

A LETTER,

TO THE

CONGREGATION OF ST. JAMES' CHURCH, YORK, U. CANADA,

AND

OCCASIONED BY

THE HON. JOHN ELMSLEY'S PUBLICATION,

OF THE

BISHOP OF STRASBOURG'S OBSERVATIONS,

ON THE 6TH CHAPTER OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

BY JOHN STRACHAN, D. D. L. L. D.

ARCHDEACON OF YORK. &c. &c.

Y O R K:

PRINTED BY ROBERT STANTON.

YORK, UPPER CANADA, 1st JANUARY 1834.

TO THE CONGREGATION OF ST. JAMES' CHURCH.

MY DEAR BRETHREN :

After the Honorable JOHN ELMSLEY returned from England, his attendance at Church, which had been usually very regular, was observed to be unfrequent ; and after a little time altogether ceased. Rumours were afloat that he had deserted the Faith of his Fathers, and conformed to the Roman Catholic Church. As he had never spoken to me on the subject, I felt unwilling to notice such rumours, although, to external appearance, they were not without foundation ; for having known no instance of such conversion in this Province, it seemed scarcely credible, that a person who had been carefully educated, to mature age, in the doctrines of the Protestant Church, should have suddenly abandoned them, and attached himself to the Roman Catholic persuasion ; but yet there seemed to be ground for apprehension. Sometimes I thought that my duty required of me to call upon him, and expostulate with him on his absence from public worship. At other times I considered that if he were sincerely in doubt, he would make his difficulties known to me ; this I felt to be his duty, and what I was entitled to expect.

While thus contemplating the matter in my own mind, I received from Mr. Elmsley the following letter, with the Bishop of Strasbourg's observations on the sixth Chapter of St. John's Gospel :

YORK, OCTOBER 7th, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR :

" In enclosing you the copy of a pamphlet, the publication of which in this Country I have been at some pains and expense to effect ; I trust you will pardon the liberty I take in begging for it your most attentive consideration, in order to my being favored, at your leisure, with your opinion of the important subject of its pages, and also of the manner in which the argument is sustained.

" It is an extract from the work of a very able and pious Catholic Prelate, a brief memoir of whose life is prefixed to the work by the London publisher. The view taken by the author, in this most essential point in controversy, between Catholics and Protestants, is to me quite new. I have perused, I believe, every other work to be found in the catalogue on this subject, before I fell in with this, and I met with nothing which favored the Catholic doctrine any thing like it; and as I may safely say, I feel myself quite unable to gainsay it, so I do not hesitate to say, that I have found nothing in any of the Protestant writers, whose controversial works I have perused, which throws the smallest difficulty upon it, or establishes a single doubt of the soundness of the argument.

" Your reading must of course have been more and more various than mine, and your judgment more matured; I therefore come to you, my dear Sir, as an enlightened teacher of that Sect in which I was born and educated, and as a friend of my Parents, and I flatter myself of mine too, to afford me all the information you can supply on so momentuous a subject. In the mean time, I will not conceal from you my determination, that unless the subject of the Bishop's argument can be overthrown, I must, of necessity, no longer abstain from receiving the Communion in that Church, where alone the real presence of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, is acknowledged.

" I remain,

" My dear Sir,

" Yours very sincerely,

" JOHN ELMSLEY."

YORK, 7th OCTOBER, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR :

" I have to acknowledge your letter of this day, enclosing a pamphlet, of which you avow yourself the publisher. With the distinguished Prelate's works, of which this pamphlet forms a very small part, I have been for some time acquainted, and readily admit

that, next to Bossuet, it is the ablest apology for the Roman Catholic Church that I have yet seen. I am, nevertheless, astonished that the Bishop's exposition of the 6th Chapter of St. John should have made so deep an impression on your mind, for no tenet of the Roman Catholic Church appears to me so completely unscriptural, and so extensively pernicious, as that of transubstantiation, nor any that has been more triumphantly refuted by Protestant writers; and had I been called upon to point out the weakest portion of the Bishop's treatise, I should have pointed to that which you have published. You must allow me to premise, that the very fact of your having printed and disseminated this Pamphlet before referring to me, affords me but small encouragement to enter upon the subject of which it treats, as it evinces a strong predilection on your part in favour of the Bishop's reasoning; and when our best Protestant writers, which you say you have read, have failed to convince, I dare not flatter myself with the hope of being able to satisfy your scruples, but since you have called upon me as the ancient friend of your parents, and as one who takes a lively interest in your eternal interest, to state my sentiments, I will do my best to convey to your mind that sincere conviction of the unsoundness of the Bishop's argument which pervades my own. I must, however, bespeak your patience, as the preparation for the opening of the Church, and other avocations press upon me at present, and will prevent me for some weeks from giving that attention to the subject which its importance confessedly merits.

"I remain,

"My dear Sir,

"Yours, very sincerely,

"JOHN STRACHAN."

The members of the Roman and English Catholic Churches, both Clergy and Laity, have always lived on the most friendly terms in Upper Canada, and will I trust continue to do so. The former believed the field to be sufficiently large for their spiritual labours, and therefore assiduously abstained from controversy. A regard for the tranquillity of their flocks, and the variety and extent

of their duties, appeared to dictate this line of conduct to the Clergy; and their situation has hitherto afforded them but little leisure or convenience for polemical discussion. But new converts, anxious to spread the strange light that has burst upon them, are not so easily restrained within the limits of a prudent discretion; and therefore Mr. Elmsley thought it necessary, as it would appear, even before his final conversion, to labour for the conversion of others, by publishing an english translation of the Bishop of Strasbourg's commentary on the sixth chapter of St. John. It was, I freely confess, at the first view not a little mortifying to me to see the son of two old and valued friends, zealous and enlightened members of the Church of England, forsaking the faith of his parents, and that of his uncle, one of the brightest pillars of our Ecclesiastical establishment, and one of the most eminent classical scholars in Europe. Yet so conscious was I that Mr. Elmsley's defection would have no effect as an example, that had he been content with the silent possession of his novel opinions, and not attempted to spread them among my people, I should not have undertaken their refutation. The tenets held by the Roman Catholic Church, and in which she differs from the truly Catholic Church of England, have been so often, and I think so clearly refuted, that Mr. Elmsley's adoption of them, when considered in all its bearings, carried with it, in my apprehension, no weight whatever. He might therefore have ascribed infallibility to the Pope; adopted transubstantiation; auricular confession; indulgences; invocation of the Saints; the adoration of the Cross, and the worship of relics, &c. &c. without any molestation from me, for I should have considered it sufficient on proper occasions to have marked my dissent from such opinions, and to have shewn on what ground our Church pronounces them unscriptural, and holds them to have no foundation in truth or in the bible. His letter and pamphlet, however, evidently assumed the nature of a challenge, and deprived me of the power of remaining any longer silent. I must acknowledge that I was not a little astonished that he should have embraced at once the doctrine of transubstantiation,

which protestants justly consider the most incredible of any held by the Church of Rome : a doctrine, as we shall prove, unknown to the primitive Church, and without the slightest countenance from scripture. But it was perhaps still more astonishing that Mr. Elmsley's adoption of this tenet should have been produced by the Bishop of Strasbourg's observations on the sixth chapter of St. John, when it is recollected that many able divines, both ancient and modern, are of opinion that it has no reference to the Lord's Supper, and is directly opposed to the doctrine of a real physical presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. To me these circumstances offer some hope ; for if so slight an argument as can be drawn from a disputed explanation of a passage of scripture, whose application to the subject is doubted, has unsettled or carried conviction to his mind, when the utter weakness of that argument is shewn, he may return to the true fold. Perhaps Mr. Elmsley has been bewildered by the words "real presence," for he seems to think, from the last paragraph of his letter, that the real presence of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist is only acknowledged in the Church of Rome ;—in this he is greatly mistaken, for the doctrine of the real presence in the Lord's Supper is held by all Protestant Churches, and particularly by the Church of England : not indeed as the Church of Rome holds it, a corporal or physical presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood ; for that Church maintains, in contradiction to reason, scripture, antiquity and the evidence of our senses, that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the very substance of Christ's personal body and blood ; but the Church of England believes that the bread and wine become holy and the spiritual body and blood of Christ, and therefore the real presence which she maintains is spiritual—not carnal ; for Christ's body is in heaven, not to return till he come with his Mighty Angels to judge the world. How then, to adopt the language of one of the most eminent Prelates of our Church, can his body be supposed to come down to twenty thousand different Churches to be divided, chewed, swallowed and digested : the presence therefore for which we contend is the spiritual presence of Christ ;

a presence by which we abide in Christ and Christ abideth in us, to the obtaining of eternal life, and such presence is fitly named a "real presence," for it is not feigned, but true and faithful.

My first intention was strictly to confine myself to the Bishop of Strasbourgh's commentary on our Saviour's remarkable discourse in the Synagogue of Capernaum, but finding it perverse and erroneous, I thought it better to enlarge my plan, and to give such an account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as should not only contain a full answer to the Bishop, but tend to instruct and edify my congregation, and all Christians who should peruse my work on one of the most important parts of our holy religion. Having little relish for controversy myself, I thought many were of the same taste, and I have therefore divided my subject into three sections:—*First.* Observations on the Eucharist. *Second.* A short History and Refutation of Transubstantiation. *Third.* Remarks on the Sixth Chapter of St. John's Gospel.—The first section I feel warranted in recommending to the perusal of all who are desirous of forming a just conception of the Lord's Supper. The second and third sections contain less of the spirit of controversy, than is usual in such publications, and are relieved by many remarks which perhaps to most readers will be new and striking.

The numerous calls upon my time have delayed the work some weeks longer than I intended, or rather the delay has been occasioned by enlarging the plan. I have consulted all the authors on the subject within my reach; nor have I scrupled to mix up their observations with my own, and even to use their words, for little absolutely new can be said upon a subject which, from its great dignity and importance, has employed the pens of the principal Christian writers, since the days of the Apostles. My great aim has been lucid arrangement and perspicuous statement, and if I have succeeded, the touching beauty and value of the ordinance of which I treat, will make my performance useful to the Christian inquirer.

I remain,

My dear Brethren,

Your affectionate Pastor,

JOHN STRACHAN.

SECTION 1st.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE EUCHARIST.

ST. MATTHEW, xxvi Chap. 26, 27, 28, & 29th, verses.

“ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

“ And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ;

“ For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

“ But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my father’s kingdom.”

ST. MARK, xiv Chap. 22, 23, 24, & 25th verses.

“ And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

“ And he took the cup ; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them : and they all drank of it.

“ And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

“ Verily, I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

ST. LUKE, xxii Chap. 19th & 20th, verses.

“ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of me.

“ Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

I. CORINTHIANS, xi Chap. 23, 24, 25 & 26th, verses.

“ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread :

“ And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me.

“ After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood ; this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

“ For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.”

THESE are the Scriptures which are considered as more especially instituting the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, or as having an immediate reference to that most solemn ordinance. It will be seen from their perusal, that the history of its first

celebration is given by the first three Evangelists in their several Gospels, and also by St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in nearly the same words. St. John, who wrote his Gospel long after the others, and rather to supply what was wanting than to repeat what was already written, omits this as a thing perfectly understood by the Church.

It is not a little pleasing to remark, that there is scarcely any variation in the several accounts of the institution; that given by St. Paul is perhaps the most full and impressive, and was communicated to him by revelation of Jesus Christ, for this Apostle conferred not with flesh and blood concerning the truths he was to deliver, and yet the harmony between him and the Holy Evangelists in every particular, is strikingly perfect: hence, we may perceive the care taken by its Divine Author, that its history should be clearly recorded, and its importance unequivocally made known. In illustrating the nature and intention of the institution, as they appear from the several parts of the record, we shall aim only at simplicity and plainness, for no eloquence can adorn a rite so beautiful, or language add sublimity to an ordinance so holy. This seems not only profitable but necessary, before we proceed to examine the grounds of difference which unhappily divide the Roman and Anglican Churches on the subject of this Sacrament.

The first thing that commands our attention is the person who instituted this Sacrament—the Lord Jesus Christ,—on the evening of the day which preceded his death, Jesus met his disciples in an upper hall in Jerusalem, that he might eat with them the Paschal Lamb; and knowing that he had performed all things appointed for him by God, and was on the ensuing day to complete his obedience by suffering a public and ignominious death, he sat down with the twelve: the Messiah so long expected, whose coming had been the occasion of so much

preparation and of so many splendid promises to the chosen people, was now about to complete the work given him to do by his Heavenly Father: the friends who were associated with him on this interesting occasion, were those humble men whom he had selected as the companions of his hitherto limited labours, but who were about to assume the character of the greatest of all the instructors that have ever been chosen by Divine Providence for the communication of spiritual blessings to mankind.

Our Lord was to partake for the last time of the Paschal ceremony, before that holy service which had been kept sacred with such peculiar feelings by the Jews in all their generations should have its meaning accomplished in the event, which it was appointed to prefigure. For the atonement represented before the crucifixion in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, bore the most exact resemblance to the sacrifice of Christ that the connexion of the event, with its type, might be so evident as to be easily recognised and admitted; but the same close resemblance not being necessary in a symbol of commemoration, that symbol was changed to prevent any confusion between the old rite which was prophetic, and the new one which was commemorative and sacramental: between the Jewish sacrifice which had no independent and inherent efficacy, and the Christian sacrifice which possessed it. Nor ought we to be ignorant of the intimate connection between the Jewish and Christian dispensations, which nowhere presents itself more forcibly than in the striking resemblance of the Passover to the Eucharist,—both were of divine appointment, and both were sacraments. The Passover was a memorial of a great deliverance from temporal bondage, and the Eucharist is a memorial of a far greater deliverance from spiritual bondage: the death of Christ was prefigured by the Passover before it was accomplished, and the Eucharist

represents or figures that precious death now past, both are federal rites between God and man.

As no person was admitted to the feast of the Passover before he was circumcised, so no one is to partake of the Eucharist before he has been baptized. Neglecting or despising the Passover, was considered so great a crime as to render the offender liable to be cut off from Israel, and in like manner to despise or neglect the Holy Communion, is in effect to be cut off from Christianity. The Passover was to continue while the Jewish law was in force, and the Eucharist shall abide as long as Christianity. Such is the striking correspondence between the Lord's Supper and the feast of the Passover. To Christians, therefore, as well as to the Jews, there is a night to be much observed unto the Lord in all generations, and to both, the manner of observing the night is appointed with thanksgiving:—"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, and has delivered our souls from death."

This sitting down of Jesus with the twelve was singularly impressive, for he knew that he was soon to pass through his last and most difficult trial; that already one of his disciples had consented to betray him; that the rest would desert him in his distress; that all would be offended, because of him that night, for the shepherd was to be smitten, and the sheep of the flock to be scattered abroad: with these thoughts labouring in his mind, he resolved to have one meeting of love with those whom his Father had given him, and whom he loved unto the end. While therefore they were eating, he took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said: "Take eat; this is my body, which is broken for you:" in like manner, after supper, he took the cup, saying: "This is the New Testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many; drink ye all of it: and this do ye in remembrance of me."

Thus like a father on his death bed, surrounded by his children, he sat among his disciples for the last time ; and with a view of impressing them strongly with the awful importance of the events which were about to happen, and by a natural reference to his body and blood, to which the bread and wine incidently on the table before him bore some resemblance, he made them the symbols of the most important event which was ever to happen in the annals of time. By this simple and beautiful rite, his death and its precious benefits were to be commemorated to all coming times, and eventually over the whole face of the habitable globe. By the bread and wine the forgiveness of sins, through the atonement made by our Saviour's sufferings and death, and also the spiritual assistance which he promises to all believers are set forth ; the bread is broken, and the wine poured out to denote our Saviour dying for us ; the bread is also eaten and the wine drunk, to denote the spiritual strength and refreshment and life which we derive from our Lord's mysterious presence and union with us : now this glorious event, which saved a perishing world, is not to be commemorated in sackcloth and ashes, in tears and lamentations, stripes and penance ; nor are we required to give our first born for our transgression, the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul ; neither are we desired to go forth on pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre ; nothing harsh, nothing burthensome, nothing melancholy is required from us. We are only commanded to meet in holy fellowship around the table of our Lord, to personate the Holy Apostles, and to receive the sacred elements which he formerly distributed to those well tried servants, when he met them for the last time before his death. We kneel together with the kind affections of Christian brethren, of men who partake of the same misfortune, and who look forward to the same deliverance. Our Saviour has done so much, that we are desired to

do little more, than with faithful and honest hearts to look forward to the completion of his work. He asks nothing that is grievous or distasteful to our feelings, he only bids us remember him, and the manner in which we are to remember him is not with downcast and sorrowful countenances, but with glad hearts, and by a social and friendly ceremony to attend to his injunction, "This do in remembrance of me."

