A Treatise upon the Passion

by

Sir Thomas More

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Spelling standardized, punctuation modernized, and glosses added
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Punctuation
The only punctuation marks found in the earliest versions of this text are the period, comma, colon, question mark, slash, or “virgule” ( / ), and parentheses. Quotation marks, semicolons, dashes, exclamation points, and italics have been made use of with the goal of making the text more readily understood by present-day readers. As for the suspension points ( … ), these are substitutes for many of More’s slashes. He often used a slash where we would use a comma, a semicolon, a dash, or italics; but he also, quite often, used one to indicate whether a certain phrase was meant to be connected more closely with the one preceding it or with the one following it; to call attention to parallel elements in different phrases; or simply to facilitate serious reflection. He also sometimes used a slash for dramatic purposes—to indicate, perhaps, a coming sly comment, or some possibly surprising conclusion. The evident thoughtfulness with which More punctuated this book leads one to suspect that he anticipated its being often read aloud, and wanted to make sure the reader got the cadence right. He writes as though he were speaking.
A treatise historical containing the bitter Passion of our Savior

Christ, after the course and order of the four Evangelists; with an exposition upon their words... taken, for the more part, out of the sayings of sundry good old holy doctors, and beginning at the first assembly of the bishops, the priests, and the seniors of the people... about the contriving of Christ’s death—written in the twenty-sixth chapter of Saint Matthew, the fourteenth of Saint Mark, and in the twenty-second of Saint Luke. And it endeth in the committing of his blessed body into his sepulchre, with the frustrate provision of the Jews about the keeping thereof with soldiers appointed thereto—written in the twenty-seventh of Saint Matthew, the fifteenth of Saint Mark, the twenty-third of Saint Luke, and the nineteenth of Saint John.

First, an introduction into the story:

Hebrews 13:14 "Non habemus hic civitatem manentem, sed futuram inquirimus"—"We have not here a dwelling-city, but we seek the city that is to come."

If it be, good Christian reader, true—as out of doubt it is even very true—that, as Saint Paul in the afore-rehearsed words saith, we have not here any city to dwell in, but we be seeking for the city that we shall dwell in hereafter: then seemeth me that many men are very far overseen; such men, I mean, as I am (alack!) myself, that so much time and study beset about their night’s lodging here, in passing by the way, and so little remember to labor and provide that they may have some house commodious for their ease, and well-favoredly trimmed to their pleasure, in that place whither once go we shall... and when we come once there, dwell there we shall, and inhabit there, forever.

Sir Thomas More wrote no more of this introduction.

The First Point: The Fall of Angels

The glorious Blessed Trinity... the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,
three distinct and diverse equal and like-mighty Persons, and all three
nevertheless one indivisible and undistinct infinite, almighty God,
being from before all time eternally established in the infinite perfection
of their incomprehensible and undecayable glory… did when it
pleased them—not of any necessity, nor for increase of any
commodity that their full and perfect and not increasable bliss could
receive thereby, but only of their mere liberal goodness—create, of
nothing, the noble, high, beautiful nature of angels, to make some
creatures partners of the Creator’s goodness. And albeit that in that
excellent company of angels all were not of like perfection, but
ordinately divided into diverse orders and degrees, the higher in
excellence of nature far surmounting the lower: yet did the
lowest far pass and excel the natural state that mankind
afterward had in its creation. But yet had not the angels
forthwith in their creation given unto them the perfect bliss, heaven,
nor were forthwith endowed with the very fruition and plain
beholding of the glorious Trinity, but were left in the hand of their
own free will and liberty… either, with help of God’s grace, by turning
to God with laud and thanks for that they had already of his gift,
to be received by grace unto that glory… or else, willingly declining
from grace and turning themselves from God, as graceless caitiffs
frowardly to fall into wretchedness. For if they had once already
had the very sight of God at that time… in such wise as the glorious
company of angels and saved souls blessedly have it now, the
heavenly beholding thereof must needs have been so delectable and so
joyful unto them, and so should have pierced and fulfilled them
thoroughly with sweetness, that it should not have left any place in
them for any contrarious appetite or affection to enter. But now
standing thus, in the liberty of themselves… with those excellent, beauteous
gifts of their nature, and being by grace moved to turn unto God
and love him, and give him condign thanks, for the same: great
multitude followed that instinct of grace and so did—and were of
God therefore exalted into the clear sight of the Godhead, and by grace

1 like-mighty: equally powerful  2 one: i.e., one same
2 undistinct: undifferentiated (in divinity)  4 incomprehensible: illimitable; boundless
4 undecayable: incorruptible / undiminishable  6 commodity: good; benefit
7 mere: sheer // liberal: generous; bountiful // of: out of  8 noble: magnificent
9 partners: partakers  10 excellent: lofty; exalted // like: the same
11 ordinately: in an ordered sequence // orders: classes // degrees: ranks
12 surmounting: transcending  13 pass: surpass  15, 16 forthwith: right away
16 fruition: satisfying enjoyment  19 laud: praise // that: what // gift: giving
20 willingly declining: deliberately turning aside  21 from: i.e., away from
21 graceless caitiffs: depraved villains  22 frowardly: perversely // once: ever
26 pierced: penetrated // fulfilled: satisfied  28 contrarious: oppositional
28 appetite: interest / longing // affection: inclination  31 condign: fitting
31 the same: i.e., those excellent, beauteous natural gifts of theirs
31–32 great multitude: a great number (of them)  32 instinct: prompting
32 were of: were by  33 Godhead: Supreme Being
confirmed and established in the full surety of joyful, perfect bliss and everlasting glory.

Lucifer, on the other side, an angel of excellent brightness, willingly letting slip the grace and aid of God… wherewith he was stirred to look upward, unto his Maker, began in such wise to look downward, upon himself, and so far forth to delight and dote in the regarding and beholding of his own beauty, that albeit he well wist he had a Maker infinitely far above him… yet thought he himself meet to be his match! And as wise as he was of nature, yet pride made him so frantic… that he boasted that he would be God’s fellow in deed, saying unto himself, “In caelum conscendam, super astra Dei. Exaltabo solium meum, et sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus aquilonis. Ascendam super altitudinem nubium: similis ero Altissimo”—“I will ascend into the heavens, above the stars of God. I will exalt my seat, and will sit in the hill of the testament, in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the height of the clouds… and I will be like unto the Highest.” But, as he used this blasphemous presumption in his mind against the great majesty of God, he was suddenly cast out… and thrown down, with an infinite number of the like traitorous angels, as the prophet Isaiah toucheth him in these words:

Isaiah 14:13–14 fellow in deed, saying unto himself, “I will ascend into the heavens, against the great majesty of God, he was suddenly cast out… and

Isaiah 14:12 “Quomodo cecidisti de caelo, Lucifer, qui mane oriebaris! Corruisti in terram!”—“How art thou fallen out of

Isaiah 14:15 into the earth!” And afterward he saith, “Veruntamen, ad infernum detraheris, in profundum laci”—“Howbeit, thou shalt be drawn down into hell—into the depth of the lake!” These words, with others, the prophet Isaiah rehearseth (in the fourteenth chapter) in resembling the fall of Nebuchadnezzar unto the ruin of Lucifer. And as well of his fall as the fall of his fellows… may well be verified the words of Saint John in his Apocalypse…

1 surety: assurance 3 side: i.e., hand // excellent: superlative; unsurpassed
2 brightness: splendor 4 willingly: deliberately // wise: a way // wist: knew
9 meet: fit; qualified // match: equal // rival // wise: intelligent // sane // of: by
5 wise: a way 7 wist: knew
10 frantic: delirious; wildly deranged // wise: intelligent // sane // of: by
11 fellow: peer // deed: actuality
12 Lucas: i.e., hand // excellent: superlative; unsurpassed
15 exalt my seat: set my throne on high // testament: covenant
16 infinite: incalculable // like: similarly // testament: covenant // back: says of // taunts
18 used: was engaging in; was carrying on
20 infinite: incalculable // like: similarly // testament: covenant // taunts
24 that: who // howbeit: however // testament: covenant // back: relates // resembling: likening
27 howbeit: however // testament: covenant // taunts
30 of his fall: by his fall // fellows: cohorts // verified: proven fulfilled
Revelation 12:7–9 where he saith (in the twelfth chapter), “Et factum est praelium magnum in caelo: Michael et angeli eius praeliabantur cum dracone. Et draco pugnabat, et angeli eius; et non valuerunt, neque locus inventus est eorum amplius in caelo. Et proiectus est draco ille magnus… serpens antiquus qui vocatur ‘Diabolus’ et ‘Satanas,’ qui seducit universum orbem; et proiectus est in terram, et angeli eius cum eo missi sunt”—“There was a great battle in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the Dragon. And the Dragon and his angels fought, and were not able; nor their place was no more found in heaven. And out was thrown that great dragon—the old serpent which is called ‘the Devil’ and ‘Satan,’ which seduceth and deceiveth the whole world—and he is thrown down into the earth, and his angels be cast down with him.”

Thus the inflexible justice of Almighty God cast out of heaven Lucifer and all his wicked, proud spirits, and deprived them from his grace forever… and thereby from all hope and comfort of recovery of any manner attaining to the celestial glory… but forever condemned to pain. Howbeit, not to the uttermost part of their pain at the first, nor all to pain alike; but as their offenses were not all alike, but some part of them, by reason of their more noble nature and greater gifts of God received, their unkindness so much the more—and their sin so much the more—grievous; and in diverse angels also diverse degrees of malice… in some the more, in some the less: so did the righteousness of God temper and proportion their punishments, driving the great devil down into the deep-dark den of hell, into the very bottom and center of the earth, and others hover about… into the air, and over parts of the earth and the sea… which (with continual recourse and counsel had with their chief prince and ruler, Lucifer, that reigneth as king over all the children of pride) do, and shall do till the Day of Doom, persecute, attempt, deceive,

9 were not able: i.e., didn’t have what it would have taken for them to win out
14 the … God: i.e., Almighty God in his inexorable justice
15 deprived: debarred 20 noble: exalted / magnificent
21 unkindness: ingratitude 21, 22: so: that
23–24 the righteousness of God: i.e., God in his righteousness
25 great: chief 27 which: who 29 that: who
30 the Day of Doom: Judgment Day // attempt: try with temptations
trouble, vex, and punish such as they can catch into their claws…
of the seely, sinful kind of man. And then at the Final Judgment
they shall all (as they, to their further discomfort, be surely shown
already) lose all their authority and rule over man… and enter
\[5\] with evil men into the selfsame infernal fire that was first and
principally prepared for themselves; and therein shall they, with the
sinful souls that have left God and followed them, in torments
intolerable burn in hell forever.

Let us here now, good readers, before we proceed further, consider
well this matter, and ponder well this fearful point: what horrible
peril there is in the pestilent sin of pride; what abominable
sin it is in the sight of God when any creature falleth into the
delight and liking of itself—as the thing whereupon continued… inevitably
faileth not to follow, first the neglecting, and after the contemning,
and finally… with disobedience and rebellion… the very full
forsaking, of God.

If God was so wroth with pride… that he spared not to drive down
into \textit{hell} for pride… the noble, high, excellent angels of heaven:
what state can there be so great in \textit{this wretched} world… that hath not
high cause to tremble and quake, every joint in his body, as soon
as he feeleth a high, proud thought enter once into his heart,
remembering the terrible commination and threat of God in Holy

\textit{Wisdom 6:7} \quad \text{Scripture, "Potentes potenter tormenta patientur"—"The
mighty men shall mightily suffer torments"?}

And then, if it be so sore a thing, and so far unsitting in the sight of
God, to see the sin of pride in the person of a great estate, that
hath, yet, many occasions of inclination thereunto: how much more
abominable is that peevish pride in a lewd, unthrifty \textit{javel}…
that hath a purse as penniless as any poor peddler, and hath, yet, a heart
as high as many a mighty prince? And if it be odious in the sight of
God that a woman beautiful indeed… abuse the pride of her beauty

\begin{itemize}
\item vex: harass; pester
\item seely: weak // kind of man: human race
\item discomfort: unhappiness
\item surely shown already: let know already for a definite fact
\item pestilent: pernicious; deadly
\item delight . . . of: delighting in and admiring of
\item after: afterward // contemning: disrespecting
\item forsaking: renouncing; repudiating
\item wroth with: wrathful at
\item noble: high-ranking // magnificent
\item high: exalted; august
\item excellent: superior
\item estate: dignitary
\item high: great
\item high: puffed-up; conceited
\item commination: denunciation
\item sore: grievous; terribly bad
\item far unsitting in the sight of: extremely incongruous in the eyes of // far from sitting well with
\item that: who
\item peevish: senseless; foolish
\item lewd: low-class
\item unthrifty: shiftless
\item javel: good-for-nothing
\item purse: money bag
\item abuse: misuse
\item pride: treasure; asset
\end{itemize}
to the vainglory of herself: how delectable is that dainty damsel
to the Devil… that standeth in her own light and taketh herself for
fair, weening herself well liked for her broad forehead… while the
young man that beholdeth her… marketh more her crooked nose?
And if it be a thing detestable for any creature to rise in pride
upon the respect and regard of personage beauty, strength, wit,
or learning, or other such manner thing as by nature and grace are
properly their own: how much more foolish abusion is there in
that pride by which we worldly folk look up on height and
solemnly set by ourselves, with deep disdain of other, far better
men, only for very vain worldly trifles that properly be not our
own? How proud be men of gold and silver!—no part of ourselves,
but of the earth; and of nature no better than is the poor copper or
tin, nor to man’s use so profitable as is the poor metal that
maketh us the plowshare, and horseshoes, and horse nails.
How proud be many men of these glistering stones… of which the
very brightest, though it cost thee 20£, shall never shine half so
bright, nor show thee half so much light, as shall a poor halfpenny
candle! How proud is many a man over his neighbor… because
the wool of his gown is finer?—and yet, as fine as it is, a poor sheep
wore it on her back before it came upon his; and all the while she
wore it… were her wool never so fine… yet was she, pardie, but a sheep!
And why should he be now better than she by that wool… that, though
it be his, is yet not so verily his… as it was verily hers? But, now, how
many men are there proud of that that is not theirs at all? Is there
no man proud of keeping another man’s gate? Another man’s
horse? Another man’s hound or hawk? What a bragging maketh
a bearherd… with his silver-buttoned baldric… for pride of another
man’s bear! Howbeit, what speak we of “other men’s” and “our
own”? I can see nothing (the thing well weighed) that any man may
well call his own; but as men may call him a fool that beareth
himself proud because he jetteth about in a borrowed gown, so

2 standeth in her own light: i.e., blocks out the light by which she could see herself clearly, and thus sabotages herself
3 fair: lovely // weening: thinking
3 well liked: much admired // broad forehead: An effect achieved by a tight binding up of the hair; see Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation, 2.17. 3 while: when
4 marketh more: i.e., is noticing more than he did before
6 personage beauty: beauty of personal appearance; physical beauty // wit: intelligence
8, 11 properly: in a strict sense; strictly speaking 8 abuson: impropriety
9 look up on height: look at others as though from above; adopt a haughty air
10 solemnly: seriously // set by: make much of 11 for: on account of
11 very vain: really worthless 14, 18, 20 poor: lowly; measly
16 glistering: glittering / glistening 22 never so: no matter how
22 pardie: by golly 23 by: on account of
26 keeping: guarding / taking care of 29 what: i.e., why
30 weighed: considered 30–31 may well: can rightly
31–32 beareth himself proud: adopts a proud demeanor 32 jetteth: struts
may we be well called very fools all… if we bear us proud of anything that we have here. For nothing have we here of our own—not so much as our own bodies!—but have borrowed it all of God, and yield it we must again, and send our seely soul out naked, no man can

1 Corinthians 4:7 tell how soon. “What hast thou,” saith Saint Paul, “that thou hast not received? And if thou have received it, whereof gloriest thou, as though thou hadst not received it?” All that ever we have, of God we have received—richesse, royalty, lordship, beauty, strength, learning, wit, body, soul, and all. And almost all these things hath he but lent us. For all these must we depart from, every whit, again… except our soul alone. And yet that must we give God again also, or else shall we keep it still with such sorrow… as we were better lose it. And for the misuse thereof, and of our bodies therewith, and of all the remnant of that borrowed ware… whereof we be now so proud, we shall yield a full strait account, and come to a heavy reckoning, and many a thousand body and soul together burn in hell eternally… for the peevish pride of that borrowed ware so gloriously boasted before in the transitory time and short, soon-passed life of this fond, wretched world. For surely this sin of pride, as it is the first of all sins, begun among the angels in heaven, so is it the head and root of all other sins… and of them all, most pestilent. But it is not my purpose to declare here… by the manifold branches thereof… all the kinds of mischief that proceedeth upon it (for that would occupy more time than were meet for this present matter), but only will I counsel every man and woman to beware even of the very least spice thereof. Which seemeth to be the bare delight and liking of ourselves for anything that either is in us… or outwardly belonging to us. Let us every man lie well in await of ourselves, and let us mark well when the Devil first casteth any proud, vain thought into our mind, and let us forthwith make a cross on our breast and bless it out by and by…
and cast it at his head again. For if we gladly take in one such
guest of his, he shall not fail to bring in two of his fellows soon
after—and every one worse than other. This point expresseth well
the Spirit of God by the mouth of the prophet… where he noteth the
perilous progress of proud folk, in the person of whom he saith in

Psalm 12:5

this wise: “Dixerunt, ‘Linguam nostram magnificabimus;
labia nostra a nobis sunt; quis noster dominus est?’”—

“They have said, ‘We will magnify our tongues; our lips be our own;
who is our lord?’” First they begin, lo, but, as it were, with a vain
delight and pride of their eloquent speech, and say they will set it
out goodly to the show; wherein yet seemeth little harm, save a
fond, foolish vanity, if they went no farther. But the Devil, that
bringeth them to that point first, intendeth not to suffer them rest
and remain there; but shortly he maketh them think and say

further, “Labia nostra a nobis sunt”—“Our lips be our own; we have
them of ourselves.” At what point are they now, lo? Do they not
now… the thing that God hath lent them… take for their own, and
will not be acknown that it is his? And thus become they thieves unto
God! And yet, lo, the Devil will not leave them thus, neither, but
carrieth them forth farther… unto the very worst point of all.
For when they say once that their lips be their own, and of themselves,
then against the truth (that they have their lips lent them, of
our Lord) their proud hearts arise, and they ask, “Quis noster
dominus est?”—“Who is our lord?”—and so deny that they have any
lord at all! And thus, lo, beginning but with a vain pride of their
own praise, they become, secondly, thieves unto God… and, finally,
from thieves they fall to be plain rebellious traitors, and refuse
to take God for their God—and fall into the detestable pride that
Lucifer fell to himself! Let us therefore (as I said, good Christian
readers) beware of this horrible vice, and resist well the very first
motions thereof; and the first suggestions of the Devil… as the young

Psalm 137:8–9

infants of Babylon… let us allto frush and break
in pieces against the “stone” that is our sure,
strong Savior Christ… with consideration of his great humility…

1 cast it at his head again: throw it back at his head  // gladly: willingly
2 fellows: companions; associates
3–4 expresseth . . . God: i.e., the Spirit of God expresses well
4 the prophet: i.e., David
5–6 saith in this wise: speaks thusly
8 magnify: glorify
10, 25 of: in
11 goodly to the show: on great display
11 yet: so far  // save: except for
12 fond: fatuous
13 suffer: let
18 be acknown: acknowledge
22 of: by
23 arise: i.e., rise in rebellion
25–26 of their own praise: i.e., in praise they’re getting from their own selves
31 motions: stirrings
31 of: from
32 allto: soundly  // frush: smash
by which he—being as verily God as man—humbled himself for our sake (to redeem us out of the proud Devil’s dominion!) unto the vile death of the cross. Which is the matter, of his bitter Passion, whereof I have taken in hand to treat... and have, for the first point toward it, told you the sore fall of the proud angels, whereby, in part, the occasion of our damnation... and consequently, for our redemption, the occasion of Christ’s Passion... grew.

A Prayer

O glorious Blessed Trinity, whose justice hath damned unto perpetual pain... many proud, rebellious angels, whom thy goodness had created to be partners of thine eternal glory: for thy tender mercy, plant in my heart such meekness that I so may, by thy grace, follow the motion of my good angel... and so resist the proud suggestions of those spiteful spirits that fell... as I may, through the merits of thy bitter Passion, be partner of thy bliss... with those holy spirits that stood... and now, confirmed by thy grace, in glory shall stand forever.

The Second Point: The Creation and Fall of Mankind

The glorious Majesty of Almighty God, after the afore-rehearsed ruin and fall of angels, not willing to suffer the malice of his proud, envious enemies... make such a diminishment in his glorious court of heaven, determined, of his great goodness, to create a new kind of creature... wherewith he would make up and fulfill, with glorious blessed people, the number of all those evil angels... that were, through their high, malicious pride, thrown out of wealth into wretchedness.

This new kind, then, that he would for this purpose create, the deep wisdom of God determined marvelously to mingle and temper. For since it should be able (with help of his grace) to attain unto such high, heavenly glory, he would have it spiritual and

3 vile: ignominious // the cross: i.e., crucifixion // matter: subject
5 told you: i.e., told you about // sore: terrible 7 grew: came about
9 whose: i.e., who in thy 10 thy: i.e., thou in thy
11, 15 partner(s): partaker(s); sharer(s) 13 motion: prompting
13–14 proud suggestions: temptations to pride
16, 17 stood/stand: remain(ed) standing; remain(ed) unfallen
19 afore-rehearsed: above-related 20 willing: wanting
20 suffer: let 22, 27 determined: decided 23 fulfill: fill to the full
23 glorious: glorified 24 blessed: holy 25 high: great; extreme
25 wealth: well-being 26–27 the deep wisdom of God: God in his deep wisdom
27 marvelously: wondrously // mingle: make as a mixture of elements
immortal; and yet, to refrain it from the proud heart… that Lucifer had, and his fellows, in their spiritual and immortal substance: God determined that this new kind of creature… should also be bodily gross and mortal. And thus, after this visible world made, and air, earth, and sea furnished with fowl and fish, and beasts, grass, herbs, trees, and fruit: he made the body of man… of the slime of the earth; and created of nothing… the spiritual substance, of the soul, after the image and similitude of himself… in that he endowed it with the three great gifts memory, understanding, and will, in a certain manner of resemblance of the glorious Blessed Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This kind, of man, created God of a marvelous convenience also… with all other manner of creation. For he made it have a being, as hath the dead stone; a life, as hath the insensible tree; a sensible feeling, as hath the unreasonable beast; a reasonable understanding, as hath the celestial angel.

