

neophytes of his Church, and that between the baptismal font and the sacred table, he detained them for some time, for the purpose of discovering what had hitherto been concealed, and instructing them in the sublime theology of the sacrament, they were about to have the happiness of receiving.—There is no doubt that, if some of these holy prelates trusted on these occasions to the ideas suggested at the moment by their piety and learning, still many must have preferred committing their thoughts to writing, that their instructions might be more connected, methodical, and clear, for the assistance also of their memory, and to spare themselves the time and trouble of two annual preparations for the work, during their episcopacy. Not that such instructions, replete with the mysterious doctrine, were written for the purpose of becoming public. The case was far otherwise, most assuredly. You may conceive with what vigilant anxiety the prelate must have guarded his invaluable treasure from the eye of the suspected or the stranger, and with what difficulty even his friends could extort a communication of his labour, or a copy of the essay from his wary and fearful circumspection. One single elementary and dogmatical instruction of this nature would bring us more acquainted with the primitive belief respecting the Eucharist, than would a thousand mutilated passages, extracted from the writings that were made public by the fathers, and in which, of course, an apprehension of revealing the mysteries drove them to a studied reserve and obscurity of style.

If it be true, as there is every reason to suppose, that the generality of the bishops during the four first ages, actually composed detailed instructions upon the dogmas of the Eucharist, we can only regret that the far greater number of these are lost. It has pleased Providence however, that some of these authentic and incontestible records of primitive faith should be transmitted to us. In them we must interrogate antiquity, whose voice may still be heard, and by whom we ourselves may be instructed in the discourses addressed to the Neophytes, and which, of their nature, plainly decide the matter for or against, between us and the Protestants. Whatever was the belief at that time, whether protestant or catholic, must there be found clearly delivered. For it was necessary to inform the neophytes what they were going to receive; whether it was really the body and blood of Jesus Christ, or merely a little bread and wine, as a figure and representation, and nothing more; whether the substance of the body took the place of the substance of the bread, and consequently required the adoration of the faithful; or, whether the bread and wine, still preserving their own nature, became simply a memorial of Jesus Christ absent, and called of course, for no other respect, or reverence, than what might be due to any other religious ceremony. Again, one or other of the two contradictory tenets must be expressed in positive terms, in these dogmatical and elementary instructions. Your own theologians, no less than ourselves, have them in their hands; but I suspect you will never have found them much inclined to

bring you acquainted with such documents. Ask them to communicate these documents to you, together with their sentiments respecting them. You will soon find that they take your request with no very good grace; and, in truth, to deal plainly with you, it is impossible that they should. Ah well! Sir, I will spare them the embarrassment, and so far as you are concerned, I will go on to accomplish their defective ministrations. Now, therefore, imagine yourself among the ancient neophytes of Jerusalem; and that you, as well as they, are about to be addressed by the venerable patriarch Cyril, on the sacrament you have hitherto known little about, in language and instructions as follows:—“The doctrine of blessed Paul is alone sufficient to give certain proofs of the truth of the divine mysteries.” He quotes the passage from Paul to the Corinthians, and thus proceeds: “As then Jesus Christ, speaking of the bread, declared and said, this is my body, who shall ever dare to call this word in question? And as speaking of the wine, he positively assured us and said, this is my blood, who shall doubt it and say, that it is not his blood? Once, in Cana of Galilee, he changed water into wine by his will alone; and shall we think it less worthy of credit, that he changed wine into his blood? invited to an earthly marriage, he wrought this miracle, and shall we hesitate to confess that he has given to his children his body to eat, and his blood to drink. Wherefore with all confidence let us take the body and blood of Christ. For under the type or figure of bread, his body is given to them, and under the figure of wine, his blood is given, that so being made partakers of the body & blood of Christ, you may become one body and one blood with him.—Wherefore I conjure you my brethren, not to consider them any more as common bread and wine, since they are the body and blood of Jesus Christ, according to his words: and although your sense might suggest that to you, let faith confirm you. Judge not of the thing by your taste, but by faith assure yourself, without the least doubt, that you are honored with the body and blood of Christ. This knowing, and of this being assured, that what appears to you bread, is not bread, but the body of Christ, although the taste judges it to be bread, and that the wine which you see, and which has the taste of wine, is not wine, but the blood of Christ.”

Saint Gregory of Nazianzum, addressing the faithful and neophytes, says: “*Waver not in spirit*, when you hear speak of the blood, passion, and death of God; but rather eat the body, and drink the blood *without any hesitation*, if you would live. *Never doubt* of what you hear said respecting his flesh, and be not scandalized at his passion. be firm and constant, and in no wise shaken by the language of our adversaries.”

Saint Gregory, of Nyssa, speaking of the newly-baptised, says: “Man being composed of two parts, the body and the soul, united and mixed up together, it necessarily follows that those who are to be saved communicate in each of these parts with him who conducts to life, that is, with Jesus Christ. Thus the soul, becoming united to

him by faith, arrives at salvation by that way; for what is united to life, participates no doubt of life. But the body also must find another life: by communicating itself with him who is to save it. For as they, who would counteract the effect of poison in their body, must have recourse to an antidote that may diffuse its healing virtue through every part of the body to which the poison had penetrated; so, in like manner, after taking the fatal poison of sin, which is destructive of our nature, it becomes indispensably necessary for us to employ a remedy that may restore what is decayed and disordered, and operating as a powerful antidote within us, may dispel, by its contrary quality, the malignant effects of the poison we had received. But what is this medicine? That body which was shown to be more powerful than death, and was the beginning of our life; and which could not otherwise enter our bodies than by eating and drinking.—The body of Christ, by the inhabitation of the word of God, was transmuted into a divine dignity; and so I now believe, that the bread, sanctified by the word of God, is transmuted into the body of Christ.” One might suppose, that Saint Gregory or Nyssa, had in his eye, and was refuting before hand, the sacramentarians who were afterwards to tell the world, that the body of Christ was to be eaten by faith alone. This great bishop teaches, in opposition to them, that as man is composed of two substances, so he is in two different ways united to God; the one adapted to the nature of the soul by faith: the other conformable to the nature of his body, by the real manducation of the body of Christ made present in the Eucharist by a change of substance.

I now request your attention to the discourse delivered by St. Ambrose to his neophytes: “I entreat you, who are soon to become partakers of the sacred mysteries, seriously to consider, which is the most excellent, the nourishment given by God to the Israelites in the desert, and called the bread of angels, or the flesh of Jesus Christ, which is the *very body* of him who is life itself: the manna which fell from heaven, or that which is above the heavens. Water flowed from out of a rock in favour of the Jews, but for you, *it is blood that flows from Christ himself*. Thus, this meat and drink of the old law, were but figures and shadows: but here we speak of the truth and the validity. And if the shadow so much excited your admiration, how truly noble must be the substance. For light is preferable to the shadow: truth to the figure: the body of Christ to the manna of heaven. But you may say; I see somewhat else; how do you assert that I shall receive the body of Christ?—this remains to be proved. How many examples may we not make use of to show, that we have not here what nature formed, but what the divine blessing has consecrated, and that the virtue of this blessing is more powerful than that of nature: because by its nature itself is *changed*? Moses held the rod: he cast it on the ground: and it became a serpent; again, he took it by the tail, and again it became a rod. If now the blessing of men was powerful enough to *change nature*, what must we not say of