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NOTES

ON THE 6TH CHAPTER OF

ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL,

AND ON THE

INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

IN

CONNECTION THEREWITH.

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The objects of this inelaborated paper are, first, to show our Lord's own exposition of the texts noticed, which have been relied on by some to prove a "Real Presence" in an untrue sense; and, secondly, to indicate what Scripture *does not teach*, as to the meaning of the words used by Jesus, at the Institution of the Last Supper.

Notes on the 6th Chapter of St. John's Gospel, and on the Institution of the Lord's Supper in connection therewith.

There is a parallel as respects our Lord's utterances, between the dialogue at Capernaum narrated in this chapter, and the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, at the well, which is the subject of the 4th chapter of the same Gospel. At Capernaum our Lord spoke of himself as "the Bread of God;" at Sychar as the source and giver of "Living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." At Capernaum the Jews said "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" At the well he said "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." To the Jews he said "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." The Samaritan woman said, "Give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." The Jews at Capernaum said "Lord, evermore give us this bread." In connection with what was said by Jesus at the well read Is. : xii. 2-3. The antecedents of the two cases, alike, serve to explain the words afterwards uttered by our Lord. The conversation at Sychar was preceded by his "weariness" and his asking drink of the woman. The antecedents of the dialogue at Capernaum were the hungering and the subsequent miraculous feeding of the multitude, by the sea of Tiberias. A comparison between the two narratives is also suggestive as respects a difference that marks

At the well our Lord addressed himself to the woman in figurthem. ative language only; but as she understood what the figure veiled and believed, explanation of it was unnecessary. On the other hand, Jesus, at Capernaum, when addressing the unbelieving Jews, used figurative language in one form of his discourse, while in another form of it he elucidated the figures. He did so so plainly, that it is difficult to perceive how an intelligent and unprejudiced hearer could fail to understand him. This was true then, and is true now, though superstition has, as well in early post-Apostolic times, as in later days, showed itself blind to the plainness or shrouded it with mystery.

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Before considering the explanation, some observations are suggested as regards the natures of the figures used by our Lord at Sychar and at Capernaum. Obviously the figurative language in either case, was suggested by circumstances then or recently existing. At the well he made himself a fount of water. At Capernaum, having just before satisfied the hunger of a multitude, he made his body bread, meat and drink. At the well he was a fount of water only in the sense of his being the source of Divine Grace. At Capernaum, his body, his blood, were bread, meat and drink, only in the sense that his body and his blood were the appointed offering to put away sin from the soul of the man who believed in him, and so received from him spiritual sustenance unto eternal life. This, clear enough in its own Divine simplicity, is made, as we shall see, demonstrably

Significant as to the meaning of "eating and drinking our Lord's flesh," if that meaning were still an open question, would be His words recorded in Jno. iv. 34, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." In harmony with this, He, in effect, said to the Jews, "As I feed on my Father by "doing his will, --- his work,"--- so you must feed on me (being "one with him") by doing my Father's work." He also said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom

What suggested the figures was evidently the physical fact of the enjoyment by a hungry natural man of material food, they, in that view, forcibly representing intensity of fruition by a hungry and thirsty soul of Him, who by belief in Him, becomes soul-satisfying spiritual food. "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." That text is a key to the interpretation of the figures,-it furnishes an answer to the question, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The light of it thrown on that question dispels the mystery which human conceit alone has imported into our Lord's words at Capernaum. What the Great Teacher meant on the Mount, by "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," he meant, when he addressed the Jews in the Synagogue, by "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man."

