrament, the “Flesh” or matter, and the “Spirit” were kept distinct by Ignatius, who uses this antithesis frequently. St. Paul’s words in 1 Cor. x. 16, “the Bread which we break is it not a communion of the Body of Christ?”

proves that the position of the Docetics of a later day who denied the reality of the Body of Christ, was actually antagonistic to the principle of the Lord's Supper as a means of communion with the Divinely exalted humanity of Christ. And so, logically, Ignatius denounced the Eucharist, which the Gnostic sects held, as invalid, seeing that it was unauthorised, and their theory of Christ's humanity was unsound.

In conclusion, his use of the term "within the altar"¹ (*thusiasterion*) must be noticed. It occurs in Eph. v. (and Trall. vii.), unless one is "within the altar." The expression is based upon the arrangement of the Jewish temple and tabernacle, and is suggestive of the Court of the Congregation where the altar stood, but obviously has no reference to the holy Table, as one cannot be "within a table." Unlike the classical word for altar (*bomos*) which means a stand, a raised place, it signified "the place of sacrifice." This meaning "is supported by examples of its use as applied to the Christian Churches" (Lightfoot). The words in Phil. iv., "One Eucharist, one flesh of the Lord, one cup (for our unification) of His blood, *one altar*, as there is one bishop" emphasise the unity of the Church. Those in Magnesians vii., "hasten together, as it were to one temple, even God, and as it were to *one altar, to one Jesus Christ*," gives a spiritual sense to the expression.

Polycarp in his letter to the Philippians (4) described the "widows, a portion of the Church, as an 'altar (*thusiasterion*) of God.'" Chrysostom, on the same principle, described the Church as a "living altar" (*thusiasterion empsychon*), and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* vii. 6, 848) said "our earthly *altar* is the assembly of those who are devoted to the prayers, having as it were one common "voice and mind." The argument is that because the Church is an altar of God her prayers are sacrifices, her good actions are oblations. And the Church is an altar because the people who form it should be ideally so many altars on which their living sacrifices are offered (*Romans* xii.). The idea is a logical development of St. Paul's thought, and is inconsistent with material sacrifices. This oneness of worship and faith and organisation is the great text of Ignatius. It is stressed also in Pauline manner in Mag. 7, "one prayer, one supplication, one

¹ (*entos tou thusiasteriou.*)

mind, one hope, etc." Compare Ephesians iv. 2.ff, "One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father." It is very clear then that he who does not stand "within the Altar," which is Christ, is deprived of the "Bread (loaf) of God," which is the grace of Christ (Eph. v.) or Christ Himself.

To sum up. Ignatius is not conscious of any change in the elements of Bread and Wine. The Lord's Supper is still connected with the *Agape* or Love Feast, which would be inconsistent with any such change, and he did not identify the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ. He never speaks of consecration in this connection. The word "Eucharist" is not confined to the sacrament, being used in the general sense (so Lightfoot) of thanksgiving in Eph. xiii, "gather yourselves together for Eucharist of God and praise of God," although in Phil. iv. of the Communion. As "the Loaf of God" (Eph. v.) it is the symbol of unity, and as such is "the gift of God" (Smyrn. 7), and "the medicine of immortality" (Eph. 20). It is also the assurance of the reality of the humanity of Christ, denied by the Docetics, for otherwise the Bread and Wine would be symbols of shadows, things that never existed. But in a wider sense, faith is the flesh and love is the blood of Christ, and faith and love sustain the soul.

It is clear that Ignatius drew both his symbolical interpretation and his spiritual teaching of the Lord's Supper from John vi. Although he did not identify the consecrated bread and wine with the Body and Blood of Christ, he employed language in his perfervid zeal for the safeguarding of the reality of the Lord's humanity against the Docetic Gnostics which was used by theologians of a later age for the express purpose of this identification. We may, on the other hand, justly argue that Ignatius is the first to expound that dynamic symbolism which we claim is the sacramental teaching of the New Testament and the Early Church. At the same time we must acknowledge that he has supplied the realist school with terms, especially with his formula, "The Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ which flesh suffered for our sins" (Smyrn. 6) yet without any intention of doing so, as he was engaged in a different controversy. Roman writers, however, seize on this point and find a realist theory in him. J. Hoffmann (*Abendmahl*

p. 179) well sums up: "an identity of the elements with the flesh and blood of Christ must have been an impossibility to Ignatius, but he employs the terms "body and blood." Réville (*L'Eucharistie*, p. 36) says that he does not expressly declare that the bread is flesh, and that the cup contains the blood. He calls the Eucharist itself the flesh of Christ. He understood his language to be metaphorical. F. Loofs says it cannot be proved that he believed in an actual presence of the flesh and blood of Christ. A. Andersen maintained that the flesh and blood of Eucharist are not taught by him. Rückert finds nothing definite in him.¹ His perfervid mentality and controversy with the Docetus caused him to lay an unreal emphasis upon the Flesh of Christ, and yet he did not identify the sacred elements with the actual Body and Blood.

