

CHAPTER 17

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND THE BENEFITS CONFERRED BY IT

This chapter is divided into two principal heads.—I. The first part shows what it is that God exhibits in the Holy Supper, sec. 1–4; and then in what way and how far it becomes ours, sec. 5–11. II. The second part is chiefly occupied with a refutation of the errors which superstition has introduced in regard to the Lord's Supper. And, first, Transubstantiation is refuted, sec. 12–15. Next, Consubstantiation and Ubiquity, sec. 16–19. Thirdly, It is shown that the institution itself is opposed to those hyperbolical doctors, sec. 20–25. Fourth, The orthodox view is confirmed by other arguments derived from Scripture, sec. 26–27. Fifth, The authority of the Fathers is shown to support the same view. Sixth, The presence for which opponents contend is overthrown, and another presence established, sec. 29–32. Seventh, What the nature of our communion ought to be, sec. 33, 34. Eighth, The adoration introduced by opponents refuted. For what end the Lord's Supper was instituted, sec. 35–39. Lastly, The examination of communicants is considered, sec. 40–42. Of the external rites to be observed. Of frequent communion in both kinds. Objections refuted, sec. 43–50.

Sections.

1. Why the Holy Supper was instituted by Christ. The knowledge of the sacrament, how necessary. The signs used. Why there are no others appointed.
2. The manifold uses and advantages of this sacrament to the pious.
3. The Lord's Supper exhibits the great blessings of redemption, and even Christ himself. This even evident from the words of the institution. The thing specially to be considered in them. Congruity of the signs and the things signified.
4. The chief parts of this sacrament.
5. How Christ, the Bread of Life, is to be received by us. Two faults to be avoided. The receiving of it must bear reference both to faith and the effect of faith. What meant by eating Christ. In what sense Christ the bread of life.
6. This mode of eating confirmed by the authority of Augustine and Chrysostom.
7. It is not sufficient, while omitting all mention of flesh and blood, to recognise this communion merely as spiritual. It is impossible fully to comprehend it in the present life.
8. In explanation of it, it may be observed,—I. There is no life at all save in Christ. II. Christ has life in a twofold sense; first, in himself, as he is God; and, secondly, by transfusing it into the flesh which he assumed, that he might thereby communicate life to us.
9. This confirmed from Cyril, and by a familiar example. How the flesh of Christ gives life, and what the nature of our communion with Christ.
10. No distance of place can impede it. In the Supper it is not presented as an empty symbol, but, as the apostle testifies, we receive the reality. Objection, that the expression is figurative. Answer. A sure rule with regard to the sacraments.

11. Conclusion of the first part of the chapter. The sacrament of the Supper consists of two parts, viz., corporeal signs, and spiritual truth. These comprehend the meaning, matter, and effect. Christ truly exhibited to us by symbols.
12. Second part of the chapter, reduced to nine heads. The transubstantiation of the Papists considered and refuted. Its origin and absurdity. Why it should be exploded.
13. Transubstantiation as feigned by the Schoolmen. Refutation. The many superstitions introduced by their error.
14. The fiction of transubstantiation why invented contrary to Scripture, and the consent of antiquity. The term of transubstantiation never used in the early Church. Objection. Answer.
15. The error of transubstantiation favoured by the consecration, which was a kind of magical incantation. The bread is not a sacrament to itself, but to those who receive it. The changing of the rod of Moses into a serpent gives no countenance to Popish transubstantiation. No resemblance between it and the words of institution in the Supper. Objection. Answer.
16. Refutation of consubstantiation; whence the idea of ubiquity.
17. This ubiquity confounds the natures of Christ. Subtleties answered.
18. Absurdities connected with consubstantiation. Candid exposition of the orthodox view.
19. The nature of the true presence of Christ in the Supper. The true and substantial communion of the body and blood of the Lord. This orthodox view assailed by turbulent spirits.
20. This view vindicated from their calumnies. The words of the institution explained in opposition to the glosses of transubstantiators and consubstantiators. Their subterfuges and absurd blasphemies.
21. Why the name of the thing signified is given to the sacramental symbols. This illustrated by passages of Scripture; also by a passage of Augustine.
22. Refutation of an objection founded on the words, *This is*. Objection answered.
23. Other objections answered.
24. Other objections answered. No question here as to the omnipotence of God.
25. Other objections answered.
26. The orthodox view further confirmed. I. By a consideration of the reality of Christ's body. II. From our Saviour's declaration that he would always be in the world. This confirmed by the exposition of Augustine.
27. Refutation of the sophisms of the Ubiquitists. The evasion of visible and invisible presence refuted.
28. The authority of Fathers not in favour of these errors as to Christ's presence. Augustine opposed to them.
29. Refutation of the invisible presence maintained by opponents. Refutation from Tertullian, from a saying of Christ after his resurrection, from the definition of a true body, and from different passages of Scripture.
30. Ubiquity refuted by various arguments.
31. The imaginary presence of Transubstantiators, Consubstantiators, and Ubiquitists, contrasted with the orthodox doctrine.

32. The nature of our Saviour's true presence explained. The mode of it incomprehensible.
33. Our communion in the blood and flesh of Christ. Spiritual not oral, and yet real. Erroneous view of the Schoolmen.
34. This view not favoured by Augustine. How the wicked eat the body of Christ. Cyril's sentiments as to the eating of the body of Christ.
35. Absurdity of the adoration of sacramental symbols.
36. This adoration condemned. I. By Christ himself. II. By the Council of Nice. III. By ancient custom. IV. By Scripture. This adoration is mere idolatry.
37. This adoration inconsistent with the nature and institution of the sacrament. Ends for which the sacrament was instituted.
38. Ends for which the sacrament was instituted.
39. True nature of the sacrament, contrasted with the Popish observance of it.
40. Nature of an unworthy approach to the Lord's table. The great danger of it. The proper remedy in serious self-examination.
41. The spurious examination introduced by the Papists. Refutation.
42. The nature of Christian examination.
43. External rites in the administration of the Supper. Many of them indifferent.
44. Duty of frequent communion. This proved by the practice of the Church in its purer state, and by the canons of the early bishops.
45. Frequent communion in the time of Augustine. The neglect of it censured by Chrysostom.
46. The Popish injunction to communicate once a-year an execrable invention.
47. Communion in one kind proved to be an invention of Satan.
48. Subterfuges of the Papists refuted.
49. The practice of the early Church further considered.
50. Conclusion.

1. After God has once received us into his family, it is not that he may regard us in the light of servants, but of sons, performing the part of a kind and anxious parent, and providing for our maintenance during the whole course of our lives. And, not contented with this, he has been pleased by a pledge to assure us of his continued liberality. To this end, he has given another sacrament to his Church by the hand of his only-begotten Son, viz., a spiritual feast, at which Christ testifies that he himself is living bread (John 6:51), on which our souls feed, for a true and blessed immortality. Now, as the knowledge of this great mystery is most necessary, and, in proportion to its importance, demands an accurate exposition, and Satan, in order to deprive the Church of this inestimable treasure, long ago introduced, first, mists, and then darkness, to obscure its light, and stirred up strife and contention to alienate the minds of the simple from a relish for this sacred food, and in our age, also, has tried the same artifice, I will proceed, after giving a simple summary adapted to the capacity of the ignorant, to explain those difficulties by which Satan has tried to ensnare the world. First, then, the signs are bread and wine, which represent the invisible food which we receive from the body and blood of Christ. For as God, regenerating us in baptism, ingrafts us into the fellowship of his Church, and makes us his by adoption, so we have said that he performs the office of a provident parent, in continually supplying the food by which he

may sustain and preserve us in the life to which he has begotten us by his word. Moreover, Christ is the only food of our soul, and, therefore, our heavenly Father invites us to him, that, refreshed by communion with him, we may ever and anon gather new vigour until we reach the heavenly immortality. But as this mystery of the secret union of Christ with believers is incomprehensible by nature, he exhibits its figure and image in visible signs adapted to our capacity, nay, by giving, as it were, earnest and badges, he makes it as certain to us as if it were seen by the eye; the familiarity of the similitude giving it access to minds however dull, and showing that souls are fed by Christ just as the corporeal life is sustained by bread and wine. We now, therefore, understand the end which this mystical benediction has in view, viz., to assure us that the body of Christ was once sacrificed for us, so that we may now eat it, and, eating, feel within ourselves the efficacy of that one sacrifice,—that his blood was once shed for us so as to be our perpetual drink. This is the force of the promise which is added, “Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you” (Mt. 26:26, &c.). The body which was once offered for our salvation we are enjoined to take and eat, that, while we see ourselves made partakers of it, we may safely conclude that the virtue of that death will be efficacious in us. Hence he terms the cup the covenant in his blood. For the covenant which he once sanctioned by his blood he in a manner renews, or rather continues, in so far as regards the confirmation of our faith, as often as he stretches forth his sacred blood as drink to us.

2. Pious souls can derive great confidence and delight from this sacrament, as being a testimony that they form one body with Christ, so that everything which is his they may call their own. Hence it follows, that we can confidently assure ourselves, that eternal life, of which he himself is the heir, is ours, and that the kingdom of heaven, into which he has entered, can no more be taken from us than from him; on the other hand, that we cannot be condemned for our sins, from the guilt of which he absolves us, seeing he has been pleased that these should be imputed to himself as if they were his own. This is the wondrous exchange made by his boundless goodness. Having become with us the Son of Man, he has made us with himself sons of God. By his own descent to the earth he has prepared our ascent to heaven. Having received our mortality, he has bestowed on us his immortality. Having undertaken our weakness, he has made us strong in his strength. Having submitted to our poverty, he has transferred to us his riches. Having taken upon himself the burden of unrighteousness with which we were oppressed, he has clothed us with his righteousness.

3. To all these things we have a complete attestation in this sacrament, enabling us certainly to conclude that they are as truly exhibited to us as if Christ were placed in bodily presence before our view, or handled by our hands. For these are words which can never lie nor deceive—Take, eat, drink. This is my body, which is broken for you: this is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins. In bidding us take, he intimates that it is ours: in bidding us eat, he intimates that it becomes one substance with us: in affirming of his body that it was broken, and of his blood that it was shed for us, he shows that both were not so much his own as ours, because he took and laid down both, not for his own advantage, but for our salvation. And we ought carefully to observe, that the chief, and almost the whole energy of the sacrament, consists in these words, It is broken for you: it is shed for you. It would not be of much importance to us that the body and blood of the Lord are now distributed, had they not once been set forth for our redemption and salvation. Wherefore they are represented under bread and

wine, that we may learn that they are not only ours, but intended to nourish our spiritual life; that is, as we formerly observed, by the corporeal things which are produced in the sacrament, we are by a kind of analogy conducted to spiritual things. Thus when bread is given as a symbol of the body of Christ, we must immediately think of this similitude. As bread nourishes, sustains, and protects our bodily life, so the body of Christ is the only food to invigorate and keep alive the soul. When we behold wine set forth as a symbol of blood, we must think that such use as wine serves to the body, the same is spiritually bestowed by the blood of Christ; and the use is to foster, refresh, strengthen, and exhilarate. For if we duly consider what profit we have gained by the breaking of his sacred body, and the shedding of his blood, we shall clearly perceive that these properties of bread and wine, agreeably to this analogy, most appropriately represent it when they are communicated to us.

4. Therefore, it is not the principal part of a sacrament simply to hold forth the body of Christ to us without any higher consideration, but rather to seal and confirm that promise by which he testifies that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, nourishing us unto life eternal, and by which he affirms that he is the bread of life, of which, whosoever shall eat, shall live for ever—I say, to seal and confirm that promise, and in order to do so, it sends us to the cross of Christ, where that promise was performed and fulfilled in all its parts. For we do not eat Christ duly and sparingly unless as crucified, while with lively apprehension we perceive the efficacy of his death. When he called himself the bread of life, he did not take that appellation from the sacrament, as some perversely interpret; but such as he was given to us by the Father, such he exhibited himself when becoming partaker of our human mortality, he made us partakers of his divine immortality; when offering himself in sacrifice, he took our curse upon himself, that he might cover us with his blessing, when by his death he devoured and swallowed up death, when in his resurrection he raised our corruptible flesh, which he had put on, to glory and incorruption.

5. It only remains that the whole become ours by application. This is done by means of the gospel, and more clearly by the sacred Supper, where Christ offers himself to us with all his blessings, and we receive him in faith. The sacrament, therefore, does not make Christ become for the first time the bread of life; but, while it calls to remembrance that Christ was made the bread of life that we may constantly eat him, it gives us a taste and relish for that bread, and makes us feel its efficacy. For it assures us, first, that whatever Christ did or suffered was done to give us life; and, secondly, that this quickening is eternal; by it we are ceaselessly nourished, sustained, and preserved in life. For as Christ would not have not been the bread of life to us if he had not been born, if he had not died and risen again; so he could not now be the bread of life, were not the efficacy and fruit of his nativity, death, and resurrection, eternal. All this Christ has elegantly expressed in these words, “The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51); doubtless intimating, that his body will be as bread in regard to the spiritual life of the soul, because it was to be delivered to death for our salvation, and that he extends it to us for food when he makes us partakers of it by faith. Wherefore he once gave himself that he might become bread, when he gave himself to be crucified for the redemption of the world; and he gives himself daily, when in the word of the gospel he offers himself to be partaken by us, inasmuch as he was crucified, when he seals that offer by the sacred mystery of the Supper, and when he

accomplishes inwardly what he externally designates. Moreover, two faults are here to be avoided. We must neither, by setting too little value on the signs, dis sever them from their meanings to which they are in some degree annexed, nor by immoderately extolling them, seem somewhat to obscure the mysteries themselves. That Christ is the bread of life by which believers are nourished unto eternal life, no man is so utterly devoid of religion as not to acknowledge. But all are not agreed as to the mode of partaking of him. For there are some who define the eating of the flesh of Christ, and the drinking of his blood, to be, in one word, nothing more than believing in Christ himself. But Christ seems to me to have intended to teach something more express and more sublime in that noble discourse, in which he recommends the eating of his flesh, viz., that we are quickened by the true partaking of him, which he designated by the terms eating and drinking, lest any one should suppose that the life which we obtain from him is obtained by simple knowledge. For as it is not the sight but the eating of bread that gives nourishment to the body, so the soul must partake of Christ truly and thoroughly, that by his energy it may grow up into spiritual life. Meanwhile, we admit that this is nothing else than the eating of faith, and that no other eating can be imagined. But there is this difference between their mode of speaking and mine. According to them, to eat is merely to believe; while I maintain that the flesh of Christ is eaten by believing, because it is made ours by faith, and that that eating is the effect and fruit of faith; or, if you will have it more clearly, according to them, eating is faith, whereas it rather seems to me to be a consequence of faith. The difference is little in words, but not little in reality. For, although the apostle teaches that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17), no one will interpret that dwelling to be faith. All see that it explains the admirable effect of faith, because to it it is owing that believers have Christ dwelling in them. In this way, the Lord was pleased, by calling himself the bread of life, not only to teach that our salvation is treasured up in the faith of his death and resurrection, but also, by virtue of true communication with him, his life passes into us and becomes ours, just as bread when taken for food gives vigour to the body.