Although Christ instituted both Sacraments, he officiated only in the Holy Supper, a distinction which, considering the importance which he attached to both, cannot be supposed accidental. It is indeed a distinction perceptible in several of his parables, and especially in his first recorded miracle of Cana of Galilee, when he changed water into wine; the water, when made wine, was then and not till then placed in the hands of the governor of the feast, to be dispensed to the guests. It should indeed seem that our Lord foresaw the notion so erroneous, that would creep into the Church respecting the nature of the bread and wine administered in the Eucharist, and therefore to render its absurdity the more palpable, he officiated himself. Another important reason evinces the wisdom of our Saviour's being the Priest at the institution of the Lord's Supper, and this arises from the nature of the things signified by the two Sacraments. They are as it were an epitome of the Christian scheme. Baptism represents the agency of the Comforter; the Eucharist the agency of the Son. The admission into his Church was not the work of our Lord himself, but of his disciples, filled with the Holy Ghost, and the ceremony of that admission was baptism: but the redemption of those so admitted was the work of Christ, and of this the Eucharist is a symbolical pledge. Hence this institution exhibits, by a significant action, the characteristic doctrine of the Christian faith; that the death of the author, which seemed to be the completion of the rage of his

enemies, was a voluntary sacrifice, so efficacious as to supersede the necessity of every other, and that his blood was shed for the remission of sins. His disciples by partaking of this rite, publish an event most interesting to all the nations of the world, and far from being ashamed of the sufferings of their Master, they glory in his cross.

Our Redeemer might have exalted any creature by his appointment to be to his Church a memorial of his body and blood, but there are some obvious and affecting reasons for the selection of bread and wine. They are pure elements which his followers would be able to procure in every age, and the Church for the consecration of them to the purpose, would partake of the same symbols in every place. The loaf and the cup, which among the Jews the master of the feast at the close of supper distributed among the guests, in token of peace and good will, stood before our Lord, and were with instructive felicity converted into the elements of that Sacrament in which we receive from him the assurance of his favour and love.—Wine, God hath provided to make glad the heart of man, and bread hath he ordained to be the staff of our subsistence, and most significantly do they represent that refreshment of the soul and nourishment unto eternal life, which those find in the body and blood of Christ who spiritually receive them in this Holy Supper. In the use of these symbols, the faithful are impressively taught their joint communion in the mercies of Christ, and their union with each other in him. For though there be many grains reaped perhaps from divers fields, yet is there in the same loaf but one bread; and though there are many grapes gathered perhaps from several vineyards, yet is there in the same cup but one wine. 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. The bread and wine were in themselves nothing more than means of corporeal strength and refreshment. Not till our Lord had blessed did he break the bread, not till he had broken the bread and taken the cup, and by his word and benediction hallowed them to this purpose, were they in any sense his body and blood. It was his consecration and offering of them as symbolical of his sacrifice of himself, which gave them their sacred significance, and converted them into the means of spiritual sustenance : and of bread and wine thus consecrated and made holy symbols, according to the ministry of the word by Divine appointment, and offered to God after the same manner, must we partake when we desire to receive this Sacrament, for otherwise we cannot be said to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. The necessary authority Christ left with his Apostles and their successors forever, and to them, and such as they shall authorize, does it exclusively appertain on behalf of their Master, to bless the cup and to break the bread : for, in the act of breaking the bread, is shadowed forth the breaking of our Lord's Body, who is the sustenance of the faithful, and in the pouring out of the wine is represented the shedding of his blood, as the libation which propitiates the Father, and washes away the sins of the world.

Hence the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been deemed by the pious a feast upon a sacrifice, a spiritual feeding upon the body broken and blood shed of Christ, under the symbols or signs of bread and wine ; that is, partaking of the atonement made by our Lord's death and sufferings, and a perfecting and strengthening our mystical union with his glorified body. Though first enjoined on the Apostles, the participation in this Sacrament was made obligatory on all Christians, in

remembrance of Christ, in the fulfilment of the most important part of his history. The Apostles best understood its nature and origin, for they were chosen to bear testimony to the event which the Lord's Supper was to call to remembrance, and they not only admitted, but earnestly invited the converts to partake of the Sacrement. It was for many ages thought to be altogether inconsistent with a Christian profession to be otherwise than a regular communicant. Indeed the great eagerness of the Christians of the primitive Church to participate in this sacred mystery, bore the freshness of the deep impression made upon their hearts by the preaching of our Lord and his disciples. They felt that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not of man but of God, that it was appointed by their Saviour whom they were bound to love, and whom they had pledged themselves in baptism to serve and obey. The injunction laid upon the Apostles by Christ, to do what he had done, to take the bread and the cup, and to bless them, and distribute them as a memorial of his death and passion, necessarily implied that there should be recipients. But who were to receive his body and his blood but the members of the Church? who were to unite in this solemn communication before God of the sacrifice of the death of Christ? but those who hope by that death to obtain remission of sins; who were to eat at the table of the Lord of this feast upon a sacrifice, but those who felt that they had need of the pledges of God's favour and goodness towards them. Thus was the institution understood by the first Christians, who cannot be supposed to have been ignorant of the design of the ordinance or intention of their Lord. Therefore on the first day of the week in all their assemblies, the celebration of the Supper was the great act of their public worship, and every person who had been grafted into the body of the

Church, and had not forfeited his privileges by notorious iniquity, was considered as not only having a right, but as being under an indispensable obligation to join in this Holy Eucharist.

When our Saviour said "do this in remembrance of me," he suggests the simple but peculiarly interesting idea on which the celebration of the Sacrament is founded. It is doing as it were over again what our Lord did with his disciples at the last interview which he had with them before his agony, his apprehension and crucifixion. It is not enough to remember him as a great and good man, a wise instructor, an admirable teacher while he lived, and that he was received up into celestial glory when he died: nor is it sufficient to remember Christ as an eminent prophet and ambassador from Heaven, a worker of miracles, and leading a most holy life, nor to remember him as our Head Lord and Master, to whom we owe the greatest veneration: nor is it enough to remember Christ as higher than the angels, but we are to remember him as our Divine Lord, as God with us, as the true God; our Almighty Saviour and Deliverer, the only begotten of the Father over all, God blessed forever. To make this fundamental conception the more vivid, we must call to remembrance the last Supper, and place ourselves in the upper chamber in Jerusalem, where it was eaten. The scene then before us, when viewed in all its circumstances, cannot be paralleled among all the meetings that ever took place upon earth: and whether we consider the party—the august rites which it was to terminate—the transcendently important ærea in the history of mankind, which it was to introduce—the great sufferings that were to fall upon the head of him who presided, or the wonderful display of affection and humility, and of all holy submission and sublime fortitude and calmness that characterized his proceedings, there is obviously none among all the meetings that ever occurred among men, at

which every human heart must feel so natural and ardent a wish, that it also had been so favoured by God, as to have made one of the company that then met together. He who presided had an equal regard for all his friends to the end of time ; his mind embraced the interests of all the individuals that should in all future ages and in every country of the world be sincerely disposed to obey his commandments. The little flock that then sat round him, and had followed him in life, were but representatives of that august and innumerable company whom he is to conduct into his heavenly kingdom. And wishing that his friends in all ages, and over the whole face of the earth, should enjoy an honor and privilege of the same kind with that which his personal presence then conferred on his more immediate friends, he said “ this do in remembrance of me.” He therefore who now officiates at this solemnity, as it is administered in our Churches, represents for the time, that Divine Teacher who sat down with the twelve before he suffered death. Those who partake of it also personate for the occasion those chosen friends whom Jesus had admitted to his intimate fellowship ; and they take their places at the table as the Apostles once took their seats at the Paschal table, where Jesus himself condescended to give them this parting token of his dying love. No mode of commemorating the death of their Master could have been selected more simple in itself or so well adapted by every affecting association to recall the events it was meant to suggest. It is obvious, beautiful and touching ; it only requires our Lord’s disciples of all ages to meet together, as he met with his friends on the last evening of his intercourse with them in time. That they should repeat that last Supper at which he gave them his parting instructions ; and should thus have their imaginations and affections recalled to the recollection of all the love with which he loved his own, of all the condescension with which he

had honoured them in his familiar converse, and of the divine pity which induced him at last to avoid not even the horrors of an ignominious death, that he might accomplish the work which his Father had given him to do.

The association of our Saviour's memory and sublime example, with some solemn circumstance to guard against the sloth and negligence incident to the weakness of human nature, evinces the wisdom of the institution of the Holy Supper. As often as Christians meet at the altar, they bind themselves afresh to their Divine Master's service; whether learned or unlearned, we are all animal as well as rational creatures. Sensible objects more forcibly affect us and make deeper impressions than words, and the more of our senses that are moved in the same manner and in the same view, the stronger and more durable must the impression be which is made upon the mind. Now this is precisely what happens in the Lord's Supper. That which the ear admits by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus and his saving death, that likewise the eye sees, and the taste as it were feels, so that we may say in some manner with the Apostle, "that which we have heard with our ears, which we have seen with our eyes, and which our hands have handled—that we believe and confess concerning Jesus, the author of life and happiness." At the Holy Supper, therefore, all are in the fairest harmony, the thoughts and senses are turned on one and the same subject, the absent is in a manner present, and the unseen visible. How greatly this conduces to renew the memory of Christ, and with how much force and vivacity it operates on our minds, is matter of experience to every communicant. In this view, therefore, the institution of the Holy Supper, and its continued use, have been, and will ever be, the surest means of preserving the memory of Christ, his death and resurrection, amongst mankind.

But the last Supper goes still farther than a repetition by his followers in all their generations of their affectionate remembrance of his spotless character and dying love ; for the very elements distributed by our Saviour were made emblematic or symbolical of the great interest which they had in the sacrifice which he made. He therefore directed them to consider the bread which he had blessed as a symbol of his body, which was about to be broken, and the wine as an emblem of his blood, which was soon to be shed for the transgressions of men. But not satisfied with such a consecration as conferred only a figurative and symbolical character on the elements of bread and wine, and which the words of our Saviour, pronounced by the Apostles, were only intended to confer, the Roman Church, by giving a new sense to Christ's expressions—This is my body ; this is my blood—has given rise to the afflicting and portentous error of transubstantiation, by which the true meaning and striking beauty of the ceremony have been long hid from many professing christians : and thus the simplest and most interesting and instructive of all the religious rites that have ever been given to the world ; the one most founded on natural feelings, and destined to give satisfaction to universally experienced wants, has been covered with mystery which has made it in the Church of Rome the most perplexed and mystical of all the ceremonies that have ever darkened the imaginations, or lessened the mutual good will of the human race. But most fortunately that Church stands almost singular in her erroneous apprehension of this ordinance ; and the general distribution of the Scriptures, and rapid dissemination of knowledge, is enlightening her children on this subject, as well as many others, and restoring among all the followers of the cross, that affecting and spiritual conception of the Sacrament which was entertained by the whole Christian Family

for more than eight hundred years after the ascension of our Saviour.

Indeed this, and every other error that may have attached itself to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, will vanish before the honest interpretation of our Saviour's own words, and a reference to the spiritual nature of his blessed religion. When sitting with his disciples our Lord may be supposed to have said, this is the last supper that I shall eat with you before I suffer the things that have been foretold of me in the Law and the Prophets, and the Psalms. An awful scene of darkness is approaching, through the utmost horrors of which I am to pass ; and I shall soon bow my head in death, amidst the insults of men, and the apparent desertion of God : yet all this is but working out the glorious designs of my heavenly Father, for the welfare of mankind ; for my death is henceforth to be viewed by all generations as the sacrifice with which God is well pleased, and for the sake of which, forgiveness of sin and eternal hope are to become the portion of all that have been given to me. As often, therefore, as ye shall eat bread and drink wine, made by consecration in my name symbols of my body and blood, ye do shew forth my death in an acceptable and effectual manner. Ye shew it forth to the Father as your plea for pardon, grace, and immortality ; ye shew it forth as gratefully impressed upon your hearts, and as an inducement to me to forgive and preserve my Church, having redeemed it with my blood : ye do shew it forth to the world as the subject of your faith, of which you are not ashamed, as the only ground of your reliance for pardon and immortality, and through which alone, man can obtain everlasting life : ye shew it forth to each other as a source and occasion of common joy, of mutual consolation and encouragement, of tender friendship and reciprocal good services : ye shew it forth to your own souls as the purchase of your

redemption, as the sure foundation of hope and peace, as the sacrifice by which your sins are taken away, and ye are restored to the love and favour of God. It is, therefore, obvious, that the intent and meaning of this Holy Rite is a commemoration of the death of Christ, in all its aspects and benefits both here and hereafter; a commemoration in which we declare ourselves his disciples, believing in and relying upon the redemption and mercies that are in him; a commemoration, desiring especially to be fed with that bread of Life which came down from Heaven; to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, that we may have eternal life abiding in us. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in whatever aspect it is honestly viewed, is found to produce the same beautiful and interesting results, namely—a devout recollection of the death of Christ, as the grand and central event in the sublime œconomy, by which the covenant of reconciliation between God and Man is sealed; and the promise of forgiveness and eternal life is now made freely, and in the name of Christ, to all who believe in him and obey his laws.

The adaptation of this sacrament to the condition and illumination of all the varieties of men, who may ever partake of it, is exceedingly striking. The simplest and most humble of mankind in respect to intellectual attainments, is in a condition to understand its import and to feel its beauty; and, perhaps, the simplest understandings and best conditioned hearts are better adapted to receive the full impression of the solemnity than those of greater expansion of thought, but of less simplicity of moral feeling; and yet, this rite opens the most glorious field of contemplation, even to the most enlightened of mankind, by the recollections which the symbolical character of the elements employed in the service, was

meant to awaken. This, said the Redeemer, is my body which is broken for you, and this cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many. All the spiritual blessings of the new covenant seem thus, in the simple elements of bread and wine, to be set before the view of the communicant; all the grand scheme of the Divine œconomy, and all the glorious consequences which its provisions are intended to effect for the moral regeneration, the intellectual and religious culture, and the final forgiveness and salvation of the human race. It is a service worthy of having been instituted by Divine Wisdom itself, adapted to the intellectual condition of all orders of worshippers, and fitted at once to interest the hearts of the most simple, and to employ with an exhaustless fund of ever expanding treasures, the intellect and imagination, and most refined sentiments of those who have attained or shall ever attain to the utmost possible reach of human perfection. Indeed, the higher beings delight to look into this mystery, and in its study, the finest and loftiest spirits that have graced and enlightened humanity, have evinced their affinity to those of Angels, by finding it a favorite subject of devout contemplation; to think lightly therefore, of this service, or to regard it because of its symbolical character as fitted only for those who live rather by sight than faith shews the greatest presumption, for while by this character it is made interesting to the hearts, and level to the imagination of the lowliest, it offers objects of thought on which the most improved and expanded intellect that has ever adorned humanity, may continue to expatiate with increasing advantage. Thus is the Divine Wisdom of our Lord most beautifully pointed out in this ordinance; for, it is so ordered, as not only to be suited to the infinitely varied condition of those, who in all ages and countries, shall ever partake of it, but so as to stand

for ever an evidence of the Divine foresight of him, by whom it was thus consecrated for the use of men.