Jesus, as is recorded by St. John, in conversing with the Jews at Capernaum, used these phrases, "eating the living bread that came

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s at came down from Heaven," "drinking the blood of the Son of Man," "eating the flesh of the Son of Man," as absolutely identical in meaning with *believing on the Son*, a phrase also used by him there. This, thus rests on authority that can never be shaken -

Compare v. 40, with v 54, of chap. 6. The first is, "and this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day." Here, "having everlasting life," and "being raised up" are made to depend on "seeing the Son and believing on him." The language of v. 54. is, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Here we have those very same effects ascribed to "eating the flesh" and "drinking the blood." ! Our Lord has moreover thus identified the meaning of "eating the flesh" with that of "eating the bread :" The 51st verse is, "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." On what then, does "the life of the world," as referred to an individual man, depend according to the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ? He has thus declared it to depend, alike and indifferently, on eating the bread of life; or on "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man ;" or on "seeing the Son of Man and believing on him." He who does the one or the other of these three things, differing in words, but identical in import, hath, independently of all other things, eternal life ! *

As the phrase "living water" was used by our Lord at the well, in a sense purely figurative, an authority would be required, even if Jesus had not explained the figures used at Capernaum, for holding that He at the last named place, spoke of eating the bread or the flesh, or of drinking the blood in other than a purely figurative sense ! When I speak of authority, I mean that of the Word of God. In the opinions of uninspired men, individually or collectively considered, a sanction can be found for almost any conceivable interpretation of any controverted passage of Holy Scripture. Such opinions, whether of individuals, churches or Councils, as they are often conflicting, even when pronounced by men or associations equally competent to judge, and, always but the judgments of fallible men, are in truth, therefore, no authority whatever. This is as true with regard to the Fathers, as with respect to the best and wisest Christians who have lived in subsequent ages. We find superstitions so marking even the most excellent of the Fathers, as to lessen materially the weight of their opinions. (See Appendix A.)

Such indeed is the nature of Revelation, and such the constitution of man's nature, that for ascertaining the meaning of Holy Scripture where it is doubtful, recourse must be had to private interpretation. "Prove all things" is a precept as obligatory on us, as it was on the cotemporaries of the Apostles whom they addressed.

* *

** i. e. That There is no authoritative teacher in the last resort but the Spirit of Truth.

* Sue rule 2 21 the end.

Our Lord having resolved the phrases, that were so used by Him at Capernaum, into simple belief in Him," I ask, if an authority can be produced for importing, as has been unwarrantably done, an extrinsic or a mystical sense into his interpretation of them? I assert that none such can be found in the Sacred Volume. If this be true, man's opinion, however respectable, cannot sanction that actno, not even if that opinion had the attributes of semel, ubique, ab

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If our Lord so interpreted the three phrases at Capernaum, that intrepretation must be adopted in construing the same or kindred

Here let me observe that, even if no such explanation had been given, it is difficult to understand how a pious Jew, conversant with the Hebrew Scriptures, could have asked "How can this man give us his flesh to eat"? He had a sufficient key to interpretation when our Lord said "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," and again, "What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before"? (See Appendix, Note B.)

Furnished with that aid, the following passages found in his sacred books, would have shown that Jew the Scriptural sense of the metaphoric phrases used at Capernaum : "And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees ;" "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures ;" "O God, my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness"; "He filleth the hungry soul with goodness;" "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come re, buy and eat : yea come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not breud ?"_"Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it-

While we, living in the full light of Christianity, can see that all this pointed to what Christians understand by "Hungering and thirsting after righteousness"-to what is so understood by some happy souls, that they do, in a sense purely and solely spiritual, feed on His love and loving sacrifice, a sincere Jew, when our Lord spake on earth could not but have seen that the language of the texts just cited referred, not to material, but, to some future spiritual food prophetically indicated.

The language of Jesus used at Capernaum illustrates and defines the words spoken by Him at the subsequent institution of the Lord's Supper, when, after blessing, He gave the bread and wine to his

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Our Lord's words "This is my body," "This is my blood," considered merely in themselves, are, of course, susceptible of a literal cr of a figurative interpretation # Tried by St. Paul's rule-"The proportion of Faith," and considered apart from more human expositions-there cannot exist a reasonable doubt that the meaning of those words is by our Lord's language at Capernaum fixed to a merely figurative sense. If so, all other arguments are unimportant; but some of these I will notice briefly, making this preliminary observation: While our Lord's words "Do this in remembrance of me" stamp a memorial character on the Institution of the last Supper, not a word can be found in Holy Scripture that declares, even by necessary inference, promise of a special grace, as connected with even the most devout observance of the Sacred Rite-a promise I mean in any other sense than that of the all sufficient one of the presence of the Paraclete, and that conveyed by the words, "I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