6. When Augustine, whom they claim as their patron, wrote, that we eat by believing, all he meant was to indicate that that eating is of faith, and not of the mouth. This I deny not; but I at the same time add, that by faith we embrace Christ, not as appearing at a distance, but as uniting himself to us, he being our head, and we his members. I do not absolutely disapprove of that mode of speaking; I only deny that it is a full interpretation, if they mean to define what it is to eat the flesh of Christ. I see that Augustine repeatedly used this form of expression, as when he said (De Doct. Christ. Lib. 3), "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man" is a figurative expression enjoining us to have communion with our Lord's passion, and sweetly and usefully to treasure in our memory that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us. Also when he says, "These three thousand men who were converted at the preaching of Peter (Acts 2:41), by believing, drank the blood which they had cruelly shed."⁶⁰⁶ But in very many other passages he admirably commends faith for this, that by means of it our souls are not less refreshed by the communion of the blood of Christ, than our bodies with the bread which they eat. The very same thing is said by Chrysostom, "Christ makes us his body, not by faith only, but in reality." He does not mean that we obtain this blessing from any other quarter than from faith: he only intends to prevent any one from thinking of mere imagination when he hears the name of faith. I say nothing of those who hold that the Supper is merely a

mark of external profession, because I think I sufficiently refuted their error when I treated of the sacraments in general (Chap. 14 sec. 13). Only let my readers observe, that when the cup is called the covenant in blood (Luke 22:20), the promise which tends to confirm faith is expressed. Hence it follows, that **unless we have respect to God, and embrace what he offers, we do not make a right use of the sacred Supper.**

7. I am not satisfied with the view of those who, while acknowledging that we have some kind of communion with Christ, only make us partakers of the Spirit, omitting all mention of flesh and blood. As if it were said to no purpose at all, that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; that we have no life unless we eat that flesh and drink that blood; and so forth. Therefore, if it is evident that full communion with Christ goes beyond their description, which is too confined, I will attempt briefly to show how far it extends, before proceeding to speak of the contrary vice of excess. For I shall have a longer discussion with these hyperbolical doctors, who, according to their gross ideas, fabricate an absurd mode of eating and drinking, and transfigure Christ, after divesting him of his flesh, into a phantom: if, indeed, **it be lawful to put this great mystery into words, a mystery which I feel, and therefore freely confess that I am unable to comprehend with my mind,** so far am I from wishing any one to measure its **sublimity by my feeble capacity.** Nay, **I rather exhort my readers not to confine their apprehension within those too narrow limits, but to attempt to rise much higher than I can guide them.** For whenever this subject is considered, after I have done my utmost, I feel that I have spoken far beneath its dignity. **And though the mind is more powerful in thought than the tongue in expression, it too is overcome and overwhelmed by the magnitude of the subject.** All then that remains is to **break forth in admiration of the mystery,** which it is plain that the mind is inadequate to comprehend, or the tongue to express. I will, however, give a summary of my view as I best can, not doubting its truth, and therefore trusting that it will not be disapproved by pious breasts.

8. First of all, we are taught by the Scriptures that **Christ was from the beginning the living Word of the Father, the fountain and origin of life, from which all things should always receive life.** Hence John at one time calls him the Word of life, and at another says, that in him was life; intimating, that he, even then pervading all creatures, instilled into them the power of breathing and living. He afterwards adds, that the life was at length manifested, when the Son of God, **assuming our nature,** exhibited himself in bodily form to be seen and handled. For although he previously diffused his virtue into the creatures, yet as man, because alienated from God by sin, had lost the communication of life, and saw death on every side impending over him, he behoved, in order to regain the hope of immortality, to be restored to the communion of that Word. **How little confidence can it give you, to know that the Word of God, from which you are at the greatest distance, contains within himself the fulness of life, whereas in yourself, in whatever direction you turn, you see nothing but death? But ever since that fountain of life began to dwell in our nature, he no longer lies hid at a distance from us, but exhibits himself openly for our participation.** Nay, the very flesh in which he resides he makes vivifying to us, that by partaking of it we may feed for immortality. "I," says he, "am that bread of life;" "I am the living bread which came down from heaven;" "And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:48, 51). **By these words he declares, not only that he is life, inasmuch as he is the eternal Word of God who came down to us from heaven, but, by coming down, gave vigour to**

the flesh which he assumed, that a communication of life to us might thence emanate. Hence, too, he adds, that his flesh is meat indeed, and that his blood is drink indeed: by this food believers are reared to eternal life. The pious, therefore, have admirable comfort in this, that they now find life in their own flesh. For they not only reach it by easy access, but have it spontaneously set forth before them. Let them only throw open the door of their hearts that they may take it into their embrace, and they will obtain it.

9. The flesh of Christ, however, has not such power in itself as to make us live, seeing that by its own first condition it was subject to mortality, and even now, when endued with immortality, lives not by itself. Still it is properly said to be life-giving, as it is pervaded with the fulness of life for the purpose of transmitting it to us. In this sense I understand our Saviour's words as Cyril interprets them, "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). For there properly he is speaking not of the properties which he possessed with the Father from the beginning, but of those with which he was invested in the flesh in which he appeared. Accordingly, he shows that in his humanity also fulness of life resides, so that every one who communicates in his flesh and blood, at the same time enjoys the participation of life. The nature of this may be explained by a familiar example. As water is at one time drunk out of the fountain, at another drawn, at another led away by conduits to irrigate the fields, and yet does not flow forth of itself for all these uses, but is taken from its source, which, with perennial flow, ever and anon sends forth a new and sufficient supply; so the flesh of Christ is like a rich and inexhaustible fountain, which transfuses into us the life flowing forth from the Godhead into itself. Now, who sees not that the communion of the flesh and blood of Christ is necessary to all who aspire to the heavenly life? Hence those passages of the apostle: The Church is the "body" of Christ; his "fulness." He is "the head," "from whence the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," "maketh increase of the body" (Eph. 1:23; 4:15, 16). Our bodies are the "members of Christ" (1 Cor. 6:15). We perceive that all these things cannot possibly take place unless he adheres to us wholly in body and spirit. But the very close connection which unites us to his flesh, he illustrated with still more splendid epithets, when he said that we "are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30). At length, to testify that the matter is too high for utterance, he concludes with exclaiming, "This is a great mystery" (Eph. 5:32). It were, therefore, extreme infatuation not to acknowledge the communion of believers with the body and blood of the Lord, a communion which the apostle declares to be so great, that he chooses rather to marvel at it than to explain it.

10. The sum is, that the flesh and blood of Christ feed our souls just as bread and wine maintain and support our corporeal life. For there would be no aptitude in the sign, did not our souls find their nourishment in Christ. This could not be, did not Christ truly form one with us, and refresh us by the eating of his flesh, and the drinking of his blood. But though it seems an incredible thing that the flesh of Christ, while at such a distance from us in respect of place, should be food to us, let us remember how far the secret virtue of the Holy Spirit surpasses all our conceptions, and how foolish it is to wish to measure its immensity by our feeble capacity. Therefore, what our mind does not comprehend let faith conceive, viz., that the Spirit truly unites things separated by space. That sacred communion of flesh and blood by which Christ transfuses his life into us, just as if it penetrated our bones and marrow, he testifies and seals in the

Supper, and that not by presenting a vain or empty sign, but by there exerting an efficacy of the Spirit by which he fulfils what he promises. And truly the thing there signified he exhibits and offers to all who sit down at that spiritual feast, although it is beneficially received by believers only who receive this great benefit with true faith and heartfelt gratitude. For this reason the apostle said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16.) There is no ground to object that the expression is figurative, and gives the sign the name of the thing signified. I admit, indeed, that the breaking of bread is a symbol, not the reality. But this being admitted, we duly infer from the exhibition of the symbol that the thing itself is exhibited. For unless we would charge God with deceit, we will never presume to say that he holds forth an empty symbol. Therefore, if by the breaking of bread the Lord truly represents the partaking of his body, there ought to be no doubt whatever that he truly exhibits and performs it. The rule which the pious ought always to observe is, whenever they see the symbols instituted by the Lord, to think and feel surely persuaded that the truth of the thing signified is also present. For why does the Lord put the symbol of his body into your hands, but just to assure you that you truly partake of him? If this is true let us feel as much assured that the visible sign is given us in seal of an invisible gift as that his body itself is given to us.

11. I hold then (as has always been received in the Church, and is still taught by those who feel aright), that the sacred mystery of the Supper consists of two things—the corporeal signs, which, presented to the eye, represent invisible things in a manner adapted to our weak capacity, and the spiritual truth, which is at once figured and exhibited by the signs. When attempting familiarly to explain its nature, I am accustomed to set down three things—the thing meant, the matter which depends on it, and the virtue or efficacy consequent upon both. The thing meant consists in the promises which are in a manner included in the sign. By the matter, or substance, I mean Christ, with his death and resurrection. By the effect, I understand redemption, justification, sanctification, eternal life, and all other benefits which Christ bestows upon us. Moreover, though all these things have respect to faith, I leave no room for the cavil, that when I say Christ is conceived by faith, I mean that he is only conceived by the intellect and imagination. He is offered by the promises, not that we may stop short at the sight or mere knowledge of him, but that we may enjoy true communion with him. And, indeed, I see not how any one can expect to have redemption and righteousness in the cross of Christ, and life in his death, without trusting first of all to true communion with Christ himself. Those blessings could not reach us, did not Christ previously make himself ours. I say then, that in the mystery of the Supper, by the symbols of bread and wine, Christ, his body and his blood, are truly exhibited to us, that in them he fulfilled all obedience, in order to procure righteousness for us—first that we might become one body with him; and, secondly, that being made partakers of his substance, we might feel the result of this fact in the participation of all his blessings.

12. I now come to the hyperbolical mixtures which superstition has introduced. Here Satan has employed all his wiles, withdrawing the minds of men from heaven, and imbuing them with the perverse error that Christ is annexed to the element of bread. And, first, we are not to dream of such a presence of Christ in the sacrament as the artificers of the Romish court have imagined, as if the body of Christ, locally present,

were to be taken into the hand, and chewed by the teeth, and swallowed by the throat. This was the form of Palinode, which Pope Nicholas dictated to Berengarius, in token of his repentance, a form expressed in terms so monstrous, that the author of the Gloss exclaims, that there is danger, if the reader is not particularly cautious, that he will be led by it into a worse heresy than was that of Berengarius (Distinct. 2 c. Ego Berengarius). Peter Lombard, though he labours much to excuse the absurdity, rather inclines to a different opinion. As we cannot at all doubt that it is bounded according to the invariable rule in the human body, and is contained in heaven, where it was once received, and will remain till it return to judgment, so we deem it altogether unlawful to bring it back under these corruptible elements, or to imagine it everywhere present. And, indeed, there is no need of this, in order to our partaking of it, since the Lord by his Spirit bestows upon us the blessing of being one with him in soul, body, and spirit. **The bond of that connection, therefore, is the Spirit of Christ, who unites us to him, and is a kind of channel by which everything that Christ has and is, is derived to us.** For if we see that the sun, in sending forth its rays upon the earth, to generate, cherish, and invigorate its offspring, in a manner transfuses its substance into it, **why should the radiance of the Spirit be less in conveying to us the communion of his flesh and blood?** Wherefore the Scripture, when it speaks of our participation with Christ, refers its whole efficacy to the Spirit. Instead of many, one passage will suffice. **Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 8:9–11), shows that the only way in which Christ dwells in us is by his Spirit. By this, however, he does not take away that communion of flesh and blood of which we now speak, but shows that it is owing to the Spirit alone that we possess Christ wholly, and have him abiding in us.**

13. The Schoolmen, horrified at this barbarous impiety, speak more modestly, though they do nothing more than amuse themselves with more subtle delusions. They admit that Christ is not contained in the sacrament circumscriptively, or in a bodily manner, but they afterwards devise a method which they themselves do not understand, and cannot explain to others. It, however, comes to this, that Christ may be sought in what they call the species of bread. What? When they say that the substance of bread is converted into Christ, do they not attach him to the white colour, which is all they leave of it? But they say, that though contained in the sacrament, he still remains in heaven, and has no other presence there than that of abode. But, whatever be the terms in which they attempt to make a gloss, the sum of all is, that that which was formerly bread, by consecration becomes Christ: so that Christ thereafter lies hid under the colour of bread. This they are not ashamed distinctly to express. For Lombard's words are, "The body of Christ, which is visible in itself, lurks and lies covered after the act of consecration under the species of bread" (Lombard. Sent. Lib. 4 Dist. 12). Thus the figure of the bread is nothing but a mask which conceals the view of the flesh from our eye. But there is no need of many conjectures to detect the snare which they intended to lay by these words, since the thing itself speaks clearly. It is easy to see how great is the superstition under which not only the vulgar but the leaders also, have laboured for many ages, and still labour, in Popish Churches. Little solicitous as to true faith (by which alone we attain to the fellowship of Christ, and become one with him), provided they have his carnal presence, which they have fabricated without authority from the word, they think he is sufficiently present. Hence we see, that all which they have gained by their ingenious subtlety is to make bread to be regarded as God.

14. Hence proceeded that fictitious transubstantiation^{D131} for which they fight more fiercely in the present day than for all the other articles of their faith. For the first architects of local presence could not explain, how the body of Christ could be mixed with the substance of bread, without forthwith meeting with many absurdities. Hence it was necessary to have recourse to the fiction, that there is a conversion of the bread into body, not that properly instead of bread it becomes body, but that Christ, in order to conceal himself under the figure, reduces the substance to nothing. It is strange that they have fallen into such a degree of ignorance, nay, of stupor, as to produce this monstrous fiction not only against Scripture, but also against the consent of the ancient Church. I admit, indeed, that some of the ancients occasionally used the term *conversion*, not that they meant to do away with the substance in the external signs, but to teach that the bread devoted to the sacrament was widely different from ordinary bread, and was now something else. All clearly and uniformly teach that the sacred Supper consists of two parts, an earthly and a heavenly. The earthly they without dispute interpret to be bread and wine. Certainly, whatever they may pretend, it is plain that antiquity, which they often dare to oppose to the clear word of God, gives no countenance to that dogma. It is not so long since it was devised; indeed, it was unknown not only to the better ages, in which a purer doctrine still flourished, but after that purity was considerably impaired. There is no early Christian writer who does not admit in distinct terms that the sacred symbols of the Supper are bread and wine, although, as has been said, they sometimes distinguish them by various epithets, in order to recommend the dignity of the mystery. For when they say that a secret conversion takes place at consecration, so that it is now something else than bread and wine, their meaning, as I already observed, is, not that these are annihilated, but that they are to be considered in a different light from common food, which is only intended to feed the body, whereas in the former the spiritual food and drink of the mind are exhibited. This we deny not. But, say our opponents, if there is conversion, one thing must become another. If they mean that something becomes different from what it was before, I assent. If they will wrest it in support of their fiction, let them tell me of what kind of change they are sensible in baptism. For here, also, the Fathers make out a wonderful conversion, when they say that out of the corruptible element is made the spiritual laver of the soul, and yet no one denies that it still remains water. But say they, there is no such expression in Baptism as that in the Supper, *This is my body*; as if we were treating of these words, which have a meaning sufficiently clear, and not rather of that term *conversion*, which ought not to mean more in the Supper than in Baptism. Have done, then, with those quibbles upon words, which betray nothing but their silliness. The meaning would have no congruity, unless the truth which is there figured had a living image in the external sign. Christ wished to testify by an external symbol that his flesh was food. If he exhibited merely an empty show of bread, and not true bread, where is the analogy or similitude to conduct us from the visible thing to the invisible? For, in order to make all things consistent, the meaning cannot extend to more than this, that we are fed by the species of Christ's flesh; just as, in the case of baptism, if the figure of water deceived the eye, it would not be to us a sure pledge of our ablution; nay, the fallacious spectacle would rather throw us into doubt. The nature of the sacrament is therefore overthrown, if in the mode of signifying the earthly sign corresponds not to the heavenly reality; and, accordingly, the truth of the mystery is lost

if true bread does not represent the true body of Christ. I again repeat, since the Supper is nothing but a conspicuous attestation to the promise which is contained in the sixth chapter of John, viz., that Christ is the bread of life, who came down from heaven, that visible bread must intervene, in order that that spiritual bread may be figured, unless we would destroy all the benefits with which God here favours us for the purpose of sustaining our infirmity. Then on what ground could Paul infer that we are all one bread, and one body in partaking together of that one bread, if only the semblance of bread, and not the natural reality, remained?