The sacramental character of the Lord's Supper is of the greatest importance; it is an oath of fidelity taken to our Divine Master, as a soldier in ancient times, bound himself by an oath, to be true to his Prince or Commander; it is an oath, not indeed, taken in words, but by the holiest of all symbols, namely—the holding in our hands, and partaking of the symbols of the body and blood of our Redeemer, that we will be true to his service; that we will avoid all known sin, practice all known duty, take the example of our Lord as the model of our lives, and endeavour in all things, to obey the pure and charitable precepts which he has given us. Here, we have another beautiful adaptation of the solemnity, to the wants and welfare of men; for it is of great moment that there should be times when a man may recall his thoughts from their wanderings, and solemnly devote himself to the service of that Being who has given him his place in life, and made him capable of offering unto him a reasonable service; and what time so proper for this solemn vow; what service so likely to impress it upon ones heart, and to give it every awful and touching sanction, as that in which we thank God for his great mercy, in sending his Son to be a partaker of our nature, and to die for our sins, in which we appear as supplicants for that pardon, which we all feel ourselves to need, and humbly hope, through Christ, for that eternal life, which is not denied for his sake, to any that come to him with true purpose of heart.

The Supper, says the Evangelist, being ended, and Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from Supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel

and girded himself. After that, he poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments and was set down again, he said unto them : know ye what I have done to you ? Ye call me Lord and Master ; and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet : for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. The intimate communion and fellowship taught by this incident, ought to prevail among all those who partake of the solemnity, and are united in its performance with their Divine Master : because it is of the greatest value. They pledge themselves to kindly feelings and good offices to each other ; and as all are united, the rich and poor, the wise and ignorant, great and low, meet at the same ordinance, eat the same bread and drink of the same cup, to remind them that all distinctions are for the time lost in the recollection of higher and more interesting relations, and that consequently the same feelings of good will ought to be carried into all the scenes of familiar and active life. In this Sacrament we commemorate the love of God manifested through Christ, in forgiving the offences of men, proclaiming free pardon to all who bear the sinfulness of this our human nature. Hence the duty of universal pity and charity to the human race, flows from the ceremony, and from our preparation for it, with peculiar effect to every human heart. At such times we feel inclined to forgive our enemies, and to be reconciled to those whom we imagine to have done us wrong : and indeed such is the sanctifying power of the solemnity, that the most untutored mind, while engaged in its performance, must feel that one of the most inconsistent of all things would be the provoking or indulging enmity against any human being.

Now it is evidently of great moment, that there should be seasons when the duty of mutual forgiveness ; of being reconciled to enemies ; of silencing every angry passion in our bosoms, and of indulging the sublime and purifying feeling of love to the whole human race, should be conscientiously performed by every one of us ; and what service so likely to dispose the heart to perform this duty as that in which we appear before God to thank him for the pardon of our manifold sins and offences, and to commemorate his boundless pity and truly divine love in sending his Son in the likeness of man, that through him we might have strong consolation and good hope, through grace.

The Eucharist is distinguished in a very remarkable manner from the more solemn ceremonies of ancient times, by its wonderful simplicity and easiness of performance. This characteristic, which to vulgar eyes seems to place it below the more splendid ceremonial of Jewish and Heathen worship, fits it for many of the most valuable purposes, and confers upon it superior excellence and beauty ; it rests upon the kindest affections the most holy recollections ; it is a repetition of Christ's last Supper with his chosen friends ; a devout commemoration of his death. Nor is it less distinguished from the pompous services of other times, by the extent of its duration. All other ceremonies terminate with the nations which have adopted them ; but the last Supper is intended to continue as long as the world, and not to give place to any other service. Nor is it less distinguished from the more remarkable ceremonies of all other nations, by the intended universality of its adoption among men ;—for it is not only to last while time endures, but with the Gospel itself it is destined to be diffused among all nations, and thus to become in time, what by its nature it is fitted to be—the grand festival of the human race. And

this it is more especially calculated to be from the precious and universally felt nature of the blessings it commemorates, and the wants it professes to supply. It is a thanksgiving for pardon of sin ; for divine pity manifested to a sinful race of beings ; for good news published from heaven to earth ; for the blessed hope of everlasting life. Now these are the greatest of all conceivable blessings, and those for which the hearts of all the children of men have ever felt the most deep seated and abiding wish.

The beauty and excellence of the Eucharistical service will appear in a most interesting light from the farther consideration, that it is rather one of pure and humble feeling, of good intention, and of charitable thoughts and moving recollections, than of profound knowledge, or of any of the more valued qualifications towards which the ambition of men is often erroneously directed : it seeks rather to promote the best state of the feelings of men, or set their hearts right, than to augment their intellectual wealth ; and the most acceptable worshipper is not the man who is best acquainted with all the mysteries of the service, or who has formed to himself the justest and most affecting estimate of its nature, but the man in every rank and in every degree of culture, who approaches it with the most sincere sense of his own frailties ; the truest gratitude for divine mercy ; the most determined pursuit of all holiness, and the most fervent charity and good will to all who bear the same human nature.

These different and striking characteristics, as well as the nature and object of the institution, prove that although confined to the twelve on its first celebration, it was designed to be a perpetual ordinance of the Church, and to become the privilege of her children. All, therefore, who stand related

to Christ as the disciples did; all who look for salvation by his death, and who after the way of his appointment have been grafted into his Church; all to whom the Saviour has been manifested as Lord and Christ—are called upon to partake of the Holy Eucharist. In the primitive Church, every adult christian who had not been set aside for his unworthiness, was a frequent communicant;—indeed the Church itself invites all such as shall be religiously and devoutly disposed: for the command of our Lord is—drink ye all of it; and who that looks for salvation by the blood of Christ, can abstain from the grateful commemoration of his death. If there be among christians one duty which may be raised above another, when all rest upon the same authority of their Lord, it is that of observing with proper affections the rite which he hath ordained for the perpetual commemoration of his death, as the sacrifice for sin; a sacrifice without which we could never have had any certain assurance of forgiveness: for he was not a man merely, but was also one who, being in the form of God, “thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” In this point of view, the general and frequent attendance upon the Last Supper, is well calculated to make upon our minds impressions of deep regret for our sins, and hearty resolutions of amendment.

The Lord’s Supper suggests in a most emphatic manner, our Saviour’s second coming, to which the faithful look forward, when all his promises will be completed, and those whom he approves, will be made happy with him for ever. The very form of the Sacrament justifies St. Paul’s explanation; that it shews forth the Lord’s death, in the belief, that he will

come again in the glory of his Father, to judge the World. He will no longer wander over an obscure part of the earth, a poor and neglected stranger, scorned by the wicked, and scarcely acknowledged by any of the good, suffering all the misfortunes incident to human life, and finally enduring the punishment of a criminal; but he will appear sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven, and every kindred, and tongue, and nation, shall be gathered before him. If we determine therefore, to be good and faithful servants, we are well assured that our Master has the power as well as the will, to reward us, and grateful ought we to be, that our Saviour, by the institution of this Sacrament, has given us a solemn opportunity of frequently calling to mind the great leading maxim of the Christian life; that we are strangers in a foreign land, travellers through a scene of danger, combatants in a serious warfare, and that we must fix our eyes on our true country, and bear up with faith and hope.

At no time has the devout Christian so clear an impression of the Divinity of our Saviour, as in this the most solemn act of religious worship, in which he can engage. He feels that Jesus is that Divine person which in so many places he declares himself to be. The Divine person whom the Prophets foretold and the Apostles taught, was the Son of the highest; Immanuel, God with us; God manifest in the flesh, the true God and eternal life; a proper object of religious worship to men and angels; possessed of all the perfections, maintaining all the functions, and taking part in all the operations of Deity. But rapturous emotions, or any preternatural manifestations of Divine love, will not be looked for by sober and faithful Christians. Yet they know and feel that blessings of a most substantial and most satisfying kind will not fail to accompany a becoming preparation for this Sacrament, and to follow the

vows they have taken. They read in Scripture, that from the participation of this holy supper, they may justly expect that their views of the Divine economy and of the purpose of Christ's assuming human nature, shall be extended and brightened; that their resolutions of new obedience shall be confirmed and realized; that their love to the whole human family shall be encreased; and that the assurance of blessed immortality shall be gradually advanced to a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Surely these are blessings of the most precious and truest kind, and we are authorised by Christ, without presumption, to believe that they will be conferred upon every sincere communicant: Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed, therefore let us keep the feast; he was the true sacrifice, the Paschal Lamb, by whose blood we obtain remission of our sins, are sanctified and saved. Therefore, the memory of this precious sacrifice, and of all the blessings which flow from it, is to be observed by a feast frequently to be repeated by all Christians to the second advent. Then shall our Saviour's power shine forth over all flesh in its meridian glory, when the mystery of God shall be finished, and when we shall see and feel our interest in the glory of him, who is the bond of union between things in heaven and things on earth.

It is manifest that in coming to the Lord's Supper, the communicant should have a clear and satisfactory conception of the nature, the object and value of the institution; he should consider it as the primitive Christians undoubtedly did, a true and proper sacrifice, and indeed the noblest we are capable of offering, for it calls upon us to give alms and oblations to the poor, the sacrifice of prayer from a pure heart: the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ; the sacrifice of a penitent and contrite heart; the sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies; and the sacri-

fice of faith and hope and self humiliation, in commemorating the grand sacrifice made by our Redeemer, and resting entirely on it as our atonement. In such a service, and so viewed, the heart and the affections must be right: we feel the sinfulness of our own nature, and are aware of the love of God, in sending Jesus Christ his Son to be a propitiation for our sins, and we are induced to accept with gratitude the offers of pardon, which are made in the Gospel through Jesus Christ, to those who sincerely repent of their iniquities. Such views and considerations naturally induce us to break off every unholy habit, to resolve to live in obedience to God's holy laws for the time to come, and cherish a spirit of love to the whole human family, and consequently be willing to be reconciled to any with whom we are living in enmity. To profit by this Sacrament, we must prepare ourselves by continued and earnest prayer, that God may command his blessing from on high, and that his Spirit may prepare us for doing in an acceptable manner this honourable and solemn service. We must qualify ourselves by knowledge of the Scriptures: faith, repentance, love and new obedience, and the means appointed for obtaining the requisite qualifications are, retirement, serious self examination, reading the Book of Revelation, humble prayer for the sanctifying and strengthening influences of the Holy Spirit: and all these should rather be habitual than occasional, for the sincere Christian is always prepared to come to the table of the Lord and is ever ready to confess, and desirous to forsake his sins: he rests entirely on the merits of the Redeemer, and gratitude warms his bosom at every remembrance of his love.

But let no true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ keep back from this holy ordinance, from mistaken notions of the measure and degree of preparation which it becomes him to possess, in order to engage in it with profit and acceptance.

The coming to the Lord's Supper is as much the duty as it is the privilege of the sincere Christian, and none such ought on slight grounds to exclude himself from this ordinance. It is appointed by that Being whom we acknowledge and are bound to love, as our Saviour whom we reverence, as the Lord of all things whom we have confessed as our master and instructor, and have pledged ourselves in our baptismal covenant, to serve and obey: it is a positive institution of that Saviour, in a conformity to whose will, safety and happiness, improvement and final approbation, will always be found. Great indeed are the inducements and powerful the reasons which should bring all the followers of the Lamb to his holy table, nor ought any to cherish excuses for so fatal an omission. Are they conscious of sin? Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, who turn unto him with penitent hearts and lively faith. Are they deficient in repentance and faith?—but will they ever escape from this sad state of bondage, if they deny themselves the appointed means of grace, and refuse to receive the Redeemer in his veiled presence at his holy table? This is a direct act of disobedience added to their iniquities, and how shall they under such circumstances approach him in the unveiled display of his glory, when he cometh in judgment? Are they scandalized because they see many going to the Supper of the Lord? who seem altogether unworthy. This is indeed afflicting and humiliating, but the unworthiness of others can never pollute the ordinance to us. Judas, the basest of men, was present at the first celebration of the Supper, and hence we learn that duties which others prostitute or perform insincerely, we are not on that account to neglect. Are any deterred from the fear that they may not subsequently live up to their obligations? This may be humble, but it implies a forgetfulness of the baptismal covenant, which imposes the same

obligations, the same faith and duties: nor should it be forgotten, that when our exertions are faithful, God's grace is sufficient for us, and that when we are weak, then he is strong. And let no Christians think that because he that receiveth the Sacrament unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own condemnation, that therefore he that receiveth it not hath chosen the better and safer part, for as those are condemned who come not to the Lord's Supper with a due preparation of mind, so are they condemned who willingly refuse to come forward. Some are perhaps deterred from the striking observation of St. Paul, "That he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Now by "damnation" is not here meant, as many suppose, everlasting destruction, but the immediate disapprobation, the displeasure of the most High, which displeasure is manifested as the Apostle states, by visiting unworthy communicants with temporal judgments, in order to their final salvation: at the same time, it were to be wished that the word damnation had been rendered condemnation, as it ought to have been, and as it actually has been in a subsequent verse of the same chapter. Moreover, the Apostle is here addressing himself to the Corinthians, who had fallen into an irreverent and in some cases a profane manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper.—Against this irreverence, St. Paul with great propriety employs the most severe reprehension: but his solemn sentence will not light upon those who qualify themselves in a becoming manner for receiving this Sacrament. And let it also be remembered, that although it is desirable, that all who come to the altar should come with happy feelings and glowing affections, fully prepared to admire the beauty of the Lord, to relish the provisions of his love, and with joyful lips to sing his praise: yet there may be true principle, where there is not perfection, real

faith where there is not strong faith, a warm heart towards the Saviour, while the eye that looks to him is dimmed with tears, and the hand trembles that lays hold of the hem of his garment. The altar is provided with encouragement, as well as nourishment, and is spread not more for those who are going on the way rejoicing, than for those who mourn in Zion; for every case a Divine supply is prepared. Let our faith be only in lively exercise, and it will be found that there is no want in the Christian experience for which the love of the Saviour has not made a suitable provision.

The benefits to be derived from a worthy participation in the Eucharist, have been in a great measure already anticipated; and indeed if we think ourselves bound either in duty or policy to promote our greatest happiness, to establish a title to the blessings of this life and that which is to come, we cannot more effectually do so, than after we have examined ourselves, by eating of that bread and drinking of that cup: for in so doing, we are admitted into the privilege of entering into a state of reconciliation with God, whom we have in so many ways offended by the breach of our former vows and promises: God the Father engaging to pardon and forgive us; God the Son to continue his intercession for us; and God the Holy Ghost to quicken and assist us with his heavenly influences; and the whole ever blessed Trinity to conduct us to the kingdom of glory; in this manner is our condition in the world sanctified, so that whether we are poor or rich, sick or in health, all things will certainly work together for the best, and God himself will choose for us, who not only knows better than we ourselves do what is most for our benefit, but likewise is more affectionate and constant in the procuring it for us.

The Eucharist is a sacrificial feast, instituted in memory of Christ's death, and conveys, as the Church expresses it, an

inward and spiritual grace, and all the benefits at which a sacrifice arrived: as pardon, favour and thanksgiving. It imparts to us the benefits of a sin offering; namely, atonement and forgiveness, expressed in the words, "This is my body given for the remission of sins," and restores to us the power of receiving every communication of Divine grace necessary to our future and eternal salvation: it farther includes the benefits of a peace offering, expressed in the words, "Take eat, this is my body," clearly intimating that by the nature of the ordinance we are placed in a state of acceptance with God: it is moreover a federal rite, for in drinking the blood of the new covenant, we obviously apply to ourselves all the precious benefits procured by that covenant, by which we have justification, peace and the gift of grace; that is, sanctification, in truth all the fruits of the spirit. So just is the account of the Lord's Supper given by our Church:—"The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not a badge or token of a Christian man's profession, but rather a certain and sure witness and effectual sign of grace, and God's good will towards us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him."

It will be seen from the remarks already made, how interesting, how obligatory, how holy and significant, how proper and useful, this Sacrament of the Supper is: and yet a leading cause of its neglect is a thoughtlessness as to its true nature and importance. Many persons never seriously consider it as the true and proper act of Christian worship: as an ordinance, which by their baptismal vows they are solemnly pledged to observe and keep as a Sacrament, instituted for the whole body of the Church, which no member can neglect without great detriment to his spiritual life.

