

The Didache or Teaching of the Apostles (*ca.* 50-120)

Translated by J. B. Lightfoot

Baptism

7:1 But concerning baptism, thus shall ye baptize.

7:2 Having first recited all these things [*the "two ways" of chs. 1-6*], baptize {in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit} in living (running) water.

7:3 But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water;

7:4 and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm.

7:5 But if thou hast neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

7:6 But before the baptism let him that baptizeth and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able;

7:7 and thou shalt order him that is baptized to fast a day or two before.

Fasting

8:1 And let not your fastings be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and the fifth day of the week;

8:2 but do ye keep your fast on the fourth and on the preparation (the sixth) day.

Prayer

8:3 Neither pray ye {as the hypocrites,} but as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, {thus pray ye.

8:4 Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;

8:5 Thy kingdom come;

8:6 Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth;

8:7 give us this day our daily bread;

8:8 and forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors;

8:9 and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one;}

8:10 for Thine is the power and the glory for ever and ever.

8:11 Three times in the day pray ye so.

Eucharist

9:1 But as touching the eucharistic thanksgiving give ye thanks thus.

Prayer Over the Cup

9:2 First, as regards the cup:

9:3 We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the holy vine of Thy son David, which Thou madest known unto us through Thy Son Jesus;

9:4 Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

Prayer Over the Bread

9:5 Then as regards the broken bread:

9:6 We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known unto us through Thy Son Jesus;

9:7 Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

9:8 As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom;

9:9 for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

Recipients of the Eucharist

9:10 But let no one eat or drink of this eucharistic thanksgiving, but they that have been baptized into the name of the Lord;

9:11 for concerning this also the Lord hath said:

9:12 {Give not that which is holy to the dogs.}

Prayer After Communion

10:1 And after ye are satisfied thus give ye thanks:

10:2 We give Thee thanks, Holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which Thou hast made known unto us through Thy Son Jesus;

10:3 Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

10:4 Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for Thy name's sake, and didst give food and drink unto men for enjoyment, that they might render thanks to Thee;

10:5 but didst bestow upon us spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy Son.

10:6 Before all things we give Thee thanks that Thou art powerful;

10:7 Thine is the glory for ever and ever.

10:8 Remember, Lord, Thy Church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Thy love;

10:9 and {gather it together from the four winds}--even the Church which has been sanctified--into Thy kingdom which Thou hast prepared for it;

10:10 for Thine is the power and the glory for ever and ever.

10:11 May grace come and may this world pass away.

10:12 Hosanna to the God of David.

10:13 If any man is holy, let him come;

10:14 if any man is not, let him repent. Maran Atha. Amen.

10:15 But permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire.

Lord's Day Worship

14:1 And on the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.

14:2 And let no man, having his dispute with his fellow, join your assembly until they have been reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled;

14:3 for this sacrifice it is that was spoken of by the Lord;

14:4 {In every place and at every time offer Me a pure sacrifice;

14:5 for I am a great king, saith the Lord and My name is wonderful among the nations.}

Pliny the Younger to Trajan (*ca.* 112)

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food--but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

Justin Martyr's *First Apology* (ca. 155)

Chapter 61 – Christian Baptism

I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ; lest, if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all. And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins, is declared by Esaias the prophet, as I wrote above; he thus speaks: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; learn to do well; judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow: and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow. But if ye refuse and rebel, the sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

And for this [rite] we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone. For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God; and if any one dare to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness. And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed.

Chapter 65 – Administration of the Sacraments

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to *genoito* [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

Chapter 66 – Of the Eucharist

And this food is called among us Eukaristia [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made

flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.

Chapter 67 – Weekly Worship of the Christians

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

Tertullian of Carthage

Apology, ch. 39 (ca. 197)

I shall at once go on, then, to exhibit the peculiarities of the Christian society, that, as I have refuted the evil charged against it, I may point out its positive good. We are a body knit together as such by a common religious profession, by unity of discipline, and by the bond of a common hope.

Prayer

We meet together as an assembly and congregation, that, offering up prayer to God as with united force, we may wrestle with Him in our supplications. This violence God delights in. We pray, too, for the emperors, for their ministers and for all in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace, for the delay of the final consummation.