CLEMENT OF ROME.

There are some notes in the epistle of Clement which bear upon this service. They show us what the Church of Rome thought about it in the first century. Bishop Lightfoot dated this letter about 95 A.D., assigning the persecution it mentions to the reign of Domitian. Of the letter itself he wrote: "Very few writings of Christian or classical antiquity are so well authenticated as this letter." The following quotations have a relation to the subject, direct or indirect.

In chapter xviii: "A sacrifice to God is a contrite heart" (Ps. li, 17), and in chapter xxxv we have "the sacrifice of praise," and Christ the "high priest of our oblations." "A sacrifice of praise will glorify me, and there is a way by which I shall show to him the salvation of God" (Ps. l. 23). This is the way in which we found our salvation, Jesus Christ, "*the high priest of our offerings*" (*prophorai*) (ch. xxxvi.).

In chapter xl. we are told that the service is to be conducted as our Lord commanded, with care and in order: "We ought to do all things in order, all that the Master commanded us to perform at appointed times. The offerings (*prophorai*) and the services (*leitourgiae*), He ordered to be made with care, and not rashly or carelessly, but at stated times and seasons. He defined in His high purpose where and by whom He desires them to be performed, in order that

¹ See A. J. MacDonald, *Evangelical Doctrine of the Holy Communion*, p. 49

all things, being done holily in His good pleasure, may be acceptable to His will. Then those who make their *offerings* at the appointed occasions are both acceptable and blessed. They cannot err when following the Master's customs. For the high priest had his own services; the priests their own place, and the levites their own ministries." (This is not a list of Jewish but of Christian officials. The levites would correspond to deacons or any other subordinates).

Here he emphasises order. Everything is to be done seemly and in order, and especially in the Holy Communion. But that is quite compatible with extreme simplicity. There is to be no confusion. Each man knows his own place and observes it, so that everything is in accordance with the regular rule. He proceeds to say (C. xli): "Let each of you *give thanksgiving* to God in his own rank: without transgressing the appointed routine (canon) of service."

In this appeal for order and regularity Clement refers to the order and system of the Jews only as illustration, not to insist upon, or to indicate any correspondence between the Christian presbyters and the Jewish priests. For the Jewish priests did not recognise Christ (the high priest of *our* offerings), but in His day Annas and Caiaphas, worldly men, as their high priests. So the parallel or analogy fails in its most important point. Clement, indeed, used certain words of the Old Testament, but he found them in the New Testament in a new sense. And in that sense he used them, e.g., *offering* (*prosphora*) used by Paul three times, of alms or a collection (Acts xxiv, 17; Rom. xv. 16), of Christ's sacrifice of Himself (Eph. v. 2), and in Hebrews (five times); (2) *service* or *leitourgia* (of the fund for the poor Jews, 2 Cor. ix. 12, of faith, Phil. ii. 17, or financial help, Phil. ii. 30). Hebrews used this word of the priestly ministry of Christ (viii. 6, see ix. 21). But it is to be noted that both words were frequently employed in the Old Testament of priestly functions, but are used by St. Paul without any thought of *priestly* duty.

Clement also orders Christians to give thanks (*eucharistein*) to God. Here Lightfoot remarks (p. 130) "The allusion is here plainly to the public services of the Church where order had been violated." This *eucharistia* will refer chiefly, though not solely, to the principal act of Christian thanksgiving, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which at a

later date was almost exclusively termed *eucharistia*. The usage of Clement is probably midway between that of St. Paul, where no such appropriation of the term appears (e.g., 1 Cor. xiv. 16 ; 2 Cor. ix. 11, 12 ; Phil. iv. 6 ; 1 Tim. xi. 1, etc.) and that of the Ignatian epistles, Phil. iv, Smyrn. vii, and of Justin, Apology i. 66, 97, *Dialogue* 41. 26, where it is so applied, but not exclusively.

No argument regarding Clement's views of the Christian Ministry can be founded upon the Jewish Ministry and its officials. It only served him as illustration.