They have never reflected that this ordinance was not made for a few, but for all the followers of Christ, and they allow themselves to think, that because they are unfit, it is innocent if not meritorious to abstain from this Sacrament. They forget that this unfitness proclaims aloud the degeneracy of their character, and the peril of their condition. Their unworthiness to appear at this heavenly banquet ought to be a new motive to urge them to make their peace and effect their reconciliation with God; to seek the wedding garment of holiness and righteousness, that they may thus be meet partakers of these holy mysteries: it is the duty of all real Christians to approach the table of the Lord, in order to seal their covenant with God; so long as they know and acknowledge that they are utterly unfit for this sublime duty and privilege of the children of God; they confess themselves his enemies, and are in danger of being everlastingly excluded from the Divine presence: he that is unfit to come to the Lord's Supper, is unfit for death, unfit for judgment, and unfit for heaven.

Let no person however suppose, that they ought lightly to come forward and give an unmeaning attendance at the altar of the Lord: if they are blasphemous, slanderers, unclean, malicious, or living in the habitual breach of any of the commandments, let them repent sincerely of their sins before they come to that holy table: but to the young, I would speak the words of encouragement,—come with holy boldness to your father's table; nor would I speak harshly to those who feel a conscious disqualification that for a season keeps them back; the scruples of a tender conscience require the kindest treatment, as they indicate a state of mind not inaccessible to warning and entreaty. Let such place themselves on the ground on which alone sinners can stand; confess themselves unworthy, and pray that their iniquity may be taken away; let them

plead what Christ hath done to take away sin : dwell with confidence on his merits, his righteous life, his atoning death, his triumphant resurrection—his perpetual advocacy ; and coming thus to God through Christ, they may dismiss all their fears of being rejected : he will receive them graciously, he will love them freely, he will place them among his children, and number them among his jewels : henceforth they will draw, with joy, water out of the well of salvation ; with enlargement of mind will they join themselves to their fellow disciples, to profess a faith and love, no longer strangers to their bosoms, and with them look forward to a place at the marriage supper of the Lamb in the sanctuary above.

SECTION II.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

According to the Church of England.

“The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather is a Sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; inasmuch that to such as rightly, worthily and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break, is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

“Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of bread and wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitious.

“The body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received, and eaten in the Supper, is faith.

“The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up or worshipped.”

28th Article of Religion.

According to the Church of Rome.

“I do likewise profess, that in the Mass there is offered a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, are truly, really and substantially in the most Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and that the whole substance of the bread is turned into the body, and the whole substance of the wine is turned into the blood, which change the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation.

“I do also profess, that whole and entire Christ, and a true Sacrament, is received under one kind only.”

17th & 18th Articles of the Creed, established by Pope Pious the Fourth, and the Council of Trent.

ON referring to the Gospels, we find that our Lord, at the institution of the Eucharist, did three things:—First. He took the bread and the cup of the Jewish Paschal Supper, and separated and consecrated them, making them the representative figures, symbols or substitutes of his body and blood. Second. He

offered them in sacrifice to God, and by these pledges voluntarily gave or offered to God his body and blood as a sacrifice upon the cross. Third. He blessed them, that they might become his body and blood, not in bare figure or representation only, as they were made by his separation of them before, but in efficacy and life-giving virtue: and as such he gave them, with these words, which are the ground of our faith and hope: "This is my body which is given for you," "this is my blood which is shed for you." After Christ our eternal High Priest had performed his own oblation of himself once offered, that one all sufficient sacrifice, which gave virtue to all the rest before, as well as after his appearing, he authorized and commanded his Apostles, and in them all their successors in the Christian Priesthood, to do as he had done, although not to the same end: for what he did was in order to his actual death of inexhaustible merit, but what we do is in order to commemorate and receive the mercies and blessings of it; to perpetuate under the figures or representations, which he had appointed the memorial of his death and sacrifice; to plead his merits with the Father, and to obtain all the benefits which by his death he purchased for mankind, pardon, grace and eternal glory: "Do this" he said, "in remembrance of me."

The most essential part of the Eucharist is the symbolical use of bread and wine, which Christ ordained for our instruction, and the form of words with which he taught us to accompany it. Now a corruption in its celebration may take place in two ways; first, by omitting any essential part; or second, by appending to it circumstances inconsistent with its true character: of both these kinds of corruption the primitive Church was wholly guiltless, as most evidently appears from the accounts handed down of the manner they adopted in its celebration. The Bishop or Priest first gave thanks to God for all

his mercies, especially for those of creation and redemption; then to shew the authority by which he was acting, and his obedience to the commands of Christ, he recited the words of the institution of the Holy Sacrament which he was celebrating: in doing this, he took the bread into his hands, and brake it, to represent the body of Christ; the cup also of wine, to represent the blood;—over the bread and the cup, he repeated Christ's powerful words: "This is my body," "this is my blood;" the elements being thus made the symbols or representations of Christ's crucified body and blood, were offered to God as the great and acceptable sacrifice of the Christian Church. The Bishop or Priest continued his prayer, and intreated the Almighty Father to send upon the bread and wine the Holy Spirit to sanctify and bless them, and to make them Christ's spiritual life-giving body in power and virtue, that to all the faithful they might be effectual to all spiritual purposes. The officiating Bishop or Priest then received the Eucharist in both kinds himself, and proceeded to deliver it in both kinds to the people. In these days the utmost simplicity prevailed; to have reserved any part of the Eucharist for the Ministers alone, or for any one privileged class of believers, would have been to manifest a violation of that great principle of equality recognized by the Gospel, that in the sight of God there is no respect of persons. The communion of the body and blood of Christ was deemed a privilege of the most precious kind, to which every convert was entitled; and so far was the Church from throwing any impediment in the way, that she earnestly and affectionately invited all her members to partake of this holy Sacrament; and it was long thought to be inconsistent with the Christian profession, to be otherwise than a regular communicant.

Nearly fifty of the most ancient Liturgies have been collected, among which we find one, which has been attributed to St. James, our Lord's brother, and which was assuredly constantly used in the very first age in the Church of Jerusalem. This Liturgy may be justly considered one of the most precious monuments of ecclesiastical antiquity, and its strict conformity with the account given by St. Cyril of his service, is a demonstrative proof that it has come down to us in all its original purity and simplicity. Now, however much these numerous Liturgies differ in other things, they agree with that of St. James, and with each other in their manner of consecrating the elements, and in their distribution: the consecration is solemnized by the three steps already noticed.

1st. The words of our Saviour's institution, containing the Priest's authority to celebrate the solemn office, and his setting apart the elements, as the representatives of his body and blood, broken and shed for the sins of the world, by pronouncing over them the words of Christ: "This is my body," "this is my blood." 2nd. A solemn oblation or offering of these instituted memorials, in sacrifice to God the Father, commemorative of his Son's death and passion. 3rd. Prayer for God's acceptance and blessing upon them by his Holy Spirit, sanctifying them through his Divine power, so as to make them the spiritual life-giving body and blood of Christ, and the means of conveying to the well disposed receiver, all the benefits purchased by our Lord's sacrifice for mankind, pardon, grace, and eternal life.

In accordance with the ancient Liturgies and Eucharistic services of the Church universal in its primitive times are the sentiments of the Christian authors of those ages, commonly called the Fathers. These form a cloud of witnesses to the commemorative sacrifice, representative and yet efficacious

and communicative of the blessings obtained for us by Christ's body and blood. This Holy Sacrament, says Ireneus, (quoting one out of many,) consists of two parts, an earthly and an heavenly: bread and wine from the earth, but the body and blood of Christ in spirit, power and heavenly efficacy. Far indeed were the Father's from imagining any change in the bread and wine, but only in their qualities, by the sanctifying power of the Divine spirit, for so the blessed author of the high and heavenly mystery had taught them "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you are spirit, and they are life." Thus we have seen, and it deserves our particular attention, that in all the forms of administering the Eucharist handed down from the first ages, the most harmonious concurrence prevailed, and that the three important points noticed above, were invariably introduced in the same order. Nor did the Church of Rome, then a highly respected Church, for purity as well as station, differ (nor for many ages after) from the Church of Jerusalem or other Churches, in the celebration of the Eucharist, all of them arranged the service in the same order, and gave to the words the same interpretation. We have further the unanimous testimony of all the ancient Fathers and early writers of the Christian Church from the very beginning, and for many ages downward, that this is the true and real import of our Lord's command, and that their manner of administering the Eucharist is the only way in which it ought to be administered.—From all this the fullest conviction arises, that such is our Saviour's gracious will on this his last and dying command: antiquity, universality and consent, all concurring in this just interpretation of scriptural truth, and in the administration of the Lord's Supper, in both kinds to communicants. This universal testimony of the Church cannot deceive us: that

which was taught and practiced in all considerable Churches, for the first four centuries, must be of apostolical authority ; and indeed without this testimony of the Church, it is impossible to prove the canon of the New Testament, or to establish the authority of the books which it contains, and surely there can be no testimony so satisfactory in ascertaining the nature and design of the Holy Eucharist, as that of the primitive Church. To her we are indebted for the authenticity of the records of the institution, and to her we must look for rightly understanding the mind and will of the Apostles, from whom she received the records of our Lord, and by whose doctrines and practice she was instructed in their true meaning.

Had the Scriptures represented the Lord's Supper, as simply a memorial of our Saviour's death, there would have been little room for variety of opinion ; but these are expressions, both in the words of the institution and in other places of Scripture, which open a further view of this ordinance, and which differently apprehended, may give rise to some difference of sentiment. In the words of the institution, Jesus calls the cup, "the New Testament or covenant in my blood," this implies some connexion between the cup drunk in the Lord's Supper, and the new covenant, which may call forth some variety of conception. He likewise says, "This is my body, this is my blood," which implies a sacredness, of the degrees of which different apprehensions may be entertained respecting their connexion. The Apostle St. Paul, in reciting the words of the institution to the Corinthians, for the purpose of correcting certain improprieties in celebrating this ordinance, speaks of the guilt and danger of eating and drinking unworthily, in a manner which to some conveys an awful idea of the sanctity of the Lord's Supper, and to many suggests the most precious benefits, as the certain consequences of eating and

drinking worthily. Now as these passages of Scripture would naturally give rise to some difference of opinion respecting the ordinance, in some of its aspects it seems to indicate the special care of the holy spirit, that the Eucharistic service of the Church has ever been so carefully framed upon the apostolic model, that during the first eight ages, not the smallest innovation was ever attempted, and even now, with the exception of the Roman Church, which has departed from the primitive usage, almost all other regular Churches, even to that recently discovered in the Mountains of Malabar, however divided among themselves in other respects, exhibit in the service of the Eucharist the most harmonious concurrence. This must of itself carry strong conviction to every candid mind, that such was the true meaning and form of our Redeemer's most holy institution, and according to which his Apostles acted and instructed.

But the spirit of God does not always contend with the spirit of man, and the mental darkness, which for many ages overspread Europe, the natural progress of error, the credulity of superstition, and the artifice of designing men, multiplied corruptions in the Church, and produced a firm belief in the most incredible things. But neither the veneration for reliques, the prayers for the dead, and the invocation of saints, are to be compared, unscriptural as they are, to the victory obtained in the thirteenth century, by Pope Innocent, over the common understanding of man in establishing transubstantiation : it is indeed the most astonishing departure from common sense recorded in the history of the human mind ; for it requires us to believe that the words " This is my body," " this is my blood," are to be understood in their mere literal sense, that when Jesus pronounced these words he changed, by his Almighty power, the bread upon the table into his body, and the wine

into his blood ; and really delivered his body and blood into the hands of his disciples ; and that at all times, when the Supper is administered, the Priest, by pronouncing these words with a good intention, has the power of making a similar change. This change is called transubstantiation, for it means that the bread and wine are not altered in figure, taste, weight or any other accident, but that the substance of them is completely destroyed, and that of the body and blood of Christ substituted for it, that the persons receiving what has been consecrated do not receive bread and wine, but literally partake of the body and blood of Christ, and really eat his flesh and drink his blood. It is further conceived, by those holding to this doctrine, that the bread and wine thus changed are presented by the Priest to God ; and he receives the name of Priest, because in laying them upon the altar he offers to God a sacrifice which, although it is distinguished from all others, by being without the shedding of blood, is a true propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the dead and of the living. The body and blood of Christ which were presented on the cross are again presented in the sacrifice of the Mass. It is conceived that the materials of this sacrifice being truly the body and blood of Christ, possess intrinsic virtue, which does not depend upon the disposition of him who receives them, but operates immediately on all who do not obstruct the operation by a mortal sin. Hence it is accounted of great importance, for the salvation of the sick, that parts of these materials should be sent to them ; it is further conceived, that as the bread and wine when converted into the body and blood of Christ, are a natural object of reverence and adoration to Christians, it is highly proper to worship them upon the altar, and that it is expedient to carry them about in solemn procession, that they may receive the homage of all who meet them.

Hence arose that expression in the Church of Rome, the elevation of the Host, *Elevatio Hostie*. But as the wine, in being carried about, was exposed to accidents inconsistent with the veneration due to the body and blood of Christ, it became customary to send only the bread, and in order to satisfy those who for this reason did not receive the wine, they were taught that, as the bread was changed into the body of Christ, they necessarily partook of the blood with the body of which the flesh retained particles or drops. In process of time, the people were not allowed to partake of the cup, and it was said when Jesus spake these words, "drink ye all of it," he was addressing himself only to his Apostles, so that his command was fulfilled, when the Priests, the successors of the Apostles drank of the cup, although the people were excluded: and thus the last part of this system conspired with the first in exalting the Clergy above the Laity, for the same persons who had the power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and who presented what they had just made as a sacrifice for the sins of others, enjoyed the privilege of partaking of the cup, while communion in one kind only, was permitted the people.

Such is the doctrine imposed upon the Church by Pope Innocent, not that this Prince was its inventor, for during the great ignorance, depravity and superstition of the ninth century, Pascasius, Abbot of Corbey, was, according to Cardinal Bellarmine, the first who wrote in express terms upon the subject: but though not the inventor, the honor of establishing it as an article of faith belongs to Innocent the Third, for he had sufficient influence in the fourth Lateran Council, held in 1215, to get it inserted as a necessary matter of belief, it was farther confirmed in the Council of Trent, and at length inserted in the Roman Catholic Creed, promulgated by Pope Pious the Fourth, in 1564.

When this extraordinary doctrine was first proposed by Pascasius, it was most strenuously resisted as untenable and hostile to the simplicity, truth and beauty of the Christian Theology, by the most learned and pious men of the age.—Raban, Archbishop of Mentz, a Prelate, deeply skilled in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew Languages, celebrated for his great erudition, and deemed the glory of Germany, opposed this innovation with determined hostility. Scotus, also so much celebrated for his skill in Languages, Philosophy and Theology, wrote against the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and his work circulated through Christendom more than two hundred years without incurring the charge of heresy or experiencing any mark of reprobation from Pope, Council, Clergy or Laity. Bertram, esteemed for the sanctity of his character, and his profound attainments in Science and Theology, wrote a book on the body and blood of the Lord, in answer to the interpretation of Pascasius, which was widely disseminated through the Christian world, and was never condemned for heresy.—Many other eminent men wrote and contended against this novel doctrine, whose names in a brief review like this, need not be mentioned: and it is the less necessary, as the free and extensive circulation which the publications of Scotus and Bertram obtained, without even any insinuation of error, must, to every unprejudiced mind, furnish irresistible proof of their conformity to the received doctrine of the Church in the ninth century, and that transubstantiation was then a novelty.—Indeed the very fact that this doctrine produced the most bitter contention from its first publication till it was confirmed two hundred years after by the Lateran Council, is demonstrative of its novelty, and that before that period it was totally unknown to the Church. It has therefore no claim to Ecclesiastical antiquity, for the Church in her primitive days of

simplicity and piety, and even after many inferior corruptions had crept in, believed without exception till the ninth century that the bread and wine retained their own nature or substance, and conveyed nourishment to the human body. She farther believed that they were made to the faithful the channels of the most precious blessings, and sanctified by the prayer of consecration; that they underwent a moral change similar to the water in baptism. Had the doctrine of transubstantiation been true, how came it to be hid from the Apostles and first Christians, from the Churches in the East and in the West, from all the followers of Christ for more than eight hundred years; and why was it left to struggle nearly eight hundred years longer before it was adopted by the ruling part of only one denomination of Christians, while on the other hand, almost all Christians, for more than eighteen centuries, have held the same doctrine concerning the elements of bread and wine as the Church of England now does; and even now the belief of transubstantiation introduced upon human authority is confined to the Roman Church, and believed to be only received in a qualified sense by a portion of her members.

