

**Apostasy in the
Divinely Prescribed
Worship of the
Church**

Mankind's Desire for Pomp

- **Mosheim believed rites and ceremonies were added in the 2nd century because mankind is “more delighted with the pomp and splendor of external forms and pageantry, than with the true devotion of the heart, and who despise whatever does not gratify their eyes and ears” (Vol I 132)**

For a Favorable Response from Pagans and Jews

- **“There is good reason to suppose that the Christian bishops purposely multiplied sacred rites for the sake of rendering the Jews and pagans more friendly to them. For both these classes had been accustomed to numerous and splendid ceremonies from their infancy, and had made no question of their constituting an essential part of religion” (Mosheim I 132)**

Not Atheists

- **“The Christians were pronounced *Atheists* because they were destitute of temples, altars, victims, priests, and all that pomp, in which the vulgar suppose the essence of religion to consist. For unenlightened persons are prone to estimate religion by what meets their eyes. To silence this accusation, the Christian doctors thought they must introduce some external rites, which would strike the senses of people” (Mosheim I 133)**

Adopting Jewish Thinking

- The close relationship with the Mosaic Law led to bishops being called high priests and the presbyters priests and the deacons Levites (Mosheim I 133)
- “the comparison of the Christian *oblations* with the Jewish *victims* and *sacrifices*, produced many unnecessary rites; and in time corrupted essentially the doctrine of the *Lord’s supper*, which, ere they were aware of it, was converted into a *sacrifice*” (Ibid)

Catechumens

- **From about 150 to 250, “The church came to be more and more regarded as possessed of life-giving mysteries, under the superintendence and dispensation of the clergy. Inquirers were prepared for initiation by instruction—the catechumens” (Walker 84-85)**
- **Instruction was given by an officer designated by the bishop and was “followed by the great initiatory rite of baptism...which granted admission to the propitiatory sacrifice of the life-giving mystery of the Lord’s supper” (85)**

Reading Scripture

- **“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” (Justin Martyr’s first *Apology*, as quoted in Ferguson I 36-37)**

The Lord's Supper

- **“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” (Justin)**

Giving

- **“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” (Justin)**

Sunday the Day of Assembly

- **“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” (Justin)**

Developments in Worship

- **“As in the time of Justin, the other elements of worship consisted of Scripture reading, preaching, prayers, and hymns...open to all honest inquirers” (Walker 85)**
- **The main day of worship was Sunday, though they were starting to meet on Wednesday and Friday, which were days of fasting (Ibid)**
- **40 hours of fasting and vigil were held in Rome in memory of Christ’s time in the grave**
- **Council of Nicea (325) extended it to 40 days of Lent, a time of prayer, repentance, alms giving and self-denial leading up to Easter**

Opening the Flood Gates for Religious Invention

- **“This corruption of Christian worship was gradual until AD 325, at which time, the flood gates of apostasy were opened wide to religious invention by the supposed conversion of Emperor Constantine. When the pagan emperor became a ‘Christian’ emperor, the pagan empire, by virtue of the change in its ruler, became a ‘Christian’ empire” (Shackelford 35)**

Secularization of the Church

- **“By taking the whole population of the Roman Empire the church became, indeed, a church of the masses, a church of the people, but as [sic] the same time more or less a church of the world. Christianity became a matter of fashion... with the secularizing process, therefore, a paganizing tendency went hand in hand” (Schaff III 125-126 as quoted in Shackelford 35)**

Distinction Obliterated

- **“When he [Constantine] offered temporal inducements to the profession of Christianity, he not only brought multitudes of unregenerate people into the churches, but he also aided in making it a part of public opinion to regard the profession of Christianity as a mere form, and to attach a magical significance to the ordinances....Christianity was secularized. The doors of the church were thrown open so wide, that the distinction between Christianity and the world was obliterated” (Newman 313 as quoted in Shackelford 35)**

Changes in the Lord's Supper

- **“Already by Tertullian's [c. 160-225] the Lord's Supper was held in commemoration of the dead” (Walker 91)**
- **“Cyprian shows such ‘sacrifices’ for martyrs” (Ibid)**
- **“With Cyprian [c. 200-Sept. 14, 258] the developed doctrine of the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice offered to God by a priest has been fully reached” (Ibid)**
- **“The sense of the life-giving quality of the Supper led, also, to the custom of infant communion, of which Cyprian is a witness” (Ibid)**

Changes in Prayers and Days of Observance of the Supper

- **“The prayers, used upon this occasion, were lengthened; and the solemnity and pomp, with which this important institution was celebrated, were increased...gold and silver vessels were now [third century] used in the administration of the Lord’s Supper” (Mosheim in Shackelford 36)**
- **“In the fourth century, the Lord’s Supper came to be observed in some places two or three times a week. It was also commemorated at the tombs of martyrs and at funerals, ‘which custom gave rise to the masses that were afterwards performed in honor of the saints and for the benefit of the dead’” (Ibid)**

Transubstantiation

- “About 831, Paschasius Radbertus...set forth the first thoroughgoing treatise on the Lord’s Supper, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*. In it he taught with Augustine, that only those who partake in faith eat and drink the body and blood of Christ”
- About 844, Ratramnus “rejected the idea of a realistic change in the elements....what is received and really present in the consecrated elements is not the actual body born of the Virgin, crucified and risen...but something else—the ‘Spirit’ of Christ, the ‘power of the divine Word, a mysterious ‘spiritual’ body appropriate to the sacrament”
- (Walker 192)