Thus, our forefather Adam being created of the earth, and our mother Eve formed and framed out of the rib of his side (as in the first and the second chapter of Genesis is declared); albeit that they were ordained unto the high, pleasant palace of heaven: yet, lest over-sudden enhancing so high might make such pride spring in their hearts as might be the cause of their driving down again, the great goodness of God measured their state and wealth, setting them… not on high in heaven, but beneath, in the pleasant garden, or orchard, of earthly Paradise. And for the further safeguard of their persons from pride… he gave them precepts and commandments—whereby they should remember and consider themselves to be but servants. And therefore he both bade them there to be occupied, and work, in the keeping of that pleasant garden… and also forbade them the eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. And yet unto their farther acknowledging of subjection, and repressing of all occasion of pride, he set upon the breaking
of his behest... the threat of a very sore pain: that is to wit, that
whenever they did eat of the forbidden tree, they should die.
That is to wit, that—whereas they had now their bodies such as,
though they might die by their own default, yet such as without
their default should never die—there should after that his commandment
were by them broken... enter into their bodies, and into
the bodies of all their posterity, an inevitable necessity of dying. Thus
had God, of his high goodness, set them in the possession of a right
wealthy state... and in the expectation of yet a far passing better... of
which they could never fail without their own default. And to keep
them from falling into the fault, he was ready to assist them with his
grace; and against proud disobedience that might make them fly from
his grace, he graciously fenced and hedged in their hearts with fear.
Now stood our father Adam and our mother Eve—lords of all the whole
earth, had full dominion over all the beasts of the same—out of dread
death or any bodily hurt. And authority they should have
had over all their own offspring... with which they were, with the
blessing of God, commanded to “increase and multiply, and replenish
the world.” Their palace was the most pleasant place, of Paradise.
Their apparel was the vesture of innocence—more glorious than cloth
of gold! Their nakedness as far from dishonesty, and all cause of shame,
as their bodies were far from all filthy tokens of sin. Their sensual parts
conformable unto reason. Against their souls... no rebellion in their
obedient bodies. Which for a season should have endured there... without
age, weariness, or pain, without spot or wem or any decay of
nature... preserved continually by the wholesome fruits and help of
God’s hand. And all their children forever, after the same rate. And
each, at sundry times, when God’s pleasure were, should have
had their bodies changed suddenly into a glorious form... and, without
death, depart out of the earth... carried up with the soul into the bliss
of heaven, there to reign in joy and bliss eternally with God, fulfilling
the places from which the proud angels fell. This was, lo, the state in

1 behest: command    // sore pain: severe punishment
3 that is to wit: that is to say; in other words    4 might: could    // by: through
4 default: fault
4–5 such... default should: i.e., those without personal guilt would; those who did not
do so through their own fault would    5 should after that: would after
8–9 right wealthy: very prosperous    9 passing: surpassing
9–10 of which they could never fail: which they could never miss out on
10 without their own default: i.e., except through their own fault
11 fault: blameworthiness; guilt    13 graciously: through divine grace / benevolently
15 out of: free from    21 dishonesty: indecency
22 filthy: nasty    // tokens: vestiges; telltale signs
23 conformable unto: compliant with    24 a season: a while; a certain length of time
24 endured; remained    25 age: ageing    // spot: blemish    // wem: disfigurement
25 decay of nature: natural deterioration    26 of: from
27 after the same rate: in the same manner    28 sundry: varying
29 suddenly: instantly    // glorious: glorified    30 out of: from
31 fulfilling: filling up
which our first father stood—a state full of heavenly hope of eternal joy to come, and a state for the meanwhile… full of present wealth. But oh, woe worth wicked envy, the daughter of pestilent pride! For the proud, hateful enemy of God… and traitorous wretch, the Devil, beholding this new creature, of mankind, set in so wealthy state, and either conjecturing by his natural understanding… or, to the increase of his grief for his proud, envious stomach, having it revealed unto him… that of this kind should be restored the ruin that was happed in heaven… by the fall of himself and his fellows, conceived so great heart-burning against the kind of man therefor… that he rather would wish his own damnation doubled so that he might destroy them… than suffer God honored in them, and them so to proceed and prosper… that their gross, mingled nature, so base in respect of his, should ascend up to that height of heaven that himself was fallen from.

The Devil then devising with himself upon some mischievous means by which he might bring mankind unto destruction… called to mind the means by which he had before wretchedly destroyed himself. And as he saw his own damnation grown by the occasion of pride, so wist he well that if he might, by some wily suggestion, bring pride into the kind of man… and make the first fathers disobey God’s commandment—then would God, of his justice, keep his promise in their punishment, and take from the posterity the gift that he promised their forefather for them, if the condition were broken upon which he gave it. Upon this, this old serpent the Devil, being, as the Scripture saith, wilier than all the beasts of the earth, would not begin at the man, whom he perceived to be wiser, and more hard to beguile, but first began at the woman, as the kind in wisdom more weak, more light of belief, and more easy to be beguiled; whom if he might make on his side, then should he and she together… be twain against one. And the wily wretch perceived well also… the tender mind that the man had to his make; and thereby guessed (as it there happed, and elsewhere happeneth...
oft) that to bring man to woe, the woman may do more... than, with all
his craft, the Devil can do himself. This wily serpent, therefore, the
Devil, devising to entice this woman to this deadly deed, took his
time for his wretched wooing... when her husband was not with her.
And then began to fall familiar with her... and inquisitive of such things
as pertained to her husband and her, and nothing at all to himself. For
there he asked her this question: “Wherefore did God,” quoth he, “command
you that ye should not eat of every tree of Paradise?” Or, as it rather seemeth by the Greek
phrase (usual in many places of Scripture), he asked her thus: “Why did
God command you that you should eat of no tree in Paradise?” And
that his question was such... appeareth by the manner of her answer.
Howbeit, if she had shown herself unwilling to fall familiar with
him, and had said again, “What is that for you?”—or had answered him
and said, “My husband shall answer you”—all his wretched wooing had been
at end, and he confounded and gone. But while she was content to be
talkative with a stranger... and wax a proper entertainer (which
property some gentlewomen ween were a goodly praise), mark well
what followed thereon. She answered the serpent and said, “Of the fruit
of the trees that are in Paradise we eat. But of the fruit of the tree
that is in the midst of Paradise... God hath commanded us that we
shall not eat, and that we should not touch it, lest we may hap to die.”
Mark here... that in these words, the contagious conversation of this
wicked serpent... with his questioning and her ear-giving thereto...
wrought not, as it seemeth, outwardly only, with her eyes and her
ears, but inwardly also, with some subtle suggestion in her heart. For by
this answer of hers it appeareth... that forthwith upon his questioning she
began to stagger, and half to doubt of the truth and steadfastness of God’s
word. For whereas God had precisely promised that if they did eat
of the fruit of that tree, they should die—she, by the inward leaning to
the Devil’s instigation, and not cleaving to the grace of God, by this her answer turned it into a doubt, saying “ne forte moriamur”—“lest peradventure we die.” By reason of which doubting, and thereby but half dreading, she made half the way herself… for the Devil to walk farther with her. For thereupon he letted not boldly to 5

Genesis 3:4–6

blaspheme God before her, and say, “Nay; ye shall not die; but God doth know… that whatsoever day you shall eat of that tree, your eyes shall be opened… and you shall be as gods, knowing both good and evil.” And upon these words… she “seeing that it seemed a good tree to eat of, and fair to the eye, and delectable to behold”—she by and by plucked off the fruit thereof, and ate it… and gave it to her husband, and he ate it too.

O wretched, wicked serpent! How much of thy deadly poison hast thou put into the seely soul of this woeful woman at once! For here had he made her believe… that of his own, devilish conditions… God had had twain: that is to wit, falsehood and envy. For he made her think that God had told them a lie… in that he said that whensoever they ate thereof, they should die; and also that God were envious… and could not, for envy, suffer it that they should have so high a thing as the knowledge of good and evil. Then struck he into her heart the poison of proud curious appetite… and inordinate desire… to know the thing which for her weal God had forbidden her to know. For God would, of his goodness, she should have known but good. But she, by the Devil’s enticement, would needs know evil too! And when her curious mind… had made her once set her fair hands unto the feeling of that foul pitch, she could never rub the filth from her fingers after. What should I speak of the other, lesser evils that he allured and allected her with, as the pleasure of the eye in the beholding of that fruit, with lickerous desire of the delicious taste?—sins not small in themselves… but small in respect of the far-passing greater: when he made her desire and long… by reason of high knowledge to be like a goddess; and for that cause, proudly to disobey God… and eat of the forbidden fruit. And she—being thus infected, and so sore envenomed, with so many poison

1 cleaving: holding fast 1–2 this her answer: this answer of hers 4 dreading: fearing 5 walk: go // letted not: did not forbear 6 before: right in front of 11 by and by: immediately 14 seely: poor 15 conditions: attributes 16 twain: two // falsehood: dishonesty 18 should: would // were: i.e., was 19 suffer: allow 20 high: lofty / great 21, 25 curious: inappropriately inquisitive 22 inordinate: unrestrained / unlawful / disordered // weal: well-being; good 23–24 she… but: i.e., have had her know only 24 would needs: i.e., just had to 27–28 speak of: say about 28 allected: enticed // as: such as 29 lickerous: lip-smacking 31 in respect of: in comparison to 31 far-passing: far-surpassing 34 sore: badly
spots—infected her husband forthwith. For at her enticement—and not so much for credence giving to the serpent’s words… as to content his wife (whose request he could not find in his heart to contrary)—he kept her company in her lewdness, and letted not to eat with her. But the wallow-sweet pleasure of that fruit… soon turned to displeasure and pain. For scant was the fruit passed down both their throats… when it so began to wamble in their stomachs… that they wished it out again… and in his belly that counseled them to eat it. For anon was there such a marvelous change… spread through both their bodies… that whereas when they put it in their mouth, they were such as it was a great pleasure each of them to behold other, and be beheld of the other: as soon as they both had eaten it, they felt such filthy sensual motions of concupiscence arise, and rebel against reason, in their flesh… that their hearts abhorred to be beheld and seen—either of any other or themselves either—

\[\text{Genesis 3:7}\]

and, for shame of their nakedness, covered their flesh with fig leaves.

Now is there no doubt but that their wicked enemy the serpent (which, as appeareth by the Bible, abode still by them, till the sentence given by God upon their all three punishment) in his mischievous manner highly rejoiced to see his devilish device brought unto such pass, and had a great game to behold them come forth so comely, appareled so richly in their royal robes of fig leaves.

Oh, what a confusion was this unto them—to see their feigned friend, their very deadly enemy, the Devil, first by their own folly so harmfully deceive them… and then so spitefully sit and laugh them to scorn! But they had no long leisure left them to take heed to that…

\[\text{Genesis 3:8}\]

ere that great confusion was overwhelmed with a greater. For suddenly, lo, they heard our Lord coming; and therewith, for shame, they fell in a fear… and fled and hid themselves from the face of God in the midst of a tree! And our Lord, as though he saw them not, called for Adam
and said, “Adam, where art thou?” And he answered, “Lord, I heard thy voice... and was afeard to come before thee, because I was naked; and therefore I hid me.” “Who showed thee,” quoth our Lord, “that thou were naked... but because thou hast eaten of the tree... of which I commanded thee thou shouldst not?”

Then took Adam a way far awry from forgiveness. For he confessed not his fault, but began to excuse himself... and lay the fault from him to his wife—and, in a manner, unto God too! “The woman,” quoth he, “that thou gavest me for my companion—she gave it me, and so I ate it.”

Then said our Lord God unto the woman, “Why didst thou so?” And she, in like wise, never acknowledged her fault, nor asked forgiveness, but excused her by the serpent, and said, “The serpent deceived me, and so I ate it.” Then gave God the sentence of punishment upon all three, using like order in declaring of his doom... as they did in the doing of their sin. For first he began at the serpent—the first, malicious contriver of all this mischief. And unto him he said: “Because thou hast done this, accursed be thou among all the living things and beasts of the earth. Upon thy breast shalt thou creep, and earth shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life. Enmity will I put between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and hers; and she shall frush thy head in pieces, and thou shalt lie in await to sting her heel.” Then gave he the woman her judgment, and said unto her: “I shall multiply thy miseries and thy conceptions, and in sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children... and thou shalt be under the power of the man, and he shall be lord over thee.” Then, finally, said he to Adam: “Because thou hast given ear unto thy wife’s words... and hast eaten of the tree of which I forbade thee to eat—accursed be the earth in thy work. With labor shalt thou eat of the earth, all the days of thy life; it shall burgeon thorns and briars, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread... till thou return again into the earth,
out of which thou were taken. For dust art thou, and into dust
shalt thou return.” Then our Lord made them coats of skins,
and clothed them therein, and said, “Lo, Adam is like one of us now—
knowing both good and evil!” And God, with that angry scorn, to
keep him from the tree of everlasting life, put them both forthwith
out of that pleasant Paradise into the wretched earth.

Long were it here, and not of necessity pertaining to this present
point (that is to wit, the fall of our forefather), to note and declare
such things as in the discourse of this matter men may note and
mark upon this part of the Scripture. As, for example, that in these
words of God with which he scorned Adam, saying, “Ecce, Adam
factus est sicut unus ex nobis” (“Lo, Adam is now made one of us”), may
be well marked that… like as by all the words of the whole text appeareth
plain that there is but one God—so is there in that God more
Persons than one. For else could he not conveniently say, “Lo, Adam
is now… as one of us”—that is to wit, “. . . a God as we be”—but he would have
said, “Lo, Adam is now as I am.”

Those words also seem well to declare that though Adam were
not so fully deceived by the persuasion of the serpent as Eve was
20
1 Timothy 2:14 (for which Saint Paul saith, “The man was not
seduced, but the woman”… whereupon Saint
Augustine, at good length, declareth certain differences between them),
yet was Adam by the means of his wife… somewhat seduced, and
brought into a foolish hope… to be, through the eating of that
fruit, by the knowledge of good and evil… made like a god. For
God, speaking to Eve no word of that foolish proud affection,
taunted and checked Adam therewith… specially by name, saying,
Genesis 3:22 “Ecce, Adam quasi unus ex nobis factus est, sciens
bonum et malum”—“Lo, Adam is now made as one

of us, knowing both good and evil.” But this was not by the serpent’s
persuasion—whom Adam would not have regarded, but
shortly shaken him off—but the seducing of Adam… was by that that

1 into: unto 4, 11 scorn(ed): taunt(ed) 7 were it: would it be
8 declare: expound 9 discourse: discussion
13–14 appeareth plain: it is clearly shown 15 conveniently: appropriately
16 that is to wit: that is to say; in other words
18 declare: make it known // were: i.e., was 22 declareth: sets forth
26 of: about // affection: aspiration 27 specially: explicitly
31 regarded: paid any mind to 32 that that: reason of the fact that
the serpent’s shrewd words... came to his ear out of his wife’s mouth, whom he would suffer to speak. And therefore our Lord in declaring his punishment unto him... laid for the cause, “Quia audisti vocem uxoris tuae, maledicta terra in opera tuo,” etc.—“Because thou hast given ear to the words of thy wife... accursed be the earth in thy work,” and so forth. And because that the woman’s preaching and babbling to her husband... did so much harm in the beginning, and would if it were 

1 Timothy 2:11–12 suffered to proceed... do always more and more: therefore Saint Paul commandeth that a woman shall not take upon her to teach her husband, but that her husband should teach her—and that she should learn of him “in silentio” (that is, in silence); that is to wit, she should sit and hear him... and hold herself her tongue. For Saint Paul well foresaw... that if the wife may be suffered to speak too, she will have so many words herself... that her husband shall have never one.

There may be marked also, in the aforesaid discourse, the marvelously mischiefous nature of envy. For the Devil so well knew the justice of God, and by his own destruction so sore had assayed it, that he doubted not but that his malicious deceit should not pass unpunished. And yet was he rather content to take harm himself... than suffer another take good. And such a devilish delight he took in beholding their harm and shame... that he voided not at God’s coming, but abode to see the sentence of their damnation... till he took his own with him too.

In this discourse is to be considered also... that when God punisheth the sinner by and by, he showeth him thereby more favor than when he deferreth it longer; and oftentimes when he delayeth it, he doth it not of favor, but of indignation and anger. For if he had here punished Eve as soon as herself had broken his commandment, both had Adam been warned by it... and their offspring

1 shrewd: maliciously cunning 2, 9, 15 suffered: allow 3 declaring: announcing 12 of: from 13 hear: listen to 14–16: Cf. Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation, 2.1. 17, 26 discourse: narrative 18 marvelously mischiefous: astonishingly evil 19 sore: terribly 20 assayed it: i.e., acquired that knowledge by experience 21 pass: go 22 suffer another: let someone else 23 voided not: did not go away 24 abode: stuck around // the... damnation: what sentence they were condemned to 27 by and by: right away 30 herself: she herself 31 had Adam: would Adam have
by her sin alone, as holy doctors declare, had not lost original justice, nor fallen in damnation of death. But forasmuch as though she was created to be Adam’s fellow, she was yet of less perfection, and more frail, and more easy to fall than he: albeit he had as then no dominion given him over her, yet his reason might show him… that to give her good counsel, he should have kept her company; which if he had done, the serpent had not deceived her. Therefore, since he did not, but by wandering another way from her… he suffered her to miscarry and be infected: God suffered the contagion of the selfsame infection… to stretch unto himself too… and thereof to grow his destruction.

And this may be a warning to every man in this world… to do the diligence that he possibly can… to keep every other man from hurt. For as the Holy Scripture saith, “Et mandavit illis unicuique de proximo suo”—“God hath given every man cure and charge of his neighbor.” And harm creepeth from one to another… by more means than men be aware of. And he that care not though his neighbor’s house fall afire… may hap to lose his own. Howbeit, as this lesson generally pertaineth to every man, for the natural love and Christian charity that every Christian man is bound to bear other—yet pertaineth it most specially to those… that have over other men that special charge given unto them… that our Lord therefore, by the mouth of Ezekiel, terribly threateneth them in this wise: “Si dicente me ad locutus fueris uti avertatur a via sua impia et vivat, ipse impius in impietate sua morietur; sanguinem autem eius de manu tua requiram”—“If when I say to the wicked man, ‘Thou shalt die,’ thou do not show it him, nor do not speak unto him, that he may turn from his wicked way and live, both shall that wicked man die in his wickedness… and yet the blood of him shall I require of thy hands.” This is a fearful word, lo, to those that have the cure over other folk… and a necessity to take good heed to their flock, to guide them well, call…
upon them and give them warning of such ways as they may perish in. For else shall the sheep not perish and be punished only, but the scab of the flock... shall catch and consume shepherd and all, for his negligence. This is here another thing specially to be marked: that like as the kind of man was not corrupted with original sin, nor lost the state of innocence, by the fault of Eve alone, which was but the feeblest and inferior party, till Adam, that was the stronger and superior party, made himself partner to the same sin also—so is there no man accounted before God for an offender in any deadly actual sin... by any manner motion or suggestion of the Devil unto the sensual part... as long as the will after the judgment of reason resisteth and refuseth to consent. But when reason giveth over to sensuality, whereby the man whole and entire falleth into the consent... either to do a deadly sin... or to delight in the devising and thinking upon any such sinful act, for the pleasure that he taketh in that thought—all were it so that he thought therewith he would not do the deed, yet were the full consent to the pleasure of that only thought... full and whole deadly sin. Howbeit, a sudden, surreptitious delight... cast by the Devil into the sensual part... is no sin at all, but may be matter of merit, except the will, with reason, giving over thereto... either consent to delight therein... or else is so negligent in looking to sensuality... that he letteth her over-long alone therein... and listeth not to do his diligence in driving that sinful suggestion from her. For surely such manner negligence... is before the face of God accounted for a consent—and so for a deadly sin.

It is also specially to be marked that the stubborn manner of Adam and Eve—not praying God of forgiveness, but excusing their sin—was, in manner, more displeasure to God than was their sin itself.

This is also notably to be marked: that as tenderly as Adam loved Eve, rather content to displease God than her—yet when he saw that sorrow should come thereon... he would fain have laid it from himself unto her. And thus will it fare by these fleshly, wretched...
lovers here: when they come in hell together, they shall curse each other full fast. Howbeit, letting pass, as impertinent to my matter, many things that might be marked more, let us not forget to mark this one point well… which is the sum of all the Second Point: that is to wit, let us consider deeply… from what weal into what wretchedness, by the folly of our forefathers, mankind is woefully fallen… through the false, wily suggestion of our mortal enemy the Devil. On which thing when I bethink me, methinketh I may well say the words of Saint John in the Apocalypse…

Revelation 12:12 with which he bewaileth this wretched world…

by reason of that the Devil fell out of heaven thereinto: “Ve terre et mari, quia descendit diabolus ad vos, habens iram magnam, sciens quia modicum tempus habet!”—“Woe to the earth and to the sea, for the Devil is come down to you, having great anger, knowing that he hath but a little time!” This woe well found our forefathers… when the Devil, full of ire for his own fall, and envy that they should succeed him, labored to bring them to the place of his final damnation—from which he saw well he had but a little time left; that is to wit, the time of this present world, which is transitory and soon shall pass, and is a time in all together very short, from the first creation to the final change thereof at the Day of Doom, if all that time be compared with his everlasting fire that followeth. He found them innocents joyful and merry, much in the favor of God… and oft rejoicing his visitation and company; the man and his wife each delighting in other, finding nothing to mislike in themselves; lords of all the world, all beasts obedient unto them; their work without weariness, their meat pleasant at hand; no necessity to die, nor any bodily hurt; high pleasure in hope of heaven—and all their children after them.