It is evident that the doctrine of transubstantiation rests upon the strictly literal meaning of the words, "This is my body," "this is my blood." Now it has been shewn that they were not so read and understood in the primitive Church, by which they were taken in a figurative sense, as if our Lord had said, this represents my body, this represents my blood; or, this signifies my body, this signifies my blood: expressions of this sort are common in all languages; on looking at a medal we naturally say, this is Julius Cæsar; or at Mr. Pitt's bust, this is Pitt. In Scripture they are very numerous: thus Joseph, in Genesis says, the three branches are three days, the three

baskets are three days; the seven fat kine are seven years, the seven good ears of corn are seven years, that is, signify seven years; the rock that followed the Israelites, says St. Paul, was Christ, that is represented Christ; thus Daniel, the ram with the two horns are the Kings of Media. In the parable of the Sower, our Lord says, the seed is the word, and the figure is carried through the whole parable; Christ calls himself the door, the vine, and his father the husbandman; he calls his disciples the salt of the earth, the light of the world: St. Paul having spoken of Sarah and Hagar, adds, these are the two covenants: the seven stars (says St. John) are the angels of the seven Churches; and in the Book of Exodus, after God had spoken of the Paschal Lamb, "This is the Lord's Passover." Now our Saviour, substituting the Holy Communion for the Sacrament, follows the style of the Old Testament, and uses the same expressions as the Jews were wont to use at the celebration of the Passover. In all this there is nothing violent, so far to the contrary, that common sense prompts such a reading, and in all of them the speakers give them the same meaning, as that which we contend for in the passages instituting the Lord's Supper. If we refer to the conduct of our Lord at the institution, we shall find that the disciples who were present could give them no other interpretation, and surely they were as competent judges as Pascasius, who did not come into existence till more than eight centuries after; nor will it be presumptuous in us to understand the Eucharist as St. Peter and St. Paul understood it, rather than follow the Abbot of Corbey. Our Lord took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take eat: this is my body;" now of what did the Saviour speak, but of the bread which he had just given them, and which they held in their hands; was it not bread still? did he not speak of that

thing which he took and brake and gave them? and what was that but the true bread, which he then distributed. It is impossible to believe, nor did the Apostles present so believe, that our Saviour meant this bread is my natural body, this wine is my natural blood: on the contrary, acting as a Priest, according to the order of Melchisedec, whose sacrifice typical of his was the pure offering of bread and wine, our Lord offered the same, that is, his own body and blood represented by bread and wine as pledges of his body and blood, which the day after hung upon the cross, a sacrifice for the sins of the world. When our Lord made this oblation, and gave himself at the last Supper to suffer and to die, under the symbols or substitutes of bread and wine, we cannot without horror give them a literal interpretation, or think that he would lay violent hands upon himself—wound and break up his own body, and shed out his own blood: our more rational belief is, that he did, under representatives of his own appointment, figures of his body and blood, sure pledges of the real substance, give his body to be broken and his blood to be shed by the hands of his crucifiers: and in order to shew his transcendant love to lost mankind, he made a voluntary oblation of himself while still in perfect liberty: no man, he said, taketh away my life from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; when therefore he said to the Apostles, “Take eat,” &c. we are to understand him as saying: Take eat; this bread now broken and given to you, is the memorial or representative of my body, which is under this emblem now given, offered and devoted to God for you: This do, continue to do as I have done; and thereby make this memorial of me and of what I now do when I am gone from you: and drink ye all of this cup, for this cup is the memorial or representative of my blood, which is now under this emblem devoted

and offered to God, as shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins ; do as I have now done, as often as you make this memorial of me.

Moreover, to take the words in their literal sense is to believe that the Lord took himself, and gave himself from himself, and was eaten even by those disciples that did not touch him ; and his blood was drunk by them even whilst it remained in his veins : but these things are so totally opposed to the most common understanding, that no one can for a moment admit them. That the Apostles understood our Saviour in a figurative sense evidently appears from the fact, that they expressed neither terror nor amazement, as they certainly would have done had they understood him otherwise. But they saw and knew what he took and broke, that it was the real bread on the table ; they did not suspect any secret meaning, nor did our Saviour declare any change, as appears from his own words. St. Paul's expressions are inconsistent with any change in the substance of the elements, for speaking of the communicants he saith, " for as often as ye eat this bread," and again, " we are partakers of that one bread," calling it bread after consecration ; for it is certain that the elements are not to be eaten nor drunk till they are consecrated, and that we are not partakers of the elements till we eat and drink them, and yet the Apostle calls it bread even after participation, " for we are partakers of that one bread." And our Saviour calls the wine, the fruit of the vine, even after the Apostles had drunk it ; he farther says, this cup is the New Testament of my blood, which words could not be meant in a literal sense, for the cup could not be changed into a covenant, though it might be a representation or memorial of it.

Let it be remembered that all languages are more or less figurative, and those of Eastern nations are especially so. In

the Scriptures the diction abounds in figures, and the discourses and speeches of our Saviour are full of them. Now to discover the true meaning of such words and passages we are not to take them in their literal sense, when it would involve an impossibility. Thus, when God declares the Prophet to be a defended city ; an iron pillar ; a brazen wall : we must consider the words figurative, because taken literally they involve that which is impossible : again, when such words and expressions, taken literally, are contrary to common sense, or the context, they are to be taken figuratively :—thus, when the Psalmist exclaims, “ awake, why sleepest thou ?” he means moral, not natural sleep. “ The blood of Jerusalem,” means the blood shed and the murder committed by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In applying these two rules to the institution of the Lord’s Supper we find that the literal sense is not only repugnant to sacred history and involves an absurdity, but that it is contrary to the context, and to many parallel passages : yet upon a forced and literal construction of these words the Church of Rome, since the thirteenth century, has erected and maintained the doctrine of transubstantiation, or of the conversion of the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper, into the actual body and blood of Christ ; a doctrine which is manifestly repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the very nature of a Sacrament, and giveth rise to many superstitions. In truth, to take the words “ this is my body,” in the sense of transubstantiation, is in direct contradiction to the senses as well as to the reason of mankind ; and yet the Church of Rome will not understand the plain institution of the Sacrament, in both kinds, like men who believe not that there is a God who made the world, but can swallow a thousand things far more difficult.

“ This is my body,” “ this is my blood,” therefore simply mean, this represents my body, this represents my blood ; for

these words were spoken before Christ's body was broken upon the cross, and before his blood was shed. He could not therefore pronounce them with the intention that they should be taken and interpreted literally by his disciples, nor did they so understand him ; nor ought it to be forgotten that the Apostles at their first council forbid blood ; and would they forbid blood and yet enjoin the taking of blood ? In the Syriac, as well as the Hebrew and Chaldee languages there is no word which expresses " to signify," " represent," or " denote."—Hence it is that we find the expression " it is," so frequently used for " represents", " denotes," or " signifies." This is (represents) my covenant betwixt thee and me ; this is (represents) the Lord's Passover ; the ten horns are (denote) ten kings ; the field is (denotes) the world ; the good seed is (represents) the children of the kingdom ; the tares are (represent) the children of the wicked one ; the enemy is (represents) the devil ; the harvest is (represents) the end of the world ; the reapers are (represent) the angels. Such expressions may be multiplied from the scriptures, but these appear sufficient to shew that any man in the present day would use no other terms than those employed by our Saviour—" this is my body," " this is my blood," meaning, this represents my body, this represent my blood, if the language in which he was speaking had no other mode of expression, as was the case with that used by our Redeemer.—Hence we perceive in what sense the consecrated bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ ; they are so sacramentally only, or by representation changed in their qualities, not in their substance. They continue bread and wine in their nature ; they become the body and blood of Christ in signification and mystery ; bread and wine to our senses ; the body and blood of Christ to our faith ; bread and wine in themselves, the life-giving body and blood of Christ in power and virtue. Therefore by

the appointment of Christ, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, the faithful receive in them the efficacy of his sacrifice and death, to all spiritual intents and purposes. There is therefore, in this holy institution, no ground for the error of transubstantiation, with which the Roman Catholics have, for five centuries, perplexed the Church of Christ. The natural blood and body of our Lord are in heaven, in glory and exaltation ; we receive them not in communion in any sense ; the bread and wine are his body and blood sacramentally and by representation. And as it is an established maxim, that all under the law, who did eat of a sacrifice, with those qualifications which the sacrifice required, were partakers of its benefits ; so all who under the Gospel eat of the Christian sacrifice of bread and wine, with the qualifications which the holy solemnity requires, are made partakers of all the benefits and blessings of that sacrifice of his natural body and blood, which Christ Jesus made to God for the sins of the whole world.

It has been well observed, that it is a sufficient confutation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, that it contradicts our senses, since we see and taste that the bread and wine after the consecration, and when we actually receive them, still continue to be bread and wine without any change or alteration whatever. Moreover, it overthrows the very nature of a Sacrament, by supposing what we eat and drink to be the thing signified, and not the sign. In fine, transubstantiation has no foundation in truth, but without reason or necessity, puts an absurd and impossible sense upon the words of our Saviour, " This is my body," " this is my blood," by which it is no more proved, than the words, " This cup of the New Testament," prove that the material cup which was used in the Sacrament, was substantially changed into the New Testament : and no more than those texts which affirm God to have eyes and ears

and hands, prove that he really has them. It contradicts four of the five senses, and undermines the foundation of all certainty. Had the Apostles preached transubstantiation and the renouncing of our senses, miracles would have afforded no evidence of the truth of the Gospel, for that which depends upon the certainty of sense as miracles do, cannot prove that which is contrary to sense. Now miracles, which are the best and highest external proof of Christianity, oppose transubstantiation as a part of the Christian doctrine, unless we are prepared to disbelieve our senses upon the evidence of which all miracles rest. A man cannot believe a miracle without relying upon his senses, nor can he believe transubstantiation without renouncing them. The main evidence and confirmation of the Christian doctrines, viz: miracles, is resolved into the testimony of our senses, but such evidence is against transubstantiation, for as it renounces the senses, miracles can give it no confirmation: for that which depends upon the certainty of sense, as miracles certainly do, can be no competent argument to prove that which is contrary to sense, as transubstantiation evidently is.

The Council of Trent, in laying down the doctrine of the Mass, seems to draw largely on the credulity of the Roman Catholics, for according to their decree, the wafers used in the Holy Communion of the Roman Church, are converted into the flesh of Christ; and the wine into his blood, each also possessing his soul and divinity. Besides, the wafer is converted into Christ's blood as well as flesh, and likewise the wine, so that every wafer, and every drop of wine is perfect Christ, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting, consequently, if ten millions of Christians are communicating at the same time, there may be in different parts of the world the same number of perfect Christs, &c. Now this appears to me to be

a doctrine which no man able to comprehend the meaning of words, can possibly comprehend or believe. Revelation is built on the testimony of the senses; and since we are forced to believe what reason reluctantly admits—that the Son of God became an infant; that he was crucified; that he arose from the dead; that he ascended into heaven with a body of flesh and blood: these facts we admit on the evidence of the senses alone; nay, we admit them on the evidence of the senses of others and not of our own. But the belief demanded by the Council of Trent, in the doctrine of transubstantiation, invalidates the whole of this evidence, for it implies that the senses may be deceived, and leaves it impossible to ascertain, when they are not deceived.

Our Lord directed the Apostles, after his resurrection, to handle him that they might be convinced that he was not a spirit: but had a Roman Catholic been present, and urged that their senses were no criterion, for if they handled the wafer it would appear bread although actually flesh, and that Jesus might appear a body and yet be spirit; it would have been impossible to have refuted him, nor under such circumstances is there any test to which our Saviour could have appealed. Roman Catholic writers endeavour to neutralize the force of this argument, by stating the imperfection of our senses and their liability to be deceived. In the same manner certain classes of enthusiasts deny our reason, and certain heretics the evidence of the primitive Church: but such expedients only shew a consciousness of weakness in the cause they seek to advocate; our senses and our reason, whatever may be their imperfections, are our only guides, for by their means we arrive at all our knowledge, sacred and profane, it is therefore much wiser to improve than to depreciate our faculties. Transubstantiation, if true, must be a miracle equal to the greatest and most incom-

prehensible that has ever been wrought by the power of God, but it rests not on the evidence of our senses as Moses' rod : the water turned into blood in Egypt, or into wine at Cana of Galilee. These were palpable, open, evident and designed, as a testimony of the power of God or the divinity of Christ : all the miracles stand upon like proof, a proof open and not imperceptible as that alleged in favour of the doctrine of transubstantiation ; had it been otherwise, men would have doubted and not believed. I know that it is said, that the belief of this doctrine is effected by a supernaturally infused faith, and therefore it is excepted from the general rule : but this answer implies a total misconception of the nature and objects of a divinely infused faith. The work of saving faith is not to convince the understanding of facts, but to incline so effectually the heart and the will, that they embrace and appropriate the consequences, which flowing from those facts affect ourselves. Having disposed of this apology, rather than reason for the doctrine, we may rest assured, that transubstantiation cannot be true, because it neutralizes every imaginable evidence on which the common sense of mankind builds the certainty of every imaginable thing, respecting which we possess the capability of forming a judgment. To this extravagant demand on our credulity, we may look with some degree of hope, as suggesting the application of a principle which, in skilful hands, will overthrow the dominion of the Church of Rome in the heart of many an uneducated, yet sensible man. Such a person cannot judge of the testimony of the Fathers, and as to the interpretation of Scriptures, he may feel inclined to acquiesce in the dictation of those to whom he has from infancy been taught to look up with reverence and faith. But in the use of his senses, he has ever been in the practice of judging for himself, and the happy moment may arrive, when he will

apply himself to this false doctrine, and cast off the spiritual oppression which insists on its right to stultify them.

When the real truth of our Saviour's presence in the Eucharist, not in the substance of his humanity, which the Heavens must receive, till the times of the restitution of all things, but in the real presence of his divine power and virtue, by the Holy Spirit, began to revive out of its darkened and obscure state in the sixteenth century, the doctrine of transubstantiation appeared particularly obnoxious to the awakened senses of sincere Christians, and rather than acknowledge it as true, many holy men and women embraced the stake and died in the flames. When these evil times had passed away, the reformers of the English Church renounced transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass as altogether unscriptural, and they restored the celebration of the Eucharist to its ancient purity, in which it is shewn to be the commemorative sacrifice of Christ's body broken, and blood shed for the sins of the world, represented according to his own institution, in bread and wine, according to Melchisedec.

In fine, I can never believe transubstantiation, since it implies that our senses, employed on proper and familiar objects, are so much deceived as to destroy all dependence upon them. I never can believe that our Saviour taught his disciples before his death not to believe in their own senses, which he must have done if he taught them transubstantiation, and that the very first thing he did after he was risen from the dead, should be to ask them quite the contrary, by appealing to the certainty of sense for the proof of his resurrection. I never can believe a doctrine which strikes at the identity of Christ, which St. John's grounds upon the evidence of the senses: that they had heard, seen, looked upon and handled, of the word of life. I can never believe a doctrine that strikes at the cer-

tainty of what St. Luke calls infallible proofs of the resurrection ; which were none others than what the senses afforded : that strikes at the ascension which took place publicly, for no other end than that the sorrowing Church might have a sensible and intelligible foundation for her trust in him : who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. I cannot believe transubstantiation, unless I can believe that truth can contradict and destroy itself : to conclude, if any can receive a doctrine so unscriptural in itself, and so dangerous in its consequences as transubstantiation, they do right to continue Roman Catholics, but if they doubt this doctrine of the Eucharist, it is high time to lay aside dissimulation and renounce the Church which maintains it. He who candidly examines the case, and is aware of its importance, will find that the doctrine of the Church of Rome holdeth to the letter which killeth : that of the Church of England, to the spirit which giveth life. Sincere minds will discover to which the preference is due, without indulging unjust suspicions or uncharitable assertions.

