

nothing should be placed upon it but the consecrated elements, and such objects, the cup, paten, and linen cloth, as were necessary accessories, together perhaps with the book of the Gospels, regarded as the symbol or representative of Christ Himself. But even in the ninth century a pastoral attributed to Pope Leo IV. admits also to be placed on the altar "reliquaries



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or a pyx with the Body of Our Lord as viaticum." The tendency, once begun, to load the altar, increased ever in force. Nowadays the tabernacle with the reserved sacrament is the largest and most conspicuous object on a Catholic altar, and dictates the design of the whole altar. So early as the fourteenth century it had become common on great days to expose on the altar all the church treasury and church plate, with reliquaries in