15. They could not have been so shamefully deluded by the impostures of Satan had they not been fascinated by the erroneous idea, that the body of Christ included under the bread is transmitted by the bodily mouth into the belly. The cause of this brutish imagination was, that consecration had the same effect with them as magical incantation. They overlooked the principle, that bread is a sacrament to none but those to whom the word is addressed, just as the water of baptism is not changed in itself, but begins to be to us what it formerly was not, as soon as the promise is annexed. This will better appear from the example of a similar sacrament. The water gushing from the rock in the desert was to the Israelites a badge and sign of the same thing that is figured to us in the Supper by wine. For Paul declares that they drank the same spiritual drink (1 Cor. 10:4). But the water was common to the herds and flocks of the people. Hence it is easy to infer, that in the earthly elements, when employed for a spiritual use, no other conversion takes place than in respect of men, inasmuch as they are to them seals of promises. Moreover, since it is the purpose of God, as I have repeatedly inculcated, to raise us up to himself by fit vehicles, those who indeed call us to Christ, but to Christ lurking invisibly under bread, impiously, by their perverseness, defeat this object. For it is impossible for the mind of man to disentangle itself from the immensity of space, and ascend to Christ even above the heavens. What nature denied them, they attempted to gain by a noxious remedy. Remaining on the earth, they felt no need of a celestial proximity to Christ. Such was the necessity which impelled them to transfigure the body of Christ. In the age of Bernard, though a harsher mode of speech had prevailed, transubstantiation was not yet recognised. And in all previous ages, the similitude in the mouths of all was, that a spiritual reality was conjoined with bread and wine in this sacrament. As to the terms, they think they answer acutely, though they adduce nothing relevant to the case in hand. The rod of Moses (they say), when turned into a serpent, though it acquires the name of a serpent, still retains its former name, and is called a rod; and thus, according to them, it is equally probable that though the bread passes into a new substance, it is still called by catachresis, and not inaptly, what it still appears to the eye to be. But what resemblance, real or apparent, do they find between an illustrious miracle and their fictitious illusion, of which no eye on the earth is witness? The magi by their impostures had persuaded the Egyptians, that they had a divine power above the ordinary course of nature to change created beings. Moses comes forth, and after exposing their fallacies, shows that the invincible power of God is on his side, since his rod swallows up all the other rods. But as that conversion was visible to the eye, we have already observed, that it has no reference to the case in hand. Shortly after the rod visibly resumed its form. It may be added, that we know not whether this was an extemporary conversion of substance.⁶⁰⁷ For we must attend to the illusion to the rods of the magicians, which the prophet did not choose to term serpents, lest he

might seem to insinuate a conversion which had no existence, because those impostors had done nothing more than blind the eyes of the spectators. But what resemblance is there between that expression and the following? “The bread which we break;”—“As often as ye eat this bread;”—“They communicated in the breaking of bread;” and so forth. It is certain that the eye only was deceived by the incantation of the magicians. The matter is more doubtful with regard to Moses, by whose hand it was not more difficult for God to make a serpent out of a rod, and again to make a rod out of a serpent, than to clothe angels with corporeal bodies, and a little after unclothe them. If the case of the sacrament were at all akin to this, there might be some colour for their explanation. Let it, therefore, remain fixed that there is no true and fit promise in the Supper, that the flesh of Christ is truly meat, unless there is a correspondence in the true substance of the external symbol. But as one error gives rise to another, a passage in Jeremiah has been so absurdly wrested, to prove transubstantiation, that it is painful to refer to it. The prophet complains that wood was placed in his bread, intimating that by the cruelty of his enemies his bread was infected with bitterness, as David by a similar figure complains, “They gave me also gall for my meat: and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psalm 69:21). These men would allegorise the expression to mean, that the body of Christ was nailed to the wood of the cross. But some of the Fathers thought so! As if we ought not rather to pardon their ignorance and bury the disgrace, than to add impudence, and bring them into hostile conflict with the genuine meaning of the prophet.

16. Some, who see that the analogy between the sign and the thing signified cannot be destroyed without destroying the truth of the sacrament, admit that the bread of the Supper is truly the substance of an earthly and corruptible element, and cannot suffer any change in itself, but must have the body of Christ included under it. If they would explain this to mean, that when the bread is held forth in the sacrament, an exhibition of the body is annexed, because the truth is inseparable from its sign, I would not greatly object. But because fixing the body itself in the bread, they attach to it an ubiquity contrary to its nature, and by adding *under* the bread, will have it that it lies hid under it,^{D132} I must employ a short time in exposing their craft, and dragging them forth from their concealments. Here, however, it is not my intention professedly to discuss the whole case; I mean only to lay the foundations of a discussion which will afterwards follow in its own place. They insist, then, that the body of Christ is invisible and immense, so that it may be hid under bread, because they think that there is no other way by which they can communicate with him than by his descending into the bread, though they do not comprehend the mode of descent by which he raises us up to himself. They employ all the colours they possibly can, but after they have said all, it is sufficiently apparent that they insist on the local presence of Christ. How so? Because they cannot conceive any other participation of flesh and blood than that which consists either in local conjunction and contact, or in some gross method of enclosing.

17. Some, in order obstinately to maintain the error which they have once rashly adopted, hesitate not to assert that the dimensions of Christ’s flesh are not more circumscribed than those of heaven and earth. His birth as an infant, his growth, his extension on the cross, his confinement in the sepulchre, were effected, they say, by a kind of dispensation, that he might perform the offices of being born, of dying, and of other human acts: his being seen with his wonted bodily appearance after the

resurrection, his ascension into heaven, his appearance, after his ascension, to Stephen and Paul, were the effect of the same dispensation, that it might be made apparent to the eye of man that he was constituted King in heaven. What is this but to call forth Marcion from his grave? For there cannot be a doubt that the body of Christ, if so constituted, was a phantasm, or was phantastical. Some employ a rather more subtle evasion, That the body which is given in the sacrament is glorious and immortal, and that, therefore, there is no absurdity in its being contained under the sacrament in various places, or in no place, and in no form. But, I ask, what did Christ give to his disciples the day before he suffered? Do not the words say that he gave the mortal body, which was to be delivered shortly after? But, say they, he had previously manifested his glory to the three disciples on the mount (Mt. 17:2). This is true; but his purpose was to give them for the time a taste of immortality. Still they cannot find there a twofold body, but only the one which he had assumed, arrayed in new glory. When he distributed his body in the first Supper, the hour was at hand in which he was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isa. 53:4). So far was he from intending at that time to exhibit the glory of his resurrection. And here what a door is opened to Marcion, if the body of Christ was seen humble and mortal in one place, glorious and immortal in another! And yet, if their opinion is well-founded, the same thing happens every day, because they are forced to admit that the body of Christ, which is in itself visible, lurks invisibly under the symbol of bread. And yet those who send forth such monstrous dogmas, so far from being ashamed at the disgrace, assail us with virulent invectives for not subscribing to them.

18. But assuming that the body and blood of Christ are attached to the bread and wine, then the one must necessarily be dissevered from the other. For as the bread is given separately from the cup, so the body, united to the bread, must be separated from the blood, included in the cup. For since they affirm that the body is in the bread, and the blood is in the cup, while the bread and wine are, in regard to space, at some distance from each other, they cannot, by any quibble, evade the conclusion that the body must be separated from the blood. Their usual pretence, viz., that the blood is in the body, and the body again in the blood, by what they call concomitance, is more than frivolous, since the symbols in which they are included are thus distinguished. But if we are carried to heaven with our eyes and minds, that we may there behold Christ in the glory of his kingdom, as the symbols invite us to him in his integrity, so, under the symbol of bread, we must feed on his body, and, under the symbol of wine, drink separately of his blood, and thereby have the full enjoyment of him. For though he withdrew his flesh from us, and with his body ascended to heaven, he, however, sits at the right hand of the Father; that is, he reigns in power and majesty, and the glory of the Father. This kingdom is not limited by any intervals of space, nor circumscribed by any dimensions. Christ can exert his energy wherever he pleases, in earth and heaven, can manifest his presence by the exercise of his power, can always be present with his people, breathing into them his own life, can live in them, sustain, confirm, and invigorate them, and preserve them safe, just as if he were with them in the body; in fine, can feed them with his own body, communion with which he transfuses into them. After this manner, the body and blood of Christ are exhibited to us in the sacrament.

19. The presence of Christ in the Supper we must hold to be such as neither affixes him to the element of bread, nor encloses him in bread, nor circumscribes him in any

way (this would obviously detract from his celestial glory); and it must, moreover, be such as neither divests him of his just dimensions, nor dissevers him by differences of place, nor assigns to him a body of boundless dimensions, diffused through heaven and earth. All these things are clearly repugnant to his true human nature. Let us never allow ourselves to lose sight of the two restrictions. First, **Let there be nothing derogatory to the heavenly glory of Christ.** This happens whenever he is brought under the corruptible elements of this world, or is affixed to any earthly creatures. Secondly, **Let no property be assigned to his body inconsistent with his human nature.** This is done when it is either said to be infinite, or made to occupy a variety of places at the same time. But when these absurdities are discarded, **I willingly admit anything which helps to express the true and substantial communication of the body and blood of the Lord, as exhibited to believers under the sacred symbols of the Supper, understanding that they are received not by the imagination or intellect merely, but are enjoyed in reality as the food of eternal life.** For the odium with which this view is regarded by the world, and the unjust prejudice incurred by its defence, there is no cause, unless it be in the fearful fascinations of Satan. What we teach on the subject is in perfect accordance with Scripture, contains nothing absurd, obscure, or ambiguous, is not unfavourable to true piety and solid edification; in short, has nothing in it to offend, save that, for some ages, while the ignorance and barbarism of sophists reigned in the Church, the clear light and open truth were unbecomingly suppressed. And yet as Satan, by means of turbulent spirits, is still, in the present day, exerting himself to the utmost to bring dishonour on this doctrine by all kinds of calumny and reproach, it is right to assert and defend it with the greatest care.

20. Before we proceed farther, we must consider the ordinance itself, as instituted by Christ, because the most plausible objection of our opponents is, that we abandon his words. To free ourselves from the obloquy with which they thus load us, the fittest course will be to begin with an interpretation of the words. **Three Evangelists and Paul relate that our Saviour took bread, and after giving thanks, brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat: this is my body which is given or broken for you. Of the cup, Matthew and Mark say, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:26; Mark 14:22). Luke and Paul say, "This cup is the new testament in my blood" (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25).** The advocates of transubstantiation insist, that by the pronoun, *this*, is denoted the appearance of bread, because the whole complexion of our Saviour's address is an act of consecration, and there is no substance which can be demonstrated. But if they adhere so religiously to the words, inasmuch as that which our Saviour gave to his disciples he declared to be his body, there is nothing more alien from the strict meaning of the words than the fiction, that what was bread is now body. What Christ takes into his hands, and gives to the apostles, he declares to be his body; but he had taken bread, and, therefore, who sees not that what is given is still bread? Hence, nothing can be more absurd than to transfer what is affirmed of bread to the species of bread. Others, in interpreting the particle *is*, as equivalent to being transubstantiated, have recourse to a gloss which is forced and violently wrested. They have no ground, therefore, for pretending that they are moved by a reverence for the words. The use of the term *is*, for being converted into something else, is unknown to every tongue and nation. With regard to those who leave the bread in the Supper, and affirm that it is the body of Christ, there is great diversity

among them. Those who speak more modestly, though they insist upon the letter, This is my body, afterwards abandon this strictness, and observe that it is equivalent to saying that the body of Christ is with the bread, in the bread, and under the bread. To the reality which they affirm, we have already adverted, and will by-and-by, at greater length. I am not only considering the words by which they say they are prevented from admitting that the bread is called body, because it is a sign of the body. But if they shun everything like metaphor, why do they leap from the simple demonstration of Christ to modes of expression which are widely different? For there is a great difference between saying that the bread is the body, and that the body is with the bread. But seeing it impossible to maintain the simple proposition that the bread is the body, they endeavoured to evade the difficulty by concealing themselves under those forms of expression. Others, who are bolder, hesitate not to assert that, strictly speaking, the bread is body, and in this way prove that they are truly of the letter. If it is objected that the bread, therefore, is Christ, and, being Christ, is God,—they will deny it, because the words of Christ do not expressly say so. But they gain nothing by their denial, since all agree that the whole Christ is offered to us in the Supper. It is intolerable blasphemy to affirm, without figure, of a fading and corruptible element, that it is Christ. I now ask them, if they hold the two propositions to be identical, Christ is the Son of God, and Bread is the body of Christ? If they concede that they are different (and this, whether they will or not, they will be forced to do), let them tell wherein is the difference. All which they can adduce is, I presume, that the bread is called body in a sacramental manner. Hence it follows, that the words of Christ are not subject to the common rule, and ought not to be tested grammatically. I ask all these rigid and obstinate exactors of the letter, whether, when Luke and Paul call the cup *the testament in blood*, they do not express the same thing as in the previous clause, when they call bread the body? There certainly was the same solemnity in the one part of the mystery as in the other, and, as brevity is obscure, the longer sentence better elucidates the meaning. As often, therefore, as they contend, from the one expression, that the bread is body, I will adduce an apt interpretation from the longer expression, That it is a testament in the body. What? Can we seek for surer or more faithful expounders than Luke and Paul? I have no intention, however, to detract, in any respect, from the communication of the body of Christ, which I have acknowledged. I only meant to expose the foolish perverseness with which they carry on a war of words. The bread I understand, on the authority of Luke and Paul, to be the body of Christ, because it is a covenant in the body. If they impugn this, their quarrel is not with me, but with the Spirit of God. However often they may repeat, that reverence for the words of Christ will not allow them to give a figurative interpretation to what is spoken plainly, the pretext cannot justify them in thus rejecting all the contrary arguments which we adduce. Meanwhile, as I have already observed, it is proper to attend to the force of what is meant by a testament in the body and blood of Christ. The covenant, ratified by the sacrifice of death, would not avail us without the addition of that secret communication, by which we are made one with Christ.