The next question is, did Clement use the term "offerings" of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, or of our thanksgiving, alms, praise and offering of ourselves? The answer is to be found in our first quotation from chapter xviii, "a sacrifice of praise." This is the Christian Sacrifice, shown in thanksgiving, service and charity especially. Furthermore, he calls Christ, as the writer to the Hebrews does (ii. 7, iii. 1, iv. 15), the "High Priest of *our* offerings," and therefore he would not regard Him as being offered by us in that or any service. The High Priest always was offerer and was not offered. This is made still plainer in chapter xlv: "Our sins will be great if we cast out from the episcopate those presbyters who have blamelessly and holily *offered the gifts (dora)*." This and the previous passages in which sacrifice is mentioned, Lightfoot illustrated by Heb. xiii. 15, 16: "Through Him then (our high priest Jesus, iv. 11, 12) let us offer a sacrifice of praise . . . Benevolence and distribution forget not, for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased." To that epistle Clement is largely indebted elsewhere. The sacrifices, offerings and gifts, therefore, are the prayers and thanksgiving, the alms, the material offerings, whether in Church or Agape. Clement does not mention bread or wine, body or blood, nor does he quote "This do, etc."

Lightfoot (p. 134) gives quotations of Clement from the *Apostolical Constitutions* ii. 25, 27, 34, 53, the last reading—"The prayer and thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) of each person is a gift (*doron*) to God." These passages show in what sense the presbyters might be said to "offer the gifts." They led the prayers and thanksgiving of the congregation; they presented the alms and contributions to God, and asked His blessing on them in the name of the whole body." Clement

is particular that all these things should be done at the right time, in the right way, and by the right person. On the first day of the week the collections were made (1 Cor. xvi. 2) and the presbyters received them. As to the procedure in the service we have it stated in Justin, *Apol.* i. 65, "The president having finished the prayers and the thanksgiving, the people say Amen." Dr. Pusey did not find any reference to the Real Presence in this epistle, which he does not notice.

Lightfoot does not find in this letter any parallel between the orders of the Jewish priesthood and the Christian. He holds that presbyter and bishop are synonymous terms in Clement. (They are distinguished some years later by Ignatius.) This fact alone shows the simplicity as well as regularity of the service in the days of Clement.

THE "TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES" (DIDACHE).

We now come to the "Teaching of the Apostles" (*Didaché*). As Clement of Alexandria¹ used this tract it would appear to be an early document. A well-known scholar² suggests a date before or about 100 A.D. The very primitive character of the Church life and organisation in which the episcopate is still undeveloped supports this view in some degree. In C. xv. an order is given about the election of bishops and deacons, the local officials of the Church as distinguished from the "apostles and prophets," C. x. the itinerating ministers. Dr. Gwatkin assigns it to a very early age of Church government before the rise of the monarchical episcopate. Bishop Lightfoot also regarded the terms Bishop and Presbyter as synonymous in the *Didache*. The passages on the "Eucharist," as it is called, are absolutely free from all material and pagan (hellenistic) associations and conceptions. In chapter ix. we have: "As regards the Eucharist (*eucharistia*) give thanks thus: First for the cup: 'We thank Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of Thy son David, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus Thy Son. Thine is the glory for ever.' Then as regards the broken bread: 'We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and the knowledge which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus Thy Child. Thine be the glory for ever.' Then

¹ *Journal Theol. Studies*, July 23, 1922, by present writer.

² *Journal Theol. Studies*, April, 1921. V. Bartlett, D.D.

followed the prayer, "As this broken bread (*Klasma*, cf. Jn. 6. 12f.) was scattered upon the mountains, and when gathered together became one, so may thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom, for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever." After this the baptised ate and drank, and after they "*had been satisfied*" (*meta to emplesthenai*) there was another thanksgiving and supplication.

This expression "had been satisfied" cannot refer to the Eucharist, but shows that the *Agape* or Love Feast was combined with it, as in 1 Cor. x and xi., just as the *kiddush* (the Sanctification) preceded the Passover feast.¹ The thanksgivings here resemble the *Eulogiae* or Blessings of the Passover, in which thanks are given for the fruits of the earth. The thanksgiving "after they had been satisfied" is as follows: "We give thanks, Holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast caused to dwell in our hearts; for knowledge, faith and immortality, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus Thy Child. To Thee be glory for ever. It is Thou, Almighty Master, who didst create all things for the glory of Thy name, and didst give to men food and drink to enjoy in order that they might render thanks to Thee, but didst graciously give to us *spiritual food* and drink, and eternal life through Thy Son."

We shall find this spiritual food (*pneumatike trophe*) again in Athanasius. The *Didache* is so far from dwelling on carnal feeding and drinking that it looks beyond such, as Sanday well said,² to "the spiritual food and drink," and to the eternal life bestowed through the Son. And when it speaks of the "Holy vine of David," there is at least an allusion to the Jewish doctrine of the Messiah, if not directly to the "Johannean allegory of the Vine." There is a quaint allusion to the sources of both wine and bread; the Vine which was a symbol of the Vine of David, the Messiah, and the seed

¹ Hastings H.D.B. ii. 637.