Justin Martyr on Instrumental Music

- **“The use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song” (C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David Vol. II*, New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company 1892, 123)**
- **“Musical organs pertain to the Jewish ceremonies and agree no more to us than circumcision” (John Price *Old Light on New Worship: Musical Instruments and the Worship of God, a Theological, Historical and Psychological Study*, Avinger, TX: Simpson Publishing Company, 2007, 71)**

Clement of Alexandria

- **“Leave the pipe to the shepherd, the flute to the men who are in fear of gods and are intent on their idol-worshipping. Such musical instruments must be excluded from our wineless feasts”**
- **“‘Praise Him with harp,’ for the tongue is a harp of the Lord; ‘and with the lute, praise Him,’ understanding the mouth as a lute moved by the Spirit”**
- **“But as for us, we make use of one instrument alone: only the Word of peace, by whom we pay homage to God, no longer with ancient harp or trumpet or from or flute” (quoted by Price 71-72)**

Thomas Aquinas and Chrysostom

- **“Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize” (Thomas Aquinas quoted in Spurgeon 123)**
- **Commenting on “Harp” and “Psaltery” in Psalm 33:2 “It was only permitted to the Jews, as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols; but now instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal” (Chrysostom quoted in Spurgeon 123)**

Adding Musical Instruments

- **“Church historians agree that the first recorded example of a musical instrument in Christian worship was an organ introduced in about 670 in a Roman Catholic Church in Rome by Pope Vitalianus” (Price 79)**
- **In 757, Emperor Constantine V sent an organ to King Pepin in Rome for use in his home (Ibid)**
- **“The second occasion of an instrument’s being used in church worship occurred in 812, when Pepin’s son, Charlemagne, had a copy of this organ made for the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle” (80)**

Adam Clarke on Amos 6:5

- “the use of such instruments of music in the Christian Church is *without* the *sanction* and *against* the *will* of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion, and that they are *sinful*” (Vol. IV 684)
- “I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil” (Ibid)

More Clarke on Amos 6:5

- “Music, *as a science*, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music *in the house of God* I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity” (Ibid)
- “*John Wesley*, who was a *lover of music*, and an *elegant poet*, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into the chapels of Methodists said,...’I have no objection to the instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN.’ I say the same, though I think the expense of purchase had better be spared” (Ibid)

Veneration (Worship) of Saints

- **“The beginnings of veneration of martyrs and of their relics run back to the middle of the second century. Their deaths were regularly commemorated with public services. With the conversion of Constantine, however, the accession to the church of the masses fresh from heathenism, this reverence largely increased” (Walker 155)**
- **The remembering of the martyrs in worship and prayer grew, by the fourth century, “to the feeling that they were to be prayed to as intercessors with God” (quoting Augustine Ibid)**

Martyrs as Guardians

- **Martyrs slowly began to replace the old gods**
- **They were viewed as “guardians of cities, patrons of trades, curers of disease”**
- **Jerome, in Against Vigilantius, said, “They follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth. If the Lamb is present everywhere, the same must be believed respecting those who are with the Lamb” (Walker 156)**
- **Martyrs were also honored with burning candles**

Veneration of Mary

- **“Clement, Jerome, and Tertullian had ascribed perpetual virginity to Mary” (Cairns 153)**
- **“Augustine believed that the mother of the sinless Christ had never committed actual sin”**
- **“Monasticism, with its emphasis on the virtue of virginity, strengthened the idea of veneration of Mary”**
- **“What at first was merely acknowledgment of her exalted position as Christ’s mother soon became belief in her intercessory powers because it was thought that the Son would be glad to listen to the requests of His mother”**
- **Immaculate conception (1854) and miraculous assumption (1950) were doctrines coming from this**

Veneration of Relics of the Saints

- **Relics included: “the body or body parts of a holy person, objects closely related to the person (such as clothing), and objects such as sand, oil, or water that touched these remains and was stored in ampullae (small flasks)” (Ferguson Vol. One 242-243)**
- **“According to the hagiographers, miracles were worked not by the relics themselves, but by God working through the saint. Toward the end of the fourth century the sentiment against disturbing a grave began to overcome, and relics of martyrs were moved to be placed under the altar of churches....This uniting of the relics of the saints with the eucharistic altar was important in bringing the cult of the saints under the supervision of bishops and priests”**

Feast of Christmas

- **“...for the first three centuries the church realized the day of Jesus’ birth was unknown and attached no theological importance to it”**
- **“Christmas was a Western feast, first celebrated in Rome in the second quarter of the fourth century. The date of December 25 was influenced by the sun cult, which was promoted by third-century emperors and continued to be recognized by Constantine” (Ferguson Vol. One 252)**

Sign of the Cross

- **“Most commonly and properly the words ‘sign of the cross’ are used of the large cross traced from forehead to breast and from shoulder to shoulder, such as Catholics are taught to make upon themselves when they begin their prayers, and such also as the priest makes at the foot of the altar when he commences Mass” (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13785a.htm>)**
- **“This arose, as early as the second century, the custom of making the sign of the cross on rising, bathing, going out, eating, in short, one engaging in any affairs of every-day life; a custom probably attended in many cases even in that age, with superstitious confidence in the magical virtue of this sign” (Schaff quoted in Shackelford 40)**

Holy Water and Rosary Beads

- **“Protection against the power of the devils was sought in the use of sacred objects...a few drops of holy water...was believed to afford protection” (Jacobs quoted by Shackelford 40)**
- **“There are also to be found in this age [Tenth Century], manifest indications of the institution of the rosary and crown of the Virgin, by which her worshippers were to reckon the number of prayers that they were to offer this new divinity....the rosary consists of fifteen repetitions of the Lord’s prayer, and six or seven times, salutations of Ave Marias” (Mosheim quoted by Shackelford 40)**