Scripture

We assemble to read our sacred writings, if any peculiarity of the times makes either forewarning or reminiscence needful. However it be in that respect, with the sacred words we nourish our faith, we animate our hope, we make our confidence more steadfast; and no less by inculcations of God's precepts we confirm good habits. In the same place also exhortations are made, rebukes and sacred censures are administered. For with a great gravity is the work of judging carried on among us, as befits those who feel assured that they are in the sight of God; and you have the most notable example of judgment to come when any one has sinned so grievously as to require his severance from us in prayer, in the congregation and in all sacred intercourse. The tried men of our elders preside over us, obtaining that honour not by purchase, but by established character.

Offering

There is no buying and selling of any sort in the things of God. Though we have our treasure-chest, it is not made up of purchase-money, as of a religion that has its price. On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are, as it were, piety's deposit fund. For they are not taken thence and spent on feasts, and drinking-bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession...

Eucharist

Yet about the modest supper-room of the Christians alone a great ado is made. Our feast explains itself by its name. The Greeks call it *agape*, i.e., affection. Whatever it costs, our outlay in the name of piety is gain, since with the good things of the feast we benefit the needy; not as it is with you, do parasites aspire to the glory of satisfying their licentious propensities, selling themselves for a belly-feast to all disgraceful treatment;--but as it is with God himself, a peculiar respect is shown to the lowly. If the object of our feast be good, in the light of that consider its further regulations. As it is an act of religious service, it permits no vileness or immodesty. The participants, before reclining, taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the cravings of hunger; as much is drunk as befits the chaste. They say it is enough, as those who remember that even during the night they have to worship God; they talk as those who know that the Lord is one of their auditors. After manual ablution, and the bringing in of lights, each is asked to stand forth and sing, as he can, a hymn to God, either one from the holy Scriptures or one of his own composing;--a proof of the measure of our drinking. As the feast commenced with prayer, so with prayer it is closed. We go from it, not like troops of mischief-doers, nor bands of vagabonds, nor to break out into licentious acts, but to have as much care of our modesty and chastity as if we had been at a school of virtue rather than a banquet.

Give the congregation of the Christians its due, and hold it unlawful, if it is like assemblies of the illicit sort: by all means let it be condemned, if any complaint can be validly laid against it, such as lies against secret factions. But who has ever suffered harm from our assemblies? We are in our congregations

just what we are when separated from each other; we are as a community what we are individuals; we injure nobody, we trouble nobody. When the upright, when the virtuous meet together, when the pious, when the pure assemble in congregation, you ought not to call that a faction, but a curia-- [i.e., the court of God.]

The Liturgy of the Ancient Church

Based on *The Didache*, chs. 7, 9, 10, 14 & Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chs. 61, 65, 66, 67

The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

“...in living (running) water. But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water; and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Prayers

“...for ourselves, for the baptized person, and for all others in every place...”

The Word

Scripture Reading(s)

“...the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits...”

Sermon

Prayer

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Kiss of Peace

Confession

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

Presentation of Bread and Wine

Prayer

“...gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands.”

For the Cup:

“We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the holy vine of Thy son David, which Thou madest known unto us through Thy Son Jesus; Thine is the glory for ever and ever.”

For the Bread:

“We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known unto us through Thy Son Jesus; Thine is the glory for ever and ever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being 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 and ever.”

Congregational “Amen”

Distribution

¶ *“...no one is allowed to partake but the man 1) who believes that the things which we teach are true, 2) and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and 3) who is so living as Christ has enjoined.”*

Prayer

“We give Thee thanks, Holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which Thou hast made known unto us through Thy Son Jesus; Thine is the glory for ever and ever. Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for Thy name’s sake, and didst give food and drink unto men for enjoyment, that they might render thanks to Thee; but didst bestow upon us spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy Son. Before all things we give Thee thanks that Thou art powerful; Thine is the glory for ever and ever. Remember, Lord, Thy Church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Thy love; and {gather it together from the four winds} – even the Church which has been sanctified – into Thy kingdom which Thou hast prepared for it; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever and ever. May grace come and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If any man is holy, let him come; if any man is not, let him repent. Maran Atha. Amen.”