All this hath this false serpent bereft them by his deceitful train, poisoning them with his own pride… that threw himself out of heaven. For as himself would have been God’s fellow—so made he them ween they should. But while they went to be gods by the
knowledge of good and evil both… they lost, alas, the good that they
had… and got but evil alone. They lost their innocence, and became
sinful; God’s favor they lost, and fell in his displeasure; his visitation
they rejoiced not, but were afeard to come near him—each of
them ashamed to behold the other, or themselves either. All beasts
were at war with them… and each of them with themselves—their
own bodies in rebellion and battle against their souls. Thrust out
of pleasant Paradise into the wretched earth; their living gotten with
sore sweat, their children borne with pain. Then hunger, thirst,
heat, cold, sicknesses sundry and sore; sure, sorry looking… for the unsure
time of death; and dread after all this… of the fearful fire of hell—
with like pain and wretchedness to all their offspring forever.

This is, lo, good readers, the wretched change that our forefathers
made… with falling into pride at the Devil’s false suggestion. In honor
they were—and would not see it. Honor they sought… and thereby fell
to shame. They would have waxed gods… and were turned into

Psalm 49:13 beasts, as the Scripture saith: “Homo cum in
honore esset non intellexit, comparatus est iumentis
insipientibus, et similis factus est illis”—“When man was in honor, he
perceived it not, but he was compared unto the foolish beasts, and
to them was he made like”… and yet brought, indeed, into far
worse condition. For many beasts live with less labor, and less
pain, too, than man; and none of them go to hell. In danger whereof
all the kind of man stood, by the occasion of their fall, if the goodness
of God had not by his grace helped with his merciful hand. And unto
heaven had no man gone… had not our Blessed Savior redeemed man,
and paid his ransom, by his bitter, painful Passion—whereof
the occasion was this wretched fall of man. And thus finish I the second
point that I said I would show you… before I come to the woeful history
of Christ’s bitter Passion.

A Prayer

Almighty God, that of thine infinite goodness didst create our
first parents in the state of innocence, with present wealth and
hope of heaven to come, till, through the Devil’s train, their folly fell
by sin to wretchedness: for thy tender pity of that Passion that was
paid for their and our redemption, assist me so with thy gracious
help… that unto the subtle suggestions of the serpent I never so
incline the ears of my heart… but that my reason may resist them… and
master my sensuality and refrain me from them.

The Third Point: The Determination of the Trinity
for the Restoration of Mankind

When the Devil had thus guilefully betrapped, and thus falsely betrayed,
our first father and mother by their own oversight and
folly, and thereby brought into miserable estate and damnable…
themselves with all their posterity: neither would the mighty
majesty of God endure and suffer his malicious, proud enemy the
Devil to rejoice the withdrawing of the kind of man from doing
him honor… nor the marvelous mercy of God abide and sustain to
see the frail kind of man eternally destroyed by the deceit and
circumvention of the false, wily Devil. For though his justice was
content forever to lose all thankful service (for thankless they serve
him still) of those malicious angels, that without other motion than
their own malice willfully turned from him; and that his mercy no
cause had to counterplead his justice… in abridging the eternity of
the proud spirits’ pain… that, of obdurate heart, would never be sorry
for their sin: yet in beholding the wretched, decayed kind of man
brought into sin… not all of himself, but by the subtle suggestion of his
false, envious enemy; and that would after wax meek, and repent, and
pray for pardon—the sharp justice of God and his tender mercy…
entered into counsel together. And by the deep wisdom of God…
was the means found… that man should so be restored… as they should
both twain be satisfied; that is to wit, both man, by justice, for his
sin somewhat punished… and yet, upon repentance, by means of
mercy… should his fault be paid for, and from all eternal bondage

1 wealth: well-being   2 train: trickery // their folly: i.e., they in their foolishness
5, 25 subtle: insidiously sly // suggestion(s): temptation(s)
7 refrain me: hold me back   10 falsely: underhandedly; treacherously
11 oversight: heedlessness / miscalculation   12 folly: foolishness
12 estate: condition   15 rejoice: have the satisfaction of
15, 17 kind of man: human race   16–17 sustain to see: i.e., put up with seeing
18 circumvention: chicanery // false: underhanded / dastardly
19 thankful: credit-deserving; meritorious
19 thankless: unmeritoriously; without deserving any credit for it   20 that: who
20 other motion: any other provocation   21 willfully: deliberately
21 from: away from // that: i.e., despite the fact that
23 the proud spirits’ pain: the punishment of the proud spirits
24 decayed: deteriorated // kind of man: race of man
25 of himself: by himself   26 false: treacherous // after: later // wax: become
27 sharp: punctilious; strict   32 fault: transgression
man redeemed and saved—and, in spite of the Devil, enhanced to
more honor... than ever he was entitled to before he took the fall.

To devise this way, lo, was a wonderful thing... far passing the
capacity of all the angels in heaven. For since the amends must needs
be made, and in maintenance of the true justice of God... the ransom
must needs be paid, for the kind of man, that was by sin addicted
and adjudged to the Devil... as his perpetual thrall, never to come in
heaven: whosoever should pay this ransom... must, and was most
conveniently to, be such as would and were able... and owed it. Now, owed
there this ransom no creature but man. And therefore, since by him
that owed it... of reason it should most conveniently be paid: man
must he be that should of duty pay it. But now was there no one man...
able to pay the ransom for the whole kind of man. For since
all the whole kind had lost heaven, and were all, in one damnation,
condemned all to bodily death already: any of them all, though he
should willingly suffer death in recompense of the sin, it could
nothing serve his fellows... nor yet himself neither; for he paid but
his debt of death for his own part—in which debt and much more... himself was condemned already.

Now, as for angels, neither can we know that any would then do
so much for man, man being fallen by sin from God’s favor... nor
any of them all was able, being but a creature, to satisfy for the
deadly trespass done unto the Creator. And yet was it, over this, far
from good convenience that any angel should have been suffered to
do it. For the redemption of man after his fall... was a greater benefit
unto him... than was his creation. For as our mother Holy Church
singeth in the Paschal Service, “Quid enim nasci profuit, nisi redimi
profuisset?”—“What availeth it man to be born, were not the profit
of his redemption?” And therefore if angel had by payment of man’s ransom,
and recompense made for his trespass, redeemed him—then would
man have thought himself more, in a manner, beholden to angel than
to God! And the occasion thereof had been a very foul disorder.

1 enhanced: elevated 3 wonderful: wondrous  // passing: exceeding; beyond
6, 13 kind of man: human race 6 that: which // by: by reason of
6 addicted: put into the legal custody of 7 adjudged: awarded judicially
7 come in: enter; get to 9, 11 conveniently: fittingly; appropriately
9 would: wanted to // were: would be 14 all the whole kind: the whole entire race
14 one damnation: the same condemnation 15 though: even if
16 willingly: voluntarily
17 nothing serve his fellows: i.e., do nothing for his fellow human beings // yet: even
18 in: i.e., to 21–22 nor... was: i.e., nor was any of all of them 23 deadly: mortal
23 over: in addition to 24 convenience: propriety // suffered: allowed
27 in the Paschal Service: i.e., in the Easter Vigil service—in the Exsultet.
28 were not: i.e., were it not for 31 manner: way 32 had: would have
32 foul: wretchedly bad
Thus was, as I say, therefore, the device of a means convenient for man’s redemption… the thing that far passed the wisdom of all the wise angels of heaven. But the deep and infinite high wisdom of Almighty God… devised the marvelous merciful just means himself: that is to wit, that by the cruel, painful death of that innocent person… that should be both God and man… the recompense should be made unto God for man. For that person both being God… should be of that nature that was able to do it… and being man… should be of that nature that was bound to do it. And the Devil (unaware that he were) unrighteously procuring that righteous man’s death… should righteously lose the power upon man… that God had for man’s unrighteousness… righteously given unto him before.

This excellent means of man’s redemption… the deep wisdom of God devised; and in time convenient… the Second Person, the Son, of God—the Wisdom of the Father, and the Father’s express, absolute image, and brightness of his Father’s glory—being sent, by his Father and himself and the Holy Ghost, down here into the earth (and nevertheless abiding still above in heaven), and in the blessed womb of the pure Virgin Mary, taking into unity of Person… the poor nature of man (by the obumbration of the Holy Ghost, of the pure blood of her body, without man’s seed or fleshly delectation, and therefore without original sin), conceived; and without help of midwife, or pain of travail, born; living here in pain and labor, fasting, watch, preaching, and prayer; and finally, for the truth of his doctrine, by the procurement of the Devil, the treason of Judas, the malice of the Jews, and cruel hands of the paynims, through the painful, bitter Passion and death of his innocent manhead… not bound or subject unto death, neither by nature or sin… but by death for man’s sake willingly suffered: that excellent means, I say, of man’s redemption so by himself devised… himself most graciously fulfilled; and by the pleasant, acceptable sacrifice of himself… obediently offered, on the cross, up to the Father, he pacified the wrath and indignation of God against man; and… by his glorious Resurrection and marvelous Ascension… sitting in the nature of man
upon the Father’s right hand, hath reduced mankind (in such as will take the benefit) to more joy, more wealth, and far more honor, too… than ever the fall of our first father lost us.

Now, albeit (as I suppose) few men have less lust to move great questions, and put manner of dispicions in unlearned laymen’s mouths, than I—which rather would wish every man to labor for good affections… than to long for the knowledge of less necessary learning, or delight in debating of sundry superfluous problems—yet of some such demands as I now see many men of much less than mean learning… have oft right hot in hand, I shall not let one or twain myself here a little to touch.

A question. First be they commonly willing to search this thing: wherefore mankind should… more than Adam and Eve themselves… need any redemption at all. For how could it (say they) stand with the justice of God that for the fault of only Adam and Eve, all that ever came of them should fall into such miserable fault? This question, and many such others like, when they be of a curious, bold presumption demanded, be not to be hearkened unto and answered, but with the words of the blessed apostle Paul rather to be rejected and rebuked: “O homo, tu quis es, qui respondeas Deo? Numquid dicit fignum ei qui se finxit, ‘Quid me fecisti sic?’”—“O man, what art thou, to take upon thee to dispute with God? Is there any workman’s work that asketh the workman, ‘Wherefore hast thou made me thus?’ And must Almighty God, then, of his work wrought in man… give a reckoning to man, that is but his handwork?” Howbeit, on the other side, where such questions are not demanded of frowardness, of a vain pride, nor of blasphemous purpose, it is not only no displeasure to God… but is also a good disposition of the mind… in that a man delighteth to think upon heavenly things, rather than upon earthly. And many a holy man hath of no vain curious mind, but of very pure devotion, beset much study upon the aforesaid question. And of those

holy men hath diverse had diverse opinions. One sort have thought that by the fall of Adam, the whole kind of man… not only lost original justice, and became subject unto the necessity of temporal death, and therewith lost also the joyful bliss of heaven… but, over that, by the filth of original sin (with which every man born into this world… by natural propagation… is infected in the vicious, sinful stock, in that we were all in, of Adam, as the fruit is in the tree, or the ear of corn in the grain, that it came of) was also damned unto perpetual pain, and sensible torment, in hell, although it were a child that died in the cradle—which to the original sin taken of his parents (of which the prophet saith, “Lo, in wickedness was I conceived, and my mother conceived me in sin”) never added actual sin of his own. And from this eternal damnation—of sensible pain in the fire of hell— they thought that never any of the kind of man should be preserved… but by the merits of the Passion of Christ, and faith in him come or to come.

Faith, I say, actual or habitual; and in infants (by the faith of their parents and the faithful church) with certain sacraments or sacrifices duly referred to God, after the sundry laws and ceremonies of sundry diverse times… wherewith these infants have habitual faith infused.

And as touching the faith of Christ: that he should once come by whom they should be saved… revelation was given to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and all the old fathers… and by them to the people of every generation… before the Law written; and at the Law written, revelation given to Moses, and by him to the people; and after, to all the prophets, and by them to the people of Jews of every generation… unto the coming of our Savior Christ himself. Now, as for such folk, either now or then, as among the paynims lived well according to nature, so that they lacked nothing to keep them from the perpetual fire of hell but the faith of Christ: some holy doctors have thought that God, of his merciful goodness, by one means or other failed not to give them the faith—as he that is of so
merciful goodness… that he will fail no man in thing necessary… without the man’s own fault.

But then other doctors that were in this point of opinion with them—that original sin damned every man to sensible pain of hell… without the faith of Christ—were not in that point agreed with them (that unto such paynims as in any place lived naturally well, and kept themselves from idolatry, God sent the faith of Christ to keep them from hell… as not suffering any man to be perpetually damned to the sensible pain of fire without his own actual fault)… since they themselves denied not but that the infants of paynims, and of the christened, both, that deceased without Baptism… were damned unto perpetual sensible pain in hell… and yet had they none actual sin of their own, but only the sin original.

Now, whereas this thing might haply seem hard… in the hearts of some such as direct their eye to the merciful nature of God, and cannot also perceive, by any rule of justice taught unto man, either by reason or Scripture, how this thing could agree with the merciful justice of God: these good men answer that hell is the place for sinful folk, and that pain is due to sin, and that those children and all be sinful—in original sin. For all are sinful… that are, through filthy concupiscence, brought by propagation out of that sinful stock of our first, sinful father. For in that stock were we all, and were infected with sin in the same, in such a certain manner as all the sour crabs that ever come of the crab tree… do take their sourness of the kernel whereof the tree grew. And

Romans 9:21 if a poor potter may without reproach, and uncontrolled, make (as Saint Paul saith) of one self piece of clay two vessels, the one to serve in honest use, the other in vile and filthy, where the clay whereof he maketh the vile vessel was nothing faulty, but good: who should be so bold, and so blasphemous, as to think that God doth wrong to make and use all those vessels for vile… that is to wit, all the kind of man… whereof the clay that they all came of—that is to wit, their first father and

2 without: i.e., without its being  3, 5 in: on  3 of opinion: i.e., in agreement  
4, 9, 12 sensible: sensorily experienced  
5 without the faith of Christ: i.e., who lacked belief in Christ / who was without the Christian faith  
6, 10 paynims: pagans  6 naturally well: uprightly on a natural level  
7 faith of Christ: Christian faith / belief in Christ  8 suffering: allowing  
9–10 own actual fault: i.e., having incurred any guilt by his own volition  
10 denied not but that: did not deny that  14 haply: perhaps // hard: harsh / problematic  
17 agree: be consonant  19 pain: punishment  21 filthy: i.e., the uncleanness of  
24 crab(s): crabapple(s)  24, 25 of: from  25 take: get  26 poor: humble; lowly  
27 uncontrolled: i.e., without getting criticized for it // of: out of  
28 self: same // honest: respectable  29, 32 vile: ignominious  29 filthy: nasty  
30 nothing: not at all  32 all the kind of man: all of humankind
mother—were, ere they came of them, waxen by their sin both twain… very vile and naught?

Besides this (say these good holy doctors), the Scripture declareth us… that God thus doth indeed. For Saint Paul calleth all the offspring

Ephesians 2:3 of Adam… by nature the children of wrath,
saying, “Eramus natura filii irae.” “We were,” saith he, “by nature the children of wrath.” And that we became such by

the corruption of our nature in our first father, Adam, he showeth

Romans 5:12 well where he saith, “Per unum hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit, et per peccatum mors, et

ita in omnes homines mors pertransit, in quo omnes peccaverunt”—“By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin, death, and so passed
death through into all men, through that one man… in whom all men have sinned.”

Romans 5:17–21 And after, he saith: “Sicut enim unius delicto mors renavit per unum, multo magis abundantiam gratiae, et donationis, et iustitiae accipientes, in vita regnabunt per unum: Iesum Christum. Igitur sicut per unius delictum in omnes homines in condemnationem, sic et per unius iustitiam in omnes homines in iustificationem vitae.

Sicut enim per unius hominis, inobedientiam peccatores constituti sunt multi, ita et per unius obedientiam iusti constituentur multi. Lex autem subintransit ut abundaret delictum. Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit et gratia. Ut sicut renavit peccatum in mortem, ita et gratia regnet per iustitiam in vitam aeternam, per Iesum Christum, Dominum nostrum”—“Likewise as by the sin of one man death hath entered by one: much more, men receiving the abundance of grace, and of the gift, and of justice, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

“Therefore, likewise as by the sin of one man it went into all men unto condemnation: so by the justice of one man also… it goeth into all men unto justification of life. For likewise as by the disobedience of one man, many be constituted and made sinners—so shall also by the obedience of one… many men be constituted and made righteous. The Law truly hath entered that sin

1 ere: before 1–2 waxen… twain: become by the sin of both of those two
2 vile: ignominious // naught: evil 3 holy doctors: theologians
3 declareth: makes it known to 8–9 showeth well: makes quite evident
26, 29 justice: righteousness 33 truly: in reality; actually // entered: come in
should abound. But where sin hath abounded—there hath grace also more abounded, that likewise as sin hath reigned unto death, so grace should also reign by justice unto everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” By these words of “wrath,” of “sin,” of “condemnation,” of death grown by the sin and “disobedience” of Adam into all his offspring—that is to wit, into all the kind of man… by natural propagation engendered and begotten of him—and by the contrary words of “justice,” of “obedience” in Christ, and of “justification” and “righteousness” in man through “grace” growing into “everlasting life,” it well appeareth (say some doctors) that Saint Paul meant that the death grown to all mankind, contracted by original sin from Adam, should be the death of everlasting pain. From which Saint Paul well, by all the process of the same words, declareth that no man can be saved but by our Savior Christ. Which thing Saint Peter showeth yet more expressly, where he saith,

Acts 4:12 “Non aliud nomen est sub caelo datum hominibus… in quo oporteat nos salvos fieri”—“There is none other name under heaven given to men… in which we must be saved.” And that no man shall be saved without faith… Saint Paul declareth, Hebrews 11:6 where he saith, “Sine fide impossibile est placere Deo”; that is to wit, either actual or habitual, infounded in the Sacrament of Baptism… or otherwise, if God be so pleased, whose power is at liberty not so bound to his holy sacraments… but that he may beside them give his grace, where he list. But with his sacraments he hath by his promise bound himself to do; and without them he doth unto few men; and with contempt of them, to no man. And for this cause say those holy doctors… infants be received to Baptism to keep them from the peril of eternal damnation and perpetual pain in the fire of hell. And of this opinion was holy Saint Augustine, as in sundry plain places of his works well appeareth. Now, since it is so (say they) that by the Scripture this point so
plainly appeareth, what should we dispute the righteousness thereof? As though that man might attain to see the bottom of God’s righteousness! How many things be there very well done, and righteously, by men—which yet seem unto children to be no right at all? And infinitely farther asunder be the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the wisest man... than is the wisdom of the wisest man above the wisdom of the most foolish child. The prophet, in Isaiah 55:8–9 the person of God, saith, “Non enim cogitationes meae cogitationes vestrae, neque viae me viae vestrae; quia sicut exaltantur caeli a terra, sic exaltatae sunt viae mea a viis vestris, et cogitationes meae a cogitationes vestris”—“My thoughts be not like your thoughts, nor my ways be not like your ways; for as high as heaven is above earth, so high are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts Romans 11:33–34 above your thoughts.” And therefore saith Saint Paul, “O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei! Quam incomprehensabilia sunt iudicia eius, et investigabiles viae eius! Quis enim cognovit sensum Domini, aut quis consiliarius eius fuit?”—“Oh, the altitude” (or “height”) “of the riches of the wisdom and cunning of God! How incomprehensible” (or “unable to attain unto”) “be his judgments, and how investigable” (that is to wit, “how unable to be sought and found out”) “be his ways! Who hath known the mind of our Lord, or who hath been of his counsel?” God hath no rule of justice to be ruled by, but is himself the rule by whose will all justice must be measured and shaped. And therefore he can do none injustice. And when we be discharged once of this gross, corruptible body, that aggrieveth and beareth down the soul, and oppresseth the mind, that many things thinketh upon: then shall such folk as shall be saved... behold and see in the glorious Godhead... the very clear solutions of such inexplicable problems.