The spiritual presence of His Lord to every earnest and faithful communicant is not, of course doubted, nor is it questioned that the act of celebrating by such the affecting rite, inasmuch as it implies fervent love, must be attended with "inward and spiritual grace." b. at end

What our Lord did mean by his words "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," lies at the very root of the question : What did Jesus Christ mean when, at the Last Supper, he said, according to St. Luke, "This is my body which is given for you," or when he said, according to St. Matthew and St. Mark, speaking of the bread, "This is my body," and speaking of the wine, "This is my blood?"

St Paul, alluding to the rock that miraculously supplied water in the wilderness,—a Jew addressing Jews—wrote in a figurative sense "That rock was Christ." Why should it be supposed that he understood in a literal sense our Lord's words "This is my body."? Unless it could be shown that the Apostle did so understand the words, the question would not be unreasonable or irrelevant. But, it will be made to appear presently that St. Paul understood them in a figurative sense. In view of the **conclusive** proof to that effect which will be adduced, I propound the question here, as fitly introductory to the subject of inquiry on which I am about to enter.

If our Lord had intended when He said "this is my body, this is my blood" to intimate His presence at a celebration of the Eucharist, in or with the elements, in any mode other than in a purely spiritual sense, it is not possible that Divine guidance would have permitted St. Matthew to have ascribed to Jesus a use, under the then surrounding circumstances, of the words that I am about to notice. That Evangelist, after writing "As they were eating, Jesus took the bread and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to his disciples and said, Take eat this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying Drink ye all of i. for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins,"—

* Of the sense in which these words were used, Scripture gives no explanation, and, except in the chapter under review, no intimation. A reverence for human opinion has inimproted them in an unnatural way; and if may be, that thus "is tanght for dostrines. The commandments of men." Our Lord delivered many procepts beside that in guestion adds to his narration a form of words of striking peculiarity. He represents our Lord, after He had blessed the cup and given it to his disciples, to have used these words respecting what remained of its already consecrated contents, (which contents, according to some opinions were then in a mystical and ineffable sense *His blood*:) "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of *this* fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."

Of the Greek pronoun used Dunbar *in voce* says, "It always refers to what is in view, or has been just spoken of."

Thus what was in the cup at that time and under those circumstances our Lord declared to be unmodified wine! He, therefore spoke of the contents of the cup as being at one and the same time "His blood" and "the fruit of the vine." Of course, then, those contents were both; but they could not be both in a literal sense. The very thing indicated by the latter phrase could not be the very thing indicated by the former phrase without the interposition of miraeulous agency. The exercise of such by our Lord on the occasion of the Institution is not predicated by any Screpture! It is not intimated by the context! Where, then, is there authority for asserting it? What miracle is recorded to have been performed by our Lord of which the character as such was not self-evident at the

There is no inconsistency between the language attributed to Jesus by St. Mark, (XIV. 25,) and by St. Luke, (XXII. 18,) on the one hand, and the words of St. Matthew, just repeated, on the other. On the same solemn occasion both forms of expression may have been used. We must indeed necessarily conclude that they were.

Respecting the words attributed by St. Matthew to Jesus, a question, then, is suggested: Was that Evangelist guided by Inspiration thus to transmit to the human family our Lord's words dom, in order to obviate the foreseen superstitions of transubstantiation and consubstantiation that mark the future history of His

Again, it may be asked, Is it morally possible, assuming the doctrine of a real presence to have a Divine foundation, that no one of the inspired writers should appear to have insisted on it as a motive to affect the hearts of those whom he addressed? Churchtion of its truth. Ministers of the Anglican Church holding it, invite their congregations to cherish it as a source of spiritual joy. The Fathers of that church, who think with these last on the question, dwell much and fondly on the doctrine. The holding it by some and the repudiating it by others constitute a conflict of opinions that, at this moment threatens to rend the Church of England. How then

which, interpreted otherwise than figuratively, would be repugnant to instincts which God has implanted in the human breast, and could not be obsyred in that world which He has made the abode of man. Why the particular words, which, literally construed, import shat is not true, should be exceptionally understood as not used figuratively has never yet been shown by argument or asthorizy: ty. He ren it to his ned of its to some lis blood:) uit of the y Father's