¶ *But permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire.*

Offering

Strasbourg Liturgy (1539)¹

Public Confession of Sins

Make confession to God the Lord, and let everyone acknowledge with me his sin and iniquity:

Almighty, eternal God and Father, we confess and acknowledge unto You that we were conceived in unrighteousness and are full of sin and transgression in all our life. We do not fully believe Your Word nor follow Your holy commandments. Remember Your goodness, we beseech You, and for Your Name's sake be gracious unto us, and forgive us our iniquity which, alas, is great Amen.

Public Absolution of Sins

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Tim. 1:15)

Let everyone, with St. Paul, truly acknowledge this in his heart and believe in Christ. Thus, in His name, I proclaim unto you the forgiveness of all your sins, and declare you to be loosed of them on earth, that you be loosed of them also in heaven, in eternity. Amen.

Psalm/Hymn

Prayer for Illumination

The Lord be with you. Let us pray:

Almighty, gracious Father, forasmuch as our whole salvation depends upon our true understanding of Your holy Word, grant to all of us that our hearts, being freed from worldly affairs, may hear and apprehend Your holy Word with all diligence and faith, that we may rightly understand Your gracious will, cherish it, and live by it with all earnestness, to Your praise and honor; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Psalm/Hymn

¹ From Baird Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 167-181.

Scripture Lesson

Sermon

Singing of the Apostles' Creed

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord be with you. Let us pray:

Almighty, merciful God and Father, You who has promised us through Your Son that whatsoever we ask of You in His name You will grant unto us, and has commanded us through Your Spirit to pray for those in authority and for all men: We do heartily beseech You through Jesus Christ, Your most-beloved Son our Savior, to enlighten with the knowledge of Your Gospel the hearts of our lord Emperor and King, all princes and nobles, and the magistrates and ruling body of this city, that they and all those in power may acknowledge You as their sovereign and true Lord, serve You with fear and trembling, and rule over us, who are the work of Your hand and the sheep of Your pasture, according to Your will and good pleasure.

Grant that all men everywhere may come to the knowledge of the truth. Especially to this congregation, being assembled in Your name, send forth Your Holy Spirit, the Master and Teacher, who may write Your law upon our hearts, take away our blindness, and lead us to recognize our sin, which otherwise, alas, is death, and its baseness and shame is concealed. Make it vivid to us, O Lord, and enlighten our eyes that we may see the truth and recognize indeed that there is nothing in us except mere sin, death, hell and the deserved wrath of God. So, may we hunger and thirst after the rich well-spring of Your goodness and grace, and gratefully accept the same which You have delivered to us through Your only-begotten Son, who, having become like unto men and us poor sinners, suffered and died and rose from the dead, in order that He may save us from sin, death, and hell, and bring us to the resurrection and our inheritance of the Kingdom of God.

And grant us, O Lord and Father, that with true faith we may keep this Supper of Your dear Son, our Lord Jesus, as He has ordained it, so that we truly receive and enjoy the true communion of His body and blood, of our Savior Himself, who is the only saving bread of heaven. In this holy sacrament, He wishes to offer and give Himself so that He may live in

us, and we in Him, being members of His body and serving You fruitfully in every way to the common edification of Your Church, being set free from every passion of our evil, corrupted flesh, from all anger, vexation, envy, hatred, selfishness, lewdness, unchastity, and what more there may be of the damned work of the flesh: to the end that, by all means, we as Your obedient children may ever lift up our hearts and souls unto You in true childlike trust, and always call upon You, saying as our only Master and Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Instruction on the Holy Supper

The first: that, since the Lord now wishes to communicate His body and blood to us, we should reflect upon the fact that our body and blood – which means, our whole nature – are corrupted to all evil and thus to eternal death, so that they of themselves may nevermore share in the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15).

The second: that to deliver us from such corruption, the eternal Word of God became flesh, so that there might be a holy flesh and blood: this is to say, a truly divine man, through whom the flesh and blood of us all would be restored and sanctified. And this happens as we truly eat and drink of His body and blood.