With such things as this, and many more that were too long to rehearse here, have those good fathers answered this matter—those, I

1 what: why // dispute: call into question  2 that man might: man could
2 attain: manage  3 well: rightly  4 no right: no right things / not right
18 cunning: astuteness  19 attain unto: grasp / arrive at
25 none: no // discharged: unburdened; freed
25 once: one day / once and for all  26 gross: material / bulky
26 aggrieveth: gives trouble to // beareth: weighs  29 Godhead: Supreme Being
29 inexplicable: baffling; mystifying  31 were: would be  32 rehearse: relate
say, that have thought that by the sin of Adam… every man, old and young, though he deceased with none other sin than original only, was in like wise, and in like reason, damned to perpetual sensible pain in the fire of hell… as by the bondage of the father, all his offspring is in this world bound unto perpetual thralldom. Howbeit, to tell you the whole truth, holy Saint Augustine, which was (among others) of this mind and opinion—for all the reasons with which he answered other men therein, concerning the justice of God in the damnation of infants unto perpetual sensible pain… for that only sin original, that they contracted by the natural propagation of the first, condemned father—with all those reasons, I say, with which he contented other men… he could never, yet, satisfy and content himself. For in a certain epistle which he writeth unto Saint Jerome, he debateth this matter at length, very substantially, and with great erudition. And in that epistle he confesseth the defense and maintenance of that opinion for so hard… that, as he there toucheth, some great, cunning men for the defense thereof… have been driven to the devising of a very great, perilous error. For they, to maintain the justice of God in that point, said that the souls which every man have put in their bodies by succession of time… were all created at once, before the seventh day, in which God rested. And of those words, that “God in the seventh day rested,” they took a foundation for that error, forgetting the words of our Savior “Pater meus usque modo operatur, et ego operor” (“My Father worketh still yet, and I work still also”)—but in the seventh day God rested from the creating of any new kind of creature. Then said they that the souls offended God before they came into the bodies, and that they were put into the bodies… some to be purged in them, and some to be damned with them; so that the infants that die with original sin… have the bodies worthy damnation… because they naturally proceed out of the damned stock, with lack of original justice, and the soul was worthy to come into that body… by the

1 man: human being  2 though: even if  3 wise: manner  // and in: and with
4, 10 sensible: sensorily experienced  7 which: who  8, 13 reasons: arguments
11 for that only: just for that; only on account of that  14, 16 epistle: letter
15 debateth: discusses  16 substantially: thoroughly  // confeseth: acknowledges
18 toucheth: mentions  // cunning: learned
26–27 worketh still yet: continually goes on working
27 I work still also: I, too, work continually  // in: on
31 die with: i.e., die in the state of  32 worthy: deserving of
34 justice: righteousness  // was worthy: deserved
society whereof it should be bound unto eternal pain—the soul, they said, was worthy for that other sin… with which it had offended God before it came into the body. This fantasy were some fain to find, for maintenance of God’s justice, of those that held the aforesaid way in the damnation of infants unto sensible pain in hell. But this erroneous opinion, as reason is, Saint Augustine rejected and confuteth. Howbeit, that yet notwithstanding, he confesseth himself to find such difficulty in the maintaining of God’s justice to stand with his own opinion of condemning infants to sensible pain in hell… that himself seemeth to doubt whether God create always every soul of new… or else that as well the soul as the body… be produced and propagated of the father and the mother—as well as the body. For if they so were, he thought that then the answer were more easy, if the whole person of the man were taken by natural propagation of the substance of our first father and mother… being subject unto that damnation. And therefore he desireth Saint Jerome to consider well that point, and search whether it might stand with the Scripture or not. And if it might, he thought it meet that Saint Jerome should take that way too. And if not, himself would not hold it neither. Howbeit, if that way would not be maintained, he then desired Saint Jerome to write unto him by what reason he thought that the justice of God might be maintained in the damning of infants unto sensible pain in hell. For he said that himself could not see how it could stand with justice… that God should create a new soul, that never offended, and put it, without any desert of itself, into that body… by whose company it should contract forthwith such an infelicity… that the body dying, and the soul departing therefrom unchristened, before it came to discretion, it should be damned to perpetual torment. And then layeth he forth there certain reasons… with which himself was wont to answer other men in that point for the time, for lack of better. But there he requireth Saint Jerome to devise him better. For he plainly confesseth that those answers which himself was wont to make other folk in the matter… never satisfied nor contented himself. Would God

1 society whereof: connection with which
2 was worthy for: i.e., deserved this on account of 3 fantasy: idea
4 fain to find: constrained to come up with 5, 9, 23 sensible: sensorily experienced
5, 19, 20 way: view 5, 22 in: regarding 6 as reason is: as stands to reason
9, 18, 24 stand: be compatible; square 9 of condemning: i.e., that God condemns
10, 19, 23, 30 himself: he himself 10 doubt: be in doubt as to; wonder
16 desireth: wants 17 point: thesis // search: find out; see 17, 18 might: could
18 meet: fitting; right 20 would not: was not to 21 desired: wanted
21, 30 reason(s): argument(s) 22 maintained: defended
25 offended: committed a sin 25–26 desert of itself: deserving on its part
26 contract: incur 27 an infelicity: a misfortune 28 discretion: the age of reason
31 the time: i.e., the time being 32 requireth: asks
32 devise him: think him up; come up with for him // better: i.e., some better one
there remained the answer of Saint Jerome again. But whether
ever he made any or not, we none find.

And thus have I, good readers, shown you the mind of some good
holy doctors… which were of the opinion that original sin, without
actual adjoined thereto, damned the kind of man, naturally descended
from Adam, unto perpetual sensible pain in the fire of hell.
Now shall ye farther understand… that there are others which have
another manner mind therein, whereupon there ensueth nothing
so great difficulty concerning the righteousness of God.

Their mind in the matter is this: that God in the creation of man…
gave to him two states. One, competent and convenient for his
mortal nature; another, of special grace, a farther state of special
prerogative: that is to wit, the possibility of immortality, put in his
own hands, and of the obtaining of eternal bliss in heaven; of
which two things there was neither nother naturally pertaining
to him. If God had given him only the first—that is to
wit, only natural—his soul, yet, should have been immortal; for
God created the nature such. But unto the bliss of heaven, the
fruition of the Godhead, he did not create it to attain by nature—
nor, as it seemeth, angels neither—but by a special gift and prerogative
of his grace. The body, being made of the earth… and mixed with
other elements, was of nature dissoluble and mortal, as the bodies
of other beasts be. Howbeit, if God had given Adam no farther
gift than competent unto his nature, he had yet had a good state,
far above all beasts—and yet a state far under the state that he
stood in by God’s farther gift. For first, if man had had but his
natural state, albeit he should have had (as some men think) the
rebellion of his sensuality against his reason, yet had he had (while
he lived) the use of the reasonable soul, and should have had
knowledge of God, and cause to love him, honor him, and serve
him, and had been bound to master his sensuality and resist the
Devil, and by the doing of the contrary… should have deserved hell, and
by doing his duty to God… should have deserved to have after this

1 of… again: i.e., that Saint Jerome gave him back
3 shown: told
3 mind: thinking
4 holy doctors: theologians
4, 7 which: who
5 the kind of man: the human race
8 manner mind: way of thinking
8–9 nothing so: i.e., nowhere near as
10 mind in: thinking on
11, 24 competent: correspondent (to)
11 convenient: fitting
13, 20 prerogative: privilege
15 nother: the one nor the other
15 pertaining: belonging
19 fruition of the Godhead: i.e., enjoyment of the Beatific Vision
22 of: by // dissoluble: subject to decomposition
24 had yet had: would yet have had
25 under: lower than
28 had he had: he would have had
28 under: lower than
29 reasonable: reason-endowed // should: would
31 had: would have
31 bound: obliged
32, 33 deserved: merited
life... not the fruition of the Godhead (that is, the bliss of heaven), but
a life good, quiet, and restful, with spiritual delight... in such knowledge
of God and his wonderful works... as reason, at the least,
without revelation, might attain unto. Which should have been a
pleasure far above the pleasure that ever any man had... by only
natural means... in this world since this world first began; and such
as I suppose whosoever might attain it... would not change that
state... with the state of the greatest king that ever reigned on earth.

And yet, though they call this the “natural” state of man, they mean not,
I think, thereby... that man was, or should have been, able to have
lived well after his nature, and have attained the end of that state,
by his own only natural power, without special aid and help of
God... since there is no creature, neither high nor low, but as it could not
without God be created, no more can it without God be conserved;
and man—if he never had had but his natural state, he should have
been in danger to do sin... more than he was with the state of
innocence that God gave him farther... and yet in that state he
sinned. And therefore, if not only we, which now (by more means than
one) have our naturals vitiated, but also Adam, that had more
than his naturals in Paradise whole and in good plight, had need,
yet, of God’s grace to help him there to stand: it must needs be, as I
said, that he must have needed the help of God’s grace to maintain
him... if he had had his only natural state. And if any man marvel
that God made all his creatures such... as they should always need aid
of his grace: let him know that God did it of his double goodness. First,
to keep them from pride, by causing them to perceive their feebleness
and to call upon him; and secondly, to do his creatures honor and
comfort. For the creature that wise is... can never think himself
in so noble condition—nor should take so great pleasure, or so much
rejoice—that he were made able to do a thing well enough himself...
as to remember and consider that he hath the most excellent Majesty
of God, his Creator and Maker, evermore attendant himself,
at his elbow, to help him.

1 fruition of the Godhead: i.e., enjoyment of the Beatific Vision
2 quiet: trouble-free; peaceful  3 wonderful: wondrous
4, 10 should: would    7–8 change... with: exchange... for
11 lived well: lived a morally upright life // after: in accord with
16 in danger to do: at risk of committing    18 which: who
19, 20 naturals: natural endowments    20 plight: condition
21 stand: stand firm / remain    22 must: i.e., would have had to
22 maintain: support    23 marvel: wonder
27 do: give    28 comfort: encouragement
If any man will here take a contrary part, and affirm that man in the state of innocence, and the angels that fell, were able of themselves to have stood in their former state, and by natural liberty of their will, without peculiar help of God, to have chosen the better and to have refused the worse; and that their strength therein then and our feebleness in this state corrupted now have their differences by reason of their nature then whole and unhurt... and ours now sore impaired and wounded; and that the cause why we cannot now without help of grace choose the good, but willingly apply the freedom of our will to the choice of the evil, is the corruption of our nature... grown by the sin of Adam; and that, therefore, before that sin, Adam was, before that fall, able to choose the good of his own natural power; and angel yet more able than he, before the fall of Lucifer; and thereupon list to conclude that neither angel nor man in the state of their first creation needed unto the resisting of sin none other help of God but only their natural power: to him that thus list to reason, mine answer will I temper thus. That they were of nature stronger, and better able naturally, than we—that will I gladly grant. But that they were so able to resist sin of their own nature then... that they needed for their assistance no help of God at all—that can I full hardly consent. Howbeit, if any man affirm stiffly yes, I will keep no schools upon the matter; nor almost in nothing else, but leave off and be content with that that I trust he will grant me: that is to wit, that they were never so able to withstand sin by their own natural power... but that, at the leastwise, yet with God’s help (which was ready when they would ask it) they should have been able the better.

Thus have I somewhat shown you... of what mind some men be... concerning the only natural state given by God unto Adam. And now shall I farther somewhat show you... what mind they be of... concerning that state which he had by the reason of the other gifts given him conditionally, by special prerogative, above his natural state; which things he lost by the condition broken.
They say that above the natural condition and state of his body…

God gave him this gift: that his body should never have died.

He gave him this gift also: that his sensual parts should never have rebelled against his reason. He gave him also therewith… that he should never have had dolor or pain in body, nor heaviness or sorrow of mind, but all thing necessary without weariness or grief.

He had farther given him above his nature… this excellent, high gift very far surmounting all the remnant: that is to wit, undeceivable hope and ability… both body and soul, through grace, to come to glory—the bliss, I say, of heaven, the joyful fruition of the glorious Trinity—forever. All these gifts God gave him above his naturals—and not for himself only, but for him and for all his posterity. But all these supernatural gifts he gave him with the knot of this condition: that is to wit, that if he broke his commandment, then should he lose them all. And that was understood by the promise of death. And not only the necessity of temporal death—the dissolution of the soul and the body, by which the man doth in deed but half die, since his far better part, that is to say, the soul, by that death dieth not at all—but by the loss of heaven… the whole entire man hath a very sore death, in that he is separated and departed from the fruition of the very fountain of life:

almighty, glorious God!

Now say there, as I told you, therefore some good men… that Adam by his sin lost from himself and all his posterity… all those gifts that God gave him above his nature—and therein could his posterity have no wrong, nor any cause to complain upon God, but upon Adam only. For they were all given unto us but upon condition hanging on his hand; which condition when he broke, those gifts could by no reason belong or be due unto us. But yet remained there high cause for us to thank God for the remnant. For the gifts only pertaining to the natural state of man (which I showed

5 dolor: suffering  6 allthing: everything  7 excellent: sublime; superb
8, 30 remnant: rest  8 undeceivable: undisappointable; sure
10–11 fruition . . . Trinity: i.e., possession of the Beatific Vision
11 above: i.e., over and above  12 naturals: natural endowments
14 knot: attachment / catch  15–16 that . . . by: by that was understood
17 dissolution: breaking apart; separation  18 deed: actuality  20 sore: terrible
21 fruition: full enjoyment  26 no wrong: i.e., no suffering of an injustice
27 they: i.e., those gifts  29 reason: rational argument  30 remnant: rest
31 pertaining: belonging // showed: i.e., named
you before)—those gave not God unto the kind of man... upon condition, to be lost by the sin of Adam; nor no man to be perpetually damned by sensible feeling of the fire of hell... for original sin, contracted without his witting, but only for actual sin, freely committed by his own vicious will. And then, if the truth thus be, this matter may partly be resembled unto some great, good prince which, giving to a poor man, for him and his heirs of his body forever, lands to the yearly value of one hundred pounds... frank and free, simpliciter and without any condition, would give him farther other lands to the yearly value of ten thousand pounds—with the honor of a dukedom also to him and his said heirs—forever, restrained, nevertheless, with this condition: that if he committed any treason against this prince’s Majesty... this duchy, with all those lands of the yearly ten thousand pounds, should be forfeited and lost from him and his said heirs perpetually; and that yet the other lands should still remain in the blood... and every man of them, if he do either treason or other great crime against the king, should stand unto his personal peril of death or other pains, according to justice, for his personal fault, without the loss of the land from the stock for the fault of any their ancestor. If, now, this man committed treason... and lost this duchy from his heirs by his deed; and yet left them this hundred-pound lands of the king’s gift beside: there were, ye wot well, none of his heirs that ever could have cause to blame the king for the loss of the duchy... but had yet greater cause to thank him for their living of the yearly hundred pounds... which they still enjoy of his liberal gift—more, by every groat, than ever the good king owed them!

Lo, thus say they... that likewise, God took from the posterity of Adam the royal duchy—that is to wit, the joys of heaven, with the commodities of those other gifts above man’s nature... which he gave Adam for himself and them upon condition, which condition Adam broke. But yet he left them still the good, honest living of the yearly hundred pounds—that is to wit, the commodities
of man’s competent state natural, which I have before partly shown you; which state also man hath without his desert received, of the only mere liberal goodness of God; and which commodities by infliction of perpetual pain felt in fire… God never taketh from any man… for the original sin, contracted from his forefather, without actual, deadly sin of himself. Now, to that that the whole kind of man are called in Scripture “the children of wrath by nature,” and “put under condemnation and death by the sin of Adam,” and such other words like, they answer that those words are, and well may be, meant of the loss and condemnation of mankind in the loss of the inheritance of heaven, and of those other gifts that God had conditionally given it, above the competent state of man’s nature… for the wrath of the condition broken by the sin of Adam; as it were a great condemnation to lose a duchy with ten thousand pounds, and retain only a mean man’s living of one hundred pounds. And they further declare that there are two manner of pains: that is to wit, “poena damni et poena sensus” (“pain of loss and pain of feeling”)—as a man may be pained by loss of money or loss of his hand. Pain of loss may be also by two means: either by the losing of a thing that he hath in possession, or by duty should have come unto him, or by the losing of a thing that should have come unto him… and yet of no duty, but of the mere liberality of some other man… which, for displeasure given, changeth his will and withdraweth it. Now say they that for actual, deadly sin, every man that impenitent dieth therein… is damned both to the pain of loss and to the pain of feeling; that is to wit, to the pain of the loss of the joys of heaven—the fruition of the glorious sight of the Godhead forever—and to the perpetual sensible pain of feeling the fire of hell perpetual. But for only original sin… they say that no man is damned unto the pain of feeling, but only unto the pain of the said loss alone. And whereas the same pain of loss (of the fruition of the Godhead) is yet unto those Christian
people that are damned for actual, deadly sin... a greater grief than is their intolerable feeling of the hot fire of hell, because they were, by regeneration of their baptism, made inheritors of heaven, and have lost it by their own fault—yet unto those that die unchristened, with none other sin than original, the pain of that loss is not grievous, because it was the thing which though it might have come to them, yet were they never entitled thereto in deed, nor were not by their own fault the cause of their own loss. And thus say some, as I show you, concerning all folk, old and young, that never being christened... nor nothing hearing of Christ, carry no deadly sin with them out of this world, but sin original only. And as for infants dying unbaptized, albeit that in many of these things that I have rehearsed by the way, many men will peradventure think otherwise, yet in the effect and substance of the point whereunto all the matter draweth—that is to wit, that those infants be damned only to the pain of loss of heaven, and not unto the pain of feeling by any sensible pain in the fire of hell—to this point I think the most part of all Christendom, both learned and unlearned, agree.

Now, as for such as die unchristened at man’s state... and never heard of Christ: some say one and some say another, as I have shown you before. And some say that without the faith of Christ, if they come to discretion... they must, besides original sin, die, of necessity, in actual sin... and be damned to sensible pain. For they say that “all the deeds that ever they do be sin.” Which saying me seemeth hard; but I will not dispute it here. Howbeit, well I wot that some texts of Scripture that they lay therefor... nothing prove for their purpose. Yet shall I not leave unshown you one comfortable saying... that Master Nicholas de Lyra toucheth upon: those words of Saint Paul (in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews), “Sine fide autem impossibile est Deo placere quemquam. Credere enim oportet accedentem ad Deum... quia est, et inquirerentibus se remunerator sit”—“Without faith,” saith Saint Paul, “it is impossible any man to please God. For every

1 actual: personally committed 1, 11 deadly: mortal 3 of their: from their 4, 8 fault: committing of sin 7 might: could 8 deed: fact; actuality 9 show: tell 10 nothing hearing of: i.e., never having heard of 12, 14 in: with regard to 13 rehearsed: mentioned // by: along 14 peradventure: perhaps 15 all the matter draweth: the whole issue comes (down) 18 to this point: with this thesis 19 agree: are in agreement 20 at man’s state: i.e., having reached adulthood 21 one: i.e., one thing 22 shown: told // the faith of Christ: the Christian faith / belief in Christ 23 discretion: the age of reason 23–24 of necessity: necessarily 26, 29 saying: assertion 26 me seemeth: seems to me // hard: problematic 27 wot: know // lay therefor: adduce for that 27–28 nothing prove for their purpose: do not at all prove their point 28 unshown you: not called to your attention 29 comfortable: consoling / encouraging 29 saying: thing said
man that cometh to God... must believe that God is, and that he
is the rewarder of them that seek him.” Upon these words saith
Master Lyra that although the people of the Jews, to whom the Law
was given, were bound to the belief of more than this; and the learned
people; and we Christian people, and those that are the priests and
learned among us, be rateably bound to the belief of more things
than were the Jews, or they that were learned among them: yet unto
the paynims and Gentiles (to whom the Law was not given, nor never
had heard of Christ), it was sufficient for their salvation to believe
those two points only which Saint Paul here rehearseth; that is
to wit, that there is one God, and that he will reward them that
seek him. And those two points be such... as every man may attain
by natural reason... helped forth with such grace as God keepeth
from no man... but from him that by his own default... either will not
receive it or deserveth to have it withdrawn. So that if this be true
that Master Lyra saith, then is there no man of discretion among the
Gentiles or paynims... unsaved without his own default. And so no
color of quarrel against the justice of God in this matter. And it is to
be considered... that Master Lyra there saith that in the belief of
those two points... is implied the belief of Christ—which is the
means of our salvation—in that he which believeth that God
will reward them that seek him... hath therein implied that God hath
a respect unto man’s salvation, and provideth a means thereunto... and
so believeth he that there is a means of man’s salvation and reward,
though he know not that the means is Christ. And there, though he
believe not on Christ by the name of Christ, yet believeth he and
hopeth for the means of salvation—which is in deed Christ. And
that belief sufficeth (saith Master Lyra) for his salvation, though
he think not on Christ, of whom he never heard. Thus have I shown
you, concerning the necessity of man’s redemption, and the manner
of man’s fall, and the things that he lost thereby, and the justice of
God used therein, and as well his justice as his mercy tempered together... in the marvelous means of man’s redemption, sundry diverse
things. And concerning Adam’s gifts, and his losses for his posterity, I have shown you sundry things of divers other men’s opinions… in which I will bind myself to the defense of neither part. But this thing am I very sure of: that by the fall of Adam, every man and child that by natural propagation came of him… had so verily lost and forfeited the bliss of heaven… that never should nor never shall any of them all attain again thereto… without the means of our Mediator and Savior, Jesus Christ. The merits of whose bitter Passion hath redeemed us and thereto made us inheritable again—as many of us, I mean, as by his faith, without contempt of his sacraments, use ourselves in such wise… as by our own sin we do not willfully and finally fall again from the benefit. And thus upon this first question, without any bold affirmations or opinion that I will hold or maintain, I have somewhat shown you divers things that divers doctors say.