² Lightfoot's view of these passages is that the *Agape* and the Eucharist are here combined, the *Agape* coming first, as in the Lord's Supper, and in 1 Cor. xi. Ermoni sees the whole reference to the *Agape*, Batiffol to the Lord's Supper. Others to both. Mr. Box believes that certain words fell out. But this is not obvious. Another expression for the *Agape* is in this tract, e.g. xi. 9. "A prophet who by the spirit appoints a *table* (*trapeza*) shall not eat of it." In Igratius the Communion and the *Agape* are combined. In Tertullian we have the Love Feast by itself (*Apol.* c. 39).

scattered upon the hills which was gathered together into bread, a symbol of the gathering together of the Church. The thanksgiving is altogether symbolical, and, instead of dwelling on any change in the elements in the service, discusses the process by which the grape and the seed corn became changed into the wine and bread, and concludes by calling them "spiritual food and drink."

Furthermore, we find here directions for Sunday worship. In C. 14, "Coming together on the Lord's day, break a loaf, and give thanks, after confessing your sins that your *sacrifice* (thusia) may be pure." Here the *sacrifice* is the "living sacrifice" (Romans xii) or offering of the bodies of the worshippers, their "spiritual service." No one who has any dispute with his brother shall come to it "lest your sacrifice be polluted." This would be absolutely inconsistent with the offering of Christ *upon the altar* by priestly consecration, or as a repetition of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, for such could not be defiled by the presence of people who were not friendly with one another. Whereas, want of harmony among themselves would spoil their own offering of themselves to God.

In C. xv. he used the expression "for they (the bishops, presbyters, and deacons) *perform the service*" of the prophets and teachers, which is used of the work of the Levite priests in the Old Testament¹ and in Hebrews x. 11; but always in the applied sense of the sacrifice of almsgiving and faith by St. Paul.² The writer of this tract in connection with the "Pure Sacrifice" quotes Malachi i. 11, which, in the original Hebrew, referred to the *Minchah* or meal offering. It was from that passage that the notion of presenting the bread and wine as an oblation was taken. But the emphasis is laid by this writer on *pure* which, of course, being an ethical quality cannot be an attribute of matter. And so one cannot press the connection of the Sacrament with the meal offering, which was partly burnt and partly eaten by priests, and did not include wine, but oil and frankincense (Lev. ii. 2) and was the concomitant of animal sacrifices (Num. xv. 4). Accordingly, the "sacrifice" of Malachi i. 11 is in no sense a prototype of the Bread and Wine of the communion, there being a special wine offering, which was also used of other

¹ Num. viii. 22. (*leitourgein leitourgian*, "liturgise the liturgy.")

² 2 Cor. ix. 12; Phil. ii. 17, 30; Rom. 15. 27.

sacrifices, but was poured out as a libation. Through ignorance of this Hebrew ritual and language, some of the early Greek Fathers saw in the communion service a presentation of the first fruits to God. And this idea was helped forward by their understanding "pure" sacrifice to be one "unbloody," not animal. The "pure sacrifice," however, if understood in the New Testament sense, is the offering not of a ceremonially clean sacrifice, but of a pure conscience, a pure heart, of which nothing can take the place, and than which nothing less is demanded.

This writer's terms "break a loaf" (*Klasate artou*) C. 14, and the broken loaf (*Klasma*) C. 9 are connected with the early expression for the communion, "the breaking of the Loaf" (*Klasis tou artou*) Acts ii. 42, 46, and incidentally confirm the early date of this document by the semi-domestic character of the Eucharistic meal. The order in C. xi. 9, "The *Prophet* who appoints a *table* (*trapeza*) shall not eat of it" is absolutely inconsistent with any priestly work, even if it refers here to the *Agape* which was followed in those days by the communion. Moreover, prophets were allowed to make as many thanksgivings as they desired (C.x. *eucharistein hosa thelousi*), which refers to prayer meetings, not to the Holy Communion. The *Didache* seems to indicate a fellowship meal of thanksgiving. It does not mention wine, nor the words of institution. In it man does not offer gifts to God, but thanksgiving for gifts received. Some writers, Nock and Andersen, deny that there is any reference to the Eucharist in this tract. Others, Rauschen (R.C.), F. Loofs, Goguel and Réville (Protestants)¹ deny there is any trace of the Real Presence in it. Dr. Pusey, in his work on that subject, passes over it in silence. The meal had a religious character. Only the baptised could partake of it, and no one who had a dispute with his neighbours was permitted to do so, until reconciled. It is more of the nature of a holy communion of the baptised than of a sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. The cup symbolises the fulfilment of prophecy in the line of David, the bread broken symbolises, not the broken Body of Christ, but the life and knowledge imparted by Him, and the unity of the Church.

¹ See *Evangelical Doctrine of Holy Communion*, A. J. Macdonald, p. 43, for references.