21. It remains, therefore, to hold, that on account of the affinity which the things signified have with their signs, the name of the thing itself is given to the sign figuratively, indeed, but very appropriately. I say nothing of allegories and parables, lest it should be alleged that I am seeking subterfuges, and slipping out of the present

question. I say that the expression which is uniformly used in Scripture, when the sacred mysteries are treated of, is metonymical. For you cannot otherwise understand the expressions, that circumcision is a “covenant”—that the lamb is the Lord’s “passover”—that the sacrifices of the law are expiations—that the rock from which the water flowed in the desert was Christ,—unless you interpret them metonymically.⁶⁰⁸ Nor is the name merely transferred from the superior to the inferior, but, on the contrary, the name of the visible sign is given to the thing signified, as when God is said to have appeared to Moses in the bush; the ark of the covenant is called God, and the face of God, and the dove is called the Holy Spirit.⁶⁰⁹ For although the sign differs essentially from the thing signified, the latter being spiritual and heavenly, the former corporeal and visible,—yet, as it not only figures the thing which it is employed to represent as a naked and empty badge, but also truly exhibits it, why should not its name be justly applied to the thing? But if symbols humanly devised, which are rather the images of absent than the marks of present things, and of which they are very often most fallacious types, are sometimes honoured with their names,—with much greater reason do the institutions of God borrow the names of things, of which they always bear a sure, and by no means fallacious signification, and have the reality annexed to them. So great, then, is the similarity, and so close the connection between the two, that it is easy to pass from the one to the other. Let our opponents, therefore, cease to indulge their mirth in calling us Tropists, when we explain the sacramental mode of expression according to the common use of Scripture. For, while the sacraments agree in many things, there is also, in this metonymy, a certain community in all respects between them. As, therefore, the apostle says that the rock from which spiritual water flowed forth to the Israelites was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), and was thus a visible symbol under which, that spiritual drink was truly perceived, though not by the eye, so the body of Christ is now called bread, inasmuch as it is a symbol under which our Lord offers us the true eating of his body. Lest any one should despise this as a novel invention, the view which Augustine took and expressed was the same: “Had not the sacraments a certain resemblance to the things of which they are sacraments, they would not be sacraments at all. And from this resemblance, they generally have the names of the things themselves. This, as the sacrament of the body of Christ, is, after a certain manner, the body of Christ, and the sacrament of Christ is the blood of Christ; so the sacrament of faith is faith” (August. Ep. 23, ad Bonifac.). He has many similar passages, which it would be superfluous to collect, as that one may suffice. I need only remind my readers, that the same doctrine is taught by that holy man in his Epistle to Evodius. Where Augustine teaches that nothing is more common than metonymy in mysteries, it is a frivolous quibble to object that there is no mention of the Supper. Were this objection sustained, it would follow, that we are not entitled to argue from the genus to the species; *e.g.*, Every animal is endued with motion; and, therefore, the horse and the ox are endued with motion.⁶¹⁰ Indeed, longer discussion is rendered unnecessary by the words of the Saint himself, where he says, that when Christ gave the symbol of his body, he did not hesitate to call it his body (August. Cont. Adimantum, cap. 12). He elsewhere says, “Wonderful was the patience of Christ in admitting Judas to the feast, in which he committed and delivered to the disciples the symbol of his body and blood” (August. in. Ps. 3).

22. Should any morose person, shutting his eyes to everything else, insist upon the expression, *This is*, as distinguishing this mystery from all others, the answer is easy.

They say that the substantive verb is so emphatic, as to leave no room for interpretation. Though I should admit this, I answer, that the substantive verb occurs in the words of Paul (1 Cor. 10:16), where he calls the bread the *communion* of the body of Christ. But communion is something different from the body itself. Nay, when the sacraments are treated of, the same word occurs: "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant" (Gen. 17:13). "This is the ordinance of the passover" (Exod. 12:43). To say no more, when Paul declares that the rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), why should the substantive verb, in that passage, be deemed less emphatic than in the discourse of Christ? When John says, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39), I should like to know what is the force of the substantive verb? If the rule of our opponents is rigidly observed, the eternal essence of the Spirit will be destroyed, as if he had only begun to be after the ascension of Christ. Let them tell me, in fine, what is meant by the declaration of Paul, that baptism is "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:5); though it is certain that to many it was of no use. But they cannot be more effectually refuted than by the expression of Paul, that the Church is Christ. For, after introducing the similitude of the human body, he adds, "So also is Christ" (1 Cor. 7:12), when he means not the only-begotten Son of God in himself, but in his members. I think I have now gained this much, that all men of sense and integrity will be disgusted with the calumnies of our enemies, when they give out that we discredit the words of Christ; though we embrace them not less obediently than they do, and ponder them with greater reverence. Nay, their supine security proves that they do not greatly care what Christ meant, provided it furnishes them with a shield to defend their obstinacy, while our careful investigation should be an evidence of the authority which we yield to Christ. They invidiously pretend that human reason will not allow us to believe what Christ uttered with his sacred mouth; but how naughtily they endeavour to fix this odium upon us, I have already, in a great measure, shown, and will still show more clearly. Nothing, therefore, prevents us from believing Christ speaking, and from acquiescing in everything to which he intimates his assent. The only question here is, whether it be unlawful to inquire into the genuine meaning?

23. Those worthy masters, to show that they are of the letter, forbid us to deviate, in the least, from the letter. On the contrary, when Scripture calls God a man of war, as I see that the expression would be too harsh if not interpreted, I have no doubt that the similitude is taken from man. And, indeed, the only pretext which enabled the Anthropomorphites to annoy the orthodox Fathers was by fastening on the expressions, "The eyes of God see;" "It ascended to his ears;" "His hand is stretched out;" "The earth is his footstool;" and exclaimed, that God was deprived of the body which Scripture assigns to him. Were this rule admitted, complete barbarism would bury the whole light of faith. What monstrous absurdities shall fanatical men not be able to extract, if they are allowed to urge every knotty point in support of their dogmas? Their objection, that it is not probable that when Christ was providing special comfort for the apostles in adversity, he spoke enigmatically or obscurely,—supports our view. For, had it not occurred to the apostles that the bread was called the body figuratively, as being a symbol of the body, the extraordinary nature of the thing would doubtless have filled them with perplexity. For, at this very period, John relates, that the slightest difficulties perplexed them (John 14:5, 8; 16:17). They debate, among themselves, how Christ is to

go to the Father, and not understanding that the things which were said referred to the heavenly Father, raise a question as to how he is to go out of the world until they shall see him? How, then, could they have been so ready to believe what is repugnant to all reason, viz., that Christ was seated at table under their eye, and yet was contained invisible under the bread? As they attest their consent by eating this bread without hesitation, it is plain that they understood the words of Christ in the same sense as we do, considering what ought not to seem unusual when mysteries are spoken of, that the name of the thing signified was transferred to the sign. There was therefore to the disciples, as there is to us, clear and sure consolation, not involved in any enigma; and the only reason why certain persons reject our interpretation is, because they are blinded by a delusion of the devil to introduce the darkness of enigma, instead of the obvious interpretation of an appropriate figure. Besides, if we insist strictly on the words, our Saviour will be made to affirm erroneously something of the bread different from the cup. He calls the bread body, and the wine blood. There must either be a confusion in terms, or there must be a division separating the body from the blood. Nay, "This is my body," may be as truly affirmed of the cup as of the bread; and it may in turn be affirmed that the bread is the blood.⁶¹¹ If they answer, that we must look to the end or use for which symbols were instituted, I admit it: but still they will not disencumber themselves of the absurdity which their error drags along with it, viz., that the bread is blood, and the wine is body. Then I know not what they mean when they concede that bread and body are different things, and yet maintain that the one is predicated of the other, properly and without figure, as if one were to say that a garment is different from a man, and yet is properly called a man. Still, as if the victory depended on obstinacy and invective, they say that Christ is charged with falsehood, when it is attempted to interpret his words. It will now be easy for the reader to understand the injustice which is done to us by those carpers at syllables, when they possess the simple with the idea that we bring discredit on the words of Christ; words which, as we have shown, are madly perverted and confounded by them, but are faithfully and accurately expounded by us.

24. This infamous falsehood cannot be completely wiped away without disposing of another charge. They give out that we are so wedded to human reason, that we attribute nothing more to the power of God than the order of nature admits, and common sense dictates.⁶¹² From these wicked calumnies, I appeal to the doctrine which I have delivered,—a doctrine which makes it sufficiently clear that I by no means measure this mystery by the capacity of human reason, or subject it to the laws of nature. I ask, whether it is from physics we have learned that Christ feeds our souls from heaven with his flesh, just as our bodies are nourished by bread and wine? How has flesh this virtue of giving life to our souls? All will say, that it is not done naturally. Not more agreeable is it to human reason to hold that the flesh of Christ penetrates to us, so as to be our food. In short, every one who may have tasted our doctrine, will be carried away with admiration of the secret power of God. But these worthy zealots fabricate for themselves a miracle, and think that without it God himself and his power vanish away. I would again admonish the reader carefully to consider the nature of our doctrine, whether it depends on common apprehension, or whether, after having surmounted the world on the wings of faith, it rises to heaven. We say that Christ descends to us, as well by the external symbol as by his Spirit, that he may truly

quicken our souls by the substance of his flesh and blood. He who feels not that in these few words are many miracles, is more than stupid; since nothing is more contrary to nature than to derive the spiritual and heavenly life of the soul from flesh, which received its origin from the earth, and was subjected to death, nothing more incredible than that things separated by the whole space between heaven and earth should, notwithstanding of the long distance, not only be connected, but united, so that souls receive aliment from the flesh of Christ. Let preposterous men, then, cease to assail us with the vile calumny, that we malignantly restrict the boundless power of God. They either foolishly err, or wickedly lie. The question here is not, What could God do? but, What has he been pleased to do? We affirm that he has done what pleased him, and it pleased him that Christ should be in all respects like his brethren, "yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). What is our flesh? Is it not that which consists of certain dimensions? is confined within a certain place? is touched and seen? And why, say they, may not God make the same flesh occupy several different places, so as not to be confined to any particular place, and so as to have neither measure nor species? Fool! why do you require the power of God to make a thing to be at the same time flesh and not flesh? It is just as if you were to insist on his making light to be at the same time light and darkness. He wills light to be light, darkness to be darkness, flesh to be flesh. True, when he so chooses, he will convert darkness into light, and light into darkness: but when you insist that there shall be no difference between light and darkness, what do you but pervert the order of the divine wisdom? Flesh must therefore be flesh, and spirit spirit; each under the law and condition on which God has created them. Now, the condition of flesh is, that it should have one certain place, its own dimensions, its own form. On that condition, Christ assumed the flesh, to which, as Augustine declares (Ep. ad Dardan.), he gave incorruption and glory, but without destroying its nature and reality.

25. They object that they have the word by which the will of God has been openly manifested; that is if we permit them to banish from the Church the gift of interpretation, which should throw light upon the word. I admit that they have the word, but just as the Anthropomorphites of old had it, when they made God corporeal; just as Marcion and the Manichees had it when they made the body of Christ celestial or phantastical. They quoted the passages, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47): Christ "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). But these vain boasters think that there is no power of God unless they fabricate a monster in their own brains, by which the whole order of nature is subverted. This rather is to circumscribe the power of God, to attempt to try, by our fictions, what he can do. From this word, they have assumed that the body of Christ is visible in heaven, and yet lurks invisible on the earth under innumerable bits of bread. They will say that this is rendered necessary, in order that the body of Christ may be given in the Supper. In other words, because they have been pleased to extract a carnal eating from the words of Christ, carried away by their own prejudice, they have found it necessary to coin this subtlety, which is wholly repugnant to Scripture. That we detract, in any respect, from the power of God, is so far from being true, that our doctrine is the loudest in extolling it. But as they continue to charge us with robbing God of his honour, in rejecting what, according to common apprehension, it is difficult to believe, though it had been promised by the mouth of Christ; I answer, as I lately did, that in the mysteries of faith we do not consult common

apprehension, but, with the placid docility and spirit of meekness which James recommends (James 1:21), receive the doctrine which has come from heaven. Wherein they perniciously err, I am confident that we follow a proper moderation. On hearing the words of Christ, this is my body, they imagine a miracle most remote from his intention; and when, from this fiction, the grossest absurdities arise, having already, by their precipitate haste, entangled themselves with snares, they plunge themselves into the abyss of the divine omnipotence, that, in this way, they may extinguish the light of truth.⁶¹³ Hence the supercilious moroseness. We have no wish to know how Christ is hid under the bread: we are satisfied with his own words, "This is my body." We again study, with no less obedience than care, to obtain a sound understanding of this passage, as of the whole of Scripture. We do not, with preposterous fervour, rashly, and without choice, lay hold on whatever first presents itself to our minds; but, after careful meditation, embrace the meaning which the Spirit of God suggests. Trusting to him, we look down, as from a height, on whatever opposition may be offered by earthly wisdom. Nay, we hold our minds captive, not allowing one word of murmur, and humble them, that they may not presume to gainsay. In this way, we have arrived at that exposition of the words of Christ, which all who are moderately versant in Scripture know to be perpetually used with regard to the sacraments. Still, in a matter of difficulty, we deem it not unlawful to inquire, after the example of the blessed Virgin, "How shall this be?" (Luke 1:34).