Another Question

Then are there many men in hand with another question, and therein demand they this. While our Savior Christ (say they) bestowed upon the redemption of man… all the blessed blood of his body, to the very following of the water after; and that not only being an innocent, sinless man and a good, but also being, besides that, very God, too, by reason whereof the least drop of his blessed blood might have sufficed to recompense and satisfy for the sins of seven whole worlds: wherefore be not all men by the virtue of his such painful death… either taken up into heaven, glorified in body and beautified in soul, forthwith as soon as they be born… or else, at the leastwise, restored to the state that Adam by his sin lost them before in Paradise? That is to wit, that their bodies might be preserved from death, and the reasonable soul from rebellion of the sensual body, and have but the Devil alone left it to strive with, and man discharged of all pain and vexation… and live here in such pleasant plight as we should have lived if Adam had not sinned; and by

2, 14 shown: made known to 2 sundry: several 2, 14 divers: various
3 part: side 4 man: adult 10 contempt: disregard; blowing-off
11 use: conduct // wise: a way 12 willfully: deliberately
16, 17 question: subject of debate 17 in hand: occupied 18 demand: ask
18 while: given that 18–20: See John 19:34. 18 bestowed: expended
20 that: i.e., did that 21 a good: i.e., a good one 22 might: could
24 wherefore: for what reason 29 reasonable: reason-endowed; rational
30 strive: fight // discharged: unburdened; freed 31 such: i.e., such a
32 plight: state // lived: i.e., lived in
serving God in such wise, then in such time or times after as
God should think convenient, all men to be translated out of earth
into the joys of heaven. In this question are there more things than
one. But for the first, we must mark and consider well… that Christ
willingly would—by the ordinance of the whole Trinity—suffer more
pain for our redemption than was of necessity requisite; howbeit,
though he so did without necessity, yet did he it not without a great
good cause. For the pleasure of God was… that by the hideous torment
and willingly taken pain of that holy, blessed, and almighty
Person… man should two things consider. One, how much we be
bounden and beholden to him… that would endure and sustain
such horrible affliction for our sake. The other, that we should
thereby consider the burden and weight of sin, and well remember in
ourselves, since that innocent, almighty Person willingly suffered so
sore, bitter pain for the sins of others, how much we very sinful
wretches should of reason be well content… every man to suffer for
our own. For unto sufferance for our sin… how loath and irksome
would we be of ourselves, when we be so scantily stirred yet thereto… for
all that wonderful example? And whereas our hard hearts are so dispiteous
that many, for all the consideration of Christ’s bitter
Passion and most painful death, cannot, yet, with compassion relent
into tears and weep: if he had paid our ransom but with one
drop of his blessed blood pricked out with a pin, what doubt is
there but that thereat, then, many a wretch would laugh? Now, as for
bringing every man unto heaven forthwith upon his birth, without
any more ado: why God would not the effect of his Passion to weigh to
such purpose… there are more causes than one. First, that thing had been
impertinent to the nature of redemption—the nature whereof were, at
the farthest, but to restore men to the liberty and freedom of their
former state. But man in the state of innocence living in Paradise…
should not have been in that case to have been forthwith translated
into heaven, but should first have served God in Paradise—and
somewhat have done, therefore—and in all that while… have stood

2 think convenient: think suitable; see fit  
3 question: subject of debate // things: i.e., things to consider  
13–14 in ourselves: of our own accord  
16 of: by // well content: quite willing // every man: i.e., every one of us  
17 sufferance: suffering // loath: averse // irksome: indisposed; antagonistic  
18 of ourselves: i.e., just on our own // all that: that whole  
19 wonderful: wondrous // whereas: given that // dispiteous: pitiless; cold  
21 compassion: sympathy / empathy // relent: melt; break down  
25 forthwith upon: immediately after // would: willed // had: would have  
28 impertinent: i.e., something not belonging // were: would be  
31 case: situation // forthwith: right away // somewhat: something

45/33—46/1 stood… abearing: i.e., continued to have his winning or losing of heaven
be contingent on his conduct
still upon the winning or losing of heaven after his abearing. For if
he had abided in Paradise untempted many years more than he
did, and had afterward, before his translation, upon the suggestion
of the old serpent the Devil… and of the young serpent the woman… eaten
of the fruit as he did: he had—in any time of his life—had the selfsame
fall. And peradventure any of his sons, if he had happed any
to beget before his fall, might for himself and the posterity
coming after of his own body… have lost, by the-like fall, the selfsame
state. And therefore I say that to bring man to heaven by and
by upon his birth… was nothing belonging to the nature of redemption,
which nature is to restore him only to the freedom of his first
state—which was not, as I show you, man to go forthwith to heaven.
“But then why be we not at the leastwise restored unto the same
state—the state of innocence—that Adam had in Paradise, with all the
commodities thereunto pertaining?” To this I answer you: Christ,
when he redeemed us, how much pain soever himself took thereabout…
was yet at his own liberty to temper the fruit that we should
take thereby. And therefore, if we took thereby much less fruit than
we do… there could no man in reason find any fault therein. Howbeit,
as there is no doubt but that God could by the Passion of Christ have
redeemed and restored us… not only to the conditional title of inheriting
heaven at length, but also to the immediate attaining of
heaven forthwith upon our birth, or to the state of innocence in
Paradise first for the meanwhile, if he had would: so doubt I nothing
also… but likewise as he restored us not straightways to heaven…
because his high wisdom wist it was not for God convenient, so
restored he us not to the state of innocence… because his high wisdom
well wist it was for ourselves not best. To be established in the
possession of eternal wealth… without any manner pain taken, or
anything done, toward the deserving thereof… was and is so proper
to God alone, the three Persons of the glorious Trinity—the Creator—
that God would never communicate that thing with any other
person being but a creature: neither man in earth nor yet angel in

2 abided: remained  3 translation: transference into the next life
3 suggestion: i.e., being tempted  4 of: i.e., by  5 he had: he would have
6 peradventure: perchance  6–7 happed any to beget: happened to beget any
9–10 by and by: immediately  12 show: tell  // forthwith: right away
15 commodities: advantages  // pertaining: attached  16 himself: he himself
17 temper: set limits to  17, 18 fruit: profit  22 at length: eventually
23 forthwith upon: immediately after  24 would: wanted to  // nothing: not at all
26, 28 wist: knew  26 convenient: suitable; good  29 wealth: well-being
32 communicate . . . with: impart . . . to  33 in earth: on earth  // yet: even
heaven. And therefore, man to look for that point as the effect of his redemption… were full unreasonable, and far over proud a request.

Now, man to be restored to the state of **innocence**—God saw that

*Psalm 49:13* for man it was not best. For as the Scripture saith, “Homo cum in honore esset, non intellexit”—“When man was in honor, his understanding failed him; he could not know himself.” And therefore to the keeping of him from sin—and especially from pride, the root of all sin—a more base state was better. And better was it also for him to have two enemies—that is to wit, the Devil and his own sensuality, both—than for to lack the one. For the having of **both** is a cause of double fear, and therefore of double diligence… to set his reason to keep sure watch to resist them, and, for double help, to call double so much upon Almighty God for grace. And then, with his so doing, he is more able, and more sure, now to subdue them both… than with less looking for God’s help… he was before the one; and hath yet also thereby… for his double victory against his double enemies… the occasion of double reward.

Besides this, if God should by his Passion have restored them that came to his faith… both in the Old Law and in the New… unto the state of innocence, so that the children circumcised or christened… should never have died… till they were come to discretion and had done some deadly sin; and that then their nature should change… and by the Sacrament of Penance yet be restored again:

*Saint Augustine* then should it (as holy Saint Augustine saith) have been a great occasion to make folk come to the faith and sacraments… for the commodities of this present life; whereas God will have heaven so sore desired and sought for… that he will have the desirers thereof… set by the pleasures of this world… not only nothing at all, but also seek for the **contrary**, and suffer displeasure and pain!

Moreover, if it so should have been, every person’s secret sinful state… should by the sudden, open change of his nature… have been, to his open shame, detected and disclosed in the sight of all the people. And over this, if it should thus have been, then must there have been

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1 *man... as* is e.g., for man to expect that upshot to be
2 *were* would be
3 *full* completely // *over* beyond; more than
4 10–11 *the one* either the one or the other // 16 *the one* e.g., the Devil
5 18 *them that* those who // 21 *discretion* the age of reason
6 22 *done some deadly sin* committed some mortal sin
7 *as holy Saint Augustine saith* See *City of God*, 13.4 // 26 *commodities* goods
8 27 *sore* strongly; intensely // 28 *set by* care about // 32 *open* visible
9 33 *open* public // *detected* revealed
10 34 *over this* furthermore // *must there* there would have had to
so many common, open miracles continually... that man should, in manner, have been drawn to the faith by force—and by that means have lost more than half the merit; which God would in no wise, of his great goodness, suffer. And yet besides this, God, that well wist what thing the bliss of heaven is, saw that it was not convenient... to give so great a gift to every slothful javel that nothing did set thereby. And he well sheweth himself to set nothing by it... that can find in his heart to do nothing for it.

Matthew 10:24; 16:24

Finally, God wist that it was nothing meet... the servant to stand in better condition than his master, as our Lord saith himself in the Gospel. And therefore would he not suffer that while he came to his own kingdom not without travail and pain, his servants should be slothful, and sit and pick their nails... and be carried up to heaven at their ease; but biddeth every man that will be his "disciple" or "servant"... take up his cross upon his back, and therewith come forth and follow him. And for this cause, lo, though the painful Passion of Christ, paid for all mankind, was of the nature of the thing... much more than sufficient for the sins of us all... though we nothing did but sin all our whole life: yet God, not willing to fill heaven with hellhounds, limited, of his own wisdom and goodness, after what rate and stint... the commodity thereof should be employed upon us—and ordinarily devised... that the merits of his pain taken for us... should make our labor and pain taken for ourselves meritorious; which else, had we taken for our sin never so much, and done never so many good deeds toward the attaining of heaven, could not have merited us a rush. And this, I say, ordinarily. For by special privilege... his liberal hand is yet, nevertheless, at liberty... to give remission of sin, and to give grace and glory, where and when soever he list.

And thus have I somewhat touched the answer unto this question... wherefore the painful Passion of Christ restored not man again unto the former state of innocence that Adam before had in Paradise.

1 common: well-known 1–2 in manner: in a way 3 in no wise: by no means 4 suffer: allow // that: who 4, 9 wist: knew 5 convenient: befitting 6 javel: lowlife 6–7 nothing did set thereby: placed no value on it 9 nothing: not at all // meet: fitting; right 10 stand in better condition: be in a better position; have it better 11 suffer: allow it to be the case 12 while: whereas 14 nails: i.e., fingernails 18 was of: was by 19 though: even if 20 willing: wanting 21 stint: measure // commodity: benefit 22 employed: bestowed 22, 27 ordinarily: as the general rule 25 never so: no matter how 27 rush: straw 30 list: (so) chooses 31 touched: touched upon; gone into 32 wherefore: (of) why 33 again: back
Now, albeit that sundry other questions both may be moved and are… which might be induced and treated here, yet lest I should therewith make this work too tedious, and the introduction longer than the principal process, of the Passion, we shall be content with these few… as those that most properly pertain unto the matter of the Redemption; and beseeching Almighty God, of his great grace, that all curious appetite of vain problems put apart, we may with meekness… give our hearts… to the very fruitful learning of those necessary things that we be bound to know, we shall hasten us to the matter of the blessed Passion itself.

The Prayer

Oh holy, blessed Savior Jesus Christ, which willingly didst determine to die for man’s sake: mollify my hard heart… and supple it so by grace… that through tender compassion of thy bitter Passion, I may be partner of thy holy Redemption.

Whereas I have herebefore shown you three points… that is to wit, the ruin of angels, the fall of man, and the determination of the Trinity for man’s redemption by means of Christ’s Passion… as three things that were causes going before, whereupon his bitter Passion followed: I doubt not but that such as are learned will like also… that ere I begin with the lamentable story of the Passion itself, I should first show farther some other points: that is to wit, by what means this determination of the Trinity was notified unto man. And also the other causes of Christ’s death and Passion, as the malice of the Jews, the treason of Judas, and the obedient will of his own holy manhead. And verily, these points might well and conveniently have been declared before, and in the treating of these three other points… somewhat have I made mention of all these points too. But I have not thought it like requisite… to declare them before...

so fully as those others, because the words of the Gospel itself… give us more occasion to declare these points in the process of the Passion itself… than those other three points which I have as a preamble touched more at large before.

A Warning to the Reader

Here I will give the reader warning that I will rehearse the words of the Evangelists—in this process, of the Passion—in Latin… word by word, after my copy, as I find it in the work of that worshipful father Master Jean Gerson… which work he entitled Monotessaron (that is to wit, “One of All Four”), as I have declared you before (in my preface), because I will not in any word willingly mangle or mutilate that honorable man’s work, but so rehearse it… that learned which shall read it here… may have the selfsame commodity thereby… that they may have by the reading of the same among his own other works; as in considering such doubts as he sometimes moveth concerning the contexture of the story, and in searching (if their pleasure be) every word in its own proper place… where it was gathered and taken out of any of the four Evangelists, and for their own learning… list confer the place and use their own judgment in the allowing or in the controlling of any part of his contexture, in the gathering and compiling of his present work. But yet will I not fully follow the same fashion in the rehearsing of the same thing in English. For if I should, there neither could any such fruit grow thereof… and also, the contexture of the story should in the eye of the English reader—and yet much more in the ear of the English hearer—seem very far unsavory, by reason of the often interposition of the initial letters signifying the names of the four Evangelists, and some one sentence with so little change so often repeated, and in some places the contexture so diversely intricated, in his collection…that himself, with a note in the margin, declareth himself to doubt and stand unsure whether in that place he join and link well in one the sundry words of the Evangelists, or no. And therefore in the rehearsing of his contexture in English…
nothing will I put in of mine own; but out will I not let to leave... any 
such thing as I shall think to be unto the English reader no furtherance, 
but a hindrance, to the clear progress of this holy story; which 
we shall, with help of God, in this wise now begin.

The First Chapter

The contexture of Master Gerson; whereof first, the rubric “De 
Festo Azimorum appropinquante: M. xxvi, R. xiii, L. xxii, I. xiii.”

Nota lector quod Marcum
semper signat Gerson per
hanc litteram R.

“Appropinquabat L. autem dies Festus Azimorum, 
qui dicitur Pascha. Erat R. autem Pascha, et Azima 
biduum. Et M. factum est cum consummasset 
Iesus sermones hos omnes, dixit discipulis suis: Scitis 
quia post biduum Pascha fiet, et Filius Hominis tradetur ut crucifigatur. Tunc 
congregati sunt principes sacerdotum et seniores in atrium principis sacerdotum 
qui dicitur Caiaphas, et consilium fecerunt. Et R. querebant L. summi 
sacerdotes et scribe, quomodo eum dolo tenerent et occiderent. timebant. L. 
vero plebem. dicebant. M. R. autem. Non in die festo, ne forte tumultus fiat 
in populo. Intravit L. autem Satanas in Iudam qui cognominatur Scariot, 
unum de duodecem. Tunc M. abit R. L. unus de duodecem ad principes 
sacerdotum et summos R. sacerdotes, ut proderet eum illis. Et L. locutus est 
cum principibus sacerdotum et magistratibus, quemadmodum illum traderet 
illis, et ait M. illis: Quid vultis michi dare et ego vobis eum tradam? Qui 
R. L. audientes gavisi sunt, et promiserunt, et pacti L. sunt pecuniam illi 
dare. At illi constituerunt ei triginta argentos, et spopondit. Et M. exinde 
I. diem festum Paschae, sciens Iesus quia venit hora eius ut transeat ex hoc mundo 
ad Patrem, cum dilexisset suos qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos”—

“Of the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves approaching: Mt 26, Mk 14, Lk 
22, Jn 13.

“...approached near (Lk) the holy day of the Unleavened Loaves,
which feast is called Pasch. For (Mk) the Pasch and the Unleavened Loaves was two days after. (Mk/Mt) And so was it that when Jesus had ended all these sermons, he said unto his disciples, ‘You know that after two days shall be the Pasch; and the Son of Man shall be delivered to be crucified.’ Then gathered there together the princes of the priests, and the ancients of the people, into the palace of the prince of the priests which is called Caiaphas, and took counsel together. And (Mk) they sought the ways, (Lk) both the chief priests and the scribes, how they might with some wile take him and put him to death. For they were afraid of the people. (Lk) They said, therefore, (Mt/Mk) ‘Not on the holy day, lest there arise some seditious ruffle among the people.’ But there entered (Lk) Satan into Judas whose surname is Iscariot—one of the Twelve. Then (Mt/Mk/Lk) went he to the princes of the priests, and to the chief priests, to betray him to them. And he (Lk) had communication with the princes of the priests, and with the rulers, in what manner he should betray him to them. And he said (Mt) unto them, ‘What will ye give me and I shall deliver him to you?’ Who, (Mk/Lk) when they heard him, were well apaid, and (Lk) promised and covenanted with him to give him money, and appointed to give him thirty groats. And he made the promise. And (Mt) from that time forth, (Mk/Lk) he sought opportunity that he might commodiously betray him, out of the presence (Lk) of the people. Before (Jn) the holy day of the Pasch, Jesus, knowing that his hour came on to go out of this world unto his Father—whereas he had loved those that were his, unto the end he loved them.”

A Prayer

Good Lord, give us thy grace… not to read or hear this Gospel, of thy bitter Passion, with our eyes and our ears… in manner of a pastime, but that it may with compassion so sink into our hearts… that it may stretch to the everlasting profit of our souls.

1, 4, 23 Pasch: Passover  3 sermons: discourses
6, 7, etc. prince(s) of the priests: i.e., high priest(s)  6 ancients: elders
7 which is called: whose name is  9 wile: devious stratagem
9 take: seize  12 ruffle: tumult  15 had communication: i.e., discussed
19 well apaid: very pleased  // covenanted: contracted; made a formal agreement
20 appointed: resolved; arranged  // groats: denarii
22 commodiously: conveniently; without difficulty
24 his hour came on: his time was coming  30 stretch to: redound to; serve for
The First Lecture

“(Mt) There approached near (Lk) the holy day of the Unleavened Bread, which is called Pasch; (Mk) for the Pasch and the Unleavened Loaves was two days after.”

These words, good Christian readers, be the words of Saint Matthew, Saint Luke, and Saint Mark—three of the four Evangelists—which, by the mention-making of the Pasch and the Unleavened Bread, give us here, in the beginning, occasion to speak of the point which I before touched: that is to wit, in what wise the merciful, just, and high-devised means of man’s redemption, the deep-secret mystery of the Blessed Trinity… which, till God revealed it unto them, none angel in heaven knew or could think upon, was, of God’s comfortable goodness, signified and declared to man. For which ye shall understand… that albeit our first parents, Adam and Eve, were

Genesis 3 disobedient… and thereby broke God’s commandment; and were also stubborn in the beginning (whereby they rather excused their default, and each of them put it from him to some other, than meekly confessed their fault and asked for pardon and mercy); for which demeanor, besides the sentence of death conditionally pronounced (before mentioned, in Genesis 2:17 the second chapter of Genesis: that whatsoever day Adam did eat of the Tree of Knowledge, he should die), God (as is recited in the third chapter) declared after… certain other punishments that either of them should have for them and their offspring too (the one, with sore travail about the getting of his daily living; the other, with sore travail in bringing forth of her children; and either of them some other things besides, as you have in the Second Point heard rehearsed before)—yet never find we that of God’s mercy they fell into despair; as we find of Cain, and of Judas. And therefore after their… not desperate, but fruitful repentance, taken upon God’s inward motion, and thereby calling to God for remission and mercy (with taking great wreak willingly themselves
upon themselves, as well with inward heaviness and sorrow… as outbound labor and pain) for their heinous offenses committed against God by the bold breaking of his high commandment:

the great goodness of God, giving them knowledge of the means of their salvation, and of that Mediator by whose death they and their offspring should be redeemed again to bliss, did in the faith of the said Mediator… remit and forgive them the eternality of the pain due unto their offense, reserving their actual enhancing into heaven until the great mystery of Christ’s Passion should be performed, and thereby the ransom paid, in such time as the high foresight and providence of God had from the beginning, before the world wrought, laid up out of sight… in the deep treasure of his unsearchable knowledge… little and little, at sundry seasons, to be signified and insinuated conveniently to man before.

And therefore this great secret mystery did God reveal in diverse wise; that is to wit, partly with inward inspiration, partly with outward means, as well by words as other outward tokens. The first mention that we find made thereof is in the third chapter of Genesis, where God unto the serpent said, among other things, thus:

Genesis 3:15

“Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius. Ipsum conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo illius”; “I shall put enmity,” said our Lord to the serpent, “between thee and the woman, and between the seed of thee and the seed of her. That seed shall tread and allto crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in await for his heel.” In these words was there a secret insinuation (and, as men might say, a watchword) given of Christ, which should be the seed of the woman—and the only seed of only woman, without man—which seed should allto tread and crush in pieces the Devil’s head and his power upon man; and that all that ever the Devil should do again against Christ… should not be able to reach his head (that is to wit, his Godhead), but only to fumble about his foot (that is to wit, his

1 inward: interior / heartfelt   // heaviness: grief
2, 17 outward: exterior
2 heinous: serious   // 4 the great . . . giving: i.e., God, in his great goodness, giving
6 in the faith of: i.e., in their belief in
8 pain: punishment
8 enhancing: elevating; raising   // 10 performed: carried out
12 wrought: (was) made   // 13 and: i.e., by
14 insinuated: intimated
14 conveniently: appropriately; suitably   // 16 wise: ways
16 that is to wit: that is   // inward: interior   // 17 tokens: indications / portents
23, 24, etc. seed: offspring
24, 29 tread: trample   // allto: completely
24 frush: crush   // 25 in await for: i.e., in ambush, waiting for a chance to strike at
26 secret: hidden   // insinuation: intimation   // men: i.e., one
26–27 a watchword: an identifying sign; a clue   // 27 which should: who would
29 frush in: smash into   // 30 upon: over   // again: in turn
31, 32 that is to wit: that is to say; in other words
32 his Godhead: him in his divine nature
55

manhead)… and yet rather lie in await to hurt it… than able to hurt it in
deed. For all that ever the Devil (when with long lying in await
therefor, he could nothing prevail by himself) caused by his
wily train the Jews and the Gentiles to do against his holy
manhead… was yet the thing, well weighed and considered, not able to

Psalm 63:8 (Vulgate)  do it hurt, but, as the prophet saith, “Sagittae
parvulorum factae sunt plagae eorum”—“The wounds
that they gave him… were like as they had been made with the arrows
that are shot out of a little boy’s bow.” For all the wounds that they
gave him in his body… could not so take hold… but that within three
days after, all his flesh was rid of all manner pain, and in far
better health—and incomparably better condition—after, forever, than
it was five days before. And here, good reader, marvel not though I
rehearse you the text of Genesis otherwise here than I did in the
Second Point, before. For whereas I there rehearsed it after the Latin
translation—whereof the sentence may stand very well—yet seemeth this
letter, after the Hebrew text, to serve more meet and more proper for
the matter… in that by the Latin text, the treading down of the Devil
seemeth applied unto our Blessed Lady; which she did, indeed, by means
of her holy seed, our Savior; but by the Hebrew text it is, as you see,
referred, as more meet is, unto her holy Son himself. But, now, when
this mystery of man’s redemption was thus prophesied by God—I
doubt it not but that of this watchword the Devil gathered somewhat,
and ever gnawed after upon that bone… from that time to the
coming of Christ, as a matter of his grief and torment. But yet
will I not warrant that he very well understood it. And Adam
(would I ween) at the first hearing… understood that word yet much
less. For though God suffered the serpent, whom he threatened therewith
to his grief and displeasure, somewhat to guess thereat: yet
while man was at that time nothing yet reconciled, but in his
heinous offense stubbornly stood at his defense; and his sorrow
shortly after, thereupon, declared unto him—it seemeth me not likely
that God gave him the knowledge of his pardon… before the full
knowledge of his punishment… or the acknowledging and repentance
of his fault. Howbeit, upon his repentance after, I nothing doubt
but that God gave him farther understanding what was by those
words meant. Besides this, he signified this mystery to them by the
sacrifice. For by the killing and offering up unto God the innocent
beast in sacrifice… was betokened the death of our innocent Savior,
and offering up of his body by the hot, fervent pain of the cross.
And thus, by divers ways, was there revelation given of this great
mystery unto others of the old fathers, as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and
Israel, and Joseph—by sundry diverse tokens, too long here to rehearse—before
the Law given in writing. Then was there in the Law written… express
warning given by Moses unto the children of Israel in desert, when

Deuteronomy 18:15 he wrote unto them (in the eighteenth chapter of the
Deuteronomy), “Prophetam de gente tua et de fratribus tuis, sicut me, suscitantib tibi Dominus Deus tuus: ipsum audies”— “A
prophet of thine own people and of thy brethren, like unto me,
shall thy Lord God raise up unto thee: and that prophet shalt thou
hear.” Here, in these words, Moses gave them warning of Christ…
that he should be a very man, coming lineally of one of their
own tribes; and that he should be a bringer of a new law to them,
as himself was; and that they should therein, upon the pain of
the vengeance of God (as after followeth in the text), be bound,
when he should come, to hear and obey him. Now, to bring
them a new law as Moses did… God never sent none
after… but only Christ. And therefore him were they, by those
words of their old lawyer, Moses, commanded for to hear and
obey… in those words “ipsum audies” (“him shalt thou hear”). And therefore,
since they so were commanded of God by the mouth of Moses,
though there had been before Christ’s coming… no word spoken of
his Godhead—yet when himself so plainly declared it unto them, they
were, I say, by the said commandment of God given them by
Moses, bound to give therein full faith and credence to him. Howbeit,
that Christ was the very Son of God, and himself very God,
besides the figures and prophecies of the Old Law very plain and
plenteous… the Father of heaven himself, present with the Holy Ghost
at Christ’s baptism, testified, and recognized him for his very

Matthew 3:17 Son, saying: “Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo
mihi complacui”—“This is my well-beloved Son, in

whom hath been my delight.” Besides this, of his birth, of the
place and the time of his doctrine, and his miracles, and the malice
conceived against him by the Jews, and the false treason of his
familiar enemy; of his Passion, his death, his Resurrection, and his
glorious Ascension… was warning given by sundry wise: as well by the
words of the holy prophets as by tokens and figures of things done
among the Chosen People… both before the Law written and after,
and by things also commanded to be done among the children of
Israel… in their sacraments, rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices—commanded
them, I say, by God by the mouth of Moses… in the law

1 Corinthians 10:11 given them by writing. For as saith Saint
Paul, “Omnia in figura contingebant illis”—“All thing
came to them in figures.”

