

self, the Saviour and the God of Israel, has said, He that eateth me, shall live by me.—Now if we cannot say that the Holy Ghost is corruptible, although he has descended and been distributed among many, we must reason in the same manner respecting the life-giving blood of Jesus Christ.—And thus do we demonstrate to Paul, that the most sacred blood of Jesus Christ our God is not corruptible; that it is not the blood of a mortal man like ourselves, but of the true God, who is a torrent of delights to those who have the happiness to partake of it."

"What a crime," cries out Firmilian, bishop of Casarea, is committed by those who admit and those who are admitted, when they have the presumption to receive the holy communion, before they have declared their sins, and washed away their stains in the bath of the Church, impiously touching the body and the blood of the Lord, since it is written: He that shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord!"

The following testimony must be considered as belonging both to the third and fourth centuries: it is the testimony of three hundred and eighteen bishops; or to speak more correctly, of the universal Church, because it emanates from the first general council. "We must not confine our attention to the bread and the chalice offered on the sacred table; but elevating our mind, let us discover by faith this Lamb of God lying on this sacred table, taking away the sins of the world, and immolated by the priests in an unbloody manner; and when we truly receive his precious body and blood, let us consider them as the pledges of our resurrection."

Saint James bishop of Nisibis, who attended at the general council of Nice, speaks as follows: "Our Saviour washed the feet of his disciples, giving them thereby a noble example of humility.—Having washed the feet of his disciples, he sat down again to the table, and then gave them his body and blood."

"There is a door to thy house, and it is the temple of God. It would certainly be a crime, O man to allow filth and dirt to come through the door, where thy king enters. Beware of every impure word, and then take the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Guard thy mouth with circumspection, remembering that thy king has entered therein.—Thou can'st no longer be permitted, O man, to let in decent expressions escape from thy mouth."

Eusebius bishop of Emessa, and disciple of Eusebius of Casarea, speaks thus of the Eucharistic blood, in allusion to the passage of Exodus.—"They shall take the blood of the lamb, and sprinkle both the door posts:—They sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon both the posts, who receive it with both their mouth and heart. They who receive unworthily, or who receiving do not believe it to be the blood of Christ, sprinkle the blood upon one post only.—As for us, receiving it with both our mouth and heart, let us be persuaded, that it is the blood of Christ. let us place it upon both posts, by receiving it into our bodies and our souls."

Let us hear what St. Hilary says "If the word,

truly, was made flesh, and we, truly, receive this word for our food: how can he be thought not to dwell naturally in us, who assumed the nature of flesh inseparably united to him, and communicates in the sacrament, that nature to us? For thus, we are all one: because the Father is in Christ, and Christ in us.—We are not to speak of heavenly things as we do of human.—Of the natural verity of Christ in us, whatever we speak we speak foolishly and wickedly, unless we learn it of him; for it is he that said: My flesh is meat; indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. There is no place left to doubt of the truth of Christ's flesh and blood: for now, by the declaration of the Lord himself and according to our belief, it is truly flesh, and truly blood. But he himself attests how we are in him by the sacramental communication of his body and blood: And the world, says he, sees me not, but you see, because I live and you shall live: for I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. (John XIV. 19 20. If he wished the unity of will alone to be understood, why should he establish a certain order and progression in the formation of it; but that he should be in the Father, by the nature of the divinity, we in him, by his corporal birth, and he in us, by the sacramental mystery."

St. Basil has already been cited in the liturgy which bears his name among the Greeks. We have seen that he composed various magnificent prayers for the altar, and that they were in great request in the East, and affixed to the canon in a great number of Churches.

St. Ephrem deacon of Edessa, whose life was written by St. Gregory of Nyssa, brother of St. Basil, expresses himself in the following remarkable manner: "Sedulously consider all these things, and believe that they are true, as they are related. For if you view them not with the eyes of faith, you cannot rise from the earth to heaven, nor in spirit behold what Christ suffered. When the eye of faith is clearly open, it contemplates, in a pure light the lamb of God, who was immolated for us, and who gave us his body for our food to the remission of our sins. This same eye of faith manifestly beholds the Lord, eating his body and drinking his blood, and indulges no curious enquiry.—You believe that Christ, the Son of God, for you was born in the flesh. Then why do you search into what is inscrutable.