26. But as nothing will be more effectual to confirm the faith of the pious than to show them that the doctrine which we have laid down is taken from the pure word of God, and rests on its authority, I will make this plain with as much brevity as I can. The body with which Christ rose is declared, not by Aristotle, but by the Holy Spirit, to be finite, and to be contained in heaven until the last day. I am not unaware how confidently our opponents evade the passages which are quoted to this effect. Whenever Christ says that he will leave the world and go away (John 14:2, 28), they reply, that that departure was nothing more than a change of mortal state. Were this so, Christ would not substitute the Holy Spirit, to supply, as they express it, the defect of his absence, since he does not succeed in place of him, nor, on the other hand, does Christ himself descend from the heavenly glory to assume the condition of a mortal life. Certainly the advent of the Spirit and the ascension of Christ are set against each other, and hence it necessarily follows that Christ dwells with us according to the flesh, in the same way as that in which he sends his Spirit. Moreover, he distinctly says that he would not always be in the world with his disciples (Mt. 26:11). This saying, also, they think they admirably dispose of, as if it were a denial by Christ that he would always be poor and mean, or liable to the necessities of a fading life. But this is plainly repugnant to the context, since reference is made not to poverty and want, or the wretched condition of an earthly life, but to worship and honour. The disciples were displeased with the anointing by Mary, because they thought it a superfluous and useless expenditure, akin to luxury, and would therefore have preferred that the price which they thought wasted should have been expended on the poor. Christ answers, that he will not be always with them to receive such honour. No different exposition is given by Augustine, whose words are by no means ambiguous. When Christ says, "Me ye have not always," he spoke of his bodily presence. In regard to his majesty, in regard to his providence, in regard to his ineffable and invisible grace, is fulfilled what he said: "Lo, I am with you alway, even

unto the end of the world” (Mt. 28:20); but in regard to the flesh which the Word assumed—in regard to that which was born of the Virgin—in regard to that which was apprehended by the Jews, nailed to the tree, suspended on the cross, wrapt in linen clothes, laid in the tomb, and manifested in the resurrection,—“Me ye have not always.” Why? Since he conversed with his disciples in bodily presence for forty days, and, going out with them, ascended, while they saw but followed not. He is not here, for he sits there, at the right hand of the Father. And yet he is here: for the presence of his majesty is not withdrawn. Otherwise, as regards the presence of his majesty, we have Christ always; while, in regard to his bodily presence, it was rightly said, “Me ye have not always.” In respect of bodily presence, the Church had him for a few days: now she holds him by faith, but sees him not with the eye (August. Tract. in Joann. 50). Here (that I may briefly note this) he makes him present with us in three ways—in majesty, providence, and ineffable grace; under which I comprehend that wondrous communion of his body and blood, provided we understand that it is effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, and not by that fictitious enclosing of his body under the element, since our Lord declared that he had flesh and bones which could be handled and seen. *Going away*, and *ascending*, intimate, not that he had the appearance of one going away and ascending, but that he truly did what the words express. Some one will ask, Are we then to assign a certain region of heaven to Christ? I answer with Augustine, that this is a curious and superfluous question, provided we believe that he is in heaven.

27. What? Does not the very name of ascension, so often repeated, intimate removal from one place to another? This they deny, because by height, according to them, the majesty of empire only is denoted. But what was the very mode of ascending? Was he not carried up while the disciples looked on? Do not the Evangelists clearly relate that he was carried into heaven? These acute Sophists reply, that a cloud intervened, and took him out of their sight, to teach the disciples that he would not afterwards be visible in the world. As if he ought not rather to have vanished in a moment, to make them believe in his invisible presence, or the cloud to have gathered around him before he moved a step. When he is carried aloft into the air, and the interposing cloud shows that he is no more to be sought on earth, we safely infer that his dwelling now is in the heavens, as Paul also asserts, bidding us look for him from thence (Phil. 3:20). For this reason, the angels remind the disciples that it is vain to keep gazing up into heaven, because Jesus, who was taken up, would come in like manner as they had seen him ascend. Here the adversaries of sound doctrine escape, as they think, by the ingenious quibble, that he will come in visible form, though he never departed from the earth, but remained invisible among his people. As if the angels had insinuated a two-fold presence, and not simply made the disciples eye-witnesses of the ascent, that no doubt might remain. It was just as if they had said, By ascending to heaven, while you looked on, he has asserted his heavenly power: it remains for you to wait patiently until he again arrive to judge the world. He has not entered into heaven to occupy it alone, but to gather you and all the pious along with him.

28. Since the advocates of this spurious dogma are not ashamed to honour it with the suffrages of the ancients, and especially of Augustine, how perverse they are in the attempt I will briefly explain. Pious and learned men have collected the passages, and therefore I am unwilling to plead a concluded cause: any one who wishes may consult their writings. I will not even collect from Augustine what might be pertinent to the

matter,⁶¹⁴ but will be contented to show briefly, that without all controversy he is wholly ours. The pretence of our opponents, when they would wrest him from us, that throughout his works the flesh and blood of Christ are said to be dispensed in the Supper—namely, the victim once offered on the cross, is frivolous, seeing he, at the same time, calls it either the eucharist or sacrament of the body. But it is unnecessary to go far to find the sense in which he uses the terms *flesh* and *blood*, since he himself explains, saying (Ep. 23, ad Bonif.) that the sacraments receive names from their similarity to the things which they designate; and that, therefore, the sacrament of the body is after a certain manner the body. With this agrees another well-known passage, “The Lord hesitated not to say, This is my body, when he gave the sign” (Cont. Adimant. Manich. cap. 12). They again object that Augustine says distinctly that the body of Christ falls upon the earth, and enters the mouth. But this is in the same sense in which he affirms that it is consumed, for he conjoins both at the same time. There is nothing repugnant to this in his saying that the bread is consumed after the mystery is performed: for he had said a little before, “As these things are known to men, when they are done by men they may receive honour as being religious, but not as being wonderful” (De Trinit. Lib. 3 c. 10). His meaning is not different in the passage which our opponents too rashly appropriate to themselves, viz., that Christ in a manner carried himself in his own hands, when he held out the mystical bread to his disciples. For by interposing the expression, *in a manner*, he declares that he was not really or truly included under the bread. Nor is it strange, since he elsewhere plainly contends, that bodies could not be without particular localities, and being nowhere, would have no existence. It is a paltry cavil that he is not there treating of the Supper, in which God exerts a special power. The question had been raised as to the flesh of Christ, and the holy man professedly replying, says, “Christ gave immortality to his flesh, but did not destroy its nature. In regard to this form, we are not to suppose that it is everywhere diffused: for we must beware not to rear up the divinity of the man, so as to take away the reality of the body. It does not follow that that which is in God is everywhere as God” (Ep. ad Dardan.). He immediately subjoins the reason, “One person is God and man, and both one Christ, everywhere, inasmuch as he is God, and in heaven, inasmuch as he is man.” How careless would it have been not to except the mystery of the Supper, a matter so grave and serious, if it was in any respect adverse to the doctrine which he was handling? And yet, if any one will attentively read what follows shortly after, he will find that under that general doctrine the Supper also is comprehended, that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, and also Son of man, is everywhere wholly present as God, in the temple of God, that is, in the Church, as an inhabiting God, and in some place in heaven, because of the dimensions of his real body. We see how, in order to unite Christ with the Church, he does not bring his body out of heaven. This he certainly would have done had the body of Christ not been truly our food, unless when included under the bread. Elsewhere, explaining how believers now possess Christ, he says, “You have him by the sign of the cross, by the sacrament of baptism, by the meat and drink of the altar” (Tract. in Joann. 50). How rightly he enumerates a superstitious rite, among the symbols of Christ’s presence, I dispute not; but in comparing the presence of the flesh to the sign of the cross, he sufficiently shows that he has no idea of a twofold body of Christ, one lurking concealed under the bread, and another sitting visible in heaven. If there is any need of explanation, it is immediately added, “In respect of the

presence of his majesty, we have Christ always: in respect of the presence of his flesh, it is rightly said, 'Me ye have not always.' " They object that he also adds, "In respect of ineffable and invisible grace is fulfilled what was said by him, 'I am with you always, even to the end of the world.' " But this is nothing in their favour. For it is at length restricted to his majesty, which is always opposed to body, while the flesh is expressly distinguished from grace and virtue. The same antithesis elsewhere occurs, when he says that "Christ left the disciples in bodily presence, that he might be with them in spiritual presence." Here it is clear that the essence of the flesh is distinguished from the virtue of the Spirit, which conjoins us with Christ, when, in respect of space, we are at a great distance from him. He repeatedly uses the same mode of expression, as when he says, "He is to come to the quick and the dead in bodily presence, according to the rule of faith and sound doctrine: for in spiritual presence he was to come to them, and to be with the whole Church in the world until its consummation. Therefore, this discourse is directed to believers, whom he had begun already to save by corporeal presence, and whom he was to leave in corporeal absence, that by spiritual presence he might preserve them with the Father." By corporeal to understand visible is mere trifling, since he both opposes his body to his divine power, and by adding, that he might "preserve them with the Father," clearly expresses that he sends his grace to us from heaven by means of the Spirit.

29. Since they put so much confidence in his hiding-place of invisible presence, let us see how well they conceal themselves in it. First, they cannot produce a syllable from Scripture to prove that Christ is invisible; but they take for granted what no sound man will admit, that the body of Christ cannot be given in the Supper, unless covered with the mask of bread. This is the very point in dispute; so far is it from occupying the place of the first principle. And while they thus prate, they are forced to give Christ a twofold body, because, according to them, it is visible in itself in heaven, but in the Supper is invisible, by a special mode of dispensation. The beautiful consistency of this may easily be judged, both from other passages of Scripture, and from the testimony of Peter. Peter says that the heavens must receive, or contain Christ, till he come again (Acts 3:21). These men teach that he is in every place, but without form. They say that it is unfair to subject a glorious body to the ordinary laws of nature. But this answer draws along with it the delirious dream of Servetus, which all pious minds justly abhor, that his body was absorbed by his divinity. I do not say that this is their opinion; but if it is considered one of the properties of a glorified body to fill all things in an invisible manner, it is plain that the corporeal substance is abolished, and no distinction is left between his Godhead and his human nature. Again, if the body of Christ is so multiform and diversified, that it appears in one place, and in another is invisible, where is there anything of the nature of body with its proper dimensions, and where is its unity? Far more correct is Tertullian, who contends that the body of Christ was natural and real, because its figure is set before us in the mystery of the Supper, as a pledge and assurance of spiritual life (Tertull. Cont. Marc. Lib. 4).⁶¹⁵ And certainly Christ said of his glorified body, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). Here, by the lips of Christ himself, the reality of his flesh is proved, by its admitting of being seen and handled. Take these away, and it will cease to be flesh. They always betake themselves to their lurking-place of dispensation, which they have fabricated. But it is our duty so to embrace what Christ absolutely declares, as to

give it an unreserved assent. He proves that he is not a phantom, because he is visible in his flesh. Take away what he claims as proper to the nature of his body, and must not a new definition of body be devised? Then, however they may turn themselves about, they will not find any place for their fictitious dispensation in that passage, in which Paul says, that “our conversation is in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:20, 21). We are not to hope for conformity to Christ in these qualities which they ascribe to him as a body, without bounds, and invisible. They will not find any one so stupid as to be persuaded of this great absurdity. Let them not, therefore, set it down as one of the properties of Christ’s glorious body, that it is, at the same time, in many places, and in no place. In short, let them either openly deny the resurrection of his flesh, or admit that Christ, when invested with celestial glory, did not lay aside his flesh, but is to make us, in our flesh, his associates, and partakers of the same glory, since we are to have a common resurrection with him. For what does Scripture throughout deliver more clearly than that, as Christ assumed our flesh when he was born of the Virgin, and suffered in our true flesh when he made satisfaction for us, so on rising again he resumed the same true flesh, and carried it with him to heaven? The hope of our resurrection, and ascension to heaven, is, that Christ rose again and ascended, and, as Tertullian says (*De Resurrect. Carnis*), “Carried an earnest of our resurrection along with him into heaven.” Moreover, how weak and fragile would this hope be, had not this very flesh of ours in Christ been truly raised up, and entered into the kingdom of heaven. But the essential properties of a body are to be confined by space, to have dimension and form. Have done, then, with that foolish fiction, which affixes the minds of men, as well as Christ, to bread. For to what end this occult presence under the bread, save that those who wish to have Christ conjoined with them may stop short at the symbol? But our Lord himself wished us to withdraw not only our eyes, but all our senses, from the earth, forbidding the woman to touch him until he had ascended to the Father (John 20:17). When he sees Mary, with pious reverential zeal, hastening to kiss his feet, there could be no reason for his disapproving and forbidding her to touch him before he had ascended to heaven, unless he wished to he sought nowhere else. The objection, that he afterwards appeared to Stephen, is easily answered. It was not necessary for our Saviour to change his place, as he could give the eyes of his servant a power of vision which could penetrate to heaven. The same account is to be given of the case of Paul. The objection, that Christ came forth from the closed sepulchre, and came in to his disciples while the doors were shut (Mt. 28:6; John 20:19), gives no better support to their error. For as the water, just as if it had been a solid pavement, furnished a path to our Saviour when he walked on it (Mt. 14.), so it is not strange that the hard stone yielded to his step; although it is more probable that the stone was removed at his command, and forthwith, after giving him a passage, returned to its place. To enter while the doors were shut, was not so much to penetrate through solid matter, as to make a passage for himself by divine power, and stand in the midst of his disciples in a most miraculous manner. They gain nothing by quoting the passage from Luke, in which it is said, that Christ suddenly vanished from the eyes of the disciples, with whom he had journeyed to Emmaus (Luke 24:31). In withdrawing from their sight, he did not become invisible: he only disappeared. Thus Luke declares that, on the journeying with them, he did not assume a new form, but that “their eyes were holden.”

But these men not only transform Christ that he may live on the earth, but pretend that there is another elsewhere of a different description. In short, by thus trifling, they, not in direct terms indeed, but by a circumlocution, make a spirit of the flesh of Christ; and, not contented with this, give him properties altogether opposite. Hence it necessarily follows that he must be twofold.

30. Granting what they absurdly talk of the invisible presence, it will still be necessary to prove the immensity, without which it is vain to attempt to include Christ under the bread. Unless the body of Christ can be everywhere without any boundaries of space, it is impossible to believe that he is hid in the Supper under the bread. Hence, they have been under the necessity of introducing the monstrous dogma of ubiquity. But it has been demonstrated by strong and clear passages of Scripture, first, that it is bounded by the dimensions of the human body; and, secondly, that its ascension into heaven made it plain that it is not in all places, but on passing to a new one, leaves the one formerly occupied. The promise to which they appeal, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world," is not to be applied to the body. First, then, a perpetual connection with Christ could not exist, unless he dwells in us corporeally, independently of the use of the Supper; and, therefore, they have no good ground for disputing so bitterly concerning the words of Christ, in order to include him under the bread in the Supper.⁶¹⁶ Secondly, the context proves that Christ is not speaking at all of his flesh, but promising the disciples his invincible aid to guard and sustain them against all the assaults of Satan and the world. For, in appointing them to a difficult office, he confirms them by the assurance of his presence, that they might neither hesitate to undertake it, nor be timorous in the discharge of it; as if he had said, that his invincible protection would not fail them. Unless we would throw everything into confusion, must it not be necessary to distinguish the mode of presence? And, indeed, some, to their great disgrace, choose rather to betray their ignorance than give up one iota of their error. I speak not of Papists, whose doctrine is more tolerable, or at least more modest; but some are so hurried away by contention as to say, that on account of the union of natures in Christ, wherever his divinity is, there his flesh, which cannot be separated from it, is also; as if that union formed a kind of medium of the two natures, making him to be neither God nor man. So held Eutyches, and after him Servetus. But it is clearly gathered from Scripture that the one person of Christ is composed of two natures, but so that each has its peculiar properties unimpaired. That Eutyches was justly condemned, they will not have the hardihood to deny. It is strange that they attend not to the cause of condemnation, viz., that destroying the distinction between the natures, and insisting only on the unity of person, he converted God into man and man into God.⁶¹⁷ What madness, then, is it to confound heaven with earth, sooner than not withdraw the body of Christ from its heavenly sanctuary? In regard to the passages which they adduce, "No man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13); "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18), they betray the same stupidity, scouting the communion of properties (*idiomatum*, κοινωρίαν), which not without reason was formerly invented by holy Fathers. Certainly when Paul says of the princes of this world that they "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8), he means not that he suffered anything in his divinity, but that Christ, who was rejected and despised, and suffered in the flesh, was likewise God and the Lord of glory. In this way, both the

Son of man was in heaven because he was also Christ; and he who, according to the flesh, dwelt as the Son of man on earth, was also God in heaven. For this reason, he is said to have descended from heaven in respect of his divinity, not that his divinity quitted heaven to conceal itself in the prison of the body, but because, although he filled all things, it yet resided in the humanity of Christ corporeally, that is, naturally, and in an ineffable manner. There is a trite distinction in the schools which I hesitate not to quote. Although the whole Christ is everywhere, yet everything which is in him is not everywhere. I wish the Schoolmen had duly weighed the force of this sentence, as it would have obviated their absurd fiction of the corporeal presence of Christ. Therefore, while our whole Mediator is everywhere, he is always present with his people, and in the Supper exhibits his presence in a special manner; yet so, that while he is wholly present, not everything which is in him is present, because, as has been said, in his flesh he will remain in heaven till he come to judgment.

