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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)



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BIBLIOTHECA SACRA  
AND  
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NO. II

MAY, 1844.

ARTICLE I.

PATRISTICAL AND EXEGETICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE QUESTION RESPECTING THE REAL BODILY PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE ELEMENTS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. (Continued.)

By M. Stuart, Professor in the Theol. Seminary, Andover.

§ 7. SCRIPTURAL USAGE IN REGARD TO SYMBOL AND TROPE.

I HAVE endeavoured to show, in the preceding No. of the Review, first of all, that we are not bound by any appeal to the Christian fathers, in respect to the opinion which we ought to form with regard to the consecrating words at the institution of the Lord's supper. THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE SUFFICIENT AND ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE, is a truth or maxim which lies at the basis of all which is properly called *Protestantism*. In the second place, I have made it an object to develop, historically, what the opinions of the fathers were; and by virtue of this exposition we come to the conclusion, that if the ancient Christian fathers are to be appealed to as a standard, neither the Romanists, nor the Lutherans, can find in them the opinions which they avow or defend. In fact, I cannot help feeling that it is only ignorance of the true state of this matter among the fathers, or party spirit which blinds the eyes of many men, or else a design to deceive, which can lead men at the present day, when the subject has been so fully developed, to appeal to *Christian antiquity* as fairly and properly supporting either *transubstantiation* or *consubstantiation*. Nor can those who regard the eucharistic elements merely as *symbols* of the blood and body of Christ, find much among the

fathers which is direct and certain in their favour. The Alexandrine fathers, and indeed the African fathers in general, had clearly a leaning toward this opinion; and we have seen, that Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian, appear to have substantially adopted the *symbolic* exegesis. Most fully and unequivocally is this the case respecting Origen, and afterwards in respect to Augustine. But these views were, in most cases, mingled with some others that savoured somewhat of the excessive, in regard to the mysterious and inexplicable virtue of the eucharist.

After all our pains-taking, then, we are cast back upon the source from which we set out; that is, we are obliged to resort only to the BIBLE, and to find out, if we can, by the proper rules of interpretation, what is the true meaning of the words: "This is my body; this is my blood."

To this work, then, let us now address ourselves; and the more heartily, inasmuch as we have seen that all attempts to settle the question about the meaning of those words from the ancient fathers, are but in vain. Down to the middle of the ninth century, the matter was open for every one to form his own opinion, without being interfered with. And when Paschasius first broached the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, it was assailed, as we have seen, from many different quarters, by the leading men of the day. It was not until A. D. 1215, that the Pope ventured to decide in favour of this doctrine; and even then it was not so firmly established, that the Council of Trent, in the middle of the sixteenth century, thought it safe to leave men to think as they would. Their anathema against all who deny transubstantiation, has silenced opposers in their churches if it has not convinced them. We must evidently look then to the Bible, and only to this, in order to discover what we ought to believe as it concerns the words employed to consecrate the elements of the eucharist.

*That it is impossible to interpret the consecrating words of the Lord's supper in a literal manner, without renouncing the use of our reason and understanding, and without violating the sound principles of scriptural interpretation, is a proposition which I fully believe, and which I shall, in the sequel, endeavour to confirm and illustrate. My belief respecting the meaning of Christ's words, is, that he meant to say, and to be understood by his disciples as averring, that the bread that was broken was a sign, symbol, or emblem, of his body that was to be broken, and, after his death, of his body that had been broken; and, in like manner, that the wine which was poured*

out was a symbol or emblem of his blood that was then to be shed, and afterwards, of his blood that had been shed.

This, I readily acknowledge, is not in accordance with the *literal* sense of the words. If this sense is to be urged, and there is no other lawful and proper exegesis but the literal one, I must yield at once; I have not another word to say. Mysterious as the declaration would then be, or rather, impossible and contradictory as the matter would then be, I must either yield to it, or give up my belief in the binding authority of the sacred writers.

But what shall we say of such a principle of interpretation? Where are its *metes and bounds*? Does it pervade the whole Bible? Do any party of Christians so named admit the universality of such a principle? Not at all. Although the Bible speaks, in countless instances, of God as possessing all the members and parts of the human body, and attributes to him anger, revenge, penitence, sorrow, exultation, and other passions and affections of the human breast, there is hardly a man to be found, who reads the Scriptures, that does not give a *tropical* sense to these and the like expressions, or at all events so modify them, that they will not ascribe any imperfection to the Godhead. So is it, also, in regard to the armour or instruments of the warrior ascribed to God, such as the bow, the arrows, the quiver, the helmet, the breastplate, the shield, the sword, the spear, the javelin, and other weapons. Who ventures, like Homer of old in respect to his gods, to bring Jehovah literally upon the field of battle as a combatant, armed at all points as one panting for the contest? And what is the chariot of the Almighty, his throne, his riding upon the clouds, his walking upon the sea, his ascending, his descending, his encircling himself with conglomerated clouds and darkness, his putting on the garments of vengeance, and other like things? What means it when wings and feathers are ascribed to him, under which the righteous shelter themselves and are safe? What say we, when the Bible speaks of his soliciting the hand of Israel in marriage, of his being married to her, of his divorcing her, and again receiving her after her penitence and submission? What is to be said of God's remembering and forgetting, loving and hating, rejoicing and weeping, apparently in the same way as men do?

What shall be said, moreover, of heaven, which John in the Apocalypse represents as 375 miles square, of the houses in it which are of the same height, of the walls that are eighteen miles high, of the foundations of these walls. which are twelve rows of

precious stones, of the superstructure which consists of jasper, of the gates which though as high as the walls are each of one pearl, of the streets of pure gold, of the river of life that runs through the city, of the trees on its borders bearing fruit each month in the year? What shall we say of leaning on Abraham's bosom in heaven while reclining at the feast-table, of the viands with which that table is spread, of the feasts of love there held, of the banqueting and the new wine there, of the crowns and garlands and palm branches and white robes of saints there, of their harps and trumpets and shouting and exultation; of the heavenly host going forth to battle, armed most thoroughly and mounted upon horses? Or what shall we say of hell—now a deep and lonely and dark pit in which the wicked are confined with chains; again, an immense burning lake; then, an under-ground residence, where only shadowy beings flit around; then, a prison with walls that cannot be scaled; now so near to heaven, that Abraham and the rich man in hell can address each other; then in the extremity of the universe, at the farthest possible distance from Jehovah?

What shall we say of the floods clapping their hands, of the hills being joyful together, of the mountains skipping like rams, the little hills like lambs, of the elements singing praise to God, of inanimate nature as discoursing on his glory, of the earth being turned up side down, of its being emptied of its inhabitants, of its mourning and weeping, and a multitude of the like representations? There is not a man in his senses on earth, who will not in an instant reject the *literal* interpretation in these and in unnumbered other instances of a similar nature. Reason does this instinctively. She needs no precepts in this case; for she spontaneously makes precepts, on such occasions. She decides at once, without even any deliberation, on admitting only the *tropical* or *figurative* meaning in all cases of this nature.

And why? Plainly it is because every man's reason spontaneously decides, that the literal interpretation of such passages would involve absurdities, incongruities, impossibilities. No one can force himself to believe, that the sacred writers meant to be understood as uttering either of these. Of course, every one assigns to language of this nature, when employed in regard to such matters, a *figurative* or *tropical* meaning. Now if it can be made to appear, that the sacramental consecrating words are in the same predicament, and must involve absurdities and impossibili-

ties, in case they are literally construed, why should not the same rule of interpretation be applied to them?

But some advocate for the literal interpretation will say to me, perhaps, that I remit him to the Old Testament for examples of the figurative; and is ready to grant, that the Hebrews, especially in their poetry, dealt largely in trope and allegory. But this reply will not suffice. I have not resorted to the Old Testament alone. If he insists on more examples of the tropical and symbolical from the New Testament, I will readily appeal to it. It is in the New Testament where we are taught, that the righteous will sit at the table in heaven, and will eat and drink with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. (Luke 14 : 15. 22 : 29 seq. Matt 8 : 11. 19 : 28. See also Matt. 20 : 21 seq. 31 : 21. Mark 10 : 37 seq.) Christ says of the Pharisees, that "they devour, i. e. swallow down, widows' houses," (Matt. 23 : 14: Mark 12 : 40. Luke 20 : 47); that they strain at a gnat and swallow down a camel, (Matt. 23 : 24); that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, (Matt. 19 : 24); that everything is possible to him who believeth, (Mark 9 : 23). Mark tells us, that the whole town, on a certain occasion, were assembled at the door where Jesus was, (Mark 1 : 33); Matthew says that Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to John, and were baptized of him in the Jordan, confessing their sins, (Matt. 3 : 6, 7). Does he mean, that infants, the sick, the impotent—all repaired to John without exception? Jesus says: The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, (John 2 : 17). Jesus says again: Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to me and drink, (John 7 : 37). He says of him that comes to him and drinks, that the water which he will give him shall be in him a well of water springing up with perpetual life and vigour, (John 4 : 14). He says again: Whosoever believeth on me as the Scripture hath said: Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, (John 7 : 38). He tells us, moreover, that we must be born again. Must we understand this as Nicodemus did? Jesus tells his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees and of Herod, (Matt. 16 : 6. Mark 8 : 15). Paul tells us, that we must be raised from the dead, in order to become Christians; that we must be created anew in Christ Jesus; that we must circumcise our hearts; that we must deny and crucify our old man; that we must put on the new man; that the rock which followed Israel in the wilderness was Christ; that we must put on Christ. He tells

the Ephesians, that they had been darkness, but now are light in the Lord, (Eph. 5: 8); and he cautions the Galatians not to bite and swallow down one another, (Gal. 5: 15). Peter says, that we are made partakers of the divine nature, (2 Pet. 1: 4); and he exhorts Christians to gird up the loins of their understanding. Our Saviour speaks of the eyes that see him and the ears that hear him as being happy, (Matt. 13: 16); and Paul says, that the feet of preachers of the gospel are beautiful, (Rom. 10: 15).

But where shall I begin, and where end in such an undertaking as this? I have not recited a tithe of what exists in the New Testament of the like nature.

The New Testament to be all *literally* interpreted! What then are all the parables of the Saviour? A method of instruction that was a favorite one with him. What is the whole book of the Apocalypse? What is almost every paragraph in the Sermon on the Mount? What is the tenor of Jesus' language, as recorded by John, in all his disputes with the Jews? There is not a serious book on earth, that has more of the tropical and the figurative in it, than most parts of the New Testament.

If now any one should say, that the instances which I have produced of the necessity of a *tropical* sense in the New Testament differ from the passage in question respecting the body and blood of Christ, inasmuch as the bread and wine, if they are not to be literally understood, must be *symbols* and not *tropes*; my reply is, that there is no good foundation for any argument from this, in favour of transubstantiation or of consubstantiation. The only difference between TROPE or PARABLE and SYMBOL is, that the former points out some resemblance by means of *words*, the latter by means of *actions* or *things*. A *discourse* may be a parable or an allegory, or be filled with tropes or metaphors; while symbols must be *significant actions* or *things*. In short, the one is addressed to the ear, in language; the other to the eye, by significant actions or objects. Thus we have before us all the parables of the Saviour, and his tropical expressions, submitted to our understanding through the medium of discourse; while the *symbolic actions*, (which indeed must be described by language,) are themselves the principal and the immediate objects of our inquiry in regard to their significance.

This is easily illustrated by examples. When Jesus girded himself with a towel, and washed and wiped the feet of his disciples, this was a *symbolic action*. No one can well misunderstand it. It taught the disciples the importance of condescension and



kindness. Now what kind of water Jesus used, or the particular manner in which he performed the washing and the wiping, matters nothing at all as to the significancy of the symbol. And as to this, I trust no one will say, that the great object of Jesus was, to show his disciples the necessity of literally washing each other's feet. (John 13 : 3 seq.)

When Jesus breathed on his disciples, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; was this breathing anything more than *symbol*? or, in other words, was the Holy Ghost actually enclosed in the air which Jesus breathed, and thus communicated to the disciples? I may take it for granted, that no one will seriously contend for this. What then was the *breathing*? Merely a symbol of the gift of the Spirit, and nothing more. When the Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus, after his baptism, in the bodily shape of a dove, did this dove contain and enclose the Holy Spirit, in his essential nature? I trust that the infinite God is not thus circumscribed. The dove was merely the symbol of his descent upon the baptized Saviour, and nothing more. (Matt. iii. Luke iii. Mark i.) When Jesus took a little child, and set him in the midst of his disciples, and said unto them : Except ye be converted, and become as this little child, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven ; did his disciples feel themselves commanded to become literally like the little child in question? No; but they had been disputing with each other about *precedence*, and they felt rebuked, by the symbol in question, for their ambitious and selfish spirit. (Matt. 18 : 2 seq.) And what shall we say of the Saviour's declaration, at the same time, that if any one should receive a little child in his name, that individual would receive him? Are Jesus and a little child one and the same, or physically identical?

When Jesus says to Peter: I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; are we to suppose that heaven is a place with bolts and locks and gates, and that Peter carried the key of the same along with him? (Matt. 16 : 19.) Here is a symbol merely, by which was signified to Peter, that he should be made an instrument of the access of many to the kingdom of heaven.