SECTION III.

SIXTH CHAPTER ST. JOHN, FROM VERSE 27 TO 71, INCLUSIVE.

" 27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

" 28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

" 29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

" 30. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

" 31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

" 32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

" 33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

" 34. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

" 35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

" 36. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

" 37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

" 38. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

" 39. And this is the Father's will which has sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

" 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

" 41. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

" 42. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

" 43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

" 44. No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

" 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

" 46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; he hath seen the Father.

" 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

" 48. I am that bread of life.

" 49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

" 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

" 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

" 52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

" 53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

" 54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

" 55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

" 56. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

" 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

" 58. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

" 59. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

" 60. ¶ Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?

" 61. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

" 62. *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

" 63. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

" 64. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

" 65. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, That no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

" 66. ¶ From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

" 67. Then Jesus said unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

" 68. Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

" 69. And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

" 70. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

" 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."

IN the history and refutation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, given in the second section, I purposely reserved for special consideration, what our Lord says in the Sixth Chapter of St. John's Gospel, because the Bishop of Strasbourg seems to think that the strongest argument for the real presence is derived from that portion of Scripture. In this opinion the learned Prelate has the misfortune to differ, as will afterwards appear, with the most ancient Fathers of the primitive Church, as well as with the most able Divines belonging to his own, and when we can place St. Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Athanasius, Cyril, Augustine, Pope Gelasius, and Facundus, in opposition to the Bishop of Strasbourg, the latter stands as an author, in a position by no means enviable. On reading the Sixth Chapter of the Gospel of St. John, you will find, that our Saviour, after feeding the five thousand, was under the necessity of withdrawing himself from the multitude, as they were going to take him by force to make him a King; believing, from the supernatural power that he had displayed, that he was able to deliver them from all their enemies, and to redeem the Jews from their present slavery under the Roman yoke. Jesus, having retired to the mountain alone, his disciples set sail for Capernaum, and while they were tossed by a tempest in the midst of the sea, they saw the Lord walking on the waters, and immediately they found themselves at land. Next morning the multitude sought Jesus through the whole neighbourhood, for they knew that he had not gone

in the ship with his disciples, but not finding him, the most forward of them procured some boats and went in search of him to Capernaum. Beholding Christ on their arrival, surrounded by his disciples, teaching the people in the Synagogue, they were unable to contain their astonishment, and exclaimed—"Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" Jesus knowing their spirit and temper, rebuked them, and exhorted them to seek a better portion than the meat that perisheth, namely, the meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed, that is, authorised and commissioned to bestow this spiritual food. The mention of the meat that perisheth, connected as it was with the miracle of the loaves, afforded our Saviour an opportunity of improving, as was his usual custom, the incident for the edification of his hearers. Solemn and awakening therefore as this discourse certainly is, it was not introduced by any formal preparation. Jesus had escaped from the people when they wished to make him a king: he had passed over the sea of Tiberias to Capernaum; some of the more active and forward of the multitude had followed him, on account of the miracle of the loaves; and from carnal, not spiritual motives. This gave rise, in a way quite natural, to the remarkable conversation recorded by St. John: as in his discourse with the woman of Samaria, our Lord took occasion, from her drawing the water, to pursue his conversation under the allegory of water, so on this occasion he carries it on under the allegory of eating and drinking. He calls the doctrine of the Gospel bread and wine, because Christianity rests on the great doctrines of the incarnation and death of Christ, which are here called his flesh and blood. Therefore Jesus speaks of the belief of these things under the phrase of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, by which food they were to become immor-

tal and partakers of his glory. The metaphor of expressing spiritual food by meat and drink, used by our Lord through the whole of this chapter, is familiar to Eastern Nations, and occurs frequently in scripture. Thus Solomon represents wisdom as inviting men, saying, "come eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled." Isaiah exclaims, "wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not; hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." And our Lord in this chapter exhorts the Jews not to labour for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth forever. But why, it may be asked, should this allegorical or figurative mode of instruction have been adopted by Christ, as the more natural way would have been to deliver his doctrines in express terms, as in some cases he has actually done; what need of another language to convey the same truth? To this I answer, that the more natural method to the Jews was the figurative or allegorical, such being the character of their numerous rites, and of the greater part of their scripture, in which the divine communications are not literal, but conveyed in types, symbols and metaphors.—For the Mosaic dispensation was not so much a revelation as a deposit of truths to be revealed: the form in which these truths are deposited being calculated rather to mould mens minds for their reception, than positively to teach them.—It was the Gospel which was to bring them to light. Hence the Christian's view of the doctrines of his religion is by this mode of expression connected with its proofs: our Lord, therefore, by conforming his plan of teaching to the spirit of the Jewish scriptures reminded them of the character of these scriptures, which were so composed that the indocile and uncandid seeing might not see, and hearing might not understand.

Our Lord having reproved them for their eagerness after perishable food, they ask, "what shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" The Saviour answered, "this is the work of God, that ye believe in him, whom he hath sent." In this expression, the Jews understood him to mean himself, and to require a belief in his divine character as the Messiah; but overlooking his miracles, and deluded with the notion of a great temporal king and deliverer, they were offended, and hastily inferring that he could not be that mighty conqueror promised in the law and the prophets. Nevertheless, as he manifestly assumed that title, they demanded new and greater proofs than those which he had yet given; for as the Messiah was higher than Moses, he ought to do much greater miracles; and having regard to the feeding of the five thousand, they suggested that Moses did much more; "what sign," said they, "shewest thou, that we may see and believe thee to be the Messiah; what dost thou work; our fathers did eat manna in the desert, and it is written, 'he gave them bread from heaven to eat;'" as if they had said, admitting the miracle of the five barley loaves and the five thousand, it was but a single miracle, and a trifling number; but Moses fed the whole Jewish nation, being upwards of two millions, not for a day or a month, but during forty years. Our Saviour rectifies their mistake, teaching them, that it was not Moses but God, who gave them the manna, and now gave them the true bread from heaven, of which that was the type and figure, for the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Still supposing Christ to speak of the material bread which would not suffer them to die, but to live forever, or to a very great age, they said unto him, "Lord ever more give us of this bread," for if you can give us such bread, we are ready to acknowledge you to be greater than Moses; for our fathers,

though they did eat manna, died in the wilderness. Our Lord then adds, "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst; I came down from heaven to save the world, and this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose none, but raise it up at the last day." Our Lord's figurative manner of expressing himself through the whole of this discourse is particularly manifested in this quotation; had he not been speaking spiritually, it would have been absurd to promise that his disciples should not hunger and thirst after eating this mysterious meat; what our Lord promised is, that they should never hunger and thirst for want of it. This answer not pleasing the Jews, they murmured saying, "is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?—how is it then that he saith I came down from heaven?" Disappointed in their worldly expectations, and having no relish for spiritual blessings, the Jews were incensed at his arrogance in pretending to have come down from heaven, and said in bitter derision, "Is not this the son of Joseph the Carpenter?" how then has he the presumption to say that he descended from heaven. On this our Lord rebukes them for their hardness of heart, and intimates that their opposition to spiritual things arose from their corrupt natures, which divine power could alone subdue: and he declares, that no man in his present degenerate state can divest himself of his blindness and enmity to God, and seriously believe in his Son, unless the Father draw him, that is, persuade him by the influence of his spirit. The time was not yet come when the mystery of the incarnation was to be so revealed as to become an article of faith, but the discourse of our Saviour led them to his celestial origin and divine mission, and the testimony afforded by his works or miracles fully justify his insisting upon their belief on

him. "Verily, verily I say unto you, that he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Here the Bishop of Strasbourg asks, "what is the meaning of this exordium, and of this manner of opening himself by halves, and by degrees? How comes it that he reminds them at repeated intervals of the necessity of the faith due to his character, his miracles, and divinity? What is the tendency of these preliminary recommendations? In what are they to end, or what is he thinking of proposing to them? Something very extraordinary, no doubt, and very difficult to be received, otherwise he would have explained himself without making use of all these precautions." Before proceeding to notice the Bishops solution of these solemn questions, and which we shall prove, as I believe to be, altogether erroneous, it is necessary to premise:—

1st. That there is a material difference and distinction between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of the Apostles: a distinction which has been too much overlooked by Divines, and which the Bishop of Strasbourg does not notice, although it would have furnished him with a much better exposition of our Saviour's meaning in this Chapter than that which he has adopted, and explained in a far more satisfactory manner the serious questions, which he proceeds to propound.—Our Saviour came rather to be the subject of Christianity than the author of it. He did not baptise, though baptism was the rite of admission into his religion; he preached not to the Gentiles, although the most distinguishing feature of the new dispensation, was its extension to all mankind. He established no Church during his abode on earth, and left no written laws behind him, but as the subject of Christianity, he appears God manifested in the flesh, and in that character accomplished our redemption by his mysterious death and sufferings. As the teacher of mankind, he instructs them in a way by which they

might attain to the Divine favour, thus made accessible to all. In the first stage of Christianity, it was impossible for our Lord to explain more clearly than he did, many things respecting his birth ; his transcendant dignity, his last sufferings, his triumph over death and the grave, and his ascension up into heaven ; and this enables us to account for the difficulty of explaining many of his allusions and dark sayings, without the aid of farther revelation. There is, however, one thing which he never fails to demand, that is, faith in his words and testimony. This he requires of all those on whom he performed miracles, for as he made faith necessary to that eternal salvation which he came to offer, it seemed fitting, that temporal deliverance should in like manner be offered with the same condition, if we suppose the latter to be intended as a type of the former. Our Lord explains frequently to the multitude, and always to his disciples, every thing in as far as the progress of events would admit ; and on the present occasion, his address to the people is not more dark and mysterious, than the incidents to which it alluded rendered necessary : if therefore hints and allusions were often given by our Lord, which partook more of the obscurity of prophecy than the explanation of a new truth, it was because many of the Christian doctrines could neither be as yet clearly communicated nor comprehended, as they depended upon events, which had not taken place. The great doctrine of the atonement for example, which was not fully accomplished till our Lord's ascension, his resurrection from the dead, &c. were not designed to be publicly understood till the illumination caused by the descent of the Holy Ghost. Even the twelve, though commonly allowed an explanation, were as much in the dark respecting some of the main truths of Christianity till the coming of the Holy Ghost, as the multitude around them. To speak therefore of our Lord's careful exordium, his opening

himself by halves and degrees, is altogether erroneous. When our Lord says to his disciples, it is expedient to you that I go away, he plainly indicates that the office of making Christians belonged to the comforter. God manifested himself in the flesh to redeem the world and to atone for sin; to be made the object of a new faith: the subject of a new religion. God manifested himself by the Spirit, to instruct men in what he had done, and to teach them what they were bound in consequence to do. The Holy Spirit was sent to the disciples, not only to bring all things to their remembrance, but to teach them all things: the necessity of which is manifest in a great number of instances. We trusted, said the two disciples, in their disappointment and despondency, that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, evidently shewing that they were ever at this time unacquainted with the doctrine of redemption, by the death of Christ. It is not for you, or you cannot be expected to know, says Christ to his disciples, the times or seasons which the Father has put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses. Even if it be admitted that our Lord's teaching embraces all the essential doctrines of Christianity, yet from the very form adopted, that of parables, symbolical miracles, and didactic prophecies, the truths so deposited by his followers were plainly not designed to be understood, until the Holy Spirit should not only have brought Christ's ministry to their remembrance, but taught them also all things implied and intended by it. Until such assistance was given, they were in possession of a revelation which they did not understand, and without this assistance, there can be no question that the Christian doctrines could never have been understood, explained and preached. From Adam until Christ the scheme of man's redemption was prefigured. In Christ's

ministry it was accomplished, by the Spirit it was explained. This great doctrine depended upon our Lord's death and sufferings, and could not be properly understood till after his crucifixion. These remarks, which might be profitably extended, account satisfactorily for our Saviour's mode of teaching, without having recourse to any art or management, as the Bishop of Strasbourg appears to suppose. Every thing was told in such a manner, as to be understood at the time, or so plainly, that when the event to which it referred took place, it was fully comprehended, or if it still partook of prophetic obscurity, it was taken by the Holy Spirit and brought home to the apprehension of the Apostles and converts.

2nd. I am as ready to admit as the Bishop of Strasbourg, that our Saviour's discourse on this occasion was very remarkable, and that his strong manner of expressing himself, and his emphatically repeating the same thing in the same or different phrases, is sufficient to persuade us that some important mystery and significant lesson of instruction was intended to be communicated. Now the Bishop contends that the mystery revealed was that of transubstantiation, or his real physical presence in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and that a prior belief in this doctrine is required by Christ, as necessary to salvation. That this is a great error will be abundantly shewn (in my opinion) in the sequel, at present it may be observed, that in this Chapter, our Lord plainly announces himself to be the Messiah; that he had come down from heaven; that he was greater than Moses; that his kingdom was not as the Jews vainly believed temporal, but spiritual; that he would at length ascend into heaven, and appear no more personally among them; that eating his flesh and drinking his blood were not meant in a gross carnal sense, but of spiritually living in him, and on his fulness by faith, for as the soul of man giveth

life to the body, without which the flesh is only a lifeless putrefying lump of clay, so without the life giving spirit of God, all forms of religion are dead and worthless; he declares, that by believing his doctrine, trusting in his promises, and meditating on his instructions, they would spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood. It is therefore not wonderful that a discourse containing such high and mysterious things should astonish our Lord's audience, since it contradicts their dearest prejudices, for though instruction had frequently been spoken of as the food of the soul, yet no Prophet or servant of God from the beginning of the world had spoken of himself, as the bread of life.

This discourse at Capernaum, happened about a year before our Lord's institution of the Eucharist, and many of the most able Divines, both ancient and modern, contend that it has no relation to that ordinance, but merely to spiritual feeding in general; others maintain that the connexion is intimate, and that our Saviour's expressions on this occasion appear a sort of preparation for the appointment of the last Supper. The arguments on both sides are exceedingly strong, and I am inclined to believe, that though this discourse more immediately refers to the atonement, and the benefits we derive from it by faith, yet it may be justly considered a prophetic intimation of the advantages to be derived from the participation of the Lord's Supper. The sacrifice of Christ and the Holy Sacrament have such a relationship, that the mention of the one may naturally suggest the other. In speaking of the offering of his body, Christ, we may well suppose, spake of it with a reference to that Sacrament, in which it is typified and its benefits applied. Those who by true faith are partakers of Christ's propitiation have eternal life, and in like manner those who rightly and worthily receive the Holy Sacrament are spiritually par

takers of Christ's body and blood ; they become one with Christ and Christ with them ; they really partake of the benefits of his passion ; they feed on him by faith ; they are supported, nourished and strengthened by him, and the divine principle of life which is then confirmed in their souls, will, if not forfeited by sin, lead to eternal happiness. But though it may be right to apply the general doctrine of this Chapter to the particular case of the Lord's Supper, considered as worthily received, because the spiritual feeding here mentioned is the thing signified and effected by the Lord's Supper, yet when we come to the critical examination of words and phrases, it will be found that this admission gives no strength or countenance to the Bishop of Strasbourg's doctrine.