31. They are greatly mistaken in imagining that there is no presence of the flesh of Christ in the Supper, unless it be placed in the bread. They thus leave nothing for the secret operation of the Spirit, which unites Christ himself to us. Christ does not seem to them to be present unless he descends to us, as if we did not equally gain his presence when he raises us to himself. The only question, therefore, is as to the mode, they placing Christ in the bread, while we deem it unlawful to draw him down from heaven. Which of the two is more correct, let the reader judge. Only have done with the calumny that Christ is withdrawn from his Supper if he lurk not under the covering of bread. For seeing this mystery is heavenly, there is no necessity to bring Christ on the earth that he may be connected with us.

32. Now, should any one ask me as to the mode, I will not be ashamed to confess that it is too high a mystery either for my mind to comprehend or my words to express; and to speak more plainly, I rather feel than understand it. The truth of God, therefore, in which I can safely rest, I here embrace without controversy. He declares that his flesh is the meat, his blood the drink, of my soul; I give my soul to him to be fed with such food. In his sacred Supper he bids me take, eat, and drink his body and blood under the symbols of bread and wine. I have no doubt that he will truly give and I receive. Only, I reject the absurdities which appear to be unworthy of the heavenly majesty of Christ, and are inconsistent with the reality of his human nature. Since they must also be repugnant to the word of God, which teaches both that Christ was received into the glory of the heavenly kingdom, so as to be exalted above all the circumstances of the world (Luke 24:26), and no less carefully ascribes to him the properties belonging to a true human nature. This ought not to seem incredible or contradictory to reason (Iren. Lib. 4 cap. 34); because, as the whole kingdom of Christ is spiritual, so whatever he does in his Church is not to be tested by the wisdom of this world; or, to use the words of Augustine, "this mystery is performed by man like the others, but in a divine manner, and on earth, but in a heavenly manner." Such, I say, is the corporeal presence which the nature of the sacrament requires, and which we say is here displayed in such power and efficacy, that it not only gives our minds undoubted assurance of eternal life, but also secures the immortality of our flesh, since it is now quickened by his immortal flesh, and in a manner shines in his immortality. Those who are carried beyond this with their hyperboles, do nothing more by their extravagancies than obscure the plain and simple truth. If any one is not yet satisfied, I would have him here to consider with himself that

we are speaking of the sacrament, every part of which ought to have reference to faith. Now by participation of the body, as we have explained, we nourish faith not less richly and abundantly than do those who drag Christ himself from heaven. Still I am free to confess that that mixture or transfusion of the flesh of Christ with our soul, which they teach, I repudiate, because it is enough for us that Christ, out of the substance of his flesh, breathes life into our souls, nay, diffuses his own life into us, though the real flesh of Christ does not enter us.⁶¹⁸ I may add, that there can be no doubt that the analogy of faith by which Paul enjoins us to test every interpretation of Scripture, is clearly with us in this matter. Let those who oppose a truth so clear, consider to what standard of faith they conform themselves: "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:3); 2 John ver. 7). These men, though they disguise the fact, or perceive it not, rob him of his flesh.

33. The same view must be taken of communion, which, according to them, has no existence unless they swallow the flesh of Christ under the bread. But no slight insult is offered to the Spirit if we refuse to believe that it is by his incomprehensible agency that we communicate in the body and blood of Christ. Nay, if the nature of the mystery, as delivered to us, and known to the ancient Church for four hundred years, had been considered as it deserves, there was more than enough to satisfy us; the door would have been shut against many disgraceful errors. These have kindled up fearful dissensions, by which the Church, both anciently and in our own times, has been miserably vexed; curious men insisting on an extravagant mode of presence to which Scripture gives no countenance. And for a matter thus foolishly and rashly devised they keep up a turmoil, as if the including of Christ under the bread were, so to speak, the beginning and end of piety. It was of primary importance to know how the body of Christ once delivered to us becomes ours, and how we become partakers of his shed blood, because this is to possess the whole of Christ crucified, so as to enjoy all his blessings. But overlooking these points, in which there was so much importance, nay, neglecting and almost suppressing them, they occupy themselves only with this one perplexing question, How is the body of Christ hidden under the bread, or under the appearance of bread? They falsely pretend that all which we teach concerning spiritual eating is opposed to true and what they call real eating, since we have respect only to the mode of eating. This, according to them, is carnal, since they include Christ under the bread, but according to us is spiritual, inasmuch as the sacred agency of the Spirit is the bond of our union with Christ. Not better founded is the other objection, that we attend only to the fruit or effect which believers receive from eating the flesh of Christ. We formerly said, that Christ himself is the matter of the Supper, and that the effect follows from this, that by the sacrifice of his death our sins are expiated, by his blood we are washed, and by his resurrection we are raised to the hope of life in heaven. But a foolish imagination, of which Lombard was the author, perverts their minds, while they think that the sacrament is the eating of the flesh of Christ. His words are, "The sacrament and not the thing are the forms of bread and wine; the sacrament and the thing are the flesh and blood of Christ; the thing and not the sacrament is his mystical flesh" (Lombard, Lib. 4 Dist. 8). Again a little after, "The thing signified and contained is the proper flesh of Christ; the thing signified and not contained is his mystical body." To his distinction between the flesh of Christ and the power of nourishing which it possesses, I assent; but his maintaining it to be a sacrament, and a sacrament contained under the bread, is

an error not to be tolerated. Hence has arisen that false interpretation of sacramental eating, because it was imagined that even the wicked and profane, however much alienated from Christ, eat his body. **But the very flesh of Christ in the mystery of the Supper is no less a spiritual matter than eternal salvation.** Whence we infer, that all who are devoid of the Spirit of Christ can no more eat the flesh of Christ than drink wine that has no savour. Certainly Christ is shamefully lacerated, when his body, as lifeless and without any vigour, is prostituted to unbelievers. This is clearly repugnant to his words, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). They object that he is not there speaking of sacramental eating; this I admit, provided they will not ever and anon stumble on this stone, that his flesh itself is eaten without any benefit. I should like to know how they confine it after they have eaten. Here, in my opinion, they will find no outlet. But they object, that the ingratitude of man cannot in any respect detract from, or interfere with, faith in the promises of God. I admit and hold that the power of the sacrament remains entire, however the wicked may labour with all their might to annihilate it. Still, it is one thing to be offered, another to be received. **Christ gives this spiritual food and holds forth this spiritual drink to all.** Some eat eagerly, others superciliously reject it. Will their rejection cause the meat and drink to lose their nature? They will say that this similitude supports their opinion, viz., that the flesh of Christ, though it be without taste, is still flesh. But I deny that it can be eaten without the taste of faith, or (if it is more agreeable to speak with Augustine), I deny that men carry away more from the sacrament than they collect in the vessel of faith. Thus nothing is detracted from the sacrament, nay, its reality and efficacy remain unimpaired, although the wicked, after externally partaking of it, go away empty. If, again, they object, that it derogates from the expression, "This is my body," if the wicked receive corruptible bread and nothing besides, it is easy to answer, that God wills not that his truth should be recognised in the mere reception, but in the constancy of his goodness, while he is prepared to perform, nay, liberally offers to the unworthy what they reject. **The integrity of the sacrament, an integrity which the whole world cannot violate, lies here, that the flesh and blood of Christ are not less truly given to the unworthy than to the elect believers of God; and yet it is true, that just as the rain falling on the hard rock runs away because it cannot penetrate, so the wicked by their hardness repel the grace of God, and prevent it from reaching them. We may add, that it is no more possible to receive Christ without faith, than it is for seed to germinate in the fire.** They ask how Christ can have come for the condemnation of some, unless they unworthily receive him; but this is absurd, since we nowhere read that they bring death upon themselves by receiving Christ unworthily, but by rejecting him. They are not aided by the parable in which Christ says, that the seed which fell among thorns sprung up, but was afterwards choked (Mt. 13:7), because he is there speaking of the effect of a temporary faith, a faith which those who place Judas in this respect on a footing with Peter, do not think necessary to the eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of Christ. Nay, their error is refuted by the same parable, when Christ says that some seed fell upon the wayside, and some on stony ground, and yet neither took root. Hence it follows that the hardness of believers is an obstacle which prevents Christ from reaching them. All who would have our salvation to be promoted by this sacrament, will find nothing more appropriate than to conduct believers to the fountain, that they may draw life from the Son of God. The dignity is amply enough commended when we hold, that it is a help by

which we may be ingrafted into the body of Christ, or, already ingrafted, may be more and more united to him, until the union is completed in heaven. They object, that Paul could not have made them guilty of the body and blood of the Lord if they had not partaken of them (1 Cor. 11:7); I answer, that they were not condemned for having eaten. but only for having profaned the ordinance by trampling under foot the pledge, which they ought to have reverently received, the pledge of sacred union with God.

34. Moreover, as among ancient writers, Augustine especially maintained⁶¹⁹ this head of doctrine, that the grace figured by the sacraments is not impaired or made void by the infidelity or malice of men, it will be useful to prove clearly from his words, how ignorantly and erroneously those who cast forth the body of Christ to be eaten by dogs, wrest them to their present purpose. Sacramental eating, according to them, is that by which the wicked receive the body and blood of Christ without the agency of the Spirit, or any gracious effect. Augustine, on the contrary, prudently pondering the expression, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life" (John 6:54), says: "That is the virtue of the sacrament, and not merely the visible sacrament: the sacrament of him who eats inwardly, not of him who eats outwardly, or merely with the teeth" (Hom. in Joann. 26). Hence he at length concludes, that the sacrament of this thing, that is, of the unity of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, is set before some for life, before others for destruction: while the matter itself, of which it is the sacrament, is to all for life, to none for destruction, whoever may have been the partaker. Lest any one should here cavil that by *thing* is not meant body, but the grace of the Spirit, which may be separated from it, he dissipates these mists by the antithetical epithets, Visible and Invisible. For the body of Christ cannot be included under the former. Hence it follows, that unbelievers communicate only in the visible symbol; and the better to remove all doubt, after saying that this bread requires an appetite in the inner man, he adds (Hom. in Joann. 59), "Moses, and Aaron, and Phinehas, and many others who ate manna, pleased God. Why? Because the visible food they understood spiritually, hungered for spiritually, tasted spiritually, and feasted on spiritually. We, too, in the present day, have received visible food: but the sacrament is one thing, the virtue of the sacrament is another." A little after, he says: "And hence, he who remains not in Christ, and in whom Christ remains not, without doubt neither spiritually eats his flesh, nor drinks his blood, though with his teeth he may carnally and visibly press the symbol of his body and blood." Again, we are told that the visible sign is opposed to spiritual eating. This refutes the error that the invisible body of Christ is sacramentally eaten in reality, although not spiritually. We are told, also, that nothing is given to the impure and profane beyond the visible taking of the sign. Hence his celebrated saying, that the other disciples ate *bread which was the Lord*, whereas Judas ate *the bread of the Lord* (Hom. in Joann. 62). By this, he clearly excludes unbelievers from participation in his body and blood. He has no other meaning when he says, "Why do you wonder that the bread of Christ was given to Judas, though he consigned him to the devil, when you see, on the contrary, that a messenger of the devil was given to Paul to perfect him in Christ?" (August. de Bapt. Cont. Donat. Lib. 5). He indeed says elsewhere, that the bread of the Supper was the body of Christ to those to whom Paul said, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself; and that it does not follow that they received nothing because they received unworthily." But in what sense he says this, he explains more fully in another passage

(De Civit. Dei, Lib. 21 c. 25). For undertaking professedly to explain how the wicked and profane, who, with the mouth, profess the faith of Christ, but in act deny him, eat the body of Christ; and, indeed, refuting the opinion of some who thought that they ate not only sacramentally, but really, he says: "Neither can they be said to eat the body of Christ, because they are not to be accounted among the members of Christ. For, not to mention other reasons, they cannot be at the same time the members of Christ and the members of a harlot. In fine, when Christ himself says, 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him' (John 6:56), he shows what it is to eat the body of Christ, not sacramentally, but in reality. It is to abide in Christ, that Christ may abide in him. For it is just as if he had said, Let not him who abides not in me, and in whom I abide not, say or think that he eats my body or drinks my blood." Let the reader attend to the antithesis between eating sacramentally and eating really, and there will be no doubt. The same thing he confirms not less clearly in these words: "Prepare not the jaws, but the heart; for which alone the Supper is appointed. We believe in Christ when we receive him in faith: in receiving, we know what we think: we receive a small portion, but our heart is filled: it is not therefore that which is seen, but that which is believed, that feeds" (August. Cont. Faust. Lib. 8 c. 16). Here, also, he restricts what the wicked take to be the visible sign, and shows that the only way of receiving Christ is by faith. So, also, in another passage, declaring distinctly that the good and the bad communicate by signs, he excludes the latter from the true eating of the flesh of Christ. For had they received the reality, he would not have been altogether silent as to a matter which was pertinent to the case. In another passage, speaking of eating, and the fruit of it, he thus concludes: "Then will the body and blood of Christ be life to each, if that which is visibly taken in the sacrament is in reality spiritually eaten, spiritually drunk" (De Verb. Apost. Serm. 2) Let those, therefore, who make unbelievers partakers of the flesh and blood of Christ, if they would agree with Augustine, set before us the visible body of Christ, since, according to him, the whole truth is spiritual. And certainly his words imply that sacramental eating, when unbelief excludes the entrance of the reality, is only equivalent to visible or external eating. But if the body of Christ may be truly and yet not spiritually eaten, what could he mean when he elsewhere says: "Ye are not to eat this body which you see, nor to drink the blood which will be shed by those who are to crucify me? I have committed a certain sacrament to you: it is the spiritual meaning which will give you life" (August. in Ps. 98). He certainly meant not to deny that the body offered in the Supper is the same as that which Christ offered in sacrifice; but he adverted to the mode of eating, viz., that the body, though received into the celestial glory, breathes life into us by the secret energy of the Spirit. I admit, indeed, that he often uses the expression, "that the body of Christ is eaten by unbelievers;" but he explains himself by adding, "in the sacrament." And he elsewhere speaks of a spiritual eating, in which our teeth do not chew grace (Hom. in Joann. 27). And, lest my opponents should say that I am trying to overwhelm them with the mass of my quotations, I would ask how they get over this one sentence: "In the elect alone, the sacraments effect what they figure." Certainly they will not venture to deny, that by the bread in the Supper, the body of Christ is figured. Hence it follows, that the reprobate are not allowed to partake of it. That Cyril did not think differently is clear from these words: "As one in pouring melted wax on melted wax mixes the whole together, so it is necessary, when one receives the body and blood of the Lord, to be conjoined with him,

that Christ may be found in him, and he in Christ.” From these words, I think it plain that there is no true and real eating by those who only eat the body of Christ sacramentally, seeing the body cannot be separated from its virtue, and that the promises of God do not fail, though, while he ceases not to rain from heaven, rocks and stones are not penetrated by the moisture.