But forasmuch as I wot well no wise man would look that I
should in this place rehearse all those things—which would make a
long book alone—I will, therefore, letting all the remnant pass,
only with a word or two show you what feast the Evangelists here
speak of in these words of theirs which I have rehearsed you: that
is to wit, the feast of Pasch, and of the Unleavened Bread.

That the children of Israel were in servitude and thralldom in
Egypt under the proud prince Pharaoh; and that God conducted
them thence in strong and mighty hand, and made that high,
stubborn king, maugre his teeth, fain to let them go; and that
when he farther followed them, of his heart-burning malice, through the
Red Sea… the same way where God had sent his own people through
safe, this fierce, furious king, with all his whole main, mighty

1, 11, 18 figures: prefigurations; types  3 testified: attested
7 doctrine: teaching  8 false: dastardly  9 familiar: close-associate
10 warning: advance notice // wise: ways  11 tokens: portents
17 allthing: everything  19 wot: know // no wise man: no one with any sense
19 look: expect  20 should: would // rehearse: mention  21 remnant: rest
22 show: explain to  23 rehearsed: quoted  24 Pasch: Passover
26 conducted: led  27 thence: out of there // high: arrogant
28 maugre his teeth: despite all his resistance / in spite of himself
28 fain: constrained / quite willing  31 furious: raging // main: numerous
army, was... with the waves of the water (which
to speak of, as things so commonly known... that for the atrocity of
child hath heard. And every man, almost, is, I trust, instructed also...
that though these things be no feigned tales, told for parables, but
were things verily done in deed—yet did they, by the provident
concerning the redemption of man. As, for example, the thralldom
of the children of Israel under King Pharaoh and the Egyptians... signifieth
the bondage of mankind under the prince of this dark world—the
Devil—and his evil spirits. Their delivery thence under the leading
of Moses... betokeneth the delivery of man from the Devil and his
evil angels... under our captain, Christ. The safe passage of the
drowned in the same, signifieth mankind passing out of the Devil’s
danger... through the water of Baptism—the sacrament taking its
force of the red blood of Christ... that he shed in his bitter Passion; and
us still, drowned and destroyed in the water of Baptism... and the
red blood of Christ’s Passion. And by all the course after, of the people
conveyed from the Red Sea... by the desert... toward the Land of Behest—
and their waywardness... and many punishments, with manifold
mercy shown again, by the space of forty years together... ere any of
them came there—is there signified and figured... the long, painful
wandering of men in the wild wilderness of this wretched world...
sore keepeth us from it that, with great help of God’s grace, in respect of the multitude… that by their evil desert eternally perish in this worldly desert… very few, I fear, and with much work, attain unto it. But for the perceiving of these words of the Gospel

“There approached near… the festival day of the Unleavened Loaves, which feast is called Pasch,” ye shall understand that the Jews, among all their feasts and holy days through the year, had one feast, the most solemn, that was called “Pasch” and “the Feast of the Unleavened Bread,” which God specially commanded them to celebrate yearly.

Exodus 12:14, 17

forever; as appeareth, at length, in the twelfth chapter of Exodus. For after that the proud, stiff-necked Pharaoh, being by Moses in the name of God… commanded to suffer the children of Israel to depart out of his land into desert (with all their wives and their children, and all their cattle), would in no wise suffer it; but, albeit that by the force and constraint of sundry sore strokes and plagues… wherewith God wonderfully smote him… he granted their delivery for the time that he stood in dread, the rod of God laying the lashes upon him, yet after the rod scant removed… evermore his stubborn pride sprang into his hard heart, and made him forbid their passage again… and hold them in thralldom still: our Lord at the last commanded Moses… that the tenth day of that month, they should take, every household, “a lamb without spot”; and the fourteenth day of the same month, in the evening, offer it and eat it up altogether, head and guts and all, so that they should leave nothing thereof— but if anything were left, they should burn it up. And of this lamb should they nothing eat raw nor sod, but only roasted at the fire. And they should eat it with wild lettuce and unleavened bread— and should have no leaven… neither that night nor in seven days following… within their house—upon pain of death. And they should eat it having their gowns girded, or tucked up about the reins of their back, and their shoes upon their feet, and their walking staffs in their hands, and so eat it in haste… as folk that had made

1 sore: strongly // from it: i.e., away from heaven
1–2 in respect of: in comparison to 2 evil desert: demerit(s)
4 attain unto it: i.e., make it there // perceiving: comprehending
5 approached near: was coming up soon 6 Pasch: Passover
9 specially: expressly 11 that: i.e., it happened that 13, 15 suffer: allow
14–15 with . . . cattle: See Exodus 10:8–11. 15 in no wise: by no means
16 sore: severe // strokes: acts of divine chastisement
17 wonderfully: wondrously 18 dread: fear 19 scant: barely
23 spot: defect 27 sod: boiled
31–32 about the reins of their back: around their loins
59/33—60/1 made them: gotten themselves
them ready to be going… and therefore might not tarry, because they were upon their passage. And then God showed them of two passages: the one, of theirs; the other, of his. For he showed them that the twenty-first day of the same month, which should be at the end of the said seven days of the Unleavened Bread, they should all pass and depart out of Egypt, over the Red Sea. And he showed them that in the night of the said fourteenth day… in which they should offer in sacrifice and eat the unspotted lamb… himself would make a passage through Egypt, and by his angel kill in that one night… all the first-begotten of the Egyptians, as well men as cattle, in every house—from the first-begotten son of Pharaoh, that sat in his seat, to the first-begotten son of the poorest and most simple slave that lay in prison. And he commanded them that with a “bundle of hyssop” they should besprinkle the posts and the hance of their doors with the blood of the lamb; which blood should be the mark unto him that should strike these first-begottens that should that night be slain—so that upon the sight of that mark, the striker should pass by their houses so marked, and not enter thereinto to do there any harm. But he warned them that there should that night none of them come out of their doors. And likewise as God had promised, so performed he that great, sore slaughter and vengeance through all Egypt in that one night; so that thereupon, Pharaoh with all the Egyptians were so daunted that both Pharaoh and all his people… not only licensed but also required and prayed the children of Israel to get them out of Egypt, into the desert, about their sacrifice—and in all that they might, they also hastened them forward. And not only let them carry and convey out with them all their own, but lent them also so great substance of theirs… that the Hebrews, as the Scripture saith, in their going with that plenteous borrowing, “despoiled the Egyptians”—and that by the special commandment of God; either in recompense of the wrongful oppression that the Egyptians had done them before… or because that, since “Domini est terra et plenitudo eius: orbis
terrarium, et universi qui habitant in eo” (“The earth belongeth to our Lord, and all thing that is therein: the whole roundel of the world, and all the people that dwell therein”), God might well with reason take what he would from whom he would, and give it where he would... and make their possession lawful.

But now was this feast, of the Unleavened Bread, yearly kept holy... the space of the said seven days, by the special commandment of God, and called “dies Azymorum” in the Greek tongue; that is to say, the days of the Unleavened Bread. And the first day of them... was the great, solemn day. And that first day... began always the night before, in the evening, in the feast of Pasch—wherein was immolated and offered in sacrifice the unspotted lamb. For, as I have shown you, that lamb were they commanded to eat with unleavened bread... and so forth, from that time, to continue the unleavened bread seven days after. This feast, therefore, of the sacrifice of the unspotted lamb... is that feast that “is called Pasch”... whereof the Evangelists here speak. And they call it also the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, because that feast began the same night in which the lamb was sacrificed.

This feast which was in the Greek called “Pascha”—and which name the Latins have taken of the Greeks and continued—was in the Hebrew tongue called “Phase”... and, as Saint Jerome saith, “Pascha” too. It was called “Phase” for that “phase,” in Hebrew, signifieth passing, or going, and the feast was, as I have shown you, ordained in remembrance of God’s passing through Egypt... in doing the vengeance upon the Egyptians by the slaughter of all their first-begottens... to compel them to suffer the Hebrews pass out of their thralldom. It is also called “Pascha” for that, as Saint Jerome saith, “Pascha” in Hebrew signifieth immolation; and therefore, for the immolation of the lamb, that feast hath in Hebrew that name.

The Greeks, as I have told you, have taken the name “Pascha”; and that,

2 all thing: everything  //  roundel: sphere  3 might well: could in good accord
7 space: duration  //  special: express
11 in the feast of Pasch: on the feast of Passover
12, 16 unspotted: unblemished; defectless  13 shown: told  21 of: from
24 going: traveling  27 suffer: let  28 for that: for the reason
30 for: because of
peradventure, the rather for that that the same Hebrew word
signifieth also, in their tongue, another thing very consonant
and convenient for the season and the matter. For “pascha” in the
Greek tongue… signifieth passion. And because that in that night
of his Maundy, in which he immolated the lamb, he began his
bitter Passion—the immolation of the very “unspotted lamb,” his
own blessed body—which immolation and Passion he finished on
the morrow: therefore they took and used the name of “Pascha,”
wherein the Latin church followeth them.

Thus have I somewhat shown you, good Christian readers, the
first point that I spoke of arising of the text: that is to wit, in what
wise the determination of the Trinity for man’s redemption was
notified unto man; that is to say, by the inspiration and prophecies
in words and writing and by figures contained… as well in other
things done among the Chosen People… as in their rites, sacraments,
ceremonies, and sacrifices. I have also shown you somewhat
concerning this feast of the Unleavened Loaves and the Pasch. But
as I said before, all these things which then were verily done… foresignified
in Christ and his Church things after to be done. For

that innocent “lamb without spot”… was a figure betokening our
Savior Christ, the very Innocent Lamb… of whom Saint John the

John 1:29

Baptist witnessed, “Ecce Agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata
mundi”—“Lo, the Lamb of God, which taketh
away the sins of the world.” By whose immolation and sacrifice
on the cross—and by his holy body received into ours… as that
lamb was into theirs—his faithful folk should be delivered
out of thralldom of the Devil’s dominion. And therefore may we
to the fruit of our souls consider, in the aforesaid figure, by these
Egyptians that in Egypt (which signifieth, by interpretation, darkness)
do labor to keep in captivity the children of Israel, the people
which God calleth from their thralldom into the liberty of his service—
we may, I say, understand by the proud king Pharaoh and his
chief captains… the great high, proud prince the Sultan of Babylon:
the Devil; and as two the special pashas of that proud souterly
sultan may we well consider the world and the flesh. And the
whole people of the Egyptians under them… may well betoken the
devilish people, and the worldly people, and the fleshly people, that
follow them and willingly be governed by them. For verily, all
these labor to draw into their service, and to make their thrall-servants,
bondsmen, and slaves, all those whom the goodness of God
calleth out of the dark, devilish worship and fleshly subjection…
into the lightsome liberty of his celestial service. For surely the
Devil himself, nor the world, nor a man’s own flesh… do not so
much by their own strength in the bringing of good folk into
their bondage… as they do by the means and help of the devilish,
worldly, and fleshly people—by occasions of pride, envy, wrath,
and covetousness; gluttony, sloth, and lechery. To which one vice of
lechery, for an example, how oft hath an old wily, wretched bawd…
brought and betrayed a good simple maiden… whom else neither
the lust of her own flesh nor the rewards of all the world nor the
labor of all the devils in hell should never have drawn thereto.
By the first-begotten children of the Egyptians… we may well understand
the first motions of sin, as the subtle inward suggestions
of the devil, and the inward incitation of the flesh, and the outward
occasions and provocations of the world and evil people; by all
which manner of motions… good, well-disposed folk be many sundry
wise solicited unto sin. And surely, killed must there be these first-begotten
children… not only of the “Egyptian” people (that is to wit,
the first motions unto such vices as have their springing of the soul),
but also the first-begotten of their beasts, too—that is to wit, the
first motions unto such vices as specially spring of the sensual,
beastly body—or else it will be very hard for the “children of Israel,”
the well-disposed people, to escape well out of bondage of these
“Egyptians.”
But, now, to destroy those “first-begotten children of the Egyptians”…
the “children of Israel” are of themselves not sufficient, but it
must needs be the work of God for them. And yet will God… that themselves
shall do somewhat too. For he will that they shall make and receive
this sacrifice of the Paschal lamb; and then, if they do worthily the
one for him, he will do the other for them. And therefore he will
that we shall receive the holy Paschal Lamb, his own blessed
body, both bodily in the Blessed Sacrament… and spiritually, with
faith, hope, and charity, receive it worthily—and in such wise also
virtually—when we receive it not sacramentally. But he will we shall
eat it with no leavened bread—that is to wit, with no sour taste of
malice or sin—but with the sweet unleavened loaves of sincere love
and virtue. We must also with a bundle of the low-growing
herb of hyssop, that signifieth humility, mark the posts and the
hance of the door of our house with the blood of the Lamb; that is
to wit, have remembrance of his bitter Passion… and his blessed
blood shed therein. And likewise as with a bundle of hyssop… the
bitter eisel and gall was given him to drink in the painful thirst
of his Passion, which he so humbly suffered: we should with a
bundle of humility, as it were with a painter’s pencil… dipped in the
red blood of Christ, mark ourselves on every side, and in the
hance of our forehead, with the letter of tau—the sign of Christ’s
holy cross. And then will God himself with his holy angels… pass
by, and kill and destroy for us those first-begotten of the Egyptians, from
the first-begotten child of the king, that sitteth in his seat—that
is to wit, of pride, which is of all sins the prince—unto the first-begotten
child of the poorest imprisoned slave, that is covetousness, lo, the
very caitiff knave. For he is yet, of all wretched vices, the most base,
by setting and binding his affection… neither unto God nor man,
nor woman, nor unto himself neither… but only made in the
pleasure of possessing a great heap of round metal plates… which
while he livest he loveth better than himself, and cannot find in
his heart to break his heap to help himself. And when he goeth,
he carrieth none hence with him, but is while he liveth… in like wise

Psalm 76:5–6 rich (as the prophet saith) as a poor man
is in a dream—which, when he waketh, hath
never a penny of all the treasure that he was so glad of in his sleep.

And covetousness is a very prisoner; for he cannot get away. Pride
will away with shame; envy, with his enemy’s misery; wrath, with
fair entreating; sloth, with hunger and pain; lechery, with sickness;
gluttony, with the belly too full. But covetousness can nothing
get away. For the more full, the more greedy; and the elder, the
more niggardly; and the richer, the more needy.

And while God killeth those Egyptians, that mark of Christ’s
bloody cross upon the post of our house shall defend us, and be
the mark by which we shall be marked from harm… as were the
twelve thousand marked with the same sign (of the letter tau),

Revelation 7:2–4 mentioned in the seventh chapter of the
Apocalypse (Saint John). But yet we must remember
that in that perilous time… we may not walk out abroad… but keep
ourselves close (God biddeth us), within our so-marked house, from all
evil outward occasions. We must also have our garments girt,
and our walking staff in our hand, and eat apace, for token of haste,
in consideration of Christ’s passage to kill the “Egyptians” for us by
his own bitter Passion… and in remembrance, also, that we may
not tarry here long about our meat, nor take leisure as we
list at our meal, but, with our gear girt and tucked up for letting
us by the way, and our shoes upon our feet, for defiling of our affections
with the dirt of sin, and with our walking staff in our hand (the
remembrance of Christ’s cross) to stay us with… and beat from us
venomous worms, get us forward apace upon our way out of the
Egyptians’ danger.

A Prayer

Good Lord, which upon the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb didst
so clearly destroy the first-begotten children of the Egyptians… that
Pharaoh was thereby forced to let the children of Israel depart out of
his bondage: I beseech thee give me the grace in such faithful wise

1 hence: out of here  //  while: as long as  //  wise: manner  //  which: who
4 never a: not one  //  5, 8 covetousness: avarice  //  6 away with: i.e., go away as a result of
7 fair: nice  //  lechery: lust  //  9 nothing get away: in no way get away / nothing get rid of
10 niggardly: miserly; stingy  //  13 marked: i.e., marked off
17 abroad: at large; on the loose  //  keep: i.e., must keep  //  18 close: closed off
19 evil outward occasions: i.e., external occasions of sin  //  20, 28 apace: quickly
20 token: indication  //  haste: being in a hurry  //  23 tarry: stick around  //  meat: food
23–24 leisure as we list: the leisure we would like to  //  24 gear: clothing
24–25 for . . . way: i.e., lest it should hinder us along the way; so it won’t get in our way
25 for . . . affections: lest our dispositions should get defiled  //  27 stay: steady; support
28 worms: snakes; serpents  //  29 danger: dominion  //  32 clearly: thoroughly
34 give: i.e., to give  //  faithful wise: i.e., a faith-filled and devout way
to receive the very sweet Paschal lamb… the very, blessed Body of our sweet Savior, thy Son… that the first suggestions of sin by thy power killed in my heart, I may safe depart out of the danger of the most cruel Pharaoh… the Devil.

The Second Lecture

“S,o was it that when Jesus had ended all these sermons, he said unto his disciples: ‘You know that after two days the Pasch shall be; and the Son of Man shall be delivered to be crucified.’"

In these words we may, good Christian people, well perceive the goodness and the prescience of our holy Savior Christ—his prescience in that he foreknew the time of his departing, by death, out of this world… unto his Father in heaven. And how could he but foreknow it, since he was not only man, but God also… that foreknoweth all thing, and not his own Passion only? Whereof he gave his disciples warning in this wise: “Two days hereafter, not only shall the Paschal Feast be, which thing you know well, but also—which thing you think not on—the Son of Man shall be delivered to be crucified.” Christ was by more than one… “delivered to be crucified.” His Father delivered him for pity upon mankind. Judas delivered him for covetousness; the priests and the scribes, for envy; the people, for ignorance and folly. The Devil delivered him for fear… lest he might lose mankind by his doctrine; and then lost he mankind after in deed… more fully by his death than before by his doctrine. His high, provident goodness appeareth well in these words: “Et factum est, cum consummasset Iesus sermones hos omnes, dixit discipulis suis…” When Jesus had “ended all these sermons”—then he gave his disciples warning of his death coming so near at hand.

