

trine behind the curtain of mystery. But to assert that the substance of the bread is transubstantiated into "*perfect God and perfect Man*," while it subsists in all its original modifications, is evidently, as I conceive, an absurdity, and not a mystery.

Had your Church said, that "the body of Christ passes in an instant from heaven to earth," she might perhaps shelter herself from the reproach of absurdity, (though condemned by Scripture) and escape under the plea of mystery. But to affirm, that the body of Christ, (while it is wholly in heaven and must remain there "until the times of the restitution of all things," Acts iii. 21.) is "wholly" on earth; is it a mystery? Is it not as manifest a contradiction, as that a part is greater than the whole?

If your Church had even said that, "some parts of the body of Christ are detached, and are mixed with the elements in the eucharist," it might perhaps have been possible for her even then to avert the charge of contradiction, by escaping under the cloak of mystery and the contracted limits of frail reason. But to declare that the body of Christ is only one in number, and that it is, "wholly present in every separate part of the Host," which are without number, in all Catholic countries, can surely be no mystery, it must be an egregiously absurdity, and if believed, evidence can no longer be the character, of truth. How, dear Sir, is it possible to reconcile the contradictory (not mysterious) ideas, that a *body having but limited circumference*, is at the same time in *heaven at the same time on earth at the same time in a thousand places* on the earth, *yea wholly present in every separate part of an innumerable Hosts*? It appears to me to be as impossible to believe this, as it would be to believe that God is three in the same sense that He is one.

If you reject the testimony of the senses by which we judge of the eucharist, will you please to inform us how we are to prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

The institution of the Lord's Supper I purpose to examine in another article. I will confine my subsequent remarks this week to your exposition of the sixth Chapter of St. John.

You affirm that our "Saviour meant all he said in the strictest literal sense." Let us try this rule of interpretation. Our Saviour says *seek not the bread that perisheth*. This is plain and unequivocal. If "our Saviour meant what he said in the strictest literal sense," it is positively unlawful for us to seek bread.

Again our Saviour says, *if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever*. Did not the Apostles eat of it? Have not your Popes, and Priests, and their flocks in past ages (according to the doctrine of your Church) eaten of it? Are they not dead already?—These examples are sufficient to show the insuperable difficulties which attend your rule of interpretation.

I think you will admit that in order to ascertain the meaning of any part of the sacred, as well as other writings, it is important to mark the time, occasion character, and customs of the persons, whose discourses or sayings, or actions are recor-

ded. Let it then be remembered, the conversation related in this chapter took place more than a year before the Lord's supper was instituted. An application of it to that institution, I think, is a misinterpretation of the whole chapter, as I shall presently endeavour to show.

In the next place, it was customary with our Lord to improve passing events to illustrate his doctrines and enforce his precepts. Thus from the dispute of the two brothers about the division of their estate, our Lord took occasion to warn his disciples against covetousness; the young man's going away sorrowful, because a discipleship to Christ required a sacrifice of his possessions, lead our Saviour to enlarge upon the danger of riches; and thus he improved the opportunity afforded by drawing water at Jacob's well, to explain to the woman of Samaria the effects and blessings of his gospel, under the figure of water. Hence, in the sixth of St. John, the circumstances of the multitude following Jesus for the sake of getting bread from heaven to eat in the desert, are improved by our blessed Redeemer, to instruct the inquiring Jews and the attending multitude relative to his doctrines and the means of salvation through his death. This he does under the idea of bread a figure obviously suggested by the circumstances just mentioned.

The question now at issue is, what is meant by the terms "I am the true bread which came down, from heaven,—my flesh is meat indeed, [and my blood is drink indeed—except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you—he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood shall live for ever," &c. Your understanding of their meaning is best expressed in your own words, as given above. On the contrary, I contend, that the meaning of the whole evidently is that by eating the flesh of Christ, we are to understand the same idea that is implied in eating bread, namely, to derive support from it. The argument of our Lord, then, according to my views may be thus expressed:—The manna which your fathers did eat in the wilderness could only sustain a mortal life. That is the true bread which preserves to eternal life, and qualifies every one that eats it for everlasting happiness. I am the bread of my doctrine, which nourishes and purifies the believing soul and fits it for happiness, but also because I shall give my life for the life of the world. Our Lord calls himself the *true bread* in the same sense in which he calls himself the *true vine*, chap. xv; and as the branch partakes of the nature of the vine, is nourished by its juice, and lives by its life; so must ye abide in me, be partakers of my nature, (eat my flesh and drink my blood) live by faith in me, bringing forth much fruit, and be made pure through my holiness. "Thus spiritual happiness on earth and even in heaven, is expressed by eating and drinking instances of which may be seen, Matt. viii, 11, xxvi, 29; Luke xiv, 15, xxii, 30; Rev. ii, 17. Those who were made partakers of the holy Spirit, are said by St. Paul, 1st Cor. xii, 13, to be made to drink unto (or of) one Spirit." (Dr. A. Clarke.) The Scriptures abound in such metapho-

rical representations. Hence we are said to see those truths which we clearly understand; to feel that which excites and moves our affections; to hear the instructions to which we pay an obedient regard; and to taste the grace which we delightfully experience.

That our Lord in this chapter does not speak in reference to the Lord's supper is evident. 1. Because the Lord's supper was not instituted till more than a year after.

2. It is declared above "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye shall have no life in you." If this refers to the Sacrament, the thief upon the cross, and all those who died previous to the institution of the sacrament, must have perished everlastingly.

3. St. Paul speaking of some, who partake of the sacrament, says that they "drink judgment to themselves," 1. Cor. xi. 30. Our Saviour says, "he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, shall live forever," v. 54th; therefore he cannot mean the Sacrament—else he and St. Paul contradict each other.

4. In reply the secret murmuring of his disciples, who misunderstood our Lord's meaning, taking his word literally, he says, "does this scandalize you? If ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? An author of your own Church in his annotations on the New Testament, remarks on this verse—"Christ's" mentioning his ascension, by this instance of his power and divinity would confirm what he had before asserted; and at the same time correct their gross apprehension of eating his flesh and drinking his blood in a vulgar and carnal manner, by letting them know he should take his *whole body with him to Heaven*; and consequently not suffer it to be, as they supposed, divided, mangled, and consumed upon earth." As if this were not sufficient to correct their mistake, our Saviour adds, verse 63, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth;" see Rom. viii. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 6th. Such only as eat and drink what I have mentioned in a spiritual sense have the promise of eternal life. For the flesh profiteth nothing, if you could corporally eat my flesh and drink my blood, it would profit you nothing; for as that which goeth into the mouth of a man cannot defile him Mark vii. 20 so neither can it save him; therefore "the words that I speak unto you are spirit, and are life," v. 63 they are spirit, in their meaning and influence; and spiritual and eternal life, in their effects.—St. Peter's confession, v. 69, gives us a farther clue (if it were wanting) to our Lord's meaning. This fervent apostle nearly repeats our Saviour's words: thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God. Is here any thing about oral manducation, as there undoubtedly would have been, had St. Peter understood our Saviour to have taught the doctrine of transubstantiation? All the transubstantiation that St. Peter perceived in our Lord's discourse is unquestionably expressed in his answer to the Saviour; and that was *faith in Christ*: Hence we infer that believing in Christ the Son of the living God, was what St. Peter understood by eating