Having premised these things, we proceed with the examination of our Lord's discourse, and here it may be proper to remark, that there is a spiritual feeding or eating and drinking our Lord's body broken and blood shed, or participating of the atonement made by our Lord's death and sufferings, without reference to sacramental feeding, because many have doubtless been saved through the blood of Christ, who never had an opportunity of participating in the Communion. It is, however, the bounden duty of all Christians frequently to commemorate the death of Christ, and when they communicate worthily, they feed spiritually on his body and blood, for this is the substance. The actual oral manducation of the bread and the drinking of the wine, being merely the outward signs. Admitting therefore the relation between what our Saviour here says about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, with the Lord's Supper, I contend that the expressions are figurative : in this I am fully warranted by the 63rd verse, as well as by the general purport of the whole conversation, which appears upon the face of it to carry a mystical, not a literal meaning. "It

is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The words are also universal and not particular in their application, whether we take them negatively or affirmatively.— " Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you :"—so far negatively. " If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever : who so eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life : " that is, all who feed upon what is here mentioned have life, and all that do not feed thereupon have no life, or all that finally share in the death, passion and atonement of Christ, are safe ; and all that have not a part therein, are lost : all that are saved, owe their salvation to the salutary passion of Christ, and their partaking thereof, which is feeding upon his flesh and blood, is their life. This is the basis of the Gospel ; we must be reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, before we have a just claim or title to any thing besides. Therefore the foundation of all our spiritual privileges, is our having a part in that reconciliation, and which, according to St. John, in this Chapter, is eating and drinking his flesh and blood, or as St. Paul tells the Hebrews, eating of the altar : the result, fruit or effect of our thus eating his crucified body, is a right to be fellow heirs with his body glorified, for if we are made partakers of his death, we shall also be made partakers of his resurrection. On this is founded our mystical union with Christ's glorified body, which neither supposes nor infers local presence ; for all the members of Christ, however distant in place, are thus mystically united with Christ, and with each other. The sum of the doctrine of this Chapter is not confined to oral or spiritual manducation in the Eucharist, but also extends to spiritual manducation at large. The feeding on Christ's death and passion, as the price of our redemption and salvation, confers a spiritual

or mystical union with Christ's human nature, and by that with his Godhead, to which his humanity is joined in an unity of person : but as this spiritual manducation belongs also to the Eucharist, our Lord's expressions are not foreign to the ordinance, but have such a relation to it, as the inward thing signified has to the sign.

3rd. Our Lord's conversation in the Synagoge, at Capernaum, was not more mysterious than that which he held with Nicodemus respecting the new birth, but when the latter was explained, as referring figuratively to baptism or the washing of water upon the outward man, and sanctification of the spirit in the inner man, it became plain and easy of comprehension, when therefore our Lord says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever ; and the bread that I shall give him is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world : " it is the same as if he had said, I am the bread of life whom God hath sent into the world, to direct and bring you into the way of everlasting life. With this bread, the manna of which you boast that your fathers eat in the wilderness, is not to be compared, for the manna preserved them not from temporal death. But whosoever eateth of this bread by believing on me, embraceth my doctrine, and persevering in obedience to my commandments, shall be kept and nourished unto everlasting life. For I am the word, and the word was made flesh, that by it the world might be saved : but my incarnation is not all, I must also suffer death upon the cross, and give my life a ransom for many. He therefore that believeth in my incarnation and passion, and acts accordingly, shall as certainly be nourished, as the bread he eats supports the life of his body. In all this, our Lord says nothing more mysterious, than when he tells the woman of Samaria, "The water which I shall give him, shall be in

him a well of water springing up into eternal life :” for as the body is nourished by the food that is eaten, so he that receives me into his heart with a spiritual appetite, his soul shall live and never die. But the Jews, unable to elevate their thoughts to spiritual things, disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat.” This oral manducation of his very flesh, they deemed monstrous and absurd. These gross conceptions, which our Lord hastens to rectify, have been adopted by the Roman Catholic Church, and yet they loudly exclaim against those who cleave to the truth. Indeed, were not the subject so awfully serious, it would be amusing to follow the Bishop of Strasbourg in this part of his interpretation. The Prelate admits, that the Jews understood our Lord, when he spoke of giving them his flesh to eat, to mean a real manducation, and although our Lord explains himself as speaking spiritually, not carnally, the Bishop adopts the condemned opinion of the Jews, and pleads also for an oral manducation of a similar kind, though covered with a veil to render it invisible to the senses. The Roman Catholic believes that the elements of bread and wine do not so much as exist in the stupendous mystery : for he believes, “That by virtue of the Divine Omnipotence, and in consequence of the solemn act of consecration, these humble substances are completely changed, being thus transubstantiated into the body and blood of our great Redeemer, in conformity to that plain and strong assurance of this Divine Being: ‘this is my body; this is my blood.’” Now the plain and obvious meaning of the words of the institution, as noticed in the former section, as well as those used by our Lord at Capernaum, was never mistaken for many centuries, but in process of time, the true sense became obscured in the dark ages, and by degrees came to be almost entirely lost ; and even now this misconstruction remains in the Roman Ca-

tholic Church a standing monument of human infirmity ; nor was it easy to restore the true sense at the reformation, and clear off the mist with which it was surrounded. The bread that I will give you is my flesh. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.—Such expressions now repeated cannot mean that the bread and wine became really and literally our Lord's body, in the same broken state as it hung upon the cross, and that blood which was spilt upon the ground more than eighteen hundred year ago ; neither can they mean that this bread and wine, literally and properly, are our Lord's glorified body, which is as far distant from us as heaven is distant ; all sense—all reason—all scripture—all antiquity, and sound theology reclaim against so wild a thought. As a further confirmation of this reasoning and illustration of the subject, I observe that there was a very prevalent tradition among the Jews, suggested by many prophetic passages of the Old Testament, that upon the coming of the Messiah, all the sacrifices of the law would cease : only the sacrifice of thanksgiving (Eucharist) should be perpetuated in bread and wine, after the example of Melchisedec. Of this person we know neither his entry into the world nor his exit from it, that he might be the more like to Christ, who is an eternal Prince and Priest : King of Righteousness ; King of Peace, without beginning of days or end of life, for of his kingdom there shall be no end. Melchisedec came to meet Abraham with blessings in his mouth, and in his hands bread and wine : and our Lord, who is declared by the Apostle to be a Priest, after his order, took bread and wine, and under these symbols offered himself a sacrifice well pleasing to God, and obtained a blessing for all the seed of Abraham, who in the Divine strength are conquerors of their spiritual enemies, Satan, sin and death. This application of the bread and wine

which Melchisedec brought forth or offered as a type of Christ, and his oblation of himself under such symbols for a blessing to mankind, is fully acknowledged by the Church from the Apostolic age. St. Clement, of Alexandria, who flourished in the second century, calls Melchisedec's bread and wine, "food sanctified for a type of the Eucharist." "Our Saviour, (says Eusebius,) the Christ of God, does yet celebrate by his servants the functions of his Priesthood, after the manner of Melchisedec; for as he being a Priest of the Gentiles, never appears to have offered corporeal sacrifices, but blessed Abraham in bread and wine; in like manner our Saviour first, and then all Priests from him, celebrating the spiritual ministry over all nations, according to the laws of the Church, mysteriously represent his body and salutary blood in bread and wine." St. Augustine, in his work "*De Civitate Dei*," mentions Melchisedec's interview with Abraham, and says, "there first appeared the sacrifice which now through the whole world is offered by Christians to God, and that is fulfilled, which was long after said by the Prophet to Christ, who was yet to come in the flesh."—"Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

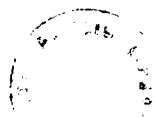
Now this interpretation of Melchisedec's, so far from favouring the Roman Catholic Church, strongly militates against their opinion; for they can neither say nor suppose that the body and blood of Christ could have been substantially received before he took flesh and blood by his incarnation, and therefore they must admit that bread and wine may be a sacrifice, pacificatory and refreshing to our souls, without believing that there is any transubstantiation in what they represent, and the virtue of which they beneficially apply. Indeed this argument, drawn from Melchisedec's typical offering of the Eucharist, is in my opinion decisive, were there no other against the doctrine of transubstantiation.

But to proceed :—our Lord's expressions, in his divinely mysterious sermon at Capernaum, were “ the bread that I will give you is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Here he speaks in the future, which he explained and fulfilled when he took bread and blessed it and gave it to his disciples saying, “ this is my body which is given for you.” The words at Capernaum were “ which I shall give,” but now, “ this bread is my body which is given”—this body, with its drink offering, his blood, in spirit and in power. But our Lord himself, to guard us against taking those strong expressions of his in a literal sense, plainly points out their spiritual meaning in the same chapter—“ it is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ;” forbidding at once the thought of his natural flesh, and condemning forever the doctrine of the Church of Rome, that the substance of the bread and wine passed into the natural substance of the flesh and blood of Christ, that very flesh and blood which he took of the substance of the blessed Virgin, and which hung on the cross on Mount Calvary : had the primitive Church believed or suspected this, they never would have thought of praying for the sanctification of the elements of bread and wine, as is expressed in all their Liturgies ; to have done so under that supposition or belief, would have been exceedingly absurd, if not blasphemous. The natural body and blood of Christ are capable of no additional sanctification, being united in one person with the divinity, and having the spirit without measure, being the fountain of it, to all who receive it. If any difficulty be felt in explaining our Lord's words at Capernaum, it is effectually removed in the institution of the Lord's Supper, when he took bread, blessed and brake it, and declared that same substantial bread to be his body ; and when he took the fruit of the vine, which the cup contained, and said, “ This is my blood,” as-

serting after the consecration and consumption of it, that what he gave, so consecrated and received by his Apostles, was in substance wine, which the Jews called the fruit of the vine ; the same meaning is established by St. Paul, for he repeatedly calls what was offered and received, bread after consecration. Thus let a man examine himself, and so let him “eat of that bread and drink of that cup: for whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord ;” bread therefore it is, and yet the body of the Lord, and wine it is, and yet the blood of Christ. At the same time this bread and wine so blessed and declared to be Christ’s body and blood, became more than a bare representation or figure. They are, as our Church, taught by Scripture, declares in her twenty-fifth article of religion, an effectual sign in virtue and effect, though not in substance the thing which they represent. It is the bread and wine quickened by the Spirit, who is the giver of life ; that Divine person, who rendered effectual to our spiritual health and souls salvation, all that our Redeemer had done and suffered for us, and by the means of his own appointment. The same Almighty word which gave bread its natural virtue to nourish the body, by his blessing in the first institution of food, gives the sacramental bread its supernatural virtue in this divine institution for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls in the spiritual life, and for the resurrection of our bodies to life eternal, for says our gracious Lord, “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day.” This appears to have been the doctrine of the Christian Church, for more than six centuries, and was scarcely in any degree obscured till very corrupt and ignorant ages followed, nor was it ever totally lost, even in the Western Church, though nearly choked for a time by the

prevailing growth of transubstantiation, yet in the face of antiquity, and that of Scripture, sense and reason, the Bishop of Strasbourg proceeds with amusing gravity to rebuke the Protestants for not adopting his new doctrine : and this at the very moment that he had seen our Lord telling the Jews, who understood his words as Roman Catholics now do : “It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” Thus we have a plain and convincing intimation that Christ spoke of eating his flesh and drinking his blood in a figurative and spiritual manner, and that the eating of his flesh, as the carnal Jews understood, and as modern Roman Catholics understand, would profit nothing. Here I pause from following the Bishop, till I make good my assertion made in the beginning of this section, that he stands in opposition, in his explanation of St. John, to the most celebrated fathers of the Church.

St. Ignatius, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist, and who had lain in the bosom of that Apostle as the Apostle had in the bosom of Christ, and who must have received the sense and meaning of this chapter from the holy penman himself, speaking to the Ephesians, desires them to make haste together to one place in one common faith, in one Jesus Christ, breaking one loaf, which is the medicine of immortality, and our antidote against death. Although this father does not quote this chapter, he had it in his eye when he says in another place “I delight not in corruptible food, nor in the entertainments of this world. The bread of God is what I covet—heavenly bread—bread of life, namely, the flesh of Jesus Christ the son of God ; and I am athirst for the drink of God, namely, his blood, which is a feast of love that faileth not, and life everlasting.” Clemens of Alexandria, who flourished about



192, speaking of the Eucharist, says—"Our Lord, in the Gospel according to St. John, has otherwise introduced it under symbols, saying, eat my flesh and drink my blood, allegorically signifying the true and clear liquor of faith and of the promise by both which the Church, like man, compacted of many members, is watered and nourished, and is made up or compounded of both—of faith, as the body; and of hope, as the soul, like as our Lord of flesh and blood."

Tertullian, speaking of our Saviour's discourse at Capernaum, "though" he says, "the flesh profiteth nothing, yet the sense is to be governed by the subject matter; for because they thought it a hard and intolerable saying, as if he had intended really to give them his flesh to eat; therefore he promised that it is the spirit that quickeneth, and then subjoined, that the flesh profiteth nothing, namely, towards quickening; therefore, as he makes the word quickener, because the word is spirit and life, he calls the same his flesh, as the word was made flesh, which consequently is to be hungered after for the sake of life, to be devoured by the ear, to be chewed by the understanding and digested by faith."

Origin says, "Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, because he feedeth all mankind with the flesh and blood of his word, as with pure meat and drink. Athanasius says, "the words which Christ spake at Capernaum, are not carnal but spiritual, for how could his body have sufficed for meat, that it should be made the food of the whole world." Cyril, of Jerusalem, observes, "that Christ once discoursing with the Jews said, except ye eat the flesh, &c.; but they not understanding the things that were spoken, or in a spiritual manner, but supposing that he exhorted them to eat flesh (like cannibals) were scandalised, and went back from him."

St. Augustine says, "Why preparest thou teeth and stomach? believe, and thou hast eaten, for to believe in him is to eat the living bread;" again in his tract on St. John, he says, "to believe in him is to eat the living bread; he that believes, eats, because he is inwardly replenished."

Again he introduces Christ as saying "understand what I say in a spiritual manner, you are not to eat that body which you see, and you are not about to drink this identical blood which they who crucify me will pour out; I have commended to you a Sacrament, which will give you life if spiritually understood; though it is necessary to be celebrated in a visible manner, yet it must be invisibly apprehended; what is the bread of the kingdom of God, but he who says, I am the living bread which came down from heaven, prepare not your mouth but your heart. This is the commendation of this Supper, see we believe in Christ: we receive this with faith in receiving, we know what is the subject of our meditation." "Certainly," says Pope Gelasius, in the fifth century, "the Sacraments of the body and blood of the Lord, which we receive, are a Divine thing, because by these we are partakers of the Divine nature. Nevertheless, the substance or nature of the bread and wine ceases not to exist, and assuredly the image and similitude of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the action of the mysteries."

"The Sacrament of adoption," says Facundus, in the sixth century, "may be called adoption, such as the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, which in the consecrated bread and wine, we are wont to call his body and blood. Not indeed that the bread is properly his body, or the wine is properly his blood, but because they contain the mystery of his body and blood within themselves. Hence it was that the Lord denominated the consecrated bread and wine which he delivered to his disciples, his own body and blood."

It were easy to multiply extracts of a similar nature, but these are quite sufficient, (more especially when taken in connexion with the celebrated men noticed in the last Section who opposed transubstantiation,) to prove that such a doctrine was unknown to the primitive Church, and that the words of Saint John are figurative as well as those which our Lord used at the institution of the Eucharist.

Thus we have seen that the Primitive Church, as well as all Protestant Churches, repudiate the doctrine of the real physical presence, and that the bread of God which came down from heaven, and of which the manna in the wilderness was a type or shadow, is to be received by faith ; for what our Heavenly Father demands of us is, to believe in him whom he hath sent. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, it consists not of exterior things, but of a dominion over the heart and understanding, and therefore what our Lord says of eating and drinking has far more respect to our spiritual than our carnal nature ; for as the animal spirits quicken the body, so in the work of grace, the spirit of God quickens our souls to spiritual and eternal life. The elements of bread and wine, considered merely in themselves, are of no advantage in the life of the soul, but they have been selected by our Saviour as symbolical of spiritual things, and are the means, if received in faith, of conveying the Holy Spirit, whose influence, as the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection and ascension is effectual to eternal life. Consequently, the shocking idea conveyed to the Jews by his words, our Saviour carefully removes and endeavours to convince them, on this as on all other occasions, that his religion is spiritual ; yet notwithstanding our Lord's earnestness to convince his hearers that he was speaking of heavenly, not earthly things, the Bishop asserts that there is no figurative language in the discourse, but that it must be taken literally.