What “sermons” these were… appeareth well in the contexture of the Gospels before: that is to wit, his doctrine that he taught them, as well in the Temple as elsewhere, and the revelations of the things to come—as

1 sweet: wholesome  2 suggestions: incitements; promptings // of: to 3 danger: dominion  6–8: See Matthew 26:2.  6, 28 sermons: discourses 7 after . . . be: i.e., two days from now it will be Passover  13 that: who 13 all thing: everything  15 warning: advance notice 15 this wise: words to this effect 15–16 the Paschal Feast be: the Feast of Passover take place 20 folly: idiocy  22, 23 doctrine: teaching  22 deed: fact; actuality 27 warning: notification 28–29 contexture . . . before: i.e., preceding woven-together text from the Gospels 30 as: such as
of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Day of Doom. Which things,
of doctrine and revelations, he had preached unto them sundry days
before that time. For since the cause of his coming into the earth…
was to bring man into heaven; and since he had, also, his life and his
death in his own hand, so that no man could
before himself would... force or compel him to die:
he would not take the time for his death... till he
had first finished and ended those words, and
those things, of heavenly doctrine... that he had determined to do;
and that done, as the thing finished that he had to do first—then sped he
him apace toward his death. And here is it good to consider that,
as our Savior wist when he should die (because he should not, nor
could not, till he would), and yet did, nevertheless, diligence in those
things that he had to do before his death (albeit he might have
defered his death unto what time him list, and have done in the
meantime everything at ease and leisure): how much need have we
poor wretches that shall die ere we would, and cannot tell the time
when, but peradventure this present day—what need have we, I say,
to make haste about those things that we must needs do, so that we
may have nothing left undone when we be suddenly sent for and
must needs go! For when Death cometh—the dreadful, mighty
messenger of God—there can no king command him, there can
none authority restrain him, there can no riches hire him, to
tarry past his appointed time one moment of an hour. Therefore
let us consider well in time... what words we be bound to speak,
and what deeds we be bound to do... and say them, and do them, apace;
and leave unsaid and undone all superfluous things—and much
more, all damnable things—witting well that we have no void
time allowed us thereunto. For as our Lord saith, the Day of our
Luke 12:39 Lord shall steal on us like a thief, and we
Mark 13:35–36 wot not when he will come—whether in the
morning or in the midday, or in the evening, or at the midnight.
And therefore have we need, as our Savior saith, to watch well that
the “thief” break not in at the walls upon us... ere we be aware; when
we be “asleep” in deadly sin. For then he robbeth us of altogether,
and maketh us poor, miserable wretches forever. Let us, then, evermore make ourselves so ready for death, nothing left undone, that whereas our Savior said after all his sermons ended… that after two days he should be delivered to be crucified: we may, by help of his grace, say to ourselves and our friends every day, “I have done all my business that I am come into this world for. For I shall—I wot ne’er how soon, but peradventure this day—be delivered by God unto the cross of painful death. From which if I die naught… I depart from death to the Devil, as did the blasphemous thief that hung on his cross beside Christ. And if I die well, as I trust in God to do, I may with his mercy straight depart into Paradise, as did the penitent thief that hung on his other side.” And God give us all the grace so to do all our business in time… that we spend not our time in vanities, or worse than vanities, while we be in health, and drive off the things of substance that we should do… till we lie in our deathbed—where we shall have so many things to do at once, and everything so unready, that every finger shall be a thumb… and we shall fumble it up in haste so unhandsomely that we may hap, but if God help the better, to leave more than half undone.

A Prayer

Good Lord, give me the grace so to spend my life… that when the day of my death shall come, though I feel pain in my body, I may feel comfort in soul… and with faithful hope of thy mercy, in due love toward thee, and charity toward the world, I may, through thy grace, depart hence into thy glory.

The Third Lecture

“Then gathered there together the princes of the priests, and the ancients, into the palace of the prince of the priests which is called Caiafas, and took counsel together. And they sought the ways, both the chief priests and the scribes, how they might
with some wile take him and put him to death. For they were afraid of the people. They said, therefore, ‘Not on the holy day, lest there arise some seditious ruffle among the people.’”

Upon these words, good Christian reader, ariseth there occasion to speak of another point, that I touched also before: that is to wit, the other cause of Christ’s death… arising upon the malice of the Jews. For in these words is touched (as you see) their malicious assembly… in devising and compassing his death. Howbeit, before this council assembled here, which was the day before his Maundy (that is to wit, the Wednesday before his Passion, and the morrow after the afore-remembered warning of his Passion given unto his disciples), there was another council gathered together among them

John 11:47–53 for the selfsame purpose, whereof mention is made in the eleventh chapter of Saint John. For whereas our Savior Christ had oftentimes reproved the priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees for their pride and their hypocrisy, their avarice and their evil constitutions made unto the commodity of themselves… in derogation of the law and commandment of God; with which admonitions their part had been to have amended their manners, and to have given him thank for his good doctrine: they, on the other side, took so far the contrary way… that for his goodness they so maliciously hated him… that albeit they perceived well (by the prophecies fulfilled in his birth, and his living and his doctrine, with the manifold marvelous miracles which he continually wrought) that he was Christ—yet so mighty was, I say, their malice… that they labored to destroy him. But especially after that he had raised Lazarus from death to life—the thing so well and openly known, and the wonder so far spread, and so much in every man’s mouth, and the man well known once for four days dead and buried, and so many men seeing him alive again, and eating and drinking and talking with him, for which the people fell so thick unto Christ… that the priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees were afeard to lose their authority—they waxed so wood therewith… that they thereupon devised both to have slain Lazarus… and also
to destroy Christ. For without his death they thought it in vain to slay Lazarus, since he that raised him once... was able to raise him again.

But because they never read of any man in the Scripture before... that ever after his death raised again himself (for of raising others, they had read), therefore if they slew Christ too... they thought they should make all the matter safe. Whereupon (as Saint John 11:47–48 John, in the eleventh chapter of his Gospel, remembereth) the bishops and the Pharisees gathered together a council and said, “What do we? This man doth many miracles... and if we leave him thus, all shall believe in him... and then shall the Romans come and destroy both our town and our people!” Thus the wily wretches, lo, the mischievous deed that they went about for the maintenance of their own worldly winning and in revenging of their own private malice—that would they color under the pretext of a great zeal unto the common wealth of all the people. And in this saying... they very well wist that they lied. For the Romans nothing rought what, or on whom, the Jews believed—whose true belief in one God they counted for superstition. And for nothing cared they among the Jews... but that the emperor of Rome should be their chief temporal governor, and have them his tributaries, and that they should have no king... but under him and at his assignment. Now, that Christ went about no temporal authority, nor would take upon him as king (albeit in deed he was king), was well enough known unto them... by that he not only fled from being king when the people would have made him king, but also refused to be so much as a judge, or an arbitrator, in a temporal matter concerning the dividing of a private inheritance between two brethren—saying to the one, “Who hath appointed me judge or divider between you?”

But yet, for all this, one of that council, called Caiaphas (which was bishop for that year), well allowed their false, lying motion... and was angry that it went not farther, straight unto Christ’s death. And therefore himself sharply, by the authority of his office, reproved them, and said unto them, “You know nothing” (as though he would say, “You be fools”); “you consider not that it is expedient for you that...
one man die for the people, and not all the people to perish.” These words, as the Evangelist saith, he spoke not of himself, but… like as, though he were an evil bishop, yet he was a bishop… so, though he meant but to further his malicious purpose, yet God so framed his words that, unawares to himself, they should be a very, true, profitable prophecy—signifying that that one man, our Savior Christ, should die for all the people; and not only for that people, but also, as Saint John farther saith, to “gather together in one… the children of God that were dispersed abroad.” And “from that day” did they purpose to kill our Savior Christ. For which, for a while, our Savior forbore to walk abroad among the Jews, withdrawing himself into the city of Ephraim, with his disciples, near unto the desert; because the bishops and the Pharisees “had given a commandment that if any man might wit where he was, he should show them, that they might make him be taken.”

But yet, for to declare that this withdrawing of Christ… was to give his disciples example… according to his own commandment to flee from persecution when they conveniently can (lest in temerarious and foolhardy offering themselves thereto, their bold pride might turn into cowardice… and take a foul, shameful fall)—that their instruction was, I say, the cause of his withdrawing, and not any fear of himself—he declared well on Palm Sunday after, when he letted not openly to ride into the city, with his disciples about him; where without dread of his enemies… all the people received him with procession and reverence; where all the people cried out as he went,

Matthew 21:8–9  “Hosanna filio David! Bene dictus qui venit in nomine Domini! Hosanna in altissimis!” (“Hosanna, in the high places!”) (“Hosanna,” in Hebrew, signifieth, “I beseech thee, save me!”)

But when the bishops, the priests and the scribes, and the Pharisees… heard and saw this, and that the people came so

2 of himself: on his own  3 were: was // an evil: a bad
3, 13, 31 bishop(s): See note for 3/8.  4 framed: formed
5 unawares to himself: without his being aware of it // very: real
10 which: i.e., which reason  11 abroad: publicly
13, 17 commandment: command; order  14 wit: know
15 show: tell // make him be taken: have him arrested
16 for to declare: in order to show  17–18: See Matthew 10:23.
18 conveniently: with propriety // temerarious: rash; reckless
20 foul: disgraceful / wretchedly bad
20–21 their instruction: i.e., the motivation of teaching them
22 of: for // declared well: made quite clear  23 letted: forbore
24 dread: i.e., his being afraid  29 signifieth: means
many with him, and among them so many of those that had
seen Lazarus both quick and dead (and four days buried, too, and
after yet now alive again)—they thought again upon the killing
of Lazarus and our Savior too. And because they durst at that time
not meddle with him… for fear of the people: some of the Pharisees would
have had him cease that voice of the people himself; and said
unto him, “Master, make thy disciples here hold their peace!”—as
though that cry were but the cry of his disciples, and not the
common voice of the people. But our Savior soon answered


them far of another fashion… and said unto
them, “Though these would hold their peace…

the very stones shall cry it out!” And this word proved true upon the
(Good) Friday following. For when the bishops, the priests, the
scribes, and the Pharisees had made the people leave off crying out of

Christ’s praise… and also turned them to the crying out against
him, to have him crucified: then, after all their cruelty spent out,
upon his death the very stones, in their manner, cried him out for

Matthew 27:51–52  

Christ; when, as the Gospel saith, “velum templi
scissum est a summo usque deorsum . . . et petrae scissae
sunt, et monumenta aperta sunt,” etc.—“the veil of the Temple rived
from the height down unto the ground . . . and the stones broke, and the
graves opened, and after that, out of them rose many holy men’s bodies.”
But, as I began to tell you, when Christ came riding into Jerusalem
so royally upon Palm Sunday… his enemies said unto themselves,
“You see we prevail nothing! Lo, all the world is fallen to him!” And
upon this arose this new counsel taken upon the Wednesday after,
whereof our present lecture speaketh; in which there were gathered
together against Christ… the princes of the priests, and the ancients
of the people, into the palace of Caiaphas (that was, as you have heard,
bishop for that year), to devise and study the means to take and
destroy our Savior.

Where the Gospel saith “the princes of the priests,” ye shall understand
that it was ordained in the Law… that there should be but one

2 quick: alive  4–5 durst . . . him: i.e., dared not at that time interfere with him
6 cease: put an end to; quell  6, 9 voice: vociferation; clamor  9 common: unanimous
9–10 answered . . . fashion: responded to them in a far different way  11 though: even if
12 word: statement  13, 30 bishop(s): See note for 3/8.  14 leave off: i.e., quit their
16 all their cruelty: i.e., the cruelty of all those persons was  17 manner: (own) way
20 rived: split  25 we prevail nothing: (that) we’re not at all winning out; we’re getting nowhere
25 all the: everyone in the
25 is fallen to him: has succumbed to him; has become a follower of his
26 counsel: consultation  28, 32 princes of the priests: i.e., high priests  28 ancients: elders
29 that: who  30 devise: think up; come up with  // study: plan out
30 take: i.e., take captive  33 ordained: stipulated
prince of the priests—bishop, or chief priest—and he to continue his office during his life. But afterward... by ambition of the priests, usurpation and covetousness of the kings... the right order of the making or choosing of the bishop was changed, and they were put in and put out by the kings—sometimes for pleasure, sometimes for displeasure, and sometimes for money, too—so that instead of one, now were they waxen many. The "ancients" of the people... were seventy... which by

Numbers 11:16–17 Moses, at the special commandment of

Exodus 18:21–22 God, were (as it appeareth in the eleventh chapter of Numbers) instituted and ordained to be judges over the people, and in great causes wherein their sentences varied, to refer the matter unto the chief priest... and stand to his determination in the matter. This number was still continued in Jerusalem, and these were their ordinary judges upon the people, and these were those whom he calleth here the "ancients of the people."

Here was, as you see, now a solemn, great assembly—but then consider whereabout. About nothing else... but to seek the ways and the means... how they might by some wile take and put an innocent unto death! So may we see that every great council is not always a good council; but as two or three be a good council... that come together in God’s name... to commune and counsel about good (and among them is God; witnessing our Savior, where he saith, "Wheresoever are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I too, myself, in the midst of them"), so when men assemble them together... to devise and counsel about mischief and wretchedness: the more that are at it, the worse is the council, and the less to be regarded, be their personages in the sight of the world never so seemly, and their authority never so great; as these that here assemble about the death of Christ... were the chief heads and rulers of the people... and specially the chief of the spirituality—so that those to whom it

2 his office: i.e., to hold that position; to serve in that capacity
3 during: for the duration of
4 order of: protocol for
7 waxen: become
7 ancients: elders // seventy: i.e., seventy older men // which: who
8 special: express / limited-application
11 great causes: important cases
12 sentences: judgments
12 stand to: submit to; go by
14 upon: over
15: See Matthew 26:3.
17 whereabout: what about
18 wile: devious stratagem // an innocent: i.e., an innocent person
19 great: high; important
20 as: just as
21 counsel: deliberate
21 good: i.e., something good
25 devise: scheme
26 mischief: wrongdoing
27 regarded: esteemed
27 personages: personal appearances
28 seemly: good / impressive
31 specially: in particular // spirituality: clergy
73/31—74/1 to... belonged: on whom it was especially incumbent
specially belonged to provide for an innocent’s surety, they were those, lo, that specially gathered together to compass an innocent’s death. Out of such council God keep every good man! For that holy king and prophet David, speaking of blessedness, putteth in the beginning of all his Psalter… for a principal blessedness…

Psalm 1:1
“Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilium impiorum”—
“Blessed is that man that hath not gone into the
council of wicked men”; that is to wit, that unto their wicked council hath not been partner nor given his assent. For likewise as God is in the midst of the good council—so in the midst of an evil council… is there undoubtedly the Devil.

But why went they about so busily to take him by some wily train… rather than boldly by force? The Gospel showeth the cause: for they were afraid of the people. His living was so holy, his doctrine was so heavenly, his miracles were so many and so marvelous, that though the priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees… that bore the rule… deeply desired his death, for their malicious anger and envy: yet the people, of their own minds, so highly did esteem him… that if he had been taken in their company, they would not have failed to fight for him. And therefore agreed this great assembly… that they would not take him “on the holy day”… “ne forte tumultus fiat in populo”—“lest there should arise some seditious business among the people.” The people they feared; but God they feared not at all!

Psalm 14:5
And as the prophet saith, “Illic trepidaverunt timore… ubi non fuit timor”—“There trembled they for dread… where the dread was not.” For as for the people—they might, percase, by policy have found the means to master. But God might they never master. The wavering people… they found the means on the morrow so to turn against Christ… that as fast as they honored him and lauded him within five days before (and not long before that, would fain have made him king!), as fast on the morrow they mocked him, and cried out to have him crucified. But God, when all this great council had done their uttermost—the Godhead, I...
say, of Christ himself (for his Father and himself and their Holy
Ghost are, all three, but one God)—raised up his dead body again;
and, maugre their men whom they set to keep his grave, he rose
and went out through the hard stone… and after sent such a
vengeance upon them all… that from their misused liberty they
be fallen ever since, in every part of the world, into perpetual
thralldom.

And on this great assembled council against Christ, that thought
themselves so strong, and their wily devices so wise, that they
would with the provision of that assembled council… utterly
destroy the innocent, are also well verified the words of the prophet

Psalm 2:4

“Qui habitat in caelis irridebit eos, et Dominus subsanabit
eos”—“He that dwelleth in heaven shall
laugh them to scorn, and our Lord shall make them a mow.” For

soon after was their council dissolved, and their council house
drawn down, and all the city destroyed; and he whom they killed
with their counsel… in despite of their council liveth and reigneth
in heaven, while the foolish, wretched, wily councillors (such as
die in their sins) lie weeping and wailing, the Devil’s burning

prisoners, in the deep dungeon of hell.

The Prayer

G

racious God, give me thy grace so to consider the punishment of
that false great council that gathered together against thee… that
I be never to thy displeasure partner, nor give mine assent to follow
the sinful device, of any wicked council.

The Fourth Lecture

“B

ut there entered Satan into Judas whose surname is Iscariot—
one of the Twelve. Then went he to the princes of the priests, and to the
chief priests, to betray him to them. And he had communication

with the princes of the priests, and with the rulers, in what manner
he should betray him to them. And he said unto them, ‘What will you

3 maugre: despite all the efforts of // keep: guard  4 after: afterward
9 devices: schemes // wise: brilliant
10 provision of: resolution adopted by / arrangement made by
14 make them a mow: make a mockery of them  16 drawn: pulled
16 all the: the whole  17 in despite: in spite / in disdain
22 consider: think about  23 false: despicable
24 partner: participant / accomplice // follow: go along with
25 device: plan / scheme  27 Judas: i.e., the Judas
28, 30 princes of the priests: i.e., high priests
29 had communication: i.e., discussed
give me and I shall deliver him to you? ’ And they, when they heard
him, were well apaid, and promised and covenanted with him to
give him money, and appointed to give him thirty groats. And he
made them promise, and from that time forth he sought opportunity
how that he might at most commodity betray him, out of presence
of the people. ”

Upon these words, good Christian people, is there given us the
occasion to speak yet of the third cause of Christ’s Passion; that is to
wit, upon what occasion the false traitor Judas was first moved to
fall to this heinous treason. For the perceiving whereof… we must
here repeat you one thing that was done a few days before. As it is
remembered in the twenty-sixth chapter of Saint Matthew, and in the fourteenth
of Saint Mark, and in the twelfth of Saint John, our Savior six days
before the feast of Pasch… went into Bethany, where he had before
raised Lazarus from death to life. There had he supper prepared for
him in the house of “Simon the leper”… whom Christ had cured.
Martha served them, and Lazarus was one of the guests that sat at
the supper. Then came there Mary Magdalene, sister unto Lazarus
and Martha, and she took a pound-weight of ointment of nard…
truly made and very dear… and therewith anointed she Christ’s
feet, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. And over that,
she broke the alabaster in which she brought it… and poured all the
remnant on his head. And all the house smelled sweet, of the savor
of that sweet ointment. Then Judas (which after fell to the
treason and betrayed his Master) grudged therewith, and was
wroth therewith, and said, “Wherefore was not this ointment
sold for three hundred pence, and given to poor folk? It
might have been sold for a great deal— yea, more than for three hundred
pence—and given to poor folk!” And thus said the “thief” not
for “anything that he cared for poor folk,” but, as the Gospel saith, “because
he was a thief and bore the purse”— into which he would fain
have had the price of that ointment, so that he might thereof, after his customable manner, have stolen out a part. Our Savior mildly answered for Mary Magdalene, and said, “Why reprove you this woman? As for poor men, you shall have ever with you; but me shall ye not ever have.” And then opened he the mystery secretly wrought by God… in the open work of her good affection: that, whereas she did it to show how glad she was of his presence there (as the manner was that folk at feasts… with pleasant, sweet odors used to gladden their guests), God wrought therein, as our Savior there declared, the signification of his *burying*. For the manner then was, in that country, to anoint the dead corpse with sweet odors, as we dress the winding-sheet here with sweet herbs and flowers. And then, whereas the rude, grudging words of Judas were spoken to her *reproof*, and in manner of her *rebuke*: our Savior, on the other side, even there openly showed… that for that deed should she forever, with the preaching of that gospel, be *renowned* and *honored* throughout all the world—so pleasant is to God the good affection of the heart… declared by the frank outward deed! For him must we serve… though especially with the mind (which if it be not good… *vitiateth* altogether)—yet are we bound to serve him also with body and goods and all; for all have we received of him. But Judas, the covetous wretch, when he saw that this ointment was *not* sold… so that he might steal a piece of the price; and then saw our Savior allow her devotion in the deed, and disallow his finding of that fault—as mildly as his Master touched him, yet could not the proud beast bear it, but, besides his covetousness, fell unto malice too. And the Devil took his time and entered into his heart… and thereunto did put the suggestion of his horrible treason, and made him to devise and determine… that the money which he lost by the anointing of his Master—he would get it up again by the *betraying* of his Master. And thereupon came he to this assembly that we speak of now… and, unsent for, presented himself unto them… to help forward their ungracious counsel.

1 had: gotten 1, 23 might: could 1 after: in accord with 2 customable: usual
4 have ever: always have (some of them) 5 ever: always // opened: revealed
6 open: out-in-the-open; visible 8, 11 odors: scented oils
10 burying: burial // manner: custom 13 rude: impolite / harsh
13 grudging: complaining 13–14 to her reproof: in criticism of her
14 her rebuke: reprimanding her; telling her off
14–15 on the other side: to the contrary 15 even: right // showed: stated
17 pleasant: pleasing 18 declared: made manifest // frank: bounteous; unstinted
18 outward: external 19 mind: mind / disposition / intention
19 vitiateth: ruins; destroys the worth of 20 altogether: the whole thing
21 goods: possessions // of: from // covetous: greedy
23 a piece of the price: a part of the proceeds 23, 24 (dis)allow: (dis)approve
24 devotion: piety // finding of that fault: i.e., finding fault with that deed
25 touched: rebuked 26 covetousness: greediness 27 time: opportunity
29 determine: decide 33 ungracious: ungodly; wicked // counsel: deliberation
And therefore, good reader, here we may well consider… that when men are in device about mischief, if they bring their purpose properly to pass… cause have they none to be proud and praise their own wits. For the Devil it is, himself, that bringeth their matters about… much more, a great deal, than they. There was once a young man fallen in a lewd mind toward a woman, and she was such… as he could conceive no hope to get her—and therefore was falling to a good point in his own mind… to let that lewd enterprise pass. He mishapped, nevertheless, to show his mind to another wretch… which encouraged him to go forward and leave it not. “For begin thou once, man, the matter,” quoth he, “and, never fear it, let the Devil alone with the remnant—he shall bring it to pass in such wise as thyself alone canst not devise how.” I trow that wretch had learned that counsel of these priests, and these ancients, assembled here together against Christ at this council. For here you see that while they were at their wits’ end… how to bring their purpose about in the taking of Christ, and were at a point to defer the matter and put it over till some other time—the Devil sped them by and by. For he entered into Judas’ heart… and brought him to them to betray him forthwith, out of hand.