When Christ and the apostles laid their hands upon the sick and infirm, and healed them, was it the outstretched arm and hand that performed the miracle of healing, or was this only a token or symbol of the blessing to be bestowed? We cannot hesitate in this matter. (Matt. 19 : 13. Mark 10 : 13.) And when the same ceremony is performed in the ordination of preachers of the gospel, is it anything more than a symbol of wishes and desires

that spiritual gifts and graces should be imparted, and of belief that they will be, in case the person ordained should be faithful to his vows?

When the apostles were directed to shake off the dust of their feet, after leaving cities which refused to hearken to their message, what else is this but a symbol or token, that religious intercourse between the preacher and the infidel hearers is thenceforth to be suspended? The message has been proffered and rejected; the intercourse must therefore cease. (Luke 9: 5. 10: 11. Matt. 10: 14. Acts 13: 51. 18: 6.)

When the prophet Agabus took Paul's girdle and bound his hands and feet, (Acts 21: 10 seq.), was not this a symbol or token, that Paul would be apprehended and bound by the Jews? When Pilate took water and washed his hands before the Jews, as they were about to crucify Jesus, was this anything more than a symbol or token, that he disclaimed any responsibility in respect to the condemnation and death of Jesus? (Matt. 27: 24). And when it is said, as it often is, that the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin, (1 John 1: 7 seq. Heb. 9: 24), is it then the physical material element which does this, or is it the virtue of his sufferings and death which accomplishes the object here named? There is no man who can hesitate in any of these cases. They are too plain to admit of any doubt.

When Mary anointed Jesus's feet with spikenard, (John 12: 1 seq.), what is this but a symbol of his being embalmed for burial? So Jesus himself explains it.

Last of all, (for I must desist from further examples), what else does the water of baptism mean, except to symbolize the moral and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and also, it may be, our need of them? Is the Holy Ghost actually comprised in the baptismal water? And is the Holy Spirit conveyed, with or without his consent,—conveyed by necessity—to the person baptized, whether this rite is performed by a saint or a reprobate? Is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, then, placed at the beck of any and every regularly ordained priest, or other person who may administer the rite of baptism, and imparted to the baptized even against his own consent? If the person to be baptized is a son of perdition, may we not take it for granted, that the Holy Spirit retains a liberty to refuse being imparted? What else, then, is the rite of baptism but a *symbol*? It is—it can be—nothing more; unless indeed you deny that all the like things in the New Testament are symbols, and maintain that the

actions and things themselves, which are apparently employed as symbols, do in fact accomplish all which they seem to betoken. But would it not be a desperate measure in exegesis, to take such a position? The Bible, in case any one would be consistent throughout with his own principles, would become a mere tissue of incongruities and absurdities under such a process.

We see then, that the Old and the New Testament are filled with examples of trope and symbol. It were easy, moreover, to occupy a whole essay with merely adducing and describing the symbols employed by the Hebrew prophets. Of all the nations in the world, the Hebrews appear to be most conspicuous among those who love trope and symbol. Nothing can be more natural than to expect, that we shall find them in the New Testament, and in the instruction which Jesus gave to his disciples, and his disciples to others. The passover-lamb with its blood sprinkled on the door-posts—what was it? Was it anything more or less than a *symbol* or *token*? Surely not. When the destroying angel saw this token, he passed by and spared the inmates of the house. And when the bread and wine, which betoken the broken and bleeding body of our Saviour, are exhibited by us, is it anything more than a symbol, that Christ by his death has procured exemption from the second death for all his followers? It is not the bread, nor the wine, which procures this; it is that which the bread and wine betoken, which has procured eternal redemption for us. If it were otherwise, then all who partake of the sacrament would be saved. But as confessedly this cannot be true, so it cannot be true that the elements of the eucharist are themselves of a saving nature. They are merely symbolical or significant of what is saving.

I merely add here, after all that has been said about *symbol* and *trope*, that however different the mere manner of them may be, they both agree in that which is important and essential. Both of them teach by resemblances or similitudes. In all tropes, there is some resemblance, either real or supposed, between the sign, i. e. what the tropical words express, and the thing signified. When I say: *The vine creeps*, or *the rose blushes*, I take it for granted that there is some similitude between the action of creeping and the low movement of the vine along the ground, and also some resemblance between the beautiful red and white of the rose and the blushing of the human cheek. When Jesus washes the feet of his disciples, this action indicates, that condescension and kindness should move us, to perform even very humble

offices to our friends. What the action of Jesus teaches, in this case, is to be *generalized* as to its principle; and we are to act in conformity with the principle established.

Of course both trope and symbol have the same general end in view. They proffer similitudes to our notice, from which we are to learn instruction. It is a law of our nature to see and apply these. It costs no efforts. It needs no technical rules. And hence we find every part of the Scriptures filled with examples of conveying instruction in this manner.

§ 8. EXAMINATION OF THE WORDS BODY AND BLOOD; WITH RESULTS.

We have seen that the Old and New Testaments are filled with trope and symbol. On the general ground of analogy, then, there can be no difficulty in assigning a tropical meaning to the consecrating words of the eucharist; no more than there is in considering baptismal water as the symbol of the sanctifying and purifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Is there any reasonable man, Romanist, Lutheran, or Calvinist, who will seriously aver and maintain, that the baptismal water is converted into the Holy Spirit, after it is consecrated by prayer? Is there any one who will contend, that the Holy Spirit is *in, with, and under* the water, so that he is actually and essentially contained in it, or encompassed by it? If there be any such person, it has not been my fortune to meet with him. I have indeed met with those who assert, that when baptism is duly administered, the germ of regeneration is of course implanted; and that it remains for the baptized person himself to decide, by his future conduct, whether this germ shall grow up and expand into a tree of life. But I do not understand even in these cases, (which indeed are very numerous and widely spread), that the Holy Spirit is regarded as being embodied in the water, and physically conveyed by the use of this element in baptism. The water, then, can be no more than a *symbol* of his purifying influences. Even if the doctrine of those who hold to baptismal regeneration be true, it is not because the Holy Spirit is incorporated with the baptismal water, and conveyed by means of it in a sensible way to the baptized, but merely because, as they assert and believe, he has promised to bless his own ordinance with his sanctifying influence.

Now why should not this be the case with the *bread and wine* of the eucharist, as well as with the water used in baptizing? But if such be the case, then of course it is not the physical

body and blood of Christ which profit the communicant; for the elements are only *symbols* or *tokens* of his body that was broken and of his blood that was poured out. Analogy with the sacrament of baptism, if admitted, would easily settle and determine the question before us.

But we shall be told at once here, that there is a great difference between the two cases. Christ himself says: *This is my body; this is my blood.* But it is nowhere said of baptismal water: *This is the Holy Spirit.*

We come, then, of necessity to *examine the diction employed in the consecrating words of the eucharist*; in order that we may see, whether any argument for the physical presence of Christ in the elements can be founded upon this.

First of all, then, what is *body*? (*σῶμα*). This question has not received a proper share of attention, in the contest about the sacramental elements. *Body* does not mean the same as *flesh*. Paul has taught us most clearly, in Rom. xi., what *body* means. "The body is not one member, but many," (v. 14). "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all these members of the body, being many, are one body, etc." (v. 12). The *body*, then, is not the flesh of a man, as such, but the idea conveyed by the word is of a composite and generic nature. It includes flesh, bones, muscles, limbs, head, trunk, blood, and (in a word) the whole outward man, i. e. the outward man as a whole, made up of a great variety of parts.

That such is the plain and constant biblical usage, is sufficiently manifest from the fact, that the sacred writers do not contrast anywhere *body* and *blood*, but always *flesh* and *blood*. The obvious reason of this is, that *body* does of itself comprehend the *blood*, as well as all other particular parts as constituents of the human frame. The *flesh* is only that part of this frame which consists of soft and cellular substance; the *blood* is only the fluid which courses through the veins, and which, in case of violent death, is usually shed or poured out. Hence the Bible does not speak of eating the *bodies* of men, but of eating their *flesh* and drinking their *blood*. If in one or two cases, in all Scripture, instances may be found of the expression φαγεῖν σῶμα, to eat or devour a *body*, these instances belong only to that category of cases, where the idea of *swallowing whole* is the one to be conveyed. (1 K. 13: 28).

If any one doubts in what a different sense *body* is employed from what *flesh* bears, let him consider, that the apostle never

speaks of the desires of the body, the lusts of the body, the works of the body, the mind of the body, but always of the desires, the lusts, the mind, the works, of the flesh. *To be in the body, to live in the body*, is no sin. It indicates simply a frail and mortal condition. Christ was in the body, during his incarnation. But *to be in the flesh*, or, in other words, to live after the flesh, to do the deeds of the flesh, to be fleshly minded, these are all indications of a corrupt moral state. So very different is the usage of the sacred writers in respect to the two words in question. The apostle speaks often of our *bodies* being raised, at the last day; but he tells us, in so many plain and explicit words, that *flesh* and *blood* cannot inherit the kingdom of God. So our *bodies* may be newly fashioned, and composed of different elements, and still be our bodies.

On the other hand, *flesh* is, in its *literal* sense, merely the soft animal substance of our bodies. But let it be remembered, that it is *living* flesh (and not dead flesh or meat) which the word *σάρξ* indicates. Flesh as dead and eatable is *κρέας* not *σάρξ*. (Rom. 14 : 21. 1 Cor. 8 : 13. Hag. 2 : 13. Zech. 11 : 16. Deut. 28 : 53. Ezek. 39 : 17, 18. Rev. 16 : 16. 19 : 18. Flesh and blood are often employed by the sacred writers to denote the living animated man. A *dead* man is not so described. *Πτώμα*, i. e. *corpse*, is the appropriate word to designate the body of a dead man. (Mark 6 : 29. Rev. 11 : 8, 9.) The various *tropical* meanings of *flesh* (*σάρξ*), I cannot trace here; nor are they necessary for my purpose.

As to *blood*, when taken in the literal sense, it needs no explanation. But still it should be remarked here, that in accordance with the spirit of what was said to Noah when *blood* was forbidden as food, viz. that the blood of an animal is the *life* thereof, do we find the tenor of the Levitical precepts to be respecting blood. Blood was considered as the grand medium and source of animal life. Hence under the ancient dispensation, it was most strictly and solemnly forbidden, in all its forms, as food; yea as food even at the solemn religious feasts. The blood of victims was poured out at the foot of the altar, and sprinkled upon it. It belonged only and exclusively to God. That man was even to be cut off from the people of God, who partook of blood as food. (Lev. 17 ; 10 seq. 3 : 17. 7 : 26 seq. comp. Gen. 9 : 4. Deut. 12 : 16, 23. 1 Sam. 14 : 32 seq.) Even in the apostles' day, and under the new dispensation, *the eating of things strangled and of blood* was forbidden to Gentile as well as Jewish converts; for things strangled are virtually included in the prohibition respecting blood, because the blood remains in them. It is thus the God of Jews and

Christians has always inculcated a horror of eating or drinking blood.

In the Bible throughout, however, there are but few cases where *shedding of blood* is spoken of, which are to be literally interpreted. As blood was *the life*, so the *shedding* of it, *pouring it out, causing it to flow*, and the like expressions, very often have a tropical sense, and mean simply the destruction of life, or the infliction of violent death. And we must acknowledge, surely, that by a very natural and easy metaphor these expressions were so employed.

Let us now see what are the RESULTS of this investigation. They are, first, that when Christ said: *This is my BODY*, if the literal sense must be insisted on, then the bread represented his *whole body*, flesh, blood, bones, nerves, and all other constituent parts; for this is the certain meaning of body, *σῶμα*. If then each communicant receives the *body* of Christ, in the bread, then each one receives, masticates, swallows, and digests, the whole body of Christ, in all its parts. And as each communicant receives the whole of Christ's physical frame, so there must be as many physical frames of Christ as there are communicants, at the same time, or successively.

But secondly, this cannot possibly be the meaning of the first sacramental declaration, because it is followed by a second, which would be a mere useless repetition. The *blood* is part of the body. Even the schoolmen, in the midst of the dark ages, made this discovery. But they made no other use of it, than to take away the cup from the laity. This they did on the very ground, that the *body* of Christ included also his *blood*. But then why did they, after this discovery, continue to distribute the *cup* among the clergy? For some other reason, we have reason to believe, than a holy and sacramental one.

The injunction, then, literally considered, to partake of the blood of Christ, after having partaken of his *body*, must be wholly superfluous. He who has eaten and swallowed the whole physical frame of Christ, has surely been already a partaker of his *blood*. He need not repeat the transaction.

We are forced, then, upon another and different meaning of the word *body*, *σῶμα*, provided we hold to the literal sense here. And what is this? The same, say the Romanists and others, as *flesh*. But let us inquire, for a moment. *Flesh*, *σάρξ*, is *living, animated* flesh; not dead flesh, not meat. Now if the body of Christ had been broken and departed to the disciples, and his blood had

been poured out, before they received the sacramental elements. (and surely the words of Christ imply this), then was Christ's flesh no longer living flesh. The blood thereof, which was the life thereof, was gone, or, as the evangelist has it, was *poured out*. The animating principle was no more in the flesh. Christ's body was a *πρῶμα*, a *corpse*; his flesh was *νεκρῆς*, *dead flesh*, not *σὰρξ*, i. e. living and animated flesh. How then could the disciples eat the body of Christ, even if this means to eat of the *flesh* of Christ; and then afterwards drink his blood? If they ate his *body*, they ate the blood with it; they must have swallowed the physical frame whole, and *living* also; for *σὰρξ* is *live* flesh. If they ate his *flesh*, i. e. his living flesh, then they must have eaten it before the blood was poured out from it. But this they did not; for it was the *broken* body of Christ which they ate, if they did literally eat his body at all; or if you choose the other mode of expression, and speak of eating his *flesh*, then it was the flesh from which the blood had been exhausted.