35. This consideration will easily dissuade us from that carnal adoration which some men have, with perverse temerity, introduced into the sacrament, reasoning thus with themselves: If it is body, then it is also soul and divinity which go along with the body, and cannot be separated from it; and, therefore, Christ must there be adored. First, if we deny their pretended concomitance, what will they do? For, as they chiefly insist on the absurdity of separating the body of Christ from his soul and divinity, what sane and sober man can persuade himself that the body of Christ is Christ? They think that they completely establish this by their syllogisms. But since Christ speaks separately of his body and blood, without describing the mode of his presence, how can they in a doubtful matter arrive at the certainty which they wish? What then? Should their consciences be at any time exercised with some more grievous apprehension, will they forthwith set them free, and dissolve the apprehensions by their syllogisms? In other words, when they see that no certainty is to be obtained from the word of God, in which alone our minds can rest, and without which they go astray the very first moment when they begin to reason, when they see themselves opposed by the doctrine and practice of the apostles, and that they are supported by no authority but their own, how will they feel? To such feelings other sharp stings will be added. What? Was it a matter of little moment to worship God under this form without any express injunction? In a matter relating to the true worship of God, were we thus lightly to act without one word of Scripture? Had all their thoughts been kept in due subjection to the word of God, they certainly would have listened to what he himself has said, “Take, eat, and drink,” and obeyed the command by which he enjoins us to receive the sacrament, not worship it. Those who receive, without adoration, as commanded by God, are secure that they deviate not from the command. In commencing any work, nothing is better than this security. They have the example of the apostles, of whom we read not that they prostrated themselves and worshipped, but that they sat down, took and ate. They have the practice of the apostolic Church, where, as Luke relates, believers communicated not in adoration, but in the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42). They have the doctrine of the apostles as taught to the Corinthian Church by Paul, who declares that what he delivered he had received of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:23).

36. The object of these remarks is to lead pious readers to reflect how dangerous it is in matters of such difficulty to wander from the simple word of God to the dreams of our own brain. What has been said above should free us from all scruple in this matter. That the pious soul may duly apprehend Christ in the sacrament, it must rise to heaven. But if the office of the sacrament is to aid the infirmity of the human mind, assisting it in rising upwards, so as to perceive the height of spiritual mysteries, those who stop short at the external sign stray from the right path of seeking Christ. What then? Can we deny that the worship is superstitious when men prostrate themselves before bread that they may therein worship Christ? The Council of Nice undoubtedly intended to meet this evil when it forbade us to give humble heed to the visible signs. And for no other reason was it formerly the custom, previous to consecration, to call aloud upon the people to raise

their hearts, *sursum corda*. Scripture itself, also, besides carefully narrating the ascension of Christ, by which he withdrew his bodily presence from our eye and company, that it might make us abandon all carnal thoughts of him, whenever it makes mention of him, enjoins us to raise our minds upwards and seek him in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father (Col. 3:2). According to this rule, we should rather have adored him spiritually in the heavenly glory, than devised that perilous species of adoration replete with gross and carnal ideas of God. Those, therefore, who devised the adoration of the sacrament, not only dreamed it of themselves, without any authority from Scripture, where no mention of it can be shown (it would not have been omitted, had it been agreeable to God); but, disregarding Scripture, forsook the living God, and fabricated a god for themselves, after the lust of their own hearts. For what is idolatry if it is not to worship the gifts instead of the giver? Here the sin is twofold. The honour robbed from God is transferred to the creature, and God, moreover, is dishonoured by the pollution and profanation of his own goodness, while his holy sacrament is converted into an execrable idol. Let us, on the contrary, that we may not fall into the same pit, wholly confine our eyes, ears, hearts, minds, and tongues, to the sacred doctrine of God. For this is the school of the Holy Spirit, that best of masters, in which such progress is made, that while nothing is to be acquired anywhere else, we must willingly be ignorant of whatever is not there taught.

37. Then, as superstition, when once it has passed the proper bounds, has no end to its errors, men went much farther; for they devised rites altogether alien from the institution of the Supper, and to such a degree that they paid divine honours to the sign. They say that their veneration is paid to Christ. First, if this were done in the Supper, I would say that that adoration only is legitimate which stops not at the sign, but rises to Christ sitting in heaven. Now, under what pretext do they say that they honour Christ in that bread, when they have no promise of this nature? They consecrate the host, as they call it, and carry it about in solemn show, and formally exhibit it to be admired, revered, and invoked. I ask by what virtue they think it duly consecrated? They will quote the words, "This is my body." I, on the contrary, will object, that it was at the same time said, "Take, eat." Nor will I count the other passage as nothing; for I hold that since the promise is annexed to the command, the former is so included under the latter, that it cannot possibly be separated from it. This will be made clearer by an example. God gave a command when he said, "Call upon me," and added a promise, "I will deliver thee" (Psal. 50:15). Should any one invoke Peter or Paul, and found on this promise, will not all exclaim that he does it in error? And what else, pray, do those do who, disregarding the command to eat, fasten on the mutilated promise, "This is my body," that they may pervert it to rites alien from the institution of Christ? Let us remember, therefore, that this promise has been given to those who observe the command connected with it, and that those who transfer the sacrament to another end have no countenance from the word of God. We formerly showed how the mystery of the sacred Supper contributes to our faith in God. But since the Lord not only reminds us of this great gift of his goodness, as we formerly explained, but passes it, as it were, from hand to hand, and urges us to recognise it, he, at the same time, admonishes us not to be ungrateful for the kindness thus bestowed, but rather to proclaim it with such praise as is meet, and celebrate it with thanksgiving. Accordingly, when he delivered the institution of the sacrament to the apostles, he taught them to do it in remembrance of him, which

Paul interprets, “to show forth his death” (1 Cor. 11:26). And this is, that all should publicly and with one mouth confess that all our confidence of life and salvation is placed in our Lord’s death, that we ourselves may glorify him by our confession, and by our example excite others also to give him glory. Here, again, we see what the aim of the sacrament is—namely, to keep us in remembrance of Christ’s death. When we are ordered to show forth the Lord’s death till he come again, all that is meant is, that we should, with confession of the mouth, proclaim what our faith has recognised in the sacrament, viz., that the death of Christ is our life. This is the second use of the sacrament, and relates to outward confession.

38. Thirdly, The Lord intended it to be a kind of exhortation, than which no other could urge or animate us more strongly, both to purity and holiness of life, and also to charity, peace, and concord. For the Lord there communicates his body so that he may become altogether one with us, and we with him. Moreover, since he has only one body of which he makes us all to be partakers, we must necessarily, by this participation, all become one body. This unity is represented by the bread which is exhibited in the sacrament. As it is composed of many grains, so mingled together, that one cannot be distinguished from another; so ought our minds to be so cordially united, as not to allow of any dissension or division. This I prefer giving in the words of Paul: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor. 10:15, 16). We shall have profited admirably in the sacrament, if the thought shall have been impressed and engraven on our minds, that none of our brethren is hurt, despised, rejected, injured, or in any way offended, without our, at the same time, hurting, despising, and injuring Christ; that we cannot have dissension with our brethren, without at the same time dissenting from Christ; that we cannot love Christ without loving our brethren; that the same care we take of our own body we ought to take of that of our brethren, who are members of our body; that as no part of our body suffers pain without extending to the other parts, so every evil which our brother suffers ought to excite our compassion. Wherefore Augustine not inappropriately often terms this sacrament *the bond of charity*. What stronger stimulus could be employed to excite mutual charity, than when Christ, presenting himself to us, not only invites us by his example to give and devote ourselves mutually to each other, but inasmuch as he makes himself common to all, also makes us all to be one in him.

39. This most admirably confirms what I elsewhere said, viz., that there cannot be a right administration of the Supper without the word. Any utility which we derive from the Supper requires the word. Whether we are to be confirmed in faith, or exercised in confession, or aroused to duty, there is need of preaching. Nothing, therefore, can be more preposterous than to convert the Supper into a dumb action. This is done under the tyranny of the Pope, the whole effect of consecration being made to depend on the intention of the priest, as if it in no way concerned the people, to whom especially the mystery ought to have been explained. This error has originated from not observing that those promises by which consecration is effected are intended, not for the elements themselves, but for those who receive them. Christ does not address the bread and tell it to become his body, but bids his disciples eat, and promises them the communion of his body and blood. And, according to the arrangement which Paul makes, the promises

are to be offered to believers along with the bread and the cup. Thus, indeed, it is. **We are not to imagine some magical incantation, and think it sufficient to mutter the words, as if they were heard by the elements; but we are to regard those words as a living sermon, which is to edify the hearers, penetrate their minds, being impressed and seated in their hearts, and exert its efficacy in the fulfilment of that which it promises.** For these reasons, it is clear that the setting apart of the sacrament, as some insist, that an extraordinary distribution of it may be made to the sick, is useless. They will either receive it without hearing the words of the institution read, or the minister will conjoin the true explanation of the mystery with the sign. In the silent dispensation, there is abuse and defect. If the promises are narrated, and the mystery is expounded, that those who are to receive may receive with advantage, it cannot be doubted that this is the true consecration. What then becomes of that other consecration, the effect of which reaches even to the sick? But those who do so have the example of the early Church. I confess it; but in so important a matter, where error is so dangerous, nothing is safer than to follow the truth.

40. Moreover, as we see that this sacred **bread of the Lord's Supper is spiritual food, is sweet and savoury**, not less than salutary, to the pious worshippers of God, on tasting which they feel that **Christ is their life**, are **disposed to give thanks**, and **exhorted to mutual love**; so, on the other hand, it is converted into the most noxious poison to all whom it does not nourish and confirm in the faith, nor urge to thanksgiving and charity. For, **just as corporeal food**, when received into a stomach subject to morbid humours, becomes itself vitiated and corrupted, and rather hurts than nourishes, **so this spiritual food also, if given to a soul polluted with malice and wickedness, plunges it into greater ruin**, not indeed by any defect in the food, but because to the "defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure" (Titus 1:15), however much it may be sanctified by the blessing of the Lord. For, as Paul says, "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;" "eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:27, 29). For men of this description, who without any spark of faith, without any zeal for charity, rush forward like swine to seize the Lord's Supper, do not at all discern the Lord's body. **For, inasmuch as they do not believe that body to be their life, they put every possible affront upon it, stripping it of all its dignity, and profane and contaminate it by so receiving; inasmuch as while alienated and estranged from their brethren, they dare to mingle the sacred symbol of Christ's body with their dissensions.** No thanks to them if the body of Christ is not rent and torn to pieces. Wherefore they are justly held guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, which, with sacrilegious impiety, they so vilely pollute. By this unworthy eating, they bring judgment on themselves. For while they have no faith in Christ, yet, by receiving the sacrament, they profess to place their salvation only in him, and abjure all other confidence. Wherefore they themselves are their own accusers; they bear witness against themselves; they seal their own condemnation. Next being divided and separated by hatred and ill-will from their brethren, that is, from the members of Christ, they have no part in Christ, and yet they declare that the only safety is to communicate with Christ, and be united to him. **For this reason Paul commands a man to examine himself before he eats of that bread, and drinks of that cup (1 Cor. 11:28).** By this, as I understand, he means that each individual should descend into himself, and consider, first, whether, with inward confidence of heart, he leans on the salvation obtained by

Christ, and with confession of the mouth, acknowledges it; and, secondly, whether with zeal for purity and holiness he aspires to imitate Christ; whether, after his example, he is prepared to give himself to his brethren, and to hold himself in common with those with whom he has Christ in common; whether, as he himself is regarded by Christ, he in his turn regards all his brethren as members of his body, or, like his members, desires to cherish, defend, and assist them, not that the duties of faith and charity can now be perfected in us, but because it behoves us to contend and seek, with all our heart, daily to increase our faith.

41. In seeking to prepare for eating worthily, men have often dreadfully harassed and tortured miserable consciences, and yet have in no degree attained the end. They have said that those *eat worthily* who are in a state of grace. *Being in a state of grace*, they have interpreted to be pure and free from all sin. By this definition, all the men that ever have been, and are upon the earth, were debarred from the use of this sacrament. For if we are to seek our worthiness from ourselves, it is all over with us; only despair and fatal ruin await us. Though we struggle to the utmost, we will not only make no progress, but then be most unworthy after we have laboured most to make ourselves worthy. To cure this ulcer, they have devised a mode of procuring worthiness, viz., after having, as far as we can, made an examination, and taken an account of all our actions, to expiate our unworthiness by contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Of the nature of this expiation we have spoken at the proper place (Book 3 chap. 4 sec. 2, 17, 27). As far as regards our present object, I say that such things give poor and evanescent comfort to alarmed and downcast consciences, struck with terror at their sins. For if the Lord, by his prohibition, admits none to partake of his Supper but the righteous and innocent, every man would require to be cautious before feeling secure of that righteousness of his own which he is told that God requires. But how are we to be assured that those who have done what in them lay have discharged their duty to God? Even were we assured of this, who would venture to assure himself that he had done what in him lay? Thus there being no certain security for our worthiness, access to the Supper would always be excluded by the fearful interdict, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."