Doing this, you prove your curiosity, not your faith. Believe then, and with a firm faith receive the body and blood of our Lord, being assured that you eat the Lamb itself whole and entire. For the mysteries of Christ are an immortal fire. Beware how you rashly attempt to fathom them, lest, whilst you are a partaker, you be consumed by them.—Abraham placed earthly food before celestial spirits, (Gen. XVIII.) of which they ate. This was wonderful. But what Christ has done for us greatly exceeds this, and transcends all speech, and all conception. To us, that are in the flesh, he has given to eat his body and blood. Myself incapable of comprehending the mysteries of God, I dare not

proceed: and should I attempt it, I should shew only my rashness."

The priesthood, raising itself bodily from earth to heaven, ascends to the throne of the Almighty, and supplicates the King of mercies, that his Holy Spirit may descend, at the same time, and sanctify the gifts offered on the altar."

What offence had Christ given, whose body and blood, at certain times, do there dwell?—This enormity was doubled, whilst you broke also the chalices, which contained the blood of Christ: Christi sanguinis portatores. O abominable crime! unheard of impiety! You have imitated the Jews, they pierced the body of Jesus Christ upon the cross; and you have struck him upon the altar."

St. Optatus, bishop of Milevum in Africa, reproaches the Donatists, as follows: "What is so outrageous as to break, to erase, and to remove the altars of God, on which you yourselves made offerings? On them the vows of the people and the members of Christ were borne; there the Almighty was invoked, and the Holy Spirit descended; and from them the faithful received the pledge of eternal life, the buckler of faith, and the hope of resurrection?—For what is the altar, but the seat of the body and blood of Jesus Christ?"

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, has left us eighteen catechetical discourses for the instruction of the catechumens, and five others addressed to the newly baptised: they appear to have been composed about the year 347, whilst he was yet a priest. Hear how he addressed the Neophytes, when explaining the liturgy: "You have seen the deacon present to the officiating priest, and to the attendant priests, water to wash their hands.—After that the officiating priest says aloud; Raise up your hearts; for it is at this awful moment particularly that you should raise up your hearts to God, and have them disengaged from all that is earthly.—At these words of the priest, you answer; We have our hearts raised up to the Lord; and by this you profess to do what he requires. The priest continues; Let us give thanks to the Lord.—You answer; It is right and just to give thanks to the Lord. We then recite that sacred hymn which the seraphims chant in heaven, in honour of the three Divine Persons, that by this celestial psalmody, we may communicate with the angelic host, and that being more and more sanctified by these spiritual canticles, we may with greater purity entreat so good and kind a God to send down the Holy Spirit on the things that are offered, and to make the bread become the body of Jesus Christ, and the wine his blood. For all that receives the impression of the Holy Spirit is sanctified and changed into another substance. Now, when the spiritual sacrifice is ended, and this unbloody worship rendered to God by means of the host of expiation is completed, we pray for the peace of all the Churches, for the tranquility of the world, for kings and their armies, and for their allies, for the afflicted, in a word for all, who stand in need of the Divine assistance." (Here comes the prayer for the dead, which I will introduce in another place.) "You say afterwards: Our Father, who art in heaven.

"After this, you hear the voice of the chanter, who, by a melodious and divine canticle, invites you to the communion of the sacred mysteries, saying these words: Taste and see how sweet is the Lord. Do you think that you are commanded to make this discovery by the mere taste of the palate? In no wise: but by the testimony of faith, which is certain and leaves no room for doubt. For when you communicate, you are not commanded to taste the bread and wine, but to take the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

"Now, when you approach to communicate, you must come with your hands stretched out, or your fingers open; but with your left hand supporting