It would seem, now, that the literal sense of these passages presents us, at the very outset, with a great incongruity in the very nature of the diction. It either presents absolute impossibilities, or else absolute incongruities and absurdities. Those who know little or nothing of Greek idiom or usage, may doubt, or deny, or overlook all this. But no man who does understand it, can fail to perceive the urgency of the case; yea, he cannot overlook or avoid the irrefragable consequences which flow from it.

How then are these difficulties to be met? Luther and his adherents met them, by denying that there is any gross or sensible mastication and deglutition and digestion of Christ's body and blood—that there is any *Capernaimitish* feeding upon it, as they express it, i. e. any gross and sensible manducation, such as the Jews of Capernaum supposed, when Jesus spoke to them of giving his flesh to eat. What then? Did Luther, or do the Romanists, who deny such a *sensual feeding*, (as they name it), admit, after all, that the physical body and blood of Christ were not eaten? Not at all. This was the very point of sound orthodoxy with them—the “*articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*.” They held fast to it, in all circumstances, in all attitudes. And so the Romanists and Greek churches still do. Some of the Lutherans, however, have long since begun to speak of feeding, not on Christ's *material* body, but on Christ's *spiritual* and *glorified* body. With how little reason, we shall see in the sequel.



What have we here, then, as the explanation of the words: This is my body; this is my blood? We have the actual and real feeding upon the actual and real body and blood of Christ, and yet in a supernatural and miraculous way. The senses declare, unequivocally, that there is no actual mastication or deglutition of any body or blood; reason and understanding also doubt or deny it. But we are told, that neither our senses nor our reason are to be believed, in this case; and that Christ has asserted, in so many plain and absolute words, that it is his body and blood. What has carnal reason, it is asked, to do with rejecting this testimony? And our senses too—can they not be deceived and misled? And are we to trust them, rather than the testimony of an infallible witness, i. e. Christ himself? It partakes of unbelief—it belongs to heresy—to reject his testimony. The omnipotence of God can easily work a miracle; and so long as this is the case, why should we call in question the real presence of Christ's body and blood?

All this may, to some minds, have a show of humble and pious belief. But *show* is all. There never was a disciple of St. Dominic or of Immanuel Swedenborg, who, if he possessed any adroitness, did not reason in the same way. But the difficulty with the reasoning in all these cases is, that it assumes, or takes for granted, the very point in question. For example, in the case before us, the assumption is, that a real miracle is wrought in the case of every individual, so often as he is a partaker at the sacramental table; and therefore, that countless miracles are still wrought, every week, in this way.

What now is the *proof*, that Christ is physically fed upon, at the Lord's Supper? It is not addressed to any of our senses. Our sight, taste, smell, feeling, I might even say hearing, are all in array against the reality of such a miracle. We see no flesh or blood; there is no odour of either; no taste of either; no feeling that we are masticating or swallowing flesh and blood. The senses all unite in the highest possible testimony which they can give, that there is no miracle, at all events none of a physical nature, in this case. They are the most fatal witnesses, that the advocates of the real presence could summon.

What then do these advocates appeal to? To the *express assertion* of Christ that the elements of the eucharist are his body and blood. If we reply that all the apparent evidence is against this; they exclaim at once: 'It is a great, an unfathomable mys-

tery; it is miraculous. Neither the senses nor reason has anything to do with this.'

But why must I give credit to these allegations? In other cases of miracles the senses are appealed to. When Jesus made the water wine, at Cana, the taste of the guests decided that the miracle had been wrought. When the blind were made to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, the sick to rise from the bed of languishment, the dead to burst their tombs and stand forth living and moving and speaking, demoniacs to be free from their malady and to return to sanity and reason—all these cases were examined and judged of by the senses. They were the only decisive witnesses. Why should they be appealed to, everywhere and always, in respect to miracles, and yet be utterly rejected in the case before us? No man can give a satisfactory reason. A party reason he may give; and if he gives it truly he will say: 'We reject the testimony of the senses, because it is against our belief.'

Then again, when they speak of *miracles* here, what can be meant? A miracle is something which is possible; I will not say *probable*, i. e. probable to the mind of man who has witnessed only the natural course of things. But it must be *possible*. It cannot involve a contradiction, nor an absurdity. But the *physical* presence of Christ, unperceived by any of the senses, is an absurdity—a contradiction. A man's whole body and blood cannot be masticated and swallowed, (and less than this cannot be meant by the sacramental words, if they are to be literally taken), without a perception by at least four of the senses. Yet it is not even contended, that there is any such perception. Then if all this could be done, how is a whole human body to be lodged in our interior? It is contradictory; the very idea of it is an absurdity.

'But,' exclaim our opponents with indignation, 'this is only gross perversion—a mere sensual, *Capernaïtic* eating. We do not maintain any such thing; we openly disavow it.'

Very well; but the matter is not at an end by this disavowal. You do still maintain the actual presence of Christ's actual and physical body and blood, in the elements; they are eaten and drunk, (no matter whether in the way of transubstantiation or consubstantiation); and if a physical body and blood is eaten and drunk, then there is only one possible way of doing this, and that is, by actual mastication and deglutition. Nothing can be physically appropriated to our nutriment, which is not disposed of in this way. The thing which you assert, then, i. e. the feeding on

Christ's actual and physical body and blood, without any of the senses perceiving it, is an impossibility. It is a downright contradiction—and therefore an absurdity. No real miracle can involve an absurdity.

Will you tell me, that I am still *Capernaïtic* in my views and reasonings? I disavow this. It is fair deduction from your premises. Do you not still hold fast to the real presence of the real body and blood of Christ—of his human body and blood? You do. Then I say again, that to eat and drink these in the shape in which you present them, to eat and drink them without any knowledge of the senses, yea with all the senses testifying exactly the contrary, is a contradiction—a real and downright absurdity.

But you reply, that you assume a supernatural, a miraculous eating and drinking. Very well—then you are bound to admit that there must be a supernatural body and blood to feed upon. But if this is the case, then the physical body and blood of Christ, as such, are not fed upon. To say that we actually eat and drink a human body and blood, without any actual perception or evidence of any of our senses—is, I say again, a downright contradiction, an absurdity. If the eating and drinking be supernatural, something above us, beyond us, not carried on by any organs that we possess, then it is not any act of ours; it is not *we* who eat and drink; it is omnipotence which accomplishes certain things that are merely carried on within us, and of which we are not so much as even the conscious instruments. If it is the exclusive work of omnipotence, then how comes the work ever to be done wrongly? How can any man eat and drink damnation to himself? How can even Christians offend in this matter, and become weak and sickly, or sleep in death, as some of the Corinthians did, in the way of chastisement for *their* sin? I may say once more, then, that this whole matter is an impossibility; it is an absolute incongruity, which is not even supposable.

If now, after all, you retreat a little and say, that 'although Christ's bodily presence in the elements cannot be maintained and defended, yet we may suppose, that the almighty power of God so directs and controls this matter of the eucharist, that Christ's body and blood is, after all, actually fed upon, although there is no perception of it by any of the senses; then where is the evidence, I ask again, of such a feeding? Not our senses; this will not be contended for. Is it the testimony of others? But they can know nothing of the matter, except through the medium of their

senses; and this is less satisfactory than the testimony of one's own senses. Of course we are sent back at last to the force of the declarations: *This is my body, this is my blood.* But before we examine these declarations as a whole, let us take some notice of an opinion somewhat current among Lutherans on the continent of Europe, to which I have already adverted. This is, that Christ's *glorified* body is partaken of at the sacramental table.

It seems to me not difficult to dispose of this view of our subject. Paul assures us, in the most direct and unequivocal language, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* Christ tells us, that at the resurrection, *the saints will be made like to the angels.* The very nature of the heavenly world would decide the same thing, if the Scriptures had not said a word upon the subject.

How then can we now feed on Christ's flesh and blood, since in his glorified nature he retains neither? It is certain that he is in the kingdom of God, at the right hand of the Father in heaven. It is equally certain, that *flesh and blood* cannot inherit that kingdom. Then his body has become what the apostle calls (for want of a better name) a *spiritual body*, i. e. a body adapted to a spiritual and never ending state of existence. Why talk then any longer of the corporeal and physical presence of Christ? There has been no such body in existence, for these 1800 years—never since his ascension to glory. Do you profess now to feed on a body that is and exists at the present time, or on one which existed 1800 years ago? On the former, no doubt. But where is it? It is a nihility; it is no-where. It ceased to exist the moment Jesus began to ascend, if not before. He was transformed. He has now an immortal body.

'Well' the Lutheran may say, perhaps, 'we are content to understand the sacramental words as implying that we feed on such a glorified body.' But if you in reality do consent to this, then you abandon the position that Christ is *corporeally* and *physically* present in the elements. You abandon the position, that he is eaten and drunk; for what possible meaning, in a literal way, can the expression, eating and drinking a *spiritual* body, have? It is incongruous; it is evidently absurd. It is just as absurd as to say that matter is spirit, or that spirit is matter.

Indeed, neither Luther nor his original adherents ever seem to have thought of this escape from the difficulties of the subject before us. Well they might refrain from such a view of the matter. It presents a case replete with contradictions to the very na-

ture of things. Either the material and physical presence must be given up, or else the feeding on a spiritualized body must be abandoned. Or if you persevere in saying, that the whole matter must be regarded as miraculous, and purely so, then you are bound to show some satisfactory evidence in the case, that there is a miraculous intervention. You will not—you dare not—appeal to the senses, nor to reason. Your only appeal, at last, is after all to the form of the words: *This is my body; This is my blood.*

But is it the real and true *meaning* of these words, which we are called upon to believe in, or is it only in the *form* and *literal sense* of them? The latter, you will say. But I must deny that the latter is either a probable or a possible sense. I pledge myself to show from the Scriptures, that there is nothing in the form of the expression which binds us to the literal sense.

#### § 9. MEANING OF THE VERB *is* IN THE CONSECRATING WORDS OF THE EUCHARIST.

The next question is, whether, according to the use of language by the sacred writers, we are bound to interpret the affirmation in the expressions: *This is my body, this is my blood,* in a *literal* manner.

If the declaration, *this is*, makes it a matter of imperious necessity that we should give a *literal* interpretation, then of course the same rule of exegesis must be extended to other cases of a similar nature. We are surely bound to be consistent and congruous, in the application of a general principle. We must make the appeal to the Scriptures, then, and inquire how this principle will operate, when applied to the Bible in general.

But before I do this, I must beg the liberty of making a few remarks on an idiom of the sacred writers, which has special regard to the matter before us.

Every critical reader of the Scriptures well knows, that in the very numerous cases where one thing is compared with another, or likened to another, or may be represented or symbolized by another, the Hebrews did not usually designate this by inserting words which literally and directly express the idea, *it is like to*, or *it may be compared with*, *it resembles*, *it is symbolized by*, *it signifies*. Seldom, very seldom, are these words to be met with in the Scriptures, where a mere similitude of a rhetorical nature is designed to be expressed. Throughout the Old and New Testa-

ments, the usual and ordinary mode of asserting or expressing these and the like ideas, is by the use of the verb *is*, either expressed or implied.

This will be abundantly illustrated in the sequel. But in order to show how much is taken for granted by the sacred writers in making *comparisons*, how much of the appeal is made to the reason and understanding of readers, how often it is assumed that they will mentally supply the requisite meaning, I will merely advert to what may be extensively found in the Hebrew Scriptures, but specially in poetry and in proverbs. I open my Hebrew Bible at random, and fall upon the 26th chapter of the book of Proverbs. Let us follow this for a moment, in order to illustrate the principle before us. I shall translate as literally as possible, with a design to show, as nearly as may be, the exact shape of the original Hebrew.

V. 6. "He who maiming his feet suffereth violence, *is* he who sendeth messages by the hand of a fool. V. 7. The legs of the lame hang down dangling, and a proverb in the mouth of fools. V. 8. A thorn shoots up into the hand of a drunkard, and a proverb in the mouth of fools. V. 10. An arrow which wounds all *is* he who hireth a fool, and who hireth travellers by the way. V. 14. The door turneth upon its hinge, and the slothful upon his bed. V. 17. He who taketh a dog by the ears *is* he, who, passing by, intermeddled with a strife that does not belong to him. V. 21. Charcoal for burning coals, and wood for fire, and a quarrelsome man to kindle a strife. V. 23. Silver-dross spread over an earthen vessel *are* burning lips and a bad heart."

Here then, in this chapter, about one third part of the composition is of the tenor that I have described. The words *is like, may be compared to, resembles, is a symbol of, signifies*, none of them, are once inserted. Not even the particles of similitude *so . . . as* (יִשְׁוֶה . . . כִּי) are employed. These are left purposely for the wit and reason of the reader to supply. And so it is throughout most of the book of Proverbs; so is it more or less in all parts of the Old Testament, but especially in the poetic parts of it, which often adopt the most concise and sententious methods of speech.