The third: that the Lord truly offers and gives His holy and sanctifying body and blood to us in the Holy Supper, with the visible things of bread and wine, through the ministry of the Church, as His holy Word declares: “Take and eat, this is My body which is given for you; drink all of it, this is My blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sin.” And we must accept this Word of the Lord with simple faith, and doubt not that He, the Lord Himself, is in the midst of us through the external ministry of the Church which He Himself has ordained for that purpose. Such does He proclaim to us with His own words: that the bread which we break may truly be, even for us, the communion of His body, and the cup with which we give thanks, the communion of His blood (1 Cor. 10). But we must always diligently consider why the Lord thus imparts to us His holy, sanctifying communion in the

holy sacrament: namely, that He may ever more live in us, and that we may be one body in Him, our Head, even as we all partake here of one bread (1 Cor. 10).

The fourth: that in this action, we keep the Lord's memorial and feast with true devotion and thankfulness, so that we always laud and praise Him in all our words and deeds, yea with our whole life, for all His benefits: for His Incarnation and bitter death whereby He has paid for our sin; for this blessed communion of His body and blood; that is, for Himself entire, who is true God and man, through whom alone we obtain the true and blessed life both here and in eternity.

The Words of Institution

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "this cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (1 Cor. 11:23-25)

Believe in the Lord, and give eternal praise and thanks unto Him!

Distribution of the Elements

Remember, believe and proclaim that Christ the Lord has died for you.

Psalm/Hymn

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. Let us pray:

Grant unto us, O heavenly Father, that the remembrance of our redemption may never leave our hearts, but that we may walk in Christ, the Light of the world, far removed from our foolish reason and blind wills, which are vain and injurious darkness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, heavenly Father, we give You eternal praise and thanks that You have been so gracious unto us poor sinners, having drawn us to Your Son our Lord Jesus, whom You have delivered to death for us and given to be our nourishment and our dwelling unto eternal life. Grant that we may never relinquish these things from our hearts, but ever grow

and increase in faith to You, which, through love, is effective of all good works. And so may our whole life be devoted to Your praise and the edification of our neighbor; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance, and give you peace. Amen. (Num. 6:24-26)

Committal

Depart! The Spirit of the Lord go with you unto eternal life! Amen.

The Form of Church Prayers and Hymns with the Manner of Administering the Sacraments and Consecrating Marriage According to the Custom of the Ancient Church

¶ *On working days, the Minister frames the sort of exhortation to prayer which may seem suitable to him, adapting it to the times and to the topic of his sermon.*

¶ *On Sunday morning [Strasbourg: and on the day of prayers], the following form is generally used.*

Invocation

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth. Amen.

Confession

My brethren, let each of you present himself before the face of the Lord, and confess his faults and sins, following my words in his heart:

O Lord God, eternal and almighty Father, we confess and sincerely acknowledge before Your holy Majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do evil, incapable of any good, and that in our depravity we transgress Your holy commandments without end or ceasing; therefore we purchase for ourselves, through Your righteous judgment, our ruin and perdition. Nevertheless, O Lord, we are grieved that we have offended You, and we condemn ourselves and our sins with true repentance, beseeching Your grace to relieve our distress. O God and Father, most gracious and full of compassion, have mercy upon us in the name of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And as You do blot out our sins and stains, magnify and increase in us day by day the grace of Your Holy Spirit; that as we acknowledge our unrighteousness with all our heart, we may be moved by that sorrow which shall bring forth true repentance in us, mortifying all our sins, and producing in us the fruits of righteousness and innocence which are pleasing to You, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

¶ *Now the Minister delivers some word of Scripture to console the conscience; and then he pronounces the Absolution in this manner:*

Let each of you truly acknowledge that he is a sinner, humbling himself before God, and believe that the heavenly Father wills to be gracious unto him in Jesus Christ.

To all those that repent in this way, and look to Jesus Christ for their salvation, I declare that the absolution of sins is effected, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Singing of the First Table of Commandments

¶ *Now the congregation sings the first table of the Commandments, after which the Minister says:*

Collect

The Lord be with us. Let us pray to the Lord:

Heavenly Father, full of goodness and grace, as You are pleased to declare Your holy will unto Your poor servants, and to instruct them in the righteousness of Your law, grant that it may also be inscribed and impressed upon our hearts in such a way, that in all our life we may endeavor to serve and obey none beside You. Neither impute to us at all the transgressions which we have committed against Your law: that, perceiving Your manifold grace upon us in such abundance, we may have cause to praise and glorify You through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Singing of the Second Table of God's Commandments