Now if our Lord had not corrected the Jews for their low and grovelling conceptions, the words used, taken literally, outrage common sense, to which all scripture is addressed, and it is not a little extraordinary, that while the Bishop contends for the literal sense of our Saviour's words, he is compelled to allow that the flesh and blood are presented under the form of bread, that under the form and appearance of bread his flesh is eaten, that they participate of the substance, of his body and are nourished by it under the appearance and usage of the ordinary aliment of man. What inconsistency!—the words are not symbolical, and yet they are symbolical; in fine, if the Bishop attaches any distinct meaning to his belief, it must be that of the Church of England; any other, even by his own shewing, betrays him into the most glaring contradictions. The fault of the Jews not only consisted in taking our Lord's words in their literal sense, “how can this man give us his flesh to eat,” but they also despised and opposed spiritual things, for their indignation did not reach its height till our Lord repeats what he had said before, “that no man can savingly believe in him, except the Father draw him by the spirit, and thus give him strength and grace to come unto him in a spiritual manner.” His disciples were so stung and offended at this close application of his doctrine, that many departed and returned to the world. Before they went away our Lord in his wonderful benignity endeavours to recall their attention to spiritual objects: are you surprised and disturbed at what I have now spoken, as if they were strange and unintelligible things? what if hereafter ye shall see me go up again to the same place from whence I at first came? when ye see this ye will learn to understand my words, not in a gross, but in a spiritual and rational sense. In truth, the metaphor in this discourse of food as doctrine, and eating and drinking as believing, was not diffi-

cult to be apprehended by the Jews, because found in the Scriptures and known in their schools, but eating his flesh and drinking his blood, literally understood, gave them offence because prohibited by the law of Moses, and repugnant to the customs of civilized nations.

Our Lord, on this apostacy, to try the faith of the twelve, said in a moving and affectionate manner, "Will ye also go away." Behold how many have forsaken me, will ye follow their example? what are your thoughts and purposes? Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." These words of St. Peter are of great importance to the right explication of the context: he and the other Apostles had continued with our Saviour from the first; they had been witnesses daily of his miracles; they had beheld his Divine countenance, that mild and God-like face, tempered by human limitations; they had seen his pure unspotted innocence—his heavenly deportment—his conversation so wise, condescending and sublime, connecting the present with the future, earth with heaven, and therefore with entire conviction they exclaimed, "Yes, we believe and know that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Nor do we understand thy words in the carnal and absurd sense which these men have given them, for we perceive that thou speakest of those doctrines and revelations by which we are to be guided to eternal life. This declaration, which is fully implied in the words of St. Peter, proves beyond controversy, that the Apostles believed our Lord's conversation in a spiritual and not in a carnal sense, for their answer to our Lord's appeal, is the same as if they had said: Thou art the true bread of life, the promised Messiah so long looked for,—the eternal Son of the living God, who camest down from heaven. Hence the

faith required by the Gospel is the submission of the heart to the reception of Divine truth, much more than any peculiar capacity for understanding abstruse doctrine, and when men are willing to receive instruction, it will always be supplied them in a sufficient degree for securing the great object of religion, the salvation of their souls. Here lay the distinction between the disciples who remained and those who forsook our Saviour: neither of them understood or could understand the full import of Christ's words, for his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension had not yet taken place, but one part gave the Saviour their full confidence, and the other was self-sufficient and averse to spiritual things. And here it is right to observe, that we stand on the vantage ground, Christ has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven; the Holy Ghost has come and announced that he is the Messiah, by the most astonishing manifestations, and these proofs of his divinity must bring certain conviction to every well ordered mind. With such accumulation of proofs in favour of the sense which we give to our Saviour's discourse, the Apostles, the Fathers, &c. ; it is rather too much for the Bishop of Strasbourg to call upon us to give up our dearest hopes, because we do not adopt his carnal interpretation. Christianity is a spiritual worship, and its object is to bring men to a nearer conformity to God: for this purpose, it elevates their views above temporal things, and qualifies them for a higher state of existence, but to maintain that the words of our Saviour in the Synagogue at Capernaum are literal, not spiritual, is so self evident a misapprehension of the nature and design of the Gospel, as to be almost incredible, and is in fact an extravagance more difficult to reconcile to the mind, than even the apostacy of the Jews, when they heard and were offended at them. One has hardly patience with the Bishop of Strasbourgh, when he says, " that if the Jews were shocked

and scandalised, when Jesus said, I will give you my flesh to eat, when he was upon earth, and before their eyes, how much more will you be scandalised, when you shall see his body go up to heaven and disappear from your sight? If this manducation appears to you incredible, now that you see my body, how much more will it appear to you, when you see it no more? This doctrine was therefore such, that after his resurrection it would represent more difficulties to be understood, than it did before, and from this I conclude that his doctrine was not such as the reformed attribute to him."

Now this mode of reasoning is singularly weak—the hard saying at which the Jews were offended, was the monstrous, and as they conceived, the savage doctrine of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, which notwithstanding our Lord's explanation, they persevered in believing, in a literal sense; and yet the Roman Catholic Church, with astonishing perverseness, adopts the very belief for which the Jews were reproved, and without their excuse, for the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom is now most clearly revealed, and leaves not the semblance of argument from Scripture, sense or reason, for the Bishop of Strasbourg's opinion. His Lordship endeavours to fortify his opinion by giving a sense to the 63rd verse, at variance with its evident meaning, for he applies the words flesh and spirit in a manner totally unconnected with the context: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:—as if our Lord had said the flesh, that is, the senses or corrupt reason of man, profiteth nothing towards the discovery or belief of what he had announced; that is, the reality of the manducation on which he has so much insisted, of which he here declares that we cannot judge by the flesh or by a carnal reason which profiteth nothing, and that it could neither be discerned nor believed, except by the quickening spirit; that is, by the grace and light

of God." Now this gloss makes the carnal man display his carnality, by adopting the spiritual interpretation of our Lord's expressions : while the spiritual man displays his spirituality, by preferring the carnal interpretation ; such a paraphrase appears to me a very extraordinary description of the two states of the carnal man and spiritual man, and is not sanctioned by any authority. The true meaning has already been given, that what he had said about eating his flesh was to be understood in a spiritual, not in a carnal sense. The words which I speak, says Christ, convey to men the power of the spirit, for the flesh of itself profiteth not at all to the end that I propose, namely, giving you eternal life. Thus understood, there is a consistent and regular connexion with what goes before. Perhaps still more singular is the interpretation by the Bishop of the 65th verse : " Therefore, said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him by my Father," which he expounds to mean, "the need of an assistance, a particular grace from heaven for believing the manducation contended for." Now such a sense is totally inconsistent with the text which evidently implies what our Saviour had already declared, "that no man can savingly believe in me, unless my Father draw him by his spirit, and give him strength and grace to enable him to come unto me in a spiritual manner for everlasting life."

Let us now look back and glance at our examination of this Chapter :

1st. Jesus Christ uses in this discourse metaphorical language, as was his custom, and urges strong motives to convince his hearers of the obligations they were under to believe in his words ; the depth and solemnity of the observations are very remarkable, and revelations are made in language not a little mysterious, of some of the leading doctrines of Christianity.—

Why such were not at the time more clearly communicated is abundantly accounted for, by the distinction noticed between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of his Apostles.

2nd. When our Lord speaks of feeding his Church with his flesh and blood, his language was so strong that the disciples murmured, and the Jews indignantly asked, "how can this man give us his flesh to eat;" it appears from the tenor of the narrative, that both Jews and disciples understood him literally, but Christ hastens to correct this mistake, and teaches them to understand him figuratively. Those who believed received his explanation, but the perverse heeded him not: yet although our Saviour interprets his language figuratively, the Bishop of Strasbourg, like the obstinate Jews, maintains that his language is literal, thus placing himself in direct contradiction to Christ's declaration recorded in Holy Scripture.

3. The figurative exposition of our Saviour's language in this Chapter, as well as the institution of the Eucharist, is in perfect accordance with the whole Scripture, but the literal exposition is in direct contradiction. The Bishop's doctrine is, "that in the celebration of the Eucharist, the Priest offers up the literal body and blood of Christ to God, as the true and proper expiatory sacrifice for the quick and the dead." Christ, therefore, according to this doctrine, is repeatedly offered; but in Holy Writ, we are positively assured, that Christ was offered only once—Heb. 9 ch. & 28 v. Heb. 10 ch. & 10 v. 1 Peter, 3 ch. & 18 v. The term once, is in direct opposition to the term repeatedly. According to Scripture, Christ is once offered, but according to the Bishop of Strasbourg and his Church, Christ is repeatedly offered; hence the Holy Scriptures and the Roman Catholic Church are placed in direct variance with each other.

4th. After our Lord's explanation, St. Peter clearly perceives, that he had been speaking figuratively, and says, thou hast the words of eternal life: had he thought that Christ had spoken literally of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he would naturally have said: Lord, it is a hard saying, yet because thou hast said it, we believe; strengthen thou our unbelief. The Apostle however speaks very differently: "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life;" as if he had said, we are resolved to remain with thee, for thou art the true bread of life. But had our Lord left them in their mistake in believing his words literal and not figurative, it would only have been in accordance with his conduct on other occasions, when dealing with hardened and obstinate sinners; for example, he said, "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again;" and though the Jews did certainly misunderstand him, because he spake of the temple of his body, yet he makes no attempt to set them right.

5th. The summary of his argument, drawn up by the Bishop, displays much weakness, with not a little assurance. The first three paragraphs are taken up with shewing that the Jews understood our Lord to mean a real manducation; in the fourth paragraph he asserts, with astonishing coolness, that our Lord had also the reality in view, because he does not correct them, totally forgetting or misapplying the 63rd verse, in which Christ expressly condemns their carnal meaning, and declares his words to be figurative. The fifth and sixth paragraphs, after noticing the offence taken by the disciples, asserts that our Lord does not soften the expressions which had alienated his hearers, although the very contrary is the fact, for Christ clearly intimates, that his flesh is his life, which he was to give for the life of the world, and eating his flesh and drinking his

blood, is believing on him Christ crucified the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. In the remaining paragraphs, the Bishop gives a perverse interpretation to the Chapter, and makes our Lord to say the very opposite of what he did say ; that he announced the reality of the manducation, and reproached the disciples for their unbelief, because they considered the manducation impossible, and that we are in the same condemnation. The Bishop farther states, that Jesus declares that no one can believe this manducation, if he has not received grace from the Father. Now the discourse proves the reverse of all this, and most clearly shews, that the Jews did understand a real manducation, and were so scandalised, that either they did not listen to or give credit to Christ's correction of their error, which clearly intimated that the manducation to which he alluded was spiritual, and therefore so must the food be spiritual, and consequently it could not be his natural flesh: but the Apostles attending to his explanation, remained stedfast in their confidence, though not yet acquainted with the true nature of his doctrine, which was afterwards to be more fully revealed. It is impossible to follow the Bishop through what he means as his summary, without remarking the difficulties he has to encounter in so interpreting the Chapter, as to support the error of transubstantiation. Instead of the sublime truths which our Lord brings forward, as far as they could then be revealed, the Bishop seeks to confine our vision to the mere belief, in a carnal manducation, and to effect this purpose he is compelled to pervert and misinterpret the clearest expressions.

6th. A great part of the Pamphlet is taken up with exhorting Protestants to turn to what his Lordship deems the true faith, respecting the body and blood of Christ; with what success may be anticipated, when the whole of the discourse at

Capernaum is in direct opposition to transubstantiation, a doctrine which we have proved unknown in the primitive Church, and which receives no countenance from the more early fathers ; nay, it has been shewn that these eminent men interpret our Lord's expressions in this Chapter figuratively, and not literally, so that they stand in direct opposition to the Bishop. In truth, his Lordship's doctrine outrages our senses, and appears to those who have not had their minds prejudiced in its favour from infancy, altogether incredible ; nor is it too much to assert, that no man of common understanding can ever be brought to believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, if proposed to him after he has attained the years of discretion. Thus have we gone through the Sixth Chapter of St. John, from which the Bishop of Strasbourg endeavours to draw the strongest argument for the real physical presence of the body and blood of Christ, in the consecrated elements of bread and wine ; and we have, it is hoped, fully proved that our Lord speaks throughout spiritually, though the images and illustrations, as was his custom, are taken from the things immediately around him or familiar to his hearers. The discourse is indeed highly spiritual, as might have been anticipated from the very nature of the Christian religion, which is essentially spiritual, and seeks to beget in us heavenly dispositions, and to bring us nearer and nearer to the character of God. But enough has been said to justify me in concluding, that the Bishop of Strasbourg has totally failed in his argument ; it therefore becomes rather ludicrous in his Lordship to exhort us to beware of the danger we are in : the danger is certainly not with us, but with his Lordship, and all persons of his belief. We arrange ourselves with the Apostles, and his Lordship takes part with the unbelieving Jews ;—we listen to Jesus Christ, who is still in the midst of us, and continues to speak the same language to us : we hear him, and

surrender ourselves in deep humility to his will, while the Bishop of Strasbourg perverts or misinterprets the words of our Saviour, and stands in the situation of those, who teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

CONCLUSION.

It is hoped that my object, in this and the preceding Sections, which has been to furnish a competent knowledge of the true nature of the Eucharist as it appears from the Scripture, and was understood by the Apostles and first Christians, and to remove the perplexing error of transubstantiation, with which it has been for many ages deformed, has been fully attained.

While doing this I have satisfactorily shewn, that it is the most merciful and beautiful institution that God ever vouchsafed to man ; and that it ought not to surprise us that its celebration stood forth as the most prominent part of the worship of the Primitive Church ; it indeed no where appears that our Saviour himself ordained any other for his disciples, but the commemoration of his own death in this Holy Sacrament.

Prayer is a duty of natural as well as of revealed religion ; but the celebration of the Eucharist, with its attendant duties, preaching the doctrine of the Apostles, fellowship among the Saints, and the public prayers, is peculiar to Christianity ; and was the known stated and constant worship of our Lord's disciples and their followers ; and with reason, for the death of Christ is the most wonderful and beneficial event that marks the annals of time, and of all others the most deserving to be the chief subject of our praise to God. Now praise, offered in a proper manner, is justly esteemed the most rational and ex-

cellent part of divine worship, consequently, a participation of the Eucharist, in faith and sincerity, is the most acceptable service we can pay to our Creator and Redeemer.

The Eucharist has been considered by the pious of all ages a feast upon a sacrifice ; and with equal propriety may it be proclaimed a festival in honor of Divine mercy to mankind ; for where shall we find a manifestation of God's unspeakable love to our fallen race like that of sending Jesus Christ into the world to save us from destruction.

Conscious, as every reflecting man must be, of having failed in his duty, and of his need of some testimony of the forgiving grace and compassion of Him, against whose law our transgressions have been committed, the communion comes as balm to the soul : we recognise it to be a feast in honor of the promised and pledged exercise of God's forgiveness, and as the most grateful of all services which can be performed by man. There is no worship so worthy of the benevolence and condescension of God to institute, nor any that ought to be so welcomed in songs of thanksgivings by the universal voice of all the inhabitants of the earth ; for as all are guilty of sin, and bear always about them doubts and fears, the most blessed assuredly of all sounds is that announced in the Holy Eucharist, which presents God accepting our Lord's sacrifice for sin, pitying our guilt, and removing our iniquities. It is indeed the business of the Gospel to announce forgiveness of sins ; peace with God ; expiation by the blood of Christ ; and eternal life to fallen but pardoned sinners. These are the messages which its heralds are commissioned to proclaim to the children of every kindred, language and people : and if it be true that, the feet of those are beautiful who speed their way into all lands proclaiming unto the inhabitants of the earth, behold your God, how much more ought the mortal history of that greatest of all

the messengers of divine mercy to be kept in remembrance whose very appearance in our nature was the highest of all pledges, that God, "had indeed pitched his tabernacle with men," and that he would dwell with them upon earth.

The Eucharist thus deemed a feast in honour of divine mercy published and ratified to the whole human race, is a conception of the Institution particularly pleasing and lovely and offers a most appropriate termination to this essay, on its true meaning, character and importance. In this aspect it is felt to be the most attractive and delightful of all festivals blotting out our sins, removing our doubts and fears, breathing into our souls peace and reconciliation, restoring our tarnished honour, and fortifying our minds with the most glorious hope of soon enjoying that more intimate communion with our Saviour in his everlasting kingdom, of which the Eucharist in this life is so touching and perfect a representation.