And therefore at his first coming… he went roundly to the matter, and said unto them, “What will ye give me and I shall deliver him to you?” Here shall you see Judas play the jolly merchant, I trow. For he knoweth how fain all this great council would be to have him delivered. He knoweth well also… that it will be hard for any man to deliver him… but one of his own disciples. He knoweth well also that of all the disciples, there would none be so false a traitor to betray his Master but himself alone. And therefore is this ware, Judas, all in thine own hand. Thou hast a monopoly thereof. And while it is so sought for, and so sore desired, and that by so many, and them that are also very rich… thou mayest now make the price of thine own ware thyself, even at thine own pleasure. And therefore ye shall, good readers, see Judas wax now a great rich man with this one bargain. But, now, the
priests and these judges were, on the other side, covetous too; and as
glad as they were of this ware, yet while it was offered to sell…
you would think the merchant was needy, and that to such a needy merchant…
a little money would be welcome; and money they offered
him, but not much. For “thirty groats” they said they will give; which
amountheth not much above ten shillings of our English money.
Now would we look that the fool would have set up his ware—namely
being such ware as it was: so precious in itself that all the money
and plate in the whole world were too little to give for it. But now what
did the fool? To show himself a substantial merchant and not a
huckster… he genteelly let them have it even at their own price. I wot
it well that of the value of the money that Judas had… all folk are not
of one mind, but whereas the text saith “triginta argenteos,” some men
call argenteus a coin of one value, and some of another. And some
put a difference between argenteus and denarius, and say that denarius
is but the tenth part of argenteus. But I suppose that argenteus was the
same silver coin which the Romans at that time used… stamped in
silver, in which they expressed the image of the emperor’s visage, and
the superscription of the emperor’s name—and was in Greek called
drachma… being in weight about the eighth part of an ounce. For of
such coins there are yet many remaining, both of Augustus’s days
and Tiberius’s—and of Nero’s, too. So that if the coin were that (for greater
silver coin I nowhere find that the emperor coined at that time)—
then was Judas’s reward the value of ten shillings of our English
money, after the old usual groats used in the time of King Edward III…
and long before and long after.

The ointment was of nard of the true making, as the Gospel
declareth in this word “nardi pistici.” And that ointment truly made…
was very costly; which was the cause that the true making was less
used, and folk for the great cost thereof… used another making
thereof, that was called “counterfeit ointment of nard.” But this was
of the true making, and was, as the Gospel saith, precious—and that so

1 side: i.e., hand // covetous: greedy; avaricious
2, 7, 8 ware: merchandise; commodity
2 while . . . sell: i.e., since he offered to sell it to them 3 needy: impoverished
4 welcome: acceptable 5 groats: denarii 6 not much above: to not much more than
6, 24 ten shillings: A shilling was worth twelve pence; 1/20 of a pound.
7 look: expect // set up: raised the price of // namely: especially
8 precious: valuable 9 plate: precious metal; bullion // were: would be
10 substantial: respectable / well-heeled 11 even: just // wot: know
12 that of: that as to; that concerning // had: got
13 one mind: the same opinion; in agreement // whereas: granted that
15 put: posit 16 but the tenth part: just one-tenth
16 I suppose: I believe; it is my understanding 18 expressed: imprinted
18 visage: face 19 superscription: inscription
20 the eighth part: one-eighth 25 after: in accord with
25 groats: fourpence coins 27, 29, 32 true: genuine; bona fide
28 declareth: makes clear // word: expression // truly: genuinely
30 for: because of 31 counterfeit: imitation; simulated 32 precious: costly
far forth that Judas valued it at “three hundred denarii”; which I take
for three hundred pieces of the selfsame coin that was called argenteus.
For if it were but a coin (as some take it) that were worth but
the tenth part of that, then had all the ointment not been much
above the value of four groats; which had been no such thing as
had been likely that the Evangelists would have called precious. And
therefore I reckon that ointment to have been esteemed by Judas at
a hundred shillings. And now was his reward ten shillings—
which is the tenth part of that hundred shillings, as thirty groats is
the tenth part of three hundred. And thus hath he by the betraying
of his Master’s body… the tenth part of the value of that ointment…
whereof he lost his advantage by the anointing of his Master’s body.
Now, if it be, as some doctors reckon, that he minded to win as
much by his treason… as he reckoned for his own part lost in that
ointment: then seemeth it, after this count and reckoning, that of such
as came in his keeping… he was, after his customable manner, wont
to steal the tenth. And then was Judas a figure of two false shrews
at once: the one, the parishioner that stealeth his tithe from his curate,
to whom his duty were to pay it… in God’s stead; the other—yet the
worse thief of them both—the evil curate himself… which, when he
receiveth it, misspendeth, upon himself, such substance thereof
as… above his own necessary finding… God putteth him in trust to bestow
upon the poor, needy people.

It is a world also to mark and consider how the false, wily
Devil hath in everything that he doth for his servants… evermore
one point, of his envious property: that is to wit, to provide (his own
purpose obtained) that they shall have of his service, for their own
part, as little commodity as he can… even here in this world. For like
as he got here unto Judas… no more advantage of his heinous
treason (the occasion of his final destruction!) but only this poor ten
shillings, whereas if his master Christ had lived, and he still carried
his purse, there is no doubt but that he should at sundry times… have

4, 9, etc. the tenth (part): one-tenth  5, 9 groats: fourpence coins
5 had: would have   6 precious: costly; valuable   7 esteemed: appraised
10 hath: gets   12 advantage: monetary profit   13 doctors: biblical exegetes
13 minded: thought   // win: gain   14 part: share   15 after: according to
15–16 such as: whatever (money)   16 in: into
16 after . . . manner: i.e., as a habitual practice   17 false: dishonest / dastardly
17 shrews: scoundrels   18, 20 curate: pastor
19 to whom . . . stead: i.e., to whom (as God’s representative) his duty would be to pay it
20 evil: bad   // which: who   21 substance: amount   22 above: beyond
22 finding: support; maintenance   24 world: i.e., marvel   // mark: note
24 false: deceitful / dastardly   26 point: determination
26 envious property: malicious nature   // provide: see to it   27 purpose: objective
27 have of his service: get from serving him   28 commodity: benefit; good
28 can: i.e., can manage to have them get   29 advantage of: gain from
29 heinous: high   30 poor: measly   32 purse: money bag
stolen out for his part far above five times that: so fareth he with all his other servants.

Look for whom he doth most in any kind of filthy fleshly delight, or false wily winning, or wretched worldly worship; let him that attaineth it in his unhappy service... make his reckoning in the end of all that feast... and count well what is come in, and what he hath paid therefor—that is to wit, lay all his pleasures and his displeasures together—and I dare say he shall find in the end... that he had been a great winner if he had never had any of them both; so much grief shall he find himself to have felt, far above all his pleasure, even in those days in which his fantasies were in their flowers and prospered... besides the pain and heaviness of heart that now, in the end, grudgethe and grieveth his conscience, when the time of his pleasure is past and the fear of hell followeth at hand.

Let us, therefore, leave the Devil’s false, deceitful service, and take nothing at his hand. For he nothing giveth but trifles—nor never giveth half an inch of pleasure... without a whole ell of pain. And yet had Judas not the wit to disdain their simple, niggardous reward, but continued for it in his treason still... till he had wretchedly done it. And from that time of that reward promised him—with which, yet, as it seemeth, they would not trust him till they had the ware in their own hand—he studied and sought the time in which he might peaceably deliver our Lord, when the people were out of the way.

In this, as the great clerk Origen declareth, this Judas was a figure also of many another Judas. For in many places, when the people be out of the way... and gone aside from the faith, then shall there some false wretch that hath been with Christ many a fair day, and hath been his disciple, and among other true disciples hath faithfully preached the Truth... come forth in the Devil’s name among the people, and for wretched worldly winning to be gotten by their favor... shall falsely betray the Truth... and cause to be spitefully
killed... the faithful, true doctrine of Christ. But woe may that
wretch be by whom the Truth is betrayed!

A Prayer

O my sweet Savior Christ, whom thine own wicked disciple,
entangled with the Devil, through vile, wretched covetousness betrayed:
inspire, I beseech thee, the marvel of thy majesty, with the love
of thy goodness, so deep into my heart that in respect of the least
point of thy pleasure, my mind may set always this whole
wretched world at naught.

The Fifth Lecture

“Before the feast of the Pasch, Jesus, knowing that his hour came
on to go out of this world unto his Father—whereas he had loved those
that were his, unto the end he loved them.”

In these words the holy Evangelist Saint John—whom Christ
so tenderly loved... that “on his breast” he leaned, in his Last Supper, and
to him secretly he uttered the false dissembled traitor; and into
whose custody he commended on the cross his own dear, heavy
mother; and which is, for the manifold tokens of Christ's special
favor, specially called in the Gospel “discipulus
ILLE QUEM DILIGEBAT IESUS” (“the disciple that Jesus
loved”)—declareth here what a manner of faithful lover our holy Savior
was... of whom himself was so beloved. For unto those words he
putteth and forthwith joineth... the rehearsing of his bitter Passion,
beginning with his Maundy (and therein his humble washing of his
disciples’ feet), the sending forth of the traitor, and after that...
his doctrine, his prayer, his taking, his judging, his scourging, his
crucifying, and all the whole piteous tragedy of his most bitter
Passion. Before all which things he setteth these afore-rehearsed
words... to declare that all these things that Christ did, in all this—

5 entangled: in involvement; in cahoots // vile: base // covetousness: avarice; greed
6 inspire: i.e., instill as if by thy holy breath // marvel: awe
7 respect of: comparison with // point: detail; particular // set: appraise
8 naught: (a worth of) zero // Pasch: Passover
11–12 his hour came on: his time was coming // his: i.e., Christ’s
15 he: i.e., Saint John // uttered: revealed the identity of // false: despicable
16 dissembled: dissembling; hypocritical // heavy: sorrowful // which: who
18 for: on account of // tokens: signs // declareth: makes known
23 rehearsing: relating // Maundy: Last Supper // doctrine: teaching
25 taking: capture // judging: trial // scourging: being scourged
27 crucifying: crucifixion // all the whole: the whole entire
27 piteous: heartrending // afore-rehearsed: above-quoted
29 declare: make it known
he did it for very love. Which love he well declared unto his disciples by many manner means at the time of his Maundy—giving them in charge… that in loving each other, they should follow the example of himself. For he—those that he loved, he loved unto the end; and so would he that they should. He was not an inconstant lover, that doth as many do—love for a while, and then upon a light occasion leave off… and turn from a friend to an enemy (as the false traitor Judas did)—but he still so persevereth in love unto the very end… that for very love he came to that painful end; and yet not only for his friends… that were already his, but for his enemies, to make them friends of his; and that not for his benefit, but only for their own. And here shall we note that where the Gospel saith, in this place and divers others, that Christ should go out of this world unto his Father (as where he said, “Poor men shall ye always have, but me shall you not always have”), it is not meant that he shall be no more with his Church here in the world, nor come no more here till the Day of Doom. For himself promised and said, “I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world.” He is here in his Godhead, he is here in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and sundry times hath here, since his Ascension, appeared unto divers holy men. But those other words, as Saint Jerome saith (and Saint Bede too), are understood… that he will not be here in corporeal conversation among us… as he was before his Passion among his disciples… with whom he commonly did eat and drink and talk.

Let us here deeply consider the love of our Savior Christ, which so loved his unto the end… that for their sakes he willingly suffered that painful end… and therein declared the highest point of love that can be. For as himself saith, “Maiorem hac amorem nemo habet… quam ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis”—“A greater love no

1, 28 declared: made manifest  2 Maundy: Last Supper  3 in charge: as a precept  6 upon a light occasion: for some trivial reason; upon some slight provocation  7 false: despicable  8 still: continually  9 yet: even / moreover  10 already his: i.e., already friends of his  13, 21 divers: several  13 should: would  14 as: such as  17–18 the Day of Doom: Judgment Day  18 himself: he himself  20 Godhead: Godhood; divinity  23 understood: i.e., rightly understood as meaning  23 conversation: interaction  25 commonly: in an ordinary way  27 which: who  27 willingly: voluntarily  28 point: degree; level
man hath… than to give his life for his friends.” This is indeed the greatest love that ever any other man had. But yet had our Savior a greater. For he gave his, as I said before, both for friend and foe.

5 But what a difference is there, now, between this faithful love of his… and other kinds, of false and fickle “love” used in this wretched world. The flatterer feigneth to love thee… for that he fareth well with thee. But, now, if adversity so diminish thy substance… that he find thy table unlaid: farewell, adieu, thy brother flatterer is gone, and getheth him to some other board—and yet shall turn, sometimes, to thine enemy, too, and wait thee with a shrewd word.

Who can in adversity be sure of many of his friends, when our Savior himself… was at his taking left alone and forsaken of his? When thou shalt go hence, who will go with thee? If thou were a king… will not all thy realm send thee forth alone and forget thee? Shall not thine own flesh let thee walk away naked, seely soul, thou little wottest whither? Howbeit, if thou die in the Devil’s danger, some fleshly lover of thine… may soon after hap to follow thee—some such as in lecherous love hath borne thee filthy company.

But if such a lover of thine happen there to come to thee, there will there be no love-touches between you, but cursing and banning shall you lie together wretchedly burning forever, where each of you shall be a hot fagot of fire to your filthy fellow.

Let us every man, therefore, in time… learn to love as we should… God above allthing, and all other things for him. And whatsoever love be not referred to that end (that is to wit, to the pleasure of God)—it is a very vain and an unfruitful love. And whatsoever love we bear to any creature… whereby we love God the less: that love is a loathsome love, and hindereth us from heaven. Love no child of thine own so tenderly… but that thou couldst be

Genesis 22:1–10 content so to sacrifice it to God… as Abraham was ready with Isaac, if it so were that God would so command thee. And since God will not so do: offer thy child

6 false: inauthentic  // used: practiced  7 feigneth: pretends
7 for that: because  // fareth: does / dines  8 substance: wealth  9 unlaid: not set
10 board: dining table  // yet: even  // to: into
11 wait thee: serve you (as if as a waiter)  // shrewd word: malicious remark (about you)
13 taking: being seized  // of: by  14 go hence: depart from here
16 flesh: blood relations / body  // seely: poor  17 wottest: know  // whither: to where
17–18 in . . . danger: in the Devil’s dominion; i.e., subject to the Devil
19 lecherous: lustful  21 banning: anathematizing; excoriating  23 fagot: stick bundle
23 fellow: companion  24 us every man: every one of us  25 allthing: everything
26 referred to: directed to; ordered toward  27 vain: i.e., much in vain; futile
29 loathsome: repulsive / hateful  // from: i.e., from getting to  31 content: willing
otherwise to God’s service. For whatsoever thing we love… whereby we break God’s commandment: that love we better than God; and that is a love deadly and damnable. Now, since our Lord hath “so loved” us… for our salvation: let us diligently call for his grace, that against his great love we be not found unkind.

A Prayer

O my sweet Savior Christ, which of thine undeserved love toward mankind… so kindly wouldst suffer the painful death of the cross: suffer not me to be cold nor lukewarm in love again toward thee.

The Second Chapter

Of the sending of Saint Peter and Saint John… the first day of the Unleavened Loaves; specified in the twenty-sixth of Saint Matthew, the fourteenth of Saint Mark, the twenty-second of Saint Luke, and the thirteenth of Saint John.

“(Jn) The first (Mt/Mk) day of the Unleavened Loaves, when (Mk) the Paschal lamb was offered, in which (Lk) the Paschal lamb must needs be killed, there came (Mt) the disciples to Jesus, and (Mt/Mk) say to him, ‘Whither wilt thou that we go and make ready for thee, that thou mayest eat the Paschal lamb?’ And he sendeth of his disciples Peter (Lk) and John, saying, ‘Go you and make ready for us the Paschal lamb, that we may eat it.’ But they said, ‘Where wilt thou that we shall make it ready?’ And he said unto them, ‘Go you (Mt) into the city, (Mk) to a certain man. (Mt) Lo, (Lk) as you shall be entering into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pot of water; follow you him into the house into which he entereth. And ye shall say to the

2. better than: i.e., more than we love
3. deadly: mortally sinful
5. against: in the face of // unkind: coldhearted
7. which: who
8. so kindly: so warmheartedly; with so much natural affection
9. suffer not me to: do not let me // again: in return // ever again
11. of the: on the
12. specified: related in detail // twenty-sixth: i.e., twenty-sixth chapter
18. whither . . . go: what place do you want us to go to
18, 20. make ready: prepare
21–22. where . . . ready: where do you want us to prepare it
24. bearing: carrying
The Homily, or Lecture, upon the Second Chapter

I have before, good Christian readers, shown you (in the exposition of the first chapter) the ordinance and institution of the Feast of the Paschal Lamb, and of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, and how the offering of that lamb was a figure of the offering up of Christ, the very Unspotted Lamb… that should be offered up to cleanse and wash away the spots of our sin… with the innocent blood of himself, that had no spot of sin of his own. The Paschal lamb was commanded to be sacrificed and eaten after the equinox in vere… the fourteenth day of the month. And on the morrow, and so forth seven days after—that is to wit, beginning the fifteenth day—was the Feast of the Unleavened Bread; during which space they were commanded that they should have no leaven in their house. Ye must understand also that though the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves was the fifteenth day, yet likewise as we begin every feast from the noon before, so did the Jews begin that first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves in the evening before—when they might see the moon and the stars appear in the element. And so, though the eating of the Paschal lamb was the fourteenth day of the month, and the
first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves was on the fifteenth day, yet by reason that the same first day of the feast... began at the evening before (that is to wit, in the evening of the fourteenth day), in which evening the Paschal lamb was to be sacrificed and eaten—these two feasts were, as you see, coincident together. For the one fell in the beginning of the other. And for this cause were each of them called by the both names; that is to wit, by the name of “the Feast of the Pasch” and also by the name of “the Feast of the Unleavened Bread.” For since the Feast of the Paschal Lamb was the chief feast... and was also the beginning of the other, all the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves was called “the Pasch.” And, again, because the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves, though it were the fifteenth day of the month—yet since it began, I say, in the evening of the fourteenth day, at such time as the Paschal lamb was sacrificed and eaten: the Feast of the Paschal Lamb was also called “the Feast of the Unleavened Bread”... and “the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread.” And for this cause do both Saint Matthew and Saint Mark call the (Sheer) Thursday in which Christ made his Maundy... “the first day of the Unleavened Bread,” saying, “The first day of the Unleavened Loaves, in which the Paschal lamb must be killed and sacrificed, the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, ‘Whither wilt thou that we shall go to make ready the Paschal lamb?’” And, as I said, the Jews called also the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the “Feast of Pasch.” And especially they called and hallowed by that name of “Pasch” the first day of the Unleavened Bread, which was the morrow after the eating of the Paschal lamb. And after that manner, of their naming that day the “Feast of Pasch,” Saint John in the thirteenth chapter of his Gospel, “Ante diem festum Paschae, sciens Iesus quia venit hora eius ut transeat ex hoc mundo ad Patrem,” etc.—“Before the holy day of Pasch, Jesus, knowing that his time was come that he should go out of this world unto his Father,” and so forth—here, lo, Saint John calleth

2 at: in 5 were... together: i.e., did, as you see, overlap each other 10 all the: the whole 12 were: i.e., was 18 Sheer: i.e., Holy 19 Maundy: Last Supper 21–22 whither:... go: where do you want us to go 22 make ready: prepare 24 hallowed: sanctified / solemnized 26 morrow: next day 26–27 after that manner: in accord with that custom 27 naming: calling
Sheer Thursday, in the evening of which day the Paschal lamb was eaten... he calleth it, I say, by the name of the day “before” that festival day of the Pasch... because the Jews did celebrate the morrow after the Pasch eaten... very solemnly, and called (as I have told you) that feast “the Feast of the Pasch.” And therefore Saint John here saying “ante diem festum Paschae,” and calling Sheer Thursday the day before the “festival day of Pasch”... because the Jews so used to call the first day of the Unleavened Bread, that began in the evening before, in which the Paschal lamb was killed, used such a manner of speaking... as we might call “Christmas” even the day before the festival day of Christmas.

I would not, good readers, stick so long upon the declaration of this point (as a thing wherein some shall peradventure take little savor), saving that I thought it not a time all lost... to let you know that upon the Scripture in this point mistaken... the church of Greece fell from the church of the Latins in a point or twain. For upon their own wrong construing this place of Saint John... they say that Christ did anticipate the time of eating his Paschal lamb with his apostles, and whereas the very day was the fourteenth day after their vernal equinox (in the evening), he did it (say they) the day before.

For the understanding whereof, ye shall note that among the Jews’ neomeniae, the first day of the new moon next after the equinox in vere (that is to wit, after the entering of the sun into Aries; which is the eleventh or the twelfth day of March)—the day of the next change of the moon after that... is the first day of the year, with the Jews. And the fourteenth day after (which is Quartadecima luna) is the eating of their Paschal lamb at night—and that day is not holy day till night. And on the morrow is their great feast...
day (that is to wit, the first day of the Unleavened Bread); but itegin{footnotesize}
beginneth in the evening before. And so do all their feasts and
their Sabbath days begin in the evening... and endure to the

Leviticus 23:32 evening following: “A vespere ad vesperum
servabitis sabbata vestra.” The year in which
our Savior was crucified, Quartadecima luna fell in Feria quinta; that is to
wit, upon the Thursday. And therefore in the evening of that
Thursday, Christ made his Maundy—and so did all the Jews. For

Exodus 12:6 that was the very day appointed by the Scripture,
in Exodus. And on the morrow, which was

Good Friday, and which was Quintadecima luna, was the first day—
and the chief day—of the Unleavened Bread. Which feast began
in the evening before; that is to wit, on Sheer Thursday, when the
eating of the Paschal lamb was. And therefore was it eaten with
unleavened bread. And so, consequently, Christ did consecrate
in unleavened bread. For in that evening began primus dies Azimorum—
as appeareth plainly by Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and

But the posterior Greeks say that Christ did not eat his
Paschal lamb in the day appointed by the Law—that is to wit,
in vespere xiiii lunae—but they say that he did prevene the time by a
day... and did eat it in vespere xiii lunae. But yet they said not that
he ate it on the Wednesday; but they say that the Thursday was xiii
luna, and that xiii luna—in which the Pasch should be eaten, by
the Law—was on Good Friday, and that the Jews did eat it then... and that in that evening (upon Good Friday, in which day Christ
died), then the Jews did eat the Paschal lamb. And that on