¶ *While the Congregation sings the rest of the Commandments, the Minister goes into the pulpit; and then he offers prayers of the type which follows:*

Strasbourg

Prayer for Illumination

Let us call upon our Heavenly Father, Father of all goodness and mercy, beseeching Him to cast the eye of His clemency upon us, His poor servants, neither impute to us the many faults and offences which we have committed, provoking His wrath against us. But as we look into the face of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom He has appointed Mediator between Himself and us, let us beseech Him, in whom is all fullness of wisdom and light, to vouchsafe to guide us by His Holy Spirit into the true understanding of His holy doctrine, making it productive in us of all the fruits of righteousness: to the glory and exaltation of His name, and to the instruction and edification of His Church. And let us pray unto Him in the name and favor of His well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, as He has taught us to pray, saying: Our Father, who art in heaven...

¶ *Or:*

Almighty and gracious Father, since our whole salvation stands in our knowledge of your Holy Word, strengthen us now by your Holy Spirit that our hearts may be set free from all worldly thoughts and attachments of the flesh, so that we may hear and receive that same Word, and, recognizing your gracious will for us, may love and serve you with earnest delight, praising and glorifying you in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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¶ *That doen, a Psalm is sung by the Congregation. Then the Minister commences again to pray, beseeching God for the grace of his Holy Spirit, that his Word may be faithfully expounded to the honor of his name and the edification of the Church, and be received with such humility and obedience which it deserves. The form is left to the discretion of the Minister.*

Psalm

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Lesson

Sermon

Pastoral Prayer

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have promised to grant our requests which we make unto You in the name of Your well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord: by whose teaching and that of His apostles we have also been taught to gather together in His name, with the promise that He will be in the midst of us, and will be our intercessor with You, to obtain all those things for which we agree to ask on earth.

First we have Your commandment to **pray for those whom You have established over us as rulers** and governors; and then, for all the needs of Your people, and indeed of all mankind. Wherefore, with trust in Your holy doctrine and promises, and now especially that we are gathered here before Your face and in the name of Your Son, our Lord Jesus, we do heartily beseech You, our gracious God and Father, in the name of our only Savior and Mediator, to grant to us the free pardon of our faults and offenses through Your infinite mercy, and to draw and lift up our thoughts and desires unto You in such way that we may be able to call upon You will all our heart, yea agreeably to Your good pleasure and only-reasonable will.

Wherefore we pray, O heavenly Father, for all princes and lords, Your servants, to whom You have entrusted the administration of Your justice, and especially for the magistrates of this city. May it please You to impart to them Your Spirit, who alone is good and truly sovereign, and daily establish them in the same, that with true faith they may acknowledge Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, to be King of kings and Lord of lords, as You have given Him all power in heaven and earth. May they seek to serve Him and to exalt His kingdom in their government, guiding and ruling their subjects, who are the work of Your hands and the sheep of Your pasture, in accordance with Your good pleasure. So may all of us both here and throughout the earth, being kept in perfect peace and quietness, serve You in all godliness and virtue, and being delivered and protected from the fear of our enemies, give praise unto You all the days of our life.

We pray also, O faithful Father and Savior, for **all those whom You have ordained pastors** of Your faithful people, to whom You have entrusted the care of souls and the ministry of the holy Gospel. Direct and guide them by the Holy Spirit, that they may be found faithful and loyal ministers of Your glory, having but one goal: that all the poor, wandering, and lost sheep be gathered and restored to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd and Prince of bishops, so that they may grow and increase in Him daily unto all righteousness and holiness. Will You, on the contrary, deliver all the churches from the mouths of ravening wolves and from all mercenaries who seek their own ambition or profit, but never the exaltation of Your holy name alone, nor the salvation of Your flock.

We pray now, O most gracious and merciful Father, for **all men everywhere**. As it is Your holy will to be acknowledged the Savior of the whole world, through the redemption wrought by Your Son Jesus Christ, grant that those who are still estranged from the knowledge of Him, being in the darkness and captivity of error and ignorance, may be brought by the illumination of Your Holy Spirit and the preaching of Your Gospel to the straight way of salvation, which is to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. Grant that those whom You have already visited with Your grace and enlightened with the knowledge of Your Word may grow in goodness day by day, enriched by Your spiritual blessings: so that all together we may worship You with one heart and one voice, giving honor and reverence to Your Son Jesus Christ, our Master, King, and Lawgiver.