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which ch He l, imy has do these ministers account for the fact, that in no one passage of any inspired document is the peculiar doctrine set forth as a motive to kindle a love of Jesus, or as an evidence of His love? How do they account for the fact that in no inspired writing is the doctrine even noticed at all? That fact is not the less a fact because St. Paul, for a special purpose, related to his Corinthian converts what he had "received of the Lord." His language is substantially what the three Evangelists have written of our Lord's words in question, but he has not given any direct explanation of their meaning. The sacred rite had been perverted by treating it as a common meal. To the offenders Σ . Paul attributes a negative transgression. His words are "What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." But, assuming the doctrine of a real presence to have had *in his judgment* a Divine foundation, the offence censured was a heinous crime, and it should have been stigmatised as such.

In another place St. Paul has written "yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more" Nothing qualifies tl is, and on no occasion of his addressing his converts does inspiration appear to have suggested to him that our Lord, though no longer known in the flesh, is in any peculiar sense known to him who in the communions of the body and of the blood of Christ. "eats his body." or "drinks his blood."

St. Peter writes of Jesus thus, "Who is gone into Heaven, and *is* on the right hand of God" Not a word is added by that Apostle, there or elsewhere, to intimate his belief of a personal presence in any sense or under any circumstances of his Lord on Earth.

Would not this silence of the inspired writers, especially that of those whose minds were brought to the very subject of Christ's absence from this world, in relation to his former presence in it, on the supposition that the doctrine is true, be utterly inexplicable. ? There would be no conceivable motive that could have swayed the Apostles' minds to suppress mention of the doctrine, if of God. That it never occurred to them, or that it was never suggested to them when they wrote, is, on the hypothesis of its truth, absolutely inadmissible in idea.

But, with regard to St. Paul, the question, whether or not he considered the peculiar doctrine to be of God, does not rest on an inference from silence or on negative testimony. It is certain that he did not recognise it as such. To Him the mode of the institution was a subject of special revelation. That he relates in 1 Cor. XI. V. 23. 24. 25. And then he adds, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The language of this verse may be a part of the revelation or the words of the Apostle. Assume it to be the latter, as it probably is. Speaking of the consecrated elements, he calls the bread "bread," without any allusion to our Lord's body; and he ceclares the institution to be commemorative. No language of his can be cited from any writing of his to shew that he regarded the institution in any other light, or that he viewed the consecrated bread as anything but bread.

If a mystical presence was revealed to him, then, as he did not declare that fact to the offenders, he fuiled to show them the extent of their offence, which is inconceivable ! Is that state of things relatively to St. Paul possibly consistent with a hypothesis that he believed in a real presence? (See Appendix C.)

There appears to me much significance as to the meaning of the

sacramental words, in the nature and probable source of the symbols. It seems probable that our Lord selected those from the Jewish Scriptures. If the passages of these last, which I have above cited for another purpose, be read in view of that supposition, (and I would here add to them the allusion to "the vine" and to "the blood of grapes" in the dying prophecy of Jacob-Gen. XLIX. 11.) I think there can be no doubt as to what suggested the adoption of the purticular elements. When the oneness in a spiritual and scriptural sense of Christians with their Lord, their love for each other and for Him and their dependance on Him for spiritual sustenance be considered, on the one hand, and on the other the countless particles that compose the one "Bread"-the scriptural type of soul-nutrimenttogether with "the blood of the grape"-figurative, as it is, of the deepest joy that the soul of man can feel,-their admirable fitness and the figurative sense of our Lord's words in question alike ap-

A devout participant of the commemorative rite, who sees nothing mystical in the words "This is my body," "This is my blood," may, nevertheless, receive the elements, and, adopting the very words of the prophets, while feeling their deepest significance, may say, "Thou hast made for me, here, a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees"-I am "abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house"-"Thou hast made me drink of the river of thy pleasures."—I have by the grace of God "Hungered and thirsted after the Lord our Righteousness," and by His grace I shall be "filled. "I here "eat and drink that which is good, without money and without price," except the priceless price of the body and blood broken and shed for me in the great sacrifice that I now commemorate. With adoring love and gratitude I thus take. and cat and drink thy body and thy blood,

WINDSOR, 5TH OCTOBER, 1879.