42. It is now easy to judge what is the nature, and who is the author, of that doctrine which prevails in the Papacy, and which, by its inhuman austerity, deprives and robs wretched sinners, oppressed with sorrow and trembling, of the consolation of this sacrament, a sacrament in which all that is delightful in the gospel was set before them. Certainly the devil could have no shorter method of destroying men than by thus infatuating them, and so excluding them from the taste and savour of this food with which their most merciful Father in heaven had been pleased to feed them. Therefore, lest we should rush over such a precipice, let us remember that this sacred feast is medicine to the sick, comfort to the sinner, and bounty to the poor; while to the healthy, the righteous, and the rich, if any such could be found, it would be of no value. For while Christ is therein given us for food, we perceive that without him we fail, pine, and waste away, just as hunger destroys the vigour of the body. Next, as he is given for life, we perceive that without him we are certainly dead. Wherefore, the best and only worthiness which we can bring to God, is to offer him our own vileness, and, if I may so speak, unworthiness, that his mercy may make us worthy; to despond in ourselves, that we may be consoled in him; to humble ourselves, that we may be elevated by him; to

accuse ourselves, that we may be justified by him; to aspire, moreover, to the unity which he recommends in the Supper; and, as he makes us all one in himself, to desire to have all one soul, one heart, one tongue. If we ponder and meditate on these things, we may be shaken, but will never be overwhelmed by such considerations as these, how shall we, who are devoid of all good, polluted by the defilements of sin, and half dead, worthily eat the body of the Lord? We shall rather consider that we, who are poor, are coming to a benevolent giver, sick to a physician, sinful to the author of righteousness, in fine, dead to him who gives life; that worthiness which is commanded by God, consists especially in faith, which places all things in Christ, nothing in ourselves, and in charity, charity which, though imperfect, it may be sufficient to offer to God, that he may increase it, since it cannot be fully rendered. Some, concurring with us in holding that worthiness consists in faith and charity, have widely erred in regard to the measure of worthiness, demanding a perfection of faith to which nothing can be added, and a charity equivalent to that which Christ manifested towards us. And in this way, just as the other class, they debar all men from access to this sacred feast. For, were their view well founded, every one who receives must receive unworthily, since all, without exception, are guilty, and chargeable with imperfection. And certainly it were too stupid, not to say idiotical, to require to the receiving of the sacrament a perfection which would render the sacrament vain and superfluous, because it was not instituted for the perfect, but for the infirm and weak, to stir up, excite, stimulate, exercise the feeling of faith and charity, and at the same time correct the deficiency of both.

43. In regard to the external form of the ordinance, whether or not believers are to take into their hands and divide among themselves, or each is to eat what is given to him: whether they are to return the cup to the deacon or hand it to their neighbour; whether the bread is to be leavened or unleavened, and the wine to be red or white, is of no consequence. These things are indifferent, and left free to the Church, though it is certain that it was the custom of the ancient Church for all to receive into their hand. And Christ said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves" (Luke 22:17). History relates that leavened and ordinary bread was used before the time of Alexander the Bishop of Rome, who was the first that was delighted with unleavened bread: for what reason I see not, unless it was to draw the wondering eyes of the populace by the novelty of the spectacle, more than to train them in sound religion. I appeal to all who have the least zeal for piety, whether they do not evidently perceive both how much more brightly the glory of God is here displayed, and how much more abundant spiritual consolation is felt by believers than in these rigid and histrionic follies, which have no other use than to impose on the gazing populace. They call it restraining the people by religion, when, stupid and infatuated, they are drawn hither and thither by superstition. Should any one choose to defend such inventions by antiquity, I am not unaware how ancient is the use of chrism and exorcism in baptism, and how, not long after the age of the apostles, the Supper was tainted with adulteration; such, indeed, is the forwardness of human confidence, which cannot restrain itself, but is always sporting and wantoning in the mysteries of God. But let us remember that God sets so much value on obedience to his word, that, by it, he would have us to judge his angels and the whole world. All this mass of ceremonies being abandoned, the sacrament might be celebrated in the most becoming manner, if it were dispensed to the Church very frequently, at least once a week. The commencement should be with public prayer; next, a sermon should be

delivered: then the minister, having placed bread and wine on the table, should read the institution of the Supper. He should next explain the promises which are therein given; and, at the same time, keep back from communion all those who are debarred by the prohibition of the Lord. He should afterwards pray that the Lord, with the kindness with which he has bestowed this sacred food upon us, would also form and instruct us to receive it with faith and gratitude; and, as we are of ourselves unworthy, would make us worthy of the feast by his mercy. Here, either a psalm should be sung, or something read, while the faithful, in order, communicate at the sacred feast, the minister breaking the bread, and giving it to the people. The Supper being ended, an exhortation should be given to sincere faith, and confession of faith, to charity, and lives becoming Christians. Lastly, thanks should be offered, and the praises of God should be sung. This being done, the Church should be dismissed in peace.

44. What we have hitherto said of the sacrament, abundantly shows that it was not instituted to be received once a-year and that perfunctorily (as is now commonly the custom); but that all Christians might have it in frequent use, and frequently call to mind the sufferings of Christ, thereby sustaining and confirming their faith: stirring themselves up to sing the praises of God, and proclaim his goodness; cherishing and testifying towards each other that mutual charity, the bond of which they see in the unity of the body of Christ. As often as we communicate in the symbol of our Saviour's body, as if a pledge were given and received, we mutually bind ourselves to all the offices of love, that none of us may do anything to offend his brother, or omit anything by which he can assist him when necessity demands, and opportunity occurs. That such was the practice of the Apostolic Church, we are informed by Luke in the Acts, when he says, that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Thus we ought always to provide that no meeting of the Church is held without the word, prayer, the dispensation of the Supper, and alms. We may gather from Paul that this was the order observed by the Corinthians, and it is certain that this was the practice many ages after. Hence, by the ancient canons, which are attributed to Anacletus and Calixtus, after the consecration was made, all were to communicate who did not wish to be without the pale of the Church. And in those ancient canons, which bear the name of Apostolical, it is said that those who continue not to the end, and partake not of the sacred communion, are to be corrected, as causing disquiet to the Church. In the Council of Antioch it was decreed, that those who enter the Church, hear the Scriptures, and abstain from communion, are to be removed from the Church until they amend their fault. And although, in the first Council of Tholouse, this was mitigated, or at least stated in milder terms, yet there also it was decreed, that those who after hearing the sermon, never communicated, were to be admonished, and if they still abstained after admonition, were to be excluded.

45. By these enactments, holy men wished to retain and ensure the use of frequent communion, as handed down by the apostles themselves; and which, while it was most salutary to believers, they saw gradually falling into desuetude by the negligence of the people. Of his own age, Augustine testifies: "The sacrament of the unity of our Lord's body is, in some places, provided daily, and in others at certain intervals, at the Lord's table; and at that table some partake to life, and others to destruction" (August. Tract. 26, in Joann. 6). And in the first Epistle to Januarius he says: "Some communicate daily in the body and blood of the Lord; others receive it on certain days: in some places, not

a day intervenes on which it is not offered: in others, it is offered only on the Sabbath and the Lord's day: in others, on the Lord's day only." But since, as we have said, the people were sometimes remiss, holy men urged them with severe rebukes, that they might not seem to connive at their sluggishness. Of this we have an example in Chrysostom, on the Epistle to the Ephesians (Hom. 26). "It was not said to him who dishonoured the feast, Why have you not taken your seat? 'But how camest thou in?' (Mt. 22:12). Whoever partakes not of the sacred rites is wicked and impudent in being present: should any one who was invited to a feast come in, wash his hands, take his seat, and seem to prepare to eat, and thereafter taste nothing, would he not, I ask, insult both the feast and the entertainer? So you, standing among those who prepare themselves by prayer to take the sacred food, profess to be one of the number by the mere fact of your not going away, and yet you do not partake,—would it not have been better not to have made your appearance? I am unworthy, you say. Then neither were you worthy of the communion of prayer, which is the preparation for taking the sacred mystery."

46. Most assuredly, the custom which prescribes communion once a-year is an invention of the devil, by what instrumentality soever it may have been introduced. They say that Zephyrinus was the author of the decree, though it is not possible to believe that it was the same as we now have it. It may be, that as times then were, he did not, by his ordinance, consult ill for the Church. For there cannot be a doubt that at that time the sacred Supper was dispensed to the faithful at every meeting; nor can it be doubted that a great part of them communicated. But as it scarcely ever happened that all could communicate at the same time, and it was necessary that those who were mingled with the profane and idolaters, should testify their faith by some external symbol, this holy man, with a view to order and government, had appointed that day, that on it the whole of Christendom might give a confession of their faith by partaking of the Lord's Supper. The ordinance of Zephyrinus, which was otherwise good, posterity perverted, when they made a fixed law of one communion in the year. The consequence is, that almost all, when they have once communicated, as if they were discharged as to all the rest of the year, sleep on secure. It ought to have been far otherwise. Each week, at least, the table of the Lord ought to have been spread for the company of Christians, and the promises declared on which we might then spiritually feed. No one, indeed, ought to be forced, but all ought to be exhorted and stimulated; the torpor of the sluggish, also, ought to be rebuked, that all, like persons famishing, should come to the feast. It was not without cause, therefore, I complained, at the outset, that this practice had been introduced by the wile of the devil; a practice which, in prescribing one day in the year, makes the whole year one of sloth. We see, indeed, that this perverse abuse had already crept in in the time of Chrysostom; but we, also, at the same time, see how much it displeased him. For he complains in bitter terms, in the passage which I lately quoted, that there is so great an inequality in this matter, that they did not approach often, at other times of the year, even when prepared, but only at Easter, though unprepared. Then he exclaims: "O custom! O presumption! In vain, then, is the daily oblation made: in vain do we stand at the altar. There is none who partakes along with us." So far is he from having approved the practice by interposing his authority to it.

47. From the same forge proceeded another constitution, which snatched or robbed a half of the Supper from the greater part of the people of God—namely, the symbol of

blood, which, interdicted to laics and profane (such are the titles which they give to God's heritage), became the peculiar possession of a few shaven and anointed individuals. The edict of the eternal God is, that all are to drink. This an upstart dares to antiquate and abrogate by a new and contrary law, proclaiming that all are not to drink. And that such legislators may not seem to fight against their God without any ground, they make a pretext of the dangers which might happen if the sacred cup were given indiscriminately to all: as if these had not been observed and provided for by the eternal wisdom of God. Then they reason acutely, forsooth, that the one is sufficient for the two. For if the body is, as they say, the whole Christ, who cannot be separated from his body, then the blood includes the body by concomitance. Here we see how far our sense accords with God, when to any extent whatever it begins to rage and wanton with loosened reins. The Lord, pointing to the bread, says, "This is my body." Then pointing to the cup, he calls it his blood. The audacity of human reason objects and says, The bread is the blood, the wine is the body, as if the Lord had without reason distinguished his body from his blood, both by words and signs; and it had ever been heard that the body of Christ or the blood is called God and man. Certainly, if he had meant to designate himself wholly, he might have said, It is I, according to the Scriptural mode of expression, and not, "This is my body," "This is my blood." But wishing to succour the weakness of our faith, he placed the cup apart from the bread, to show that he suffices not less for drink than for food. Now, if one part be taken away, we can only find the half of the elements in what remains. Therefore, though it were true, as they pretend, that the blood is in the bread, and, on the other hand, the body in the cup, by concomitance, yet they deprive the pious of that confirmation of faith which Christ delivered as necessary. Bidding adieu, therefore, to their subtleties, let us retain the advantage which, by the ordinance of Christ, is obtained by a double pledge.

48. I am aware, indeed, how the ministers of Satan, whose usual practice is to hold the Scriptures in derision, here cavil.⁶²⁰ First, they allege that from a simple fact we are not to draw a rule which is to be perpetually obligatory on the Church. But they state an untruth when they call it a simple fact. For Christ not only gave the cup, but appointed that the apostles should do so in future. For his words contain the command, "Drink ye all of it." And Paul relates, that it was so done, and recommends it as a fixed institution. Another subterfuge is, that the apostles alone were admitted by Christ to partake of this sacred Supper, because he had already selected and chosen them to the priesthood. I wish they would answer the five following questions, which they cannot evade, and which easily refute them and their lies. First, By what oracle was this solution so much at variance with the word of God revealed to them? Scripture mentions twelve who sat down with Jesus, but it does not so derogate from the dignity of Christ as to call them priests. Of this appellation we shall afterwards speak in its own place. Although he then gave to twelve, he commanded them to "do this;" in other words, to distribute thus among themselves. Secondly, Why during that purer age, from the days of the apostles downward for a thousand years, did all, without exception, partake of both symbols? Did the primitive Church not know who the guests were whom Christ would have admitted to his Supper? It were the most shameless impudence to carp and quibble here. We have extant ecclesiastical histories, we have the writings of the Fathers, which furnish clear proofs of this fact. "The flesh," says Tertullian, "feeds on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may be satiated by God" (Tertull. de Resurr. Carnis.). "How," says

Ambrose to Theodosius, “will you receive the sacred body of the Lord with such hands? how will you have the boldness to put the cup of precious blood to your lips?” Jerome speaks of “the priests who perform the Eucharist and distribute the Lord’s blood to the people” (Hieron. in Malach. cap. 2). Chrysostom says, “Not as under the ancient law the priest ate a part and the people a part, but one body and one cup is set before all. All the things which belong to the Eucharist are common to the priest and the people” (Chrysost. in Cor. cap. 8, Hom. 18). The same thing is attested by Augustine in numerous passages.

49. But why dispute about a fact which is perfectly notorious? Look at all Greek and Latin writers. Passages of the same kind everywhere occur. Nor did this practice fall into desuetude so long as there was one particle of integrity in the Church. Gregory, whom you may with justice call the last Bishop of Rome, says that it was observed in his age.^{D133} “What the blood of the Lamb is you have learned, not by hearing, but by drinking it. His blood is poured into the mouths of the faithful.” Nay, four hundred years after his death, when all things had degenerated, the practice still remained. Nor was it regarded as the custom merely, but as an inviolable law. Reverence for the divine institution was then maintained, and they had no doubt of its being sacrilege to separate what the Lord had joined. For Gelasius thus speaks: “We find that some taking only the portion of the sacred body, abstain from the cup. Undoubtedly let those persons, as they seem entangled by some strange superstition, either receive the whole sacrament, or be debarred from the whole. For the division of this mystery is not made without great sacrilege” (De Consec. Dist. 2). Reasons were given by Cyprian, which surely ought to weigh with Christian minds. “How,” says he, “do we teach or incite them to shed their blood in confessing Christ, if we deny his blood to those who are to serve; or how do we make them fit for the cup of martyrdom, if we do not previously admit them by right of communion in the Church, to drink the cup of the Lord?” (Cyprian, Serm. 5, de Lapsis). The attempt of the Canonists to restrict the decree of Gelasius to priests is a cavil too puerile to deserve refutation.

50. Thirdly, Why did our Saviour say of the bread simply, “Take, eat,” and of the cup, “drink ye all of it;” as if he had purposely intended to provide against the wile of Satan? Fourthly, If, as they will have it, the Lord honoured priests only with his Supper, what man would ever have dared to call strangers, whom the Lord had excluded, to partake of it, and to partake of a gift which he had not in his power, without any command from him who alone could give it? Nay, what presumption do they show in the present day in distributing the symbol of Christ’s body to the common people, if they have no command or example from the Lord? Fifthly, Did Paul lie when he said to the Corinthians, “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you?” (1 Cor. 11:23). The thing delivered, he afterwards declares to be, that all should communicate promiscuously in both symbols. But if Paul received of the Lord that all were to be admitted without distinction, let those who drive away almost the whole people of God see from whom they have received, since they cannot now pretend to have their authority from God, with whom there is not “yea and nay” (2 Cor. 1:19, 20). And yet these abominations they dare to cloak with the name of the Church, and defend under this pretence, as if those Antichrists were the Church who so licentiously trample under foot, waste, and abrogate the doctrine and institutions of Christ, or as if the Apostolic Church, in which religion flourished in full vigour, were not the Church.