Who now, in perusing the Proverbs that I have just exhibited, would think of making the verb *is*, indicative of literal and substantial reality? For example: "An arrow which wounds all *is* he who hireth a fool, and who hireth passengers by the way." Is it matter of fact, that the simpleton who hires fools and vaga-

bonds to do his business, is really and veritably an *arrow*, and one which wounds all? And so of all the other comparisons here. And so of countless myriads, I had almost said, throughout the Old Testament and the New. Nothing is more familiar to the critical reader of the Scriptures, than the fact, that the particles of comparison, *as . . . so*, are omitted in instances not to be numbered, where their presence is virtually supplied by the verb *is*, either expressed or implied.

The shades of meaning attached to the verb *is*, in such cases, are somewhat various, although essentially they are of the like tenor. I must illustrate some of them by examples.

(1) There are many cases, where the word *is* designates the idea of *signifies*, *means*.

Thus in Matt. 27 : 46, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, *that is* (adds the evangelist), My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Here, *that is*, plainly signifies *that means*. "If ye had known *what is* [what means] I desire mercy and not sacrifice," Matt. 12 : 7. "What *is* this which he saith to us?" John 16 : 17. Plainly, *what means* that which he saith? "Eating bread with common hands, *that is* [which means] with unwashed ones," Mark 7 : 2. "What *is* [means] this which is written?"—Luke 20 : 17. "Acedama, which *is* [means] field of blood," Acts 1 : 19. "King of Salem, which *is* [means] King of peace," Heb. 7 : 2. "Boanerges, which *is* [means] sons of thunder," Mark 3 : 17. Examples of the same kind are so numerous, and withal so plain, that it would be superfluous to go on with further illustration.

(2) Another class of cases, still more numerous, are those in which one agent or object is simply said to be another agent or object, the particles of similitude, or a verb expressing the idea *is like*, *may be compared with*, *resembles*, etc., being omitted, and their place supplied by the word *is*, expressed or implied.

Where to begin or end the illustration of this part of our subject, I scarcely know. If we go to the Old Testament, we cannot open a page, in any of the poetic parts which does not exhibit this idiom. I open, at a venture, at the 18th Psalm. There meets me at the very outset the idiom in full. "The Lord is my rock—is my fortress—is my strength—is my buckler—is the horn of my salvation—is my high tower. Who is a rock save our God?" In the sequel we find: "The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shield, God is my rock and my salvation—my defence—my glory, God is our sun," and the like. If to these we should add all the passages in which the parts and members of

the human frame are ascribed to God, and the feelings and passions and affections of men, and above all those in which the movements and the armour and the contests of men are ascribed to him, as also the vengeance taken upon enemies, and the like, it would of itself make a little volume.

This is not peculiar merely to the Old Testament. It is in the New as well as the Old. "Our God is a consuming fire," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (12: 29). "I am the true vine," says the Saviour, "and my Father is the husbandman," John 15: 1. Christ is called "the Lamb of God; Christ our pass-over is sacrificed for us." He says of himself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I am the bread of life . . . which came down from heaven. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." John the Baptist says of himself: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." Paul says of himself and his fellow Christians: "We are the circumcision; We many are one body; We are a sweet savour to God; We are the children of the promise; We are members one of another; We are members of the body of Christ; We are one body in Christ; We are the children of God; We are of the truth; We are of God; We are Abraham's seed; We are the house of God."

Christ says of Peter: "Thou art a rock, and on this rock will I build my church." He says of his disciples: "Ye are the salt of the earth—the light of the world—a city set on a hill." Christ says of the Jews: "Ye are of your father, the devil." The Bible says of magistrates: "Ye are gods." Peter says to his hearers, (Acts iii), "Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant." Paul says of the Corinthians: "Ye are the temple of God; Ye are my workmanship in the Lord; Ye are the seal of my apostleship;" of the Thessalonians: "Ye are my glory and my joy; Ye are all children of the light."

Did any man, now, of common sense, ever attempt to give these and the like declarations, which are almost without number in both Testaments, a literal meaning? For example, did any one ever venture to maintain, that God is a literal rock, a literal shield, a literal tower; that Christ is literally a lamb, the resurrection, the door of the sheep, bread which came down from heaven; that his apostles are salt, and light, and a city on a hill; that Christians are a temple, that they are a seal, that they were begotten by the light? No: among all the ravings of commentators on the Bible,



none have ever reached such an eminence of folly and extravagance and stupidity, as such an exegesis would indicate. I think we shall see, in the sequel, that to interpret literally the consecrating words of the eucharist, deserves to be ranked under the same category as the literal interpretation of the phrases just repeated would be.

(3) There is another shade of meaning to the verb *is*, which is still more important and direct to our purpose, than either of those already brought to view. It is this, viz. *symbolizes, betokens, represents*. In cases where any sensible object is described as being the *sign or token or symbol* of some truth, or event, or fact, and where such object is not introduced on its own account, but merely as affording an apparent resemblance or similarity to some particular truth, event, or fact, which the speaker or writer wishes to illustrate, the verb *is* is employed in the sense just specified.

Examples of this nature are to be found in abundance, throughout the Scriptures. Thus Joseph, when he interprets Pharaoh's dream, says: "The seven kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; and the seven thin and ill-favoured kine are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind are seven years of famine." When Jotham proposed the fable of the trees going forth in quest of a king, and seeking in vain for one that would reign peaceably over them, no one will contend that this did not represent the men of Shechem seeking to make Abimelech their king. When Nathan propounded to David the parable of the poor man and his lamb, robbed by the rich one in order to save his own property, was there any difficulty in David's understanding the prophet, when he said, at the close of his parable: "Thou art the man?" When Isaiah sung his song respecting the vineyard that brought forth wild grapes, was there any difficulty in understanding him, when he said: "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant?" When this prophet named his newly born child *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* (haste to the spoil—rush to the prey), was there any difficulty in his proposing this as a symbol of the sudden spoiling and wasting of Damascus and Samaria? When he speaks of "leviathan, that coiled serpent, and the dragon that is in the sea," as about to be destroyed, is there any difficulty in saying that this symbolizes or betokens the king of Egypt? When Jeremiah is commanded to go and hide his girdle near the Euphrates, and in the sequel finds it marred, does any one feel that there is difficulty in saying, that this betokens the marring of

the pride of Judah and Jerusalem? When the same prophet sees the vessel of clay marred in the potter's hand, does not that clay represent the house of rebellious Israel in the hands of the Lord? When Ezekiel portrays upon a tile the siege of the city of Jerusalem, was not that picture a symbol or token for the house of Israel? When the same prophet saw the vision of the dry bones in the valley and the resurrection of them, was there any enigma in his words, when he said: "These bones are the whole house of Israel?" Did they not understand him when he said: "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel?" When Daniel interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar respecting the gigantic image compounded of various metals, did that king misapprehend him when he said: "Thou art the head of gold?" Was he not intelligible, when he intimated that the second empire would be silver, the third brass, and the fourth iron and clay? When those awful words, *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*, were stamped in characters of celestial radiance on the walls of Belshazzar's banqueting hall, were they not an intelligible symbol of his destruction? When Daniel saw the vision of the four beasts which came up out of the sea, was there any difficulty in his understanding the words of the angel-interpreter, when he said to him: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kingdoms—the fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom—the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise? And again, in the vision of the ram and he-goat: "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia; the rough goat is the king of Grecia; the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." When Zechariah saw spectral horses of different colors under the myrtle tree, was there any difficulty in understanding the report which they are said to make to the guardian-angel: "We have walked to and fro through the land, and behold! all is at rest?" And was it not equally intelligible, when, after the prophet had seen seven lamps, and two olive-trees supplying them with oil, the angel-interpreter told him: "These [olive-branches] are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

But let us go to the New Testament. Instances here are not less frequent. Look at the parable of the sower. 'The seed sown by the way side, is he that heareth the word and speedily hath it taken from him by the wicked one; the seed sown in stony places, is he that heareth the word and speedily loseth it by reason of of-

fence; the seed among thorns, is he that heareth the word, and in whom it is speedily choked by riches; the good seed sown in good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it, and bringeth forth much fruit.' So in the parable of the tares: 'The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the angels are the reapers.' Matt. xii. When the Saviour addressed 'the parable of the man who owned a vineyard, and let it, and went into a far country, and put husbandmen in to till it, and they refused to render him any rent-dues, and beat his messengers, and killed his son,' did the Jews have any difficulty in saying: This means us? Mark xii. When Paul says, that the rock from which the Israelites drank the flowing water in the wilderness, was Christ, did the Corinthians understand him literally? 1 Cor. x. When he says, that the two sons of Abraham, the one of a free-woman the other of a bond-maid, were the two covenants; is he to be literally interpreted? When he says, that Abraham's maid-servant, Hagar, is mount Sinai in Arabia, did the Galatians, in their own minds, regard the woman and the mountain as identical? And John, when he saw the seven stars in the Saviour's right hand, and beheld him walking in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, did he literally interpret the words of the Saviour when he said to him: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches?" Did he mistake the import of the angel-interpreter's words, who conducted him into the wilderness, and showed him a huge scarlet-coloured beast, with seven heads and ten horns, and a woman sitting upon the beast, gorgeously arrayed, and then said: "The seven heads are the seven mountains;—and they are seven kings; and the ten horns are ten kings; and the woman whom thou sawest, is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth?" Rev. xvii.

I began with Genesis, and have ended with the Apocalypse, in making selections for the purpose of illustration. But I have not cited a tith of the instances that may be found in the Scriptures, which bear the particular stamp in question, viz. where the verb *is* means *symbolizes, betokens, represents, presents a similitude of, and the like*. Did ever any man that was sane, doubt this meaning in any of the passages which I have adduced? I think not; the matter appears impossible. The very supposition involves an absurdity, and would betoken a wandering of the intellect. So,

every one not engaged in a dispute which is to support some favorite tenet, would spontaneously decide.

On what grounds now does this spontaneous decision of every mind rest? On a very plain and simple ground, I would answer. The supposition, in all these and the like cases, of a literal meaning involves either absurdity, or contradiction, or impossibility; it forces upon us what is crude, or gross, inept, frigid, irrelevant. Now if we suppose that the scriptural writers were sane and not mad-men, we cannot possibly suppose them to have written such passages as I have cited, with an intention that they should be literally interpreted. Of course we give—for we must give—to all such passages a *tropical* sense. There is no other principle but this, by which a tropical sense can ever be determined.

The simple question now before us therefore is: Whether the consecrating words of the eucharist stand on the same basis, and must be interpreted by a reference to the same principles of exegesis?

If now it can be shown, that any other than a *tropical* interpretation would involve absurdities, impossibilities, or incongruities, this makes a final settlement of the question. There is no appeal from such a court. It is the highest tribunal short of that which belongs to Omniscience.

One thing at least has now been done. It has been shown, that both the Old and New Testaments are full of expressions, whose *form* resembles that which is now in question. *This is, such a thing is such an one*, is said times without number, where no reasonable person ever thought it possible to give a literal interpretation. *Analogy*, then, proves nothing in favour of the exegesis defended by transubstantiation or by consubstantiation. It goes altogether against it. The most irrefragable reasons ought, therefore, to be produced for the literal interpretation, as it regards the case in question, if such interpretation is to be given. That such reasons exist, however, never has been satisfactorily shown; may I not add, never can be shown?

Thus have I examined the meaning of all the important words employed in the consecration of the eucharist. Neither the word *body* nor *blood* can apply to the Saviour in a *literal* sense, in the state in which he now is and since his glorification. The cases in which the verb *is* means *represents, symbolizes, designates*, and the like, are almost without number in the Scriptures, and are altogether incontrovertible. No necessity lies upon us, then, of giving to the word *is*, in the eucharistic formula, a literal sense.

Analogy everywhere in the Scriptures, in favour of a tropical sense of the word, is met with by every reader. But still, it is in all cases a sound principle of interpretation, not to depart from the literal sense of any word, unless there is good and sufficient reason. Is there then such reason in the present case? This introduces us to the consideration of the grounds, on which the *tropical* signification of the verb *is* rests, as employed in the consecrating words of the eucharist.

† 10. SPECIAL REASONS WHY THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF CHRIST'S WORDS AT THE INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE.

Thus far we have been principally engaged in removing the obstacles, which are in the way of rightly deciding the exegetical question respecting the true and real meaning of the consecrating words of the eucharist. First of all, we have seen that the opinion of the Christian fathers is not obligatory upon us. Next, we have seen that even if it were obligatory, no certain standard of opinion in relation to the matter before us was erected, or even professed to be set up, until about the middle of the ninth century; so that we can find no adequate and satisfactory guidance among the early fathers. Our next object was, to inquire whether the Scriptures do not every where abound in *tropical* language; and if they do, whether analogy would not favour the tropical interpretation of our text. We have seen, in the course of this inquiry, that the Scripture abounds more in such language, than almost any other book with which we are conversant; and thus, all difficulties on the score of analogy are removed. Our next object was, to examine the question whether there is anything in the nature of the language or diction of our text, which demands that it should be exempted from a tropical interpretation. It has, as I trust, been shewn by an overwhelming mass of examples, that the instances of a tropical sense, where the form of the diction is like that of our text, are almost beyond enumeration in the Scriptures, and occur in almost every part of them. On none of these grounds, then, can the advocates of a *literal* sense establish their opinion. The argument seems to be plainly against them on all these points, so far as they go. At all events, it does not in any measure speak in their favour.