PHILALETHES.

b. The author acknowledges a "Real Presence" in this sense, viz : "That the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper"-but, in that sense only, in which Jesus, when He distributed the bread and wine, can be shown from Scripture to have designed that they should be taken and received by His faithful disciples at the Last Supper.

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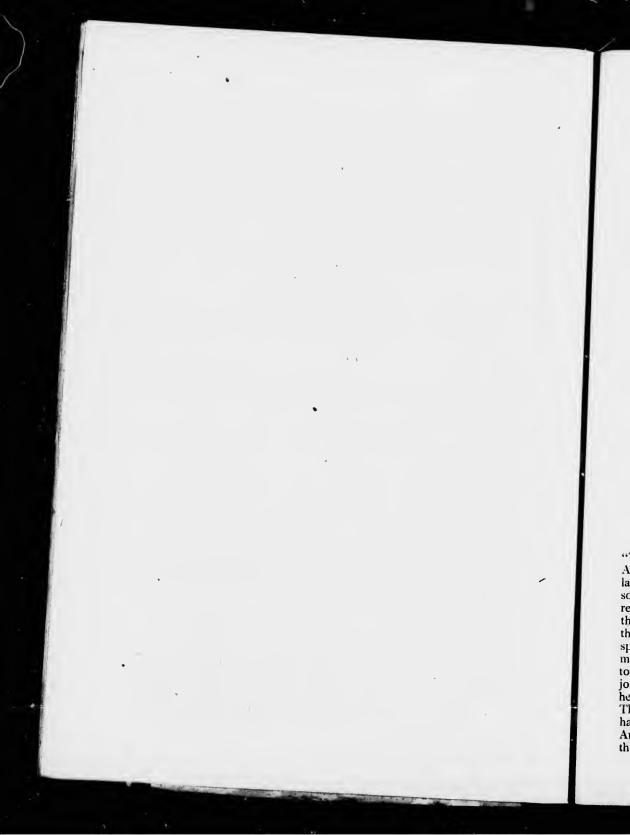
Peter, at the close of the discourse at Capernaum, thus declared the substance of our Lord's teaching there:

Speaking for the Twelve he said, "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God;" in other words, "Thou hast the words of eternal life;" and thou utteredst them when thou saidst, "He that believeth on me hath eternal life."

The Apostle thus showed his apprehension of the one sense in which Jesus had used all the phrases! He did not even intimate his conception of any other sense of "eating and drinking the flesh and blood of the Son of Man." than that conveyed by the words, "Seeing and believing on the Son of Man!"

Are the advocates of a *mystical* sense of the former phrase blind to this? Do they understand our Lord's words *now*, better than Peter understood them *then*?

APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

Hear the learned and excellent St. Augustine, who wrote thus: "Then didst thou by a vision discover to thy forenamed Bishop, (St. Ambrose) where the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius, the martyrs, lay hid (whom thou hadst in thy secret treasury stored, uncorrupted, so many years) whence thou mightest seasonably produce them to repress the fury of a woman, but an Empress. (Justina.) For when they were discovered and dug up, and with due honour translated to the Ambrosian Basilica, not only they who were vexed with unclean spirits (the devils confessing themselves) were cured, but a certain man, who had for many years been blind, a citizen and well known to the city, asking and hearing the reason of the people's confused joy, sprang forth, desiring his guide to lead him thither. Led thither, he begged to be allowed to touch with his handkerchief the bier of Thy saints whose death is precious in Thy sight. Which when he had done, and put to his eyes they were forthwith opened."-St. Ambrose preached a sermon on this miracle Libr : of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church. 1 Vol. 167. sec 16. Edited by Dr. Pusey.