Likewise, O God of all comfort, we commend unto You all **those whom You do visit and chasten with cross and tribulation**, whether by poverty, prison, sickness, or banishment, or any other misery of the body or affliction of the spirit. Enable them to perceive and understand Your fatherly affection which You do chasten them unto their correction, that they may turn unto You with their whole heart, and, having turned, receive full consolation and deliverance from every ill.

Finally, O God and Father, grant also to **those who are gathered here** in the name of Your Son Jesus, to hear His Word and keep His holy Supper, that we may acknowledge truly, without hypocrisy, what perdition is ours by nature, what condemnation we deserve and heap upon ourselves from day to day by our unhappy and disordered life. Wherefore, seeing that there is nothing of good in us and that our flesh and blood cannot inherit Your kingdom, may we yield ourselves completely, with all our love and steadfast faith, to Your dear Son, our Lord, the only Savior and Redeemer:

¶ *What concludes this prayer is a long paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer*

To the end that He, dwelling in us, may mortify our old Adam, renewing us for a better life, by which Your name, according as it is holy and worthy, may be exalted and glorified everywhere and in all places, and that we all creatures may give You true and perfect obedience, even as Your angels and heavenly messengers have no desire but to fulfill Your commandments. Thus may Your will be done without any contradiction, and all men apply themselves to serve and please You, renouncing their own will and all the desires of their flesh. In this manner may You have lordship and dominion over us all, and may we learn more and more each day to submit and subject ourselves to Your majesty. In such a way may You be King and Ruler over all the earth, guiding Your people by the scepter of Your Word and the power of Your Spirit, confounding Your enemies by the might of Your truth and righteousness. And thus may every power and principality which stands against Your glory be destroyed and abolished day by day, till the fulfillment of Your kingdom be manifest, when You shall appear in judgment.

Grant that we who walk in the love and fear of Your name may be nourished by Your goodness; and supply us with all things necessary and expedient to eat our bread in peace. Then, seeing that You care for us, we may better acknowledge You as our Father and await all good gifts from Your hand, withdrawing our trust from all creatures, to place it entirely in You and Your goodness.

And since in this mortal life we are poor sinners, so full of weakness that we fail continually and stray from the right way, may it please You to pardon our faults by which we are beholden to Your judgment; and through that remission, deliver us from the obligation of eternal death in which we stand. Be pleased, therefore, to turn aside Your wrath from us, neither impute to us the iniquity which is in us; even as we, by reason of Your commandment, forget the injuries done to us, and instead of seeking vengeance, solicit the good for our enemies.

Finally, may it please You to sustain us by Your power for the time to come, that we may not stumble because of the weakness of our flesh. And especially as we of ourselves are so frail that we are not able to stand fast for a single moment, while, on the other hand, we are continually beset and assailed by so many

enemies – the devil, the world, sin and our own flesh never ceasing to make war upon us – will You strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit and arm us with Your grace, that we may be able to resist all temptations firmly, and persevere in this spiritual battle until we shall attain full victory, to triumph at last in Your kingdom with our Captain and Protector, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ *It is proper to observe that on the Sunday prior to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the following admonitions are made to the people; first, that each person prepare and dispose himself to receive it worthily and with such reverence that it deserves; second, that children may certainly not be brought forward unless they are well instructed and have made profession of their faith in the church; third, that if strangers are there who may still be untaught and ignorant, they proceed to present themselves for private instruction. On the day of the Lord's Supper, the Minister touches upon it in the conclusion of his Sermon, or better, if there is occasion, he preaches the whole Sermon about it, in order to explain to the people what our Lord wishes to say and signify by this mystery, and in what way it behooves us to receive it.*

Singing of the Apostles' Creed

Prayer of Consecration

Inasmuch as we have made confession of our faith to testify that we are the children of God, hoping therefore that He will take heed of us as a gracious Father, let us pray to Him, saying:

Heavenly Father, full of all goodness and mercy, as our Lord Jesus Christ has not only offered His body and blood once on the cross for the remission of our sins, but also desires to impart them to us as our nourishment unto everlasting life, we beseech You to grant us this grace: that we may receive at His hands such a great gift and benefit with true sincerity of heart and with ardent zeal. In steadfast faith may we receive His body and blood, yea Christ Himself entire, who, being true God and true man, is truly the holy bread of heaven which gives us life. So may we live no longer in ourselves, after our nature which is entirely corrupt and vicious, but may He live in us and lead us to the life that is holy, blessed and everlasting: whereby we may truly become partakers of the new and eternal testament, the covenant of grace, assured that it is Your good pleasure to be our gracious Father forever, never reckoning our faults against us, and to provide for us, as Your well-beloved children and heirs, all our needs both of soul and body. Thus may we render praise and thanks unto You without ceasing, and magnify Your name in word and deed.

Grant us, therefore, O heavenly Father, so to celebrate this day the blessed memorial and remembrance of Your dear Son, to exercise in the same, and to proclaim the benefit of His death, that, receiving new growth and strength in faith and in all things good, we may with so much greater confidence proclaim You our Father and glory in You; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, in whose name we pray unto You, as He has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven...

The Words of Institution

Let us hear how Jesus Christ instituted His holy Supper for us, as St. Paul relates it in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians:

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘this cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body.’” (1 Cor. 11:23-29)

Instruction on the Holy Supper

We have heard, my brethren, how our Lord observed His Supper with His disciples, from which we learn that strangers and those who do not belong to the company of His faithful people must not be admitted. Therefore, following that precept, in the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, I

excommunicate all idolaters, blasphemers and despisers of God, all heretics and those who create private sects in order to break the unity of the Church, all perjurers, all who rebel against father or mother or superior, all who promote sedition or mutiny; brutal and disorderly persons, adulterers, lewd and lustful men, thieves, ravishers, greedy and grasping people, drunkards, gluttons, and all those who lead a scandalous and dissolute life. I warn them to abstain from this Holy Table, lest they defile and contaminate the holy food which our Lord Jesus Christ gives to none except they belong to His household of faith.

Moreover, in accordance with the exhortation of St. Paul, let every man examine and prove his own conscience to see whether he truly repents of his faults and grieves over his sins, desiring to live henceforth a holy life according to God. Above all, let him see whether he has his trust in the mercy of God and seeks his salvation wholly in Jesus Christ and, renouncing all hatred and rancor, has high resolve and courage to live in peace and brotherly love with his neighbors.

If we have this witness in our hearts before God, never doubt that He claims us as His children, and that the Lord Jesus addresses His Word to us, to invite us to His Table and to give us this holy Sacrament which He imparted to His disciples.

And yet, we may be conscious of much frailty and misery in ourselves, such that we do not have perfect faith, but are inclined toward defiance and unbelief, or that we do not devote ourselves wholly to the service of God and with such zeal as we ought, but have to fight daily against the lusts of our flesh. Nevertheless, since our Lord has granted us the grace of having His Gospel graven on our hearts, so that we may withstand all unbelief, and has given us the desire and longing to renounce our own wishes, that we may follow His righteousness and His holy commandments: let us be assured that the sins and imperfections which remain in us will not prevent Him from receiving us and making us worthy partakers of this spiritual Table. For we do not come here to testify that we are perfect or righteous in ourselves: On the contrary, by seeking our life in Jesus Christ we confess that we are in death. Know, therefore, that this Sacrament is a medicine for the poor sick souls, and that the only worthiness which our Lord requires of us is to know ourselves sufficiently to deplore our sins, and to find all our pleasure, joy and satisfaction in Him alone.

Above all, therefore, let us believe those promises which Jesus Christ, who is the unfailing truth, has spoken with His own lips; He is truly willing to make us partakers of His body and blood, in order that we may possess Him wholly and in such a way that He may live in us and we in Him. And though we see but bread and wine, we must not doubt that He accomplishes spiritually in our souls all that He shows us outwardly by these visible signs, namely, that He is the bread of heaven to feed and nourish us unto eternal life. So, let us never be unmindful of the infinite goodness of our Savior who spreads out all His riches and blessings on this Table, to impart them to us. For in giving Himself to us, He makes a testimony to us that all that He has is ours. Therefore, let us receive this Sacrament as a pledge that the virtue of His death and passion is imputed to us for righteousness, even as though we had suffered them in our own persons. May we never be so perverse as to draw away when Jesus Christ invites us so gently by His Word. But accounting the worthiness of this precious gift which He gives, let us present ourselves to Him with ardent zeal, that He may make us capable of receiving it.