We come now to the more direct and positive part of our subject. **THERE ARE UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENTS AGAINST A LITERAL**

EXEGESIS. My present object is briefly and succinctly to develop the truth of this position.

I. My first remark is, that *several considerations serve to show, that the literal sense of the consecrating sacramental words is very IMPROBABLE.*

(1) The idea of *eating flesh and blood*, above all, of eating *human* flesh and blood commingled, or of eating blood at all, was and is abhorrent both to the old and new Dispensation.

Immediately after the flood, God said to Noah: "Flesh with the life thereof, which is the *blood* thereof, shall ye not eat," Gen. 9: 4. Such was the patriarchal precept; and such the usage of the pious, down to the time of the Mosaic legislation. Throughout all the Scriptures the idea reigns, that the *blood* of animal beings is the *life* of them, i. e. it is the element with which the animal life is peculiarly and inseparably connected. This is true in point of fact; and to the feelings of a Hebrew, this was true in the highest sense which he could entertain for any truth of such a nature.

When we come down to the Levitical law, there the eating of *blood* is universally and at all times prohibited. "It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations . . . not to eat blood," says Moses; Lev. 3: 17. Again: "Ye shall eat no manner of blood . . . Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people," Lev. 7: 26, 27. "I will set my face against that soul which eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people, for the life of the flesh is the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul," Lev. 17: 10, 11.

Here then are two reasons for not eating blood; the first, that it is the animal life; the second, that it is to be set apart for making atonement. The blood was sacred, because it appertained to the altar of God, and was to be poured out and sprinkled there; and it was not lawful, therefore, for any man to devour that which was sacred to God.

Now the blood of Jesus made the great and real atonement for the sins of the world. Is it probable, then, that this was to be *eaten* and *drunk*, and thus profaned more than the blood of even animal victims was allowed to be?

Through all the Old Testament the same spirit reigns. Every where an abhorrence of eating blood is inculcated; even the blood of common animals. How much more is the shedding or

eating of human blood forbidden! The man who purposely sheds another's blood, is to repay the debt which he owes to justice, by his own blood. "Life for life, blood for blood." The consummation of all iniquity among the Jews was, the crime of offering up children to Moloch. It is not possible to take higher ground against the destruction of human life, than the Jewish legislator did. The idea of feeding on human flesh and blood, was one of the last, the most dreadful, the most shocking, that could possibly enter a Jewish mind. (Comp. Deut. 12: 16, 23. 15: 23. 1 Sam. 14: 32 seq. Ezek. 30: 25 seq.)

Was this carried over to New Testament times? It was. Even after the death of Christ, and the abolition of all precepts merely ritual and Levitical, we find a united council of apostles and elders at Jerusalem, advising their Christian brethren to abstain not only from things offered to idols, and the pollution which commonly was associated with this, but from *things strangled* and from *blood*," Acts 15: 20. From things *strangled*—because the blood was still in them. All this, moreover, when Christianity knows no distinction of meats clean and unclean; all this, when Christianity teaches, that 'not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of his mouth defileth him.' (Comp. Acts 15: 28. 22: 5.)

(2) Is it to be supposed, that the apostles ever regarded their Master as having taught them really and actually to eat his own flesh and drink his own blood? And taught them to do this, not once only, when he was with them, but down to the time when he should come to judge the world? Had they understood him in this way, how could they have refrained from the highest degree of astonishment and horror? Not only as Jews would they have shuddered to their inmost soul, but as the friends and confidants of the Saviour, their astonishment would have been irrepressible, their horror beyond expression.

I see them gathering, with mournful faces, around the passover-table. Jesus has told them that he is to be betrayed, condemned, crucified, and afterwards that he should leave them, and by his *personal* presence be with them no more. I hear him endeavouring to assuage their bitter grief on account of these tidings, and saying to them: "Let not your hearts be troubled; trust in God, and trust in me." When Peter declared that he was ready to die with his Master, rather than be separated from him, they all joined with him in the expression of the same feeling. Was this a time to make the proposal that they should actually eat his

broken body and drink his blood? Cannibals there were in those days, no doubt, who ate up prisoners of war, and sometimes fed on human sacrifices. But among the Jews, who ever heard of such a thing? It is the part of a savage and blood-thirsty enemy only, and he must belong to the most ignorant and uncultivated of the human race, to eat human flesh and drink human blood. But the proposal to do this in respect to a venerated, adored, and supremely beloved friend—who ever heard of the like?

It was not possible, in the nature of things, that some traces of the apostles' astonishment should not be apparent, in their demeanor and in their words, in case they understood the consecrating words of Jesus *literally*, at the eucharist? One cannot even imagine, that they would not have been overwhelmed with astonishment and horror. And yet, there is not a trace of all this, in the histories of the sacrament. Everything went on in the most quiet and orderly manner. When Jesus had spoken of his sufferings and death, on former occasions, the disciples had been mute with wonder and unbelief. And even when he spoke so plainly that his words could no longer be to them a matter of doubt, the disciples exclaim: 'That be far from thee, Lord!' But now—when he proposes that they should even eat and drink his very body and blood, not a word of wonder, of astonishment, or even of doubt!

Is not all this absolutely incredible, on the ground that Jesus meant to be, and was, literally understood? So, I cannot help thinking, every man on earth, who is not a partizan in dispute, would spontaneously decide.

Considerations such as these seem to render it in a high degree improbable, that the apostles understood Jesus as giving them a literal precept, at the sacramental table. Would Paul, would John, would Peter, have omitted to proffer some exposition of such an unheard of and (to a Jew) unimaginable thing, as regularly feasting on human flesh and blood? And even on the flesh and blood of their own Lord and Master? This would surely be a new, a most extraordinary way of manifesting love and respect for him. From the foundation of the world down to that hour, when was the like ever spoken of, or even imagined?

So much for the *probabilities* of this matter. Now then, let us,

II. Consider the *POSSIBILITIES* of feeding on the real body and blood of Jesus.

We will go back to the original institution of the Lord's Supper. "This is my body, which is broken for you; eat ye all of it. This



is my blood, which is shed for you; drink ye all of it." What now is this? Here is his *body*, first of all, i. e. the *whole* of his frame with all its parts including the *blood*. This is presented to them as *broken*, and they, i. e. each one of them, is to eat his broken body. But how is this possible, in the literal sense? The body of Jesus was not then broken. Jesus was then sitting before them, clothed, sound, unmaimed. He was at the head of the table; it was the *outer* as well as the inner man, which presided on that occasion. To say that the disciples ate his *broken* body, before it was broken, is to affirm that a thing can be and not be at one and the same time. It is to affirm that a body which is whole and sound, is at the same time maimed and broken. It is to say, that a living Jesus, in health and strength, is at the same moment Jesus dead and cut in pieces. And this is neither more nor less than a downright contradiction—a palpable absurdity.

I might speak, too, of the absurdity of supposing that each of the apostles devoured a whole human body, or that all of them did or could devour such a body, at a single meal, when they had already taken their paschal meal. To make this possible, either the body must no longer be body, or the physical capacities of the disciples must no longer be human. In either of these cases, the *literal* meaning of the command of Jesus falls to the ground.

So is it also with Jesus' BLOOD. The cup, he says, is "his blood, *which is shed* for the disciples." Yet his blood was then in its full natural and healthy course, running at that instant in his veins, and as yet unharmed. How then could they drink the blood that was *shed*? Besides; as they had already eaten his *body*, they had of course eaten his blood; for the body surely includes this. Why repeat this awful rite? How could the blood be drunk again, which had already been swallowed? How could *shed* blood be drunk, when the blood was *not* shed? The thing is impossible. To affirm it, is therefore an absurdity. And if, in order to avoid this, any one should begin, as is usual, to talk about the *mysterious* and the *inexplicable*, and the duty of *implicit faith* in what Christ has said, even although it contradicts the senses and reason;—this is only because he feels the force of the pressure, and knows not how else to escape from it. Where does he get his authority for the mysterious, and unintelligible, and miraculous, in this simple rite? Not in the New Testament itself. Paul has not given us anything of this, in his account of the sacrament. (1 Cor. xi.) Such an advocate of the literal sense, then, evidently says this, because he does not know what else to say.

I know one may here urge an *implicit faith*; and he may reproach all, who doubt the correctness of his views in relation to this matter, with unbelief. But I say once more: *Faith is believing what God has revealed; not what he has not revealed.* Now what God has revealed, is the *meaning* of the scriptural declarations, the purport, the sentiment; not the mere *form* of the words, which is nothing more than the husk around the proper fruit. It is no more true faith in me, to believe that the words, *This is my body*, mean, that a piece of bread is literally Jesus' broken body, than it is true faith to believe that the declaration, *God is a rock*, means that the ever living God, who is a *Spirit*, is literally a rock. The one is as great an absurdity as the other; and God has neither revealed absurdities, nor required us to believe them.

I am aware, as I have before intimated, that the advocate for a literal sense will here ask, with a countenance full of reproof: 'What, are we not to believe God's *unerring* word, rather than the testimony of our *erring* reason and senses?' But you, I would reply to him, make no advances by this question. You do not believe, that God is really a rock, or a shield, or a buckler, or a high tower, or that he has eagles' wings and feathers. Why not? The Bible asserts all this. The testimony of your reason and senses, you say, has nothing to do with setting aside the declarations of the Bible. Get down then upon your knees, and confess before heaven and earth that you are guilty of infidelity, because you do not believe that the everlasting God is literally each and every one of the substances just named. But no; you toss your head with disdain, and ask me whether I can for a moment suppose, that the Bible asserts an absurdity and a contradiction, and whether you are really called upon to believe such a thing as that. Very well; out of thine own mouth, then, thou must be judged. I aver, now, in presence of all that is called reason among men, that the belief, that a broken piece of bread which visibly and palpably retains all its qualities as such is still a true human body of flesh and blood, is just as palpable an absurdity as those which you at once refuse to believe. If you appeal to the *miraculous*, (as doubtless you will), I say, as I have said before, that a true miracle always appeals to the senses and to reason for confirmation. You evidently turn away from both of these, in the present case, because both of them are against you. A miracle, moreover, can never be an *impossibility*. But the case before us shows, that an impossibility must be assumed in order to make the matter out. This becomes still more plain, when we consider,

III. That one concrete, specific thing or object cannot, at one and the same time, be another and different concrete and specific thing or object.

A man, for example, may be a father, a magistrate, a military commander, a senator, and the like; or he may be amiable, gentle, intelligent, learned, benevolent, or the reverse; and yet be one and the same man. But all these are mere *qualities* or *attributes* of the substance or person man. And so there may be a boundless variety of attributes belonging to any particular substance, while the substance remains the same. Yet a man cannot be a *tree* or a *stone*, at the same time that he is a man. A body cannot of itself be *spirit*, so long as it is body. And the simple intelligible reason in all these cases is, that we are unable, in any possible manner, to comprehend how a thing can *be*, and yet *not be*, at one and the same time. If a man is a *human* being, he is not a *tree*; and if he becomes a tree, he is no longer a human being.

I cannot prove all this, now, as I readily concede, by any series of argument. The reason is, that the truth which it contains is plainer and higher than that which is established by argument. Demonstration is quite below it, and is employed only to establish secondary truths. But such truths as I have just repeated, belong to the very elements of a rational soul. The elementary principles of rationality decide them all; and the proof of this is the fact, that no man can doubt them, if he make ever so strenuous efforts to do so.

One thing or substance, then, cannot be another thing or substance, at the same time; and this, because it is impossible that a thing should *be*, and *not be*, at one and the same time.

The body and blood of Christ cannot, in the nature of things, be at the same time bread and wine; and bread and wine as such cannot, in the nature of things, be the body and blood of Christ. And if you endeavour to avoid the force of this, as you probably will, by saying that *transubstantiation* only maintains that the bread and wine go over into and become the body and blood of Christ; this will not satisfy a sober inquirer. All the attributes of bread and wine still remain after consecration; and it is impossible, therefore, that the substances themselves should not still remain. If you take your refuge in *consubstantiation*, and say, that you do not suppose any change of the elements of the bread and wine, but you merely maintain that Christ's body and blood are in, with, and under them; then you are called upon for evidence of this. All the senses decide against it. All the phenomena of

bread and wine decide against it. A human body, as such, cannot be cooped up in these elements. If you say that it is actually there; then you merely say, that it is no longer a human body. Of course you give up, at last, the literal sense of the sacramental words. If now you next begin to appeal to the *miraculous*, this appeal has already been examined.

I repeat, therefore, that one thing or substance cannot at the same time be another thing or substance; a human body and human blood cannot, at the same time that they are body and blood, be bread and wine; and so *vice versa*. A human body and blood, as such, cannot be present in, with, and under any substance, and yet not be perceptible to our senses. It is a downright impossibility. To believe this is not *faith*, but superstition; it is not to give credit to the declarations of the sacred writers, but to the inventions and conceits of men. Luther himself, during the first seven years after the Reformation had commenced, did not maintain the doctrine of consubstantiation. It was only his disputes with Carlstadt and Zuingle which brought him at last to this position. When he had become angry with some of the extravagancies and biting sarcasms of Carlstadt, he exclaimed, in one of his controversial writings: "I hereby testify and acknowledge before God and all the world, that I do not hold with the sacramentarian enthusiasts, [meaning his opponents,] nor ever have held with them, nor ever shall hold with them; so help me God!" (Das diese Worte noch feststehen, A. D. 1527. See Stud. und Krit. 1843. p. 317.) In saying, that he never had held with them, he must have pacified his conscience by some hair-splitting discriminations. Luther evidently found it easier to put down his opponents by appeal to oath, than by appeal to argument.