St. Cyprian thus wrote and related his experience :---"Listen to an event that took place in my own presence, and on my own testimony. Some parents who made their escape, in the thoughtlessness of terror left behind them, at nurse, an infant daughter, whom the nurse, finding in her hands, gave over to the magistrates. Unable, through its tender years to eat flesh, they gave it, before an idol to which the crowd assembled, bread mingled with some wine which however was remains of that which had been used in the soul slaughter of perishing Christians. The mother afterwards got back her child, but the infant was unable to express and make known the act that had been committed, as she had before been to understand or to prevent it. Through ignorance therefore it arose, that, when we were sacrificing, the mother brought it in with her. The child, however, mixed with the Holy congregation, could not bear our prayers and worship; it was, at one moment, convulsed with weeping, then became tossed like a wave by throbs of feeling, and the babe's soul, while yet in the tender days, confessed a consciousness of what had happened with what signs it could, as if forced to do so by a torturer. When, however, after the solemnities were complete, the Deacon began to offer the cup to those who were there and in the course of their receiving its (the infant's) "turn came,' (Note, this - a then usage of the primitive Church-had the sanction of St. Cyprian) "The little child turned it's face away, under the instinct of God's majesty, compressed its lips in resistance and refused the cup. The Deacon, however, persevered, and forced upon her, against her will, of (sic) the Sacra ment of the cup." (Note, the good St. Cyprian was present) "There followed a sobbing and vomiting. The Eucharist was not able to remain in a body and mouth that had been polluted.----The secrets of the darkness are laid open under the Lord's light, and God's Priest could not be deceived in crimes however hidden." Libr. of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church. 3 Vol. p. 168 Sec. 16. Edited and translated by members of the English Church.

NOTE B.

The significance of these last words has not been apprehended by some commentators, while they have been wrested from their purpose by others.

Our Lord had declared to the Jews that He had come down from Heaven to do his Father's will, and that his Father's will was that every one who believed on Him who had visited earth on that mission, should have eternal life. The Jews had murmured and said "Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph whose Father and Mother we know? how is it then that he saith 1 came down from Heaven"? And many of his disciples who had heard (his whole previous discourse) had said this is an hard saying ; who can hear it? "Thereupon Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man" (him whom ye have regarded as

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from that ssion, not now? nany had now-Vhat l as a mere man,) ascend up where he was before?" The meaning of which clearly is, When hereafter ye shall see this mere son of Joseph as ye repute Him to be, by His Divine power ascending to Heaven, and thereby manifesting His Divine nature—will ye then regard as "an hard saying" what ye have heard from his lips to-day—will ye then persist in viewing Him, in relation to what you have so heard that purported to be Divine utterances, as a mere human pretender to powers and authority that He did not possess?

The 62nd verse has been, however, tortured to support the conceit of mystery !

NOTE C.

"This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you," (L. XXII. 20; Cor. XI. 25) i. e., plainly the new covenant in my blood, in contrast with the old covenant which was in the blood of bulls and goats.

"Not discerning the Lord's body," occurring in the 29th verse, is explained in the first part of that verse to mean "eating and drinking unworthily"-words which are fully satisfied by considering that they refer to the carnal and irreverent "eating and drinking," censured-to such an "eating and drinking" as had no regard to our Lord's words, "this is my body" and "this is my blood." As to the phrase "Be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, "note the remarkable words (Heb. vi. vi.)-the more remarkable if St. Paul wrote the epistle in which they are found-referring to those that fall away. They are represented as "crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame." They were thus accounted "guilty of the body and blood of Christ." They had despised the great Sacrifice. The effect of St. Paul's admonition is, if "when ye come together," after being thus warned by me, "ye eat and drink" as in a common meal, and so treat with contemptuous disregard the Divinely instituted memorial of the Lord's Sacrifice, ye will "eat and drink" condemnation to yourselves, inasmuch as ye will thereby show that ye count the symbols of the body and blood of the new covenant "unsanctified things"-ye will, in effect, approve of the act of those that crucified the Lord Jesus-ye will be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

I have thus shortly noticed the foregoing texts from I. Gor. XI., because they have been relied on to prove the mystical hypothesis.

PHILALETHES.