The “Reformed” Sursum Corda

To do so, let us lift our spirits and hearts on high where Jesus Christ is in the glory of His Father, whence we expect Him at our redemption. Let us not be fascinated by these earthly and corruptible elements which we see with our eyes and touch with our hands, seeking Him there as though He were enclosed in the bread or wine. Then only shall our souls be disposed to be nourished and vivified by His substance when they are lifted up above all earthly things, attaining even to heaven, and entering the Kingdom of God where He dwells. Therefore let us be content to have the bread and wine as signs and witnesses, seeking the truth spiritually where the Word of God promises that we shall find it.

Distribution of the Elements

Strasbourg

¶ *That done, the Minister, having informed the people that they are to come to the holy Table in reverence, good order, and Christian humility, first partakes himself of the bread and wine, then administers it to the deacon, and subsequently to the whole congregation, saying:*

Take, eat, the body of Jesus which has been delivered unto death for you.

¶ *And the deacon offers the cup, saying:*

This is the cup of the new testament in the blood of Jesus which has been shed for you.

¶ *Meanwhile, the Congregation sings Psalm 138*

Geneva

¶ *That done, the Ministers distribute the bread and the chalice to the people, having admonished them to come forward with reverence and in good order. Meanwhile, some Psalms are sung; or some portion of Scripture is read, appropriate to the significance of the sacrament. At the conclusion, Thanksgiving is offered:*

Thanksgiving After the Supper

Heavenly Father, we offer You eternal praise and thanks that You have granted so great a benefit to us poor sinners, having drawn us into the Communion of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom You have delivered to death for us and whom You give us as the meat and drink of life eternal. Now grant us this other benefit: that You will never allow us to forget these things; but having them imprinted on our hearts, may we grow and increase daily in the faith which is at work in every good deed. Thus may we order and pursue all our life to the exaltation of Your glory and the edification of our neighbor; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who in the unity of the Holy Spirit lives and reigns with You, O God, forever. Amen.

Singing of the Canticle of Simeon

Benediction

The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance, and give you peace. Amen. (Num. 6:24-26)

The Historical Roots of Reformed Worship

Ancient Liturgy

Service of the Word

O.T. Reading (*J 67; T 39*)

N.T. Reading (*J 67; T 39*)

Sermon (*J 67; T 39*)

Service of the Sacrament

Prayers (*J 65, 67*)

Confession (*D 14:1*)

Singing (*T 39*)

Presentation of Bread and Wine (*J 65, 67*)

Prayer over the Cup (*D 9:2-4; J 65, 67; T 39*)

Prayer over the Bread (*D 9:5-9; J 65, 67; T 39*)

Corporate "Amen" (*J 65*)

Distribution (*J 65, 67*)

Prayer after Communion (*D 10:1-15; T 39*)

Offering (*J 67; T 39*)

Reformed Liturgy

Service of the Word

Invocation Psalm 124:8 (*Cg; Cs*)

Confession (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Absolution (*B; Cs*)

Song Psalm/Hymn (*B; Cg*)/First Table (*Cs*)

Prayer Collect (*Cs*)

Song Second Table (*Cs*)

Prayer for Illumination (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Song (*B*)

Scripture Reading (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Sermon (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Service of the Sacrament

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Singing of the Apostles' Creed (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Prayer of Consecration (*Cs*)

The Words of Institution (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Instruction on the Holy Supper (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Distribution of the Elements (*B*)

Song (*B; Cs*)

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Singing of the Cantic of Simeon (*Cg; Cs*)

Benediction (*B; Cg; Cs*)

Key

D *Didache* (chapter #)

J Justin Martyr, *First Apology* (chapter #)

T Tertullian, *Apology* (chapter #)

B Martin Bucer, *Strasbourg Liturgy*, 1539

Cg John Calvin, *Genevan Liturgy*, 1542

Cs John Calvin, *Strasbourg Liturgy*, 1545