IV. There is yet another consideration, which goes to show the impossibility of the real bodily presence of Christ in the sacramental elements. It is this, viz., that his *real human body and blood* have now no actual existence, and have not had any for more than 1800 years.

The proof is short, but irresistible. Paul says, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; that corruption cannot inherit incorruption;" that a human body is sown a natural body, and raised a spiritual one." 1 Cor. 15: 50, 44). Jesus declares to his disciples, that at the resurrection "they shall be made like the angels;" and therefore they shall then be no more capable of fleshly or carnal desires, Mark 12: 25. The nature of the heavenly world speaks for this, in language too plain to be misun-

derstood. All there is permanent, unchangeable, imperishable. A real material human body of flesh and blood, therefore, cannot by any possibility be in existence there.

Now Jesus is there. He is seated at the right hand of God. He reigns over the Universe, and is everywhere present in it. Yet not in a body of flesh and blood, but in a *glorified* body. Nor is his body of flesh and blood in the tomb, where it was once laid. "He is not there, but has risen from the dead." More than eighteen hundred years ago Jesus's body became a spiritual one. His natural body has existed nowhere since that period. How then can it be eaten and drunk? How can we eat and drink a *nonentity*? It is an impossibility. And if you say, as some do, that it is the *glorified* body of Jesus which the communicant eats and drinks, I ask then, how can natural and physical organs masticate and swallow down a glorified *spiritual* body? The Lutheran cries out, I am aware, that he does not maintain a *Capernaïtic* eating or manducation. I hear the assertion; but still I ask: How can your physical organs, as such, perform an office different from that which belonged to the same organs of men in the town of Capernaum? To talk of physical organs devouring *spiritual* substances—what is this but to do violence to reason and common sense? You may think that such a covering will hide the deformities of the case; but the bed is evidently too strait for a man to turn himself thereon, and the covering narrower than that a man can wrap himself therein. It is a mere evasion to which you are forced, by the desperate cause which you have undertaken to patronize.

V. If the real presence in the elements of the eucharist is to be maintained, then Christ's human body and blood must be *ubiquitous*, i. e. be everywhere and at the same time.

The matter needs only a brief illustration. The sacrament of the Supper may be in actual celebration at the same moment, on different sides of our globe. We may, without any violence, and for the sake of illustration, suppose it to be celebrated at the same time, all over the earth, wherever human beings are found. Now according to the doctrine in question, Christ's human body and blood must be present in all these places; and what is more, each individual communicant masticates and swallows the whole. The material body and blood of Jesus, then, must not only be ubiquitous, but be indefinitely multiplied at one and the same time. But this is plainly an impossibility and an absurdity.

If you deny, that there is any such actual bodily presence, then

you give up your favourite *literal* interpretation. If you affirm it, then you fall into the predicament just mentioned. Either horn of the dilemma is fatal to the interpretation in question.

‡11. WHAT SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGE CAN BE REASONABLY EXPECTED FROM THE BODILY PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE ELEMENTS OF THE EUCHARIST ?

The improbability and impossibility of the real physical presence of Jesus's body and blood in the bread and wine of the eucharist, have been set forth in the preceding section. We may now pass on to contemplate our subject in another and somewhat different light. Supposing the doctrine which has now been opposed to be true ; taking it for granted that the bread and wine of the eucharist do become transmuted into the actual body and blood of Christ ; or supposing that the body and blood of Christ are in, with, and under, the eucharistic elements ; admitting for the moment all or any part of this, we should then have a very important question to ask, viz. *What is the spiritual advantage or profit which may be rationally expected from such a presence ?*

I do not even intimate that we are competent, in respect to everything which religion may require us to believe, in all cases to show the actual benefit that may be derived from what is taught or required ; or rather, to show *in what way* benefit may be plainly derived. Still, there is a general analogy throughout the Scriptures, in relation to these matters. The very nature, moreover, of a religion preëminently *spiritual*, helps to cast light on such a subject.

When Nicodemus was told, that a man must be *born again* in order to see the kingdom of God, he asked with apparent surprise, and in such a way as to show that he thought his question would be a confounding one : " How can a man be born when he is old ? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born ? " The reply of Jesus was very simple and instructive. It assures him that the birth in question was to be brought about by the Spirit of God, and was not a natural or physical occurrence. " That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. "

In other words, a change in a man's religious character is not brought about by mere natural and physical agents. It depends on an influence entirely different from theirs. That must be a *spiritual cause* which will produce *spiritual effects*.

Our Saviour here speaks of the ultimate and highest agent in the regeneration and sanctification of men, viz. of the Spirit of God. Nothing short of his influence will produce a saving change in the hearts of men. But the question, Whether means or instruments are employed by the Holy Spirit when he operates upon the hearts of men, is quite another matter. It is however a matter so plain, that but a few moments' attention need be bestowed upon it.

The Gospel, and the preachers and teachers of it, are the *means* employed by the Great Head of the church, in making converts to Christianity, and in sanctifying the souls of men. Now both of these are means, i. e. real and proper instruments of religious profit, because, and merely because, they exhibit religious TRUTH, that is, place it before the minds of men and impress it upon them.

It is *spiritual truth*, which ultimately is instrumental in converting and sanctifying men; for nothing but such truth is adapted to produce such impressions as may be really salutary and saving.

Must I appeal to the Scriptures, in order to confirm such a view of the subject? Where then shall I begin or end? Both the volumes of Scripture are filled with testimonies to our purpose. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple." (Ps. 19: 7.) "Get wisdom, get understanding; . . . forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee; love her and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thine acquisitions get understanding." (Prov. 4: 5—7.) By wisdom and understanding here, divine truth and instruction are clearly meant. The word of God, the law of the Lord, is everywhere, among the prophets of the Old Testament, regarded as the all-important instrument of reproof, of admonition, of comfort, and of quickening. To cite passages in proof of this, would be to cite a large portion of the prophetic writings.

Come we then to the New Testament, where we find by way of eminence a *spiritual* religion, and the task of illustration becomes very easy. Hear the Saviour, in his last prayer for his disciples: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." (John 17: 17.) "Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you." (John 15: 3.) To the same purpose Peter: "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit . . . Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

(1 Pet. 1: 22, 23.) Such is the testimony of James also: "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." (James 1: 18.) And what says Paul? "In Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the Gospel." (1 Cor. 4: 15. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1: 16.) "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1: 18.) "I declare unto you the gospel . . . by which ye are saved." (1 Cor. 15: 2.)

I say nothing here of that preaching, which, overlooking and keeping out of sight the numerous declarations of such a character as these, ventures to maintain, that no influences but those which come *immediately* from the Holy Spirit, have anything to do with converting or sanctifying men. Who then gave the word of truth in the Scripture? "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Did the Holy Spirit, then, impart the truths of the Bible to men for their good, and yet leave these imparted truths in such a defective state that not one jot of efficacy is to be attributed to them? Is this the manner in which he is wont to do his work? Verily to decry this work of the Spirit himself, to put it down and to represent it as insignificant or altogether inefficacious, is virtually to treat him with disrespect and dishonour.

But this is digression. Let us return to our immediate object. The Bible regards divine truth as the necessary instrumentality in the conversion and sanctification of men. It is to the soul, in respect to its spiritual training and nourishment, what appropriate food is to our bodies. It is indispensable. All religion begins with it, and is supported by it. It is a *truth*, that there is a God, and that he is the moral governor of the world; and without a knowledge and belief of this truth, the apostle has decided (Heb. 11: 6) that there can be no rational religion. Some truth must always be the object of belief or faith; and faith is the indispensable condition of salvation. All our religious feelings must have an ultimate reference to, and be excited by, the knowledge and belief of certain truths. In a word, it is all comprehended in the one most significant declaration of our Saviour to the Jews: "Ye shall know the *truth*, and the *truth* shall make you free." (John 8: 32.) "The glorious liberty of the children of God," can be acquired and enjoyed only by means of gospel-truth.

If now we go, for a moment, to all the providential dealings of God with men, and specially consider those which are apparently instrumental in their conviction, conversion, and edification; we shall find that all this good was done by impressing on their minds



some important religious truth. If we make inquiry respecting the similitudes, the symbols, the parables, of the prophets or of Jesus and of his apostles, we find the simple object of them all to be the impression or inculcation of some religious truth. This is the proper aliment of the spiritual man; and all expectation of being spiritually renovated, or nourished, without divine truth, is like the expectation of receiving bodily nutriment by feeding upon the air. There is no part of the Bible, Old Testament or New, which holds up this matter in a light that differs from the one in which I have now placed it.

What says the Psalmist to those, who expected profit and acceptance merely on the ground of *external* worship? "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices and burnt offerings, which are continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy stall, nor he-goats out of thy fold . . . Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? . . . Unto the wicked God saith: What hast thou to do that thou shouldst declare my statutes, or take my covenant in thy mouth? . . . Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him who ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God." (Ps. 50: 8, 9, 13, 23.) So the evangelical prophet: "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; and so are the new moons and sabbath, the summoning of assemblies; I cannot away with iniquity and solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them. . . . When ye make many prayers, I will not hear." (Is. 1: 12—15.) And is this a spirit which magnifies externals, and rites, and forms, and regards them as constituting an all-important and indispensable part of religion? Is this the language of such persons as consider the external and visible and the physical as an essential part of true religion, or who regard these things as in themselves either making men pious, or keeping them so? A man must close up the avenues to his understanding, his reason, and his conscience, before he can answer these questions in the affirmative.

And how does the great Teacher of Christianity deal with the Scribes and Pharisees, who were scrupulous and exact beyond all measure in everything that pertained to externals, while they neglected the *truths* which all the rites and forms of the Mosaic ritual were designed to teach? We know well what awful reproof he administered to them. "Ye Scribes and Pharisees, hyp-

ocrites, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" What said the great Teacher to the woman of Samaria, who was all-intent upon getting a word from him in favor of the Samaritan national temple at Gerizim? "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in *spirit* and in *truth*; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. GOD IS A SPIRIT; AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM, MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH." (John 4 : 23, 24.)

How can we now—in the face of all this and many hundred times as much more in the Bible respecting the utter inefficiency of mere externals—how can we aver, that the mere eating and drinking of the proper physical body and blood of Jesus is spiritually saving or salutary in its nature? "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14 : 17. "Neither if we eat, are we the better, neither if we eat not, are we the worse." (1 Cor. 8 : 8.) Even as "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing," so is it with the mere physical eating of any food whatever. Above all, who can show us, that to feast literally on human flesh and blood is the high road to salvation?

No; even the most strenuous advocates of the real bodily presence of Jesus in the elements of the eucharist, are constrained to acknowledge that the Lord's Supper does not profit unbelievers. So then, by their own statement, *faith* is the indispensable condition of spiritual profit. But *faith* is the *belief* of something, and not the eating of flesh and blood. Faith is the giving of credit to divine truth; and it fixes of course upon truth as its proper aliment. A faith which *spiritually* profits at the Lord's table, must then be a faith which fixes upon and receives the truths there taught. But what is there taught, must be that which is there symbolized or betokened, not what is eaten or drunk. Just so far as faith lays hold on what is betokened, so far this may profit him who exercises the faith. Who can aver, and support his declaration, that the mere physical action of eating, in itself, secures pardon or spiritual profit? It did not even under the ancient dispensation, (as we have already seen,) full of types and shadows and rites as it was; how can it profit then, under a dispensation where God, who is a Spirit, demands of all his worshippers that they worship in *spirit* and in *truth*?

Plain and incontrovertible, on the score of reason or the ground of Scripture, as these truths appear to be, yet they seem, after all, to be among the last truths, which the mass of men are disposed

really and heartily to believe. In every age, among nominal Christians and among the heathen, the great majority of men, who have manifested any interest in matters of religion, have, in one way and another, contrived (if I may so express myself) to make an *external* disposition of it. Among the heathen, it has consisted of tortures inflicted upon one's self or upon others, sacrifices of human victims or of animals, a great variety of penances and oblations, genuflexions and prostrations of the body, multiplied rites, ceremonies, and outward observances; all showing a belief, or at least a hope, that the Godhead might be propitiated in some such way as offended men are rendered placable. Men can see only the *external* demeanor, and are obliged to recognize this as the evidence of the internal state or condition of the mind. Hence the heathen, who imagine that their gods are like to themselves, draw the conclusion, that external service and the offering of sacrifices are all that is necessary in order to find acceptance.

Christians call this ignorance and superstition. And so indeed it is. But while the great body of nominal Christians readily stigmatize the heathen rites, and observances, in this way, yet by far the larger portion of them are attached to rites, observances, and opinions, that have the same basis as those of the heathen. The idea, that the mere external performance or celebration of any rite or outward usage is real and true and acceptable worship of God, or that the due ceremonial observance of any of these things will secure the divine favour and blessing, is nothing more, at bottom, than the principle so common among the heathen. All religion, even that which is true and spiritual, demands, and from its very nature must demand, some external manifestations or developments of itself, in its various relations to God and man. But in the case of true religion, these developments are not superstitiously and inseparably connected with this particular usage or that, or with the mere mode of any usage.

No undue importance is attached to mere costume. While true piety is ready to admit, that decency and propriety demand some sort of costume, the particular fashion of it, or even the quality of the ingredients which compose merely the costume, is never a matter of anxious solicitude. True piety does not abandon taste, nor give up the right of judging that one mode of costume is more graceful, and decorous, and becoming, than another; and yet, it will never confound the person with the dress,

nor show less solicitude for the man and for his welfare, than it does for the fashion and quality of his garments.

The advocates, now, of rites and externals, who have set their hearts strongly upon them, have been and are always prone to attach to them an extravagant view of their importance. Genuflexions, bowing in this direction or that, prayers regulated by the clock or by the number, i. e. by the *quantity*, wax candles, chrism or anointing with consecrated oil, a robe of sackcloth and a girdle of leather, shorn locks and cowls of revolting material and form, bare feet, or shoes with little spikes in them, processions with banners and measured chanting, pilgrimages to one place or another, living as devotees in cloisters and convents, keeping midnight vigils and exhausting fasts—all these, and a multitude more of like things, have been invented and trusted in by nominal Christians. *Invented* did I say? Not exactly so; nearly every one of these things has been borrowed from the heathen, and has merely been baptized with a Christian name; as Conyers Middleton has unanswerably shown, in his little book on this subject. The very same spirit, which leads men to substitute such things for true religion, and to trust in them as the means of salvation, guides them when they come to a decision, that baptism with water confers the *germ* of regeneration, and the partaking of the actual body and blood of Christ, at the sacramental table, procures the pardon of sin and the sanctification of the heart. O how much easier it is, to perform any and every external rite, yea even to undergo any penance or bodily suffering, than to bring to God the sacrifice of a broken heart and of a contrite spirit! This is the very ground and basis of all the false and delusive reasoning in respect to externals. ‘Baptism,’ it is said very confidently, ‘is a holy and awful rite;’ and so much is true. But what next? ‘Such a rite must of necessity accomplish some important good.’ But how of necessity? Do not all rites and forms derive their importance, as to the effect produced, from the temper and spirit of those who perform them? This is surely true. But once more: ‘The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is above all a holy and awful rite; in which the very body and blood of Christ are partaken of by the communicants. It is impossible that such a sacred mystery as this should be ordained, unless some important good is derived from it.’

I admit now the sacred and awful nature of the rite. Whatever calls us to the special contemplation of the Saviour, in his sufferings and death, is sacred, is in itself of a holy nature, is adapted

to good. But does not this again depend on the tone and temper of the communicant? Even the advocates for the miraculous nature of the transaction confess, that an unbeliever derives from the ordinance nothing but condemnation and harm. How then is the eating of the flesh and blood of Christ, at the table, supposing this to be matter of actual fact, in and of itself salutary and saving? How can material food sanctify the soul, in and of itself? The human body and blood of Jesus, in itself considered, is not moral and spiritual. As eaten and drunk, it is like any other similar food; else it is no longer a human body and blood. How can *matter* operate on and change *spirit*? Spirit may modify, change, even create, matter, because spirit is the only real agent in the universe; but how can matter change and modify and purify spirit? How can any food, masticated, swallowed, digested, do anything more than nourish the body? Food may refresh and invigorate the animal spirits, the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , of men; but what has this to do with sanctifying and saving them?

'But the sacred body and blood of Christ—how dare you speak in this manner respecting them? How is it possible, that they should not change and sanctify all who are in any way partakers of them?'

But stay a moment; you are too fast for your own position. You admit, that the *unbelieving* eat and drink damnation to themselves; and this, because they do not discern the Lord's body aright. But what then is *discerning* his body? Is that an act of *mind* in the partaker, or does it consist in what the natural senses discern in mastication and deglutition? Not in the latter, because the unbeliever performs that operation. If then *discerning* belongs to the mind, to the act of the mind and heart, what has this to do with the mere physical partaking of food? Nothing more, at the highest point, than that this partaking, under appropriate circumstances, may, by recalling important truths in the way of reminiscence, lead the partaker to a devotional state of mind. On your own ground, you cannot consistently make out anything more.

Sensible of this, and pressed by the arguments urged against fleshly views of the sacrament, intelligent men, who still cherish such views, have, for the most part, betaken themselves to a place behind the veil of mystery. 'The *how* and *why* have nothing to do,' they tell us, 'with such a sacred and awful mystery. Unbelief in it is profane; calling it in question is presumptuous; doubting, even when urged to do so by reason and our senses, is crim-

inal.' This and the like has been and is still said, until the bare repetition of it has almost, of itself, forced it upon the minds of the greater mass of nominal Christians.

I shall not repeat what I have already said, in the way of answer to such suggestions. They are the usual and the last refuge of those, who feel that they are driven from the field of reasoning and argument. They have this advantage, that they are in their alleged form so indefinite and airy, that you cannot easily find out their true nature, so as to know *where* or *how* you can bring forward what is sensible and palpable in opposition to them. They satisfy mystics better than argument or reason would; because they obviously suit that trait in their character which is the predominating and influential one. Hence the final retreat, the *sanctum sanctorum* of those who have fled from the battle-fields of reason, and exegesis, and argument, is always found to be in mystery. *Procul, O procul, este profani!*

Meantime, as a Protestant, I must think that it becomes us, on such a point, to be able to give a *reason* for the faith that is in us. No outcry of this nature can induce a man of sober judgment to abandon his position. It is the never-failing resort of those who have nothing better to say, to betake themselves to crying out—'*Mystery!* awful mystery! It would be profanation to make even an attempt at investigation or explanation!'

After all is said and done, it becomes us to follow on in the steps of the noble Bereans, and search the Scriptures daily, whether these things are so. The Great Head of the church will not condemn us for inquiring *what we ought to believe*, or in other words, *what the Bible has really taught*; and to do this with success, we must find how much of opinions that are current, is to be put to the account of the doctrines and commandments of men.

Before this part of our discussion is finally dismissed, I must make a few remarks on a portion of the passage in 1 Cor. 11: 24—26, which I have not hitherto particularly noticed. It will help to confirm the views which have already been given.

Let me ask now, what would be the consequences of a *literal* interpretation, consistently carried through that portion of the passage just referred to, which runs thus: "*This cup is the new testament in my blood?* A *cup*, then, is the *new testament*; not the wine in it, but the cup. A piece of metal is the new testament, sanctioned by the blood of Jesus; for such I take to be the meaning of the phrase *in my blood*. Then, moreover, we have the expression, *so often as ye drink THIS CUP*. A cup, then, is to be drunk,

and not the contents of it. I would ask the reader, moreover, to turn his attention from these expressions, for a moment, to kindred ones in the Gospel of John: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7: 37, 38.) What now is the *literal* sense of this? John himself says, that "Jesus spake this of the *Spirit*, which they that believe on him should receive." But what has this to do with the *literal* sense? Jesus says of himself: "I am the bread which came down from heaven." (John 6: 41.) Jesus' body then, according to this, must have descended from heaven; or rather, according to the strict letter of it, Jesus had no body proper; his apparent body consisted merely of *bread*, which was formed in heaven. How his natural birth could comport with this, and how the apostle could assert that he took part in *flesh* and *blood* in order to participate in our nature, let those explain who contend for the *literal* sense of passages like those which I have just quoted. When Jesus says to the Jews: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, *dwelleth* in me and I in him" (John 6: 56), the one part is doubtless as literal as the other. What then is a literal and physical dwelling in Christ? And this too when he, at the same time, dwells in us?

But enough. There is nothing in all John's Gospel more true or certain, than those words of Jesus which are, and were designed to be, explanatory of such declarations. "It is the *Spirit* that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The *words* that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are *life*." (John 6: 63.)

#### § 12. SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

It remains for me briefly to exhibit what I regard as scriptural and proper views of the eucharist. The reader would have some reason to complain, if, after having occupied so long a time and expended so much effort in endeavouring to tear down buildings destitute of any solid structure, I should now dismiss him without any attempt to point out to him a nobler edifice built on a foundation which cannot be shaken.

To a simple-hearted inquirer, it would seem that this lies revealed upon the very face of 1 Cor. 11: 24—26. In regard to partaking of the bread, the words of Jesus are: *This do in remembrance of me*. The very same words Paul repeats, in respect to the cup: *This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*. The elements, then, of bread and wine are set forth distributed, and

partaken of, for the sake of calling to our mind a remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. If that be not the main design of the ordinance, why did not Paul say: This do, so oft as ye eat and drink, that ye may be actual partakers of the real body and blood of Christ, and may thus be made partakers of pardon, and of all needed spiritual graces? Nothing was casier than to say this, if this were meant. How could Paul, in an enumeration so circumstantial of the adjuncts and attributes and uses of the sacrament, omit a circumstance so highly important, so fundamental even, as this?

TO CALL UP AFRESH THE MEMORY OF CHRIST, IS THEN THE SPECIAL OBJECT OF THE EUCHARIST. But in what respects? Is only a general view of his person, life, and attributes, suggested to our minds? Or is it some special and particular act of beneficence to our guilty race, on the part of Jesus, which is to be peculiarly called to remembrance?

The latter, beyond all reasonable doubt; yet not in such a sense as to be exclusive. Nothing can be more appropriate, at the sacramental table, than calling to mind the incarnation of Jesus, his life and actions, his public ministry and constant beneficence; and yet here, as often elsewhere in the New Testament, his *sufferings* and *death* are beyond all reasonable question the things specially to be called to mind or remembered.

Paul himself has given the lead to such a conclusion. After repeating: *This do in remembrance of me*, both after the account of the distribution of the bread and of the cup, he sums up the whole, at the close, in a way that is significant and altogether intelligible. He requires Christians to eat the sacramental bread and drink the sacramental wine in remembrance of Christ, "*for or because that so often as they eat this bread and drink this cup, THEY DO SHOW FORTH THE LORD'S DEATH UNTIL HE COME.*"

This then is the special point of remembrance, the specific thing to be peculiarly called to mind. The Lord's *death* is to be the subject of special commemoration. Nor was this to be done merely once, or twice, but it is to be repeated, so often as circumstances may render it expedient or desirable, until the Lord shall come, i. e. so long as the Christian church is militant and not triumphant. This speaks plainly against those sects or parties among Christians, who have laid aside the ordinance of the eucharist, as being only a temporary institution, designed merely for the primitive ages of the Christian religion.

In perfect accordance with this view of the subject presented



by Paul, is the declaration of Christ as recorded by Matthew : " This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." (26 : 28). The blood which is shed for *many* has doubtless a reference to the fact, that Gentiles, as well as Jews, are to be made partakers of the benefits procured by Jesus' blood. And these *benefits* are summed up in the *remission of sins*.

In a dissertation, the design of which is to illustrate the special object of the eucharist, it would be inappropriate to introduce, and follow out in full, the great subject of the *atonement* made by the sufferings and death of Christ. Yet I must say so much as will serve to make my views in relation to this subject explicit, and fully understood.

If there be any one doctrine in Christianity (as I believe there is), which distinguishes it by way of eminence from all other systems of religion so called, it is, in my apprehension, the very doctrine that is now before us. It lies on the face of the Old and of the New Testament, as we should naturally expect, when its importance is considered. Long before the coming of Christ did the evangelical prophet announce, that ' he would be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ; that the chastisement of our peace, [by which our peace is procured], was to be laid upon him, and that by his stripes we must be healed. All we, (he exclaims), like sheep, have gone astray . . . and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . For the transgression of my people was he smitten. . . . It pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief ; when thou shall make his soul [i. e. his life] an offering for sin, he shall see his seed . . . he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied ; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. . . . He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Is. 53 : 5 seq.)

Thus much for one of the most vivid of all the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. I take no notice of the various, contradictory, and irreconcilable interpretations, by which this passage has been made to refer to the Jewish people at large ; to the pious part of them ; to the order of prophets as such ; to the particular prophet who utters the sentiments in question ; or to some Jewish king. All these bear the stamp of a hot-bed and forced growth. They do violence to the laws of exegesis, or to the analogy of Scripture doctrine, as well as contradict those in-

interpreters of the ancient Scriptures who have expressed their views in the New Testament.

The declarations of Christ himself, respecting the object of his death, are too direct and obvious to admit of being explained away: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20: 28.) And so the apostles: "Who gave himself a ransom for all. (1 Tim. 2: 6.) Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. (Tit. 2: 14.) Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Pet. 2: 18, 19.) Christ being come . . . by his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. . . . The blood of Christ, who by an eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, will purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God. (Heb. 9: 11—14.) And they sung a new song, saying: Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation. (Rev. 5: 9.) The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1: 7.) Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. (Rev. 1: 5.) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body, on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. (1 Pet. 2: 24.) Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many. (Heb. 9: 28.) Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved by his life. (Rom. 5: 10.) In whom we have redemption, through his blood. (Eph. 1: 7.) In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1: 14.) Who is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2: 2.) Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1: 29.) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

These are only a few of the declarations of Scripture in regard to the point before us, viz., the atonement made by the sufferings and death of Christ. Now what I aver is, that these expressions are not capable, by any fair means in exegesis, of being explained away, so as to be made not to teach the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, or the atonement made by his death. How could any Jew, for example, when addressed by John the Baptist, and called to "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the

sins of the world," understand anything different from an expiatory victim? A lamb had been the yearly paschal sacrifice, even from the very evening when the destroying angel passed by the Hebrews, and smote the first-born of the Egyptians. Here, however, was a LAMB OF GOD; not a victim of the ordinary kind, which was to be offered for an individual or a family, but one which should expiate the sins of a *world*. Such is *God's Lamb*, in distinction from all others. Now, how can any one make out to my mind, that a Lamb is the appropriate emblem of a teacher or governor; and so, that John meant by his declaration merely to point the Jews to Jesus as the great teacher, exemplar, and director, of all moral and spiritual concerns? No Jew would ever have given such an interpretation to the words of John; it would never have entered his mind, that they were even susceptible of such an interpretation. Of course, *we* cannot with any propriety so interpret John's words. And what is true of these words, applies to all the modes of expression, in the several passages that have been quoted from the Old Testament and from the New. They were addressed either to Jews, or to readers familiar in some good degree, through the medium of the Old Testament, with Jewish ideas and feelings.

If there be any doctrine which lies upon the face of the New Testament, when this volume is read with a full, enlightened, and proper reference to the views and feelings of the persons addressed, in relation to the subject of propitiatory sacrifices, I must say, that the doctrine of atonement for sin by the sufferings and death of Christ, is that doctrine. Apart from all philosophizing and all favorite systems of belief in theology, I do not think that any intelligent readers, well skilled in the Old Testament idiom, would ever dream of any other meaning being attributed to such phrases as I have quoted, than the one which I have given. So says Gesenius; whose character as to biblical knowledge is well known to most readers, and who still explains Is. liii. as having relation to the order of the *prophets* among the Hebrews. But he does this on the very ground, that he does not consider himself as bound at all by the New Testament, or by the ancient Jewish interpretation. He says expressly, that most Hebrews who read the passage, and who were so familiar with the idea of offerings and vicarious satisfaction, must necessarily interpret the passage as having respect to these; and that no doubt remains, that the representations of the apostles respecting the propitiatory death

of Christ rest, in a manner altogether preëminent, on the like ground. (Comm. in Esaiam. II. p. 191.)

Here then we find the great object of the symbols at the table of the Lord. They are 'TO SHOW FORTH HIS DEATH, until he come.' They are designed in a peculiar manner to recall to the mind of the communicant, the sufferings and death of him who instituted these memorials. Other views of him must accompany such recollections. His love, his pity, his constancy, his inextinguishable compassion for perishing men, his hatred of sin, his earnest desire for the purification and holiness of all his followers—all these, and more of the like things, stand inseparably connected with the remembrance of his death on the cross. And it is by a lively remembrance of these things, and a lively and active faith in them, that the believer must be profited, if profited at all, at the table of the Lord.

I have, in a previous section, endeavoured to show what connection divine truth has with the spiritual profit of men. It is the *truth*, which makes men free from the bondage of sin. It is the *truth*, by which men are sanctified. And so far as the Lord's Supper brings up the remembrance of truth and impresses it upon the communicants, so far they may be spiritually profited, if they are in a proper state of mind; but no further. That the physical partaking of the elements of the eucharist, even if the real body and blood of Christ are in them, has of itself a spiritual and saving influence, is contrary to all analogy of Scripture; contrary to reason and the nature of things; contrary to experience. Nay, the very advocates of such views are obliged to concede, that any one destitute of faith and penitence, is only injured by coming to the table of the Lord. Virtually this is giving up the question. It is referring the good to be done to the state of the communicant's mind, and the exercises of it, and not to the physical action of eating and drinking the elements of the Supper.

Let us stop now, for a moment, and ask: Why did not Paul, who has expressly given the reason why we ought to eat of the bread and drink of the cup—why did he not say, that by eating and drinking the proper physical body and blood of Christ, we obtain forgiveness and the promise of eternal life? Nothing can be more certain, than that he needed to say this, in case his Corinthian brethren were to be instructed in the real object of the sacrament, and that such was the real object. Without saying something expressly of this nature, it was not to be expected that they would so understand him, when interpreting the words which he

had addressed to them. And yet we have not one word of this nature. On the contrary; Paul has plainly and positively declared what is the direct proper object of the sacrament: "Do this in remembrance of me; As often as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death until he come."

Let us now contemplate, for a moment, the harmony that exists between the two sacraments, as indicative of leading truths in the gospel, and as symbolizing them in a very expressive manner.

Under the Jewish dispensation, and indeed throughout even the heathen world, water was employed in their sacred rites for the purposes of purification, and as an emblem of it. The significance of this element in regard to the matter in question, no one will deny. It is very obvious to all. Under the New Dispensation, rites and ceremonies were almost entirely to be done away. Two, and only two, sacraments or solemn external rites were to be retained, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. Baptism into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, while it taught that the God of the Christians was recognized in this rite, was at the same time emblematic of the purity of heart which true worshippers must possess. But to regenerate and sanctify the heart is the appropriate work of the Holy Spirit. Hence the rite of baptism should be considered as peculiarly emblematical of his sanctifying influences on the hearts of believers. To maintain now that the mere outward act, immersion in water, or affusion or sprinkling with water, which is the act of men, in reality regenerates or sanctifies the heart, would be to attribute the work of regeneration and sanctification neither to the Holy Spirit the proper author of it; nor yet to the subject of baptism, i. e. the person baptized, who is, or is to become, holy; but to the person who baptizes, or at least to that which he performs. This is not only *unscriptural*, but *antiscritural*. In the nature of things, it is impossible. The rite or symbol itself is not to be confounded with the thing symbolized. Else there is no symbol in the case, but the rite itself becomes the very thing which it merely indicates or signifies. The assumption, moreover, that the Holy Spirit is promised and is given, in every case where the rite is (as to its *externals*) duly administered, no one has yet made out, and no one can make out, from the Bible. Else it would follow, that all who are baptized would be regenerated, and of course would be saved; which we know not to be true.

So in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But here the sym-

bol has another significancy. It is altogether appropriate to the *work of Christ*, or rather to that peculiarity in the Christian dispensation, which makes it to be what it is—a religion different from all others. The atoning blood of Jesus; his body broken for us—offered as the propitiatory sacrifice for sin, in order to procure pardon; these are the things or truths symbolized by the sacrament of the eucharist. This is peculiar and appropriate to the Saviour only. And so often as the sacramental bread is eaten and the cup drunk, so often is this indicated by visible symbols; and so it will continue to be, until our Lord shall come.

Now here the sign or symbol cannot pass over into the thing signified by it. This would be to confound, and represent as identical, the *sign* with the *thing signified*. We know this cannot be true; for we know that men may come in an unbelieving frame of mind to the Lord's table, and there eat and drink condemnation to themselves. The eating and drinking is not in itself the bestowment of that which it merely signifies, or of which it is a sign or symbol. No outward act merely ever changes, or can change, the heart. The Spirit of God and the moral influences of his truth are the appropriate agents, in such a change. Just so far as the symbols in question recall and impress divine truth, so far they may have a sanctifying influence. To look for such influence beyond this, is not rational expectation founded on the Scriptures and on the nature of the Christian religion, but superstition and groundless mystical conjecture.

If I am right in these positions, it will be seen that the two sacraments are peculiarly designed to hold up to view the great and distinctive truths of Christianity. Under the ancient dispensation, God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was not known; certainly not acknowledged as such, by the great mass of the Jewish nation. Whatever intimations of this nature may be in the Old Testament, they were not generally noticed or recognized among the Jews. Under the new dispensation, God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is acknowledged by its introductory ritual; which, at the same time, holds up the work of the Spirit in a peculiar manner. Under the old dispensation, the *expiatory* death of Christ was taught for the most part only by mere types and shadows, which seem, as to the great mass of the Jewish nation, to have been but imperfectly understood. Under the new dispensation, the eucharist presents this great truth in the light of noon-day. The leading features then of Christianity, as such, are portrayed in the two sacraments which Christ has appointed. Viewed in

this light, the importance of their significancy must be plain to every considerate observer.

Some other deductions may be made from the views that have been presented. All controversies about the kind or material of the bread employed, are evidently insignificant, and to no good purpose. And so is it about the wine. The bread originally employed was doubtless *unleavened* bread. The "fruit of the vine" was probably unfermented wine, such as was commonly used at the Jewish passover-table. But as in baptism we are not solicitous whether the water comes from a well, a spring, a brook, a river, or even the sea or the clouds, the significancy of the rite still remaining the same; so in the eucharist, the bread may be of any kind; the wine may be of any kind; the significancy does not depend on this. So far as significancy does depend on the symbol, it depends on two circumstances; the first, that there be nutrition in the elements, because the signification is, as these elements nourish the body and keep it alive, so does Christ nourish and preserve the spiritual believer, or rather his spiritual part; the second, that there be a *breaking* of the bread, and a *pouring out* of the wine, because this is adapted to indicate the breaking or wounding of Christ's body, and the shedding of his blood. The Romish custom of making the bread into wafers, which are not broken in presence of the communicants, diminishes or takes away the proper significancy of this part of the eucharist. Any substances which are *aliment*, and which are *broken* and *poured out* for use, would answer the purpose in a case of necessity, as to the external part of the sacrament. This we must believe from the very nature of Christianity. But it is doubtless better, to keep as near the original celebration, as to the matter or kind of elements, as may be convenient and ordinarily possible. Innovations are apt to distract the mind of the worshipper.

And now, after such a view of the subject, who can say with any reason, that our doctrine respecting the eucharist abridges its significancy, its solemnity, and its importance? I am aware, that the advocates both for transubstantiation and consubstantiation have charged this upon the symbolic view of the sacramental bread and wine. But I must confess, for one, that I never yet have been able to feel the force of this objection. Are not the visible tokens and symbols of anything, provided they are well adapted, the most significant of all methods of inculcating simple truths? Is there no perceptible difference, between sitting down to the Lord's table, and breaking the bread and pouring out the

cup, as indicative of his broken body and his blood poured out, and merely hearing a historical description of his sufferings and death? Every time we approach the table of the Lord, and continue the rite which, we are certain, began at his death, we perceive with the eye, as well as hear with the ear, the certain indications of the great truths connected with our salvation. Does any person in this country feel no difference between an active celebration of the fourth of July, the birth day of our independence, in which he shares, and the mere reading of an account, that independence was declared on that day? Of all methods of teaching, symbol, when striking and significant and appropriate and demonstrative, is the most impressive and forcible. It is preaching the gospel to the eyes, and the ears, and the heart, at the same time.

Now what more do the advocates of the real and physical presence of Jesus' body and blood gain or secure? Nothing, at the best. Suppose his physical body and blood are there; they do not see them, they do not taste them; not one of the senses has any cognizance of them. This they themselves will confess. They must then merely imagine that Christ is present. And why cannot he, who regards the bread and wine as symbols, imagine the same thing? Why cannot he, led on by his symbols, look at a bleeding and dying Saviour? He can; he should; he must; or else he eats and drinks unworthily. And what can the advocates of the real presence do more?

Even if their *senses* could discern the body and blood of Christ, of what *spiritual* profit could the eating of human flesh and blood, as such, possibly be? It is out of all question about showing from Scripture, or from reason, that it would be any. The idea is incongruous; it is even revolting. Mystery may hang awe about it; and the proverb, *omne ignotum mirabile*, may be verified in this case. We may be even reproached, as we are indeed, for rejecting mystery here. But let us not be moved by this. The true mystery lies in the *things signified*, not in the symbols which indicate those things. These are plain, intelligible, palpable. Men, indeed, have rendered them mystical, inexplicable, and even think they have arrived at the summit of faith, when they can say: *Credo quia impossibile est*. But I know of no such faith demanded by the Scriptures. Faith—I repeat it, I would God it might sink deep into every Christian heart—*faith is believing what is revealed*, not believing what is unrevealed and impossible. There may be—there are—mysteries, many and great, which be-



long to things and truths connected intimately with the gospel. The fact that there are such mysteries is a thing altogether credible and intelligible. We understand that this is a fact, and we have good reasons for believing it. But no true gospel-mystery involves a contradiction, or an absurdity. In this very respect, it is distinguished from all *fictitious* mysteries.

But I must desist. I have executed my design; which was to show *what the eucharist is not*, and finally *what it is*.

Connected with this interesting subject, spring up a multitude of themes or questions. Who should come to the table of the Lord? What engagements and qualifications, on their part, does this imply? In what state of mind is this table to be approached? What are the best preparations for such a solemn act? In what way may we celebrate the Lord's Supper, so as best to profit by it? What exercises are to follow it? All these are *practical* and profitable matters of question. But my limits forbid me to touch them.

It would be interesting also to inquire, *how often* this rite is to be celebrated? What preparation for it churches, as well as individuals, should make? At what time in the day it is to be celebrated? What are the bonds of mutual communion and fellowship which are strengthened by it? What the implied engagements which communicants make to each other, as to spiritual watch and brotherly admonition? And finally, what are the certain evidences, that we have duly profited by approaching the table of the Lord, and partaking of the eucharistic elements?

Not one of these inquiries, however, can I now touch. I have executed my present purpose; and must leave to other occasions, or to other persons, the delightful and profitable task of discussing, illustrating, and enforcing, the truths connected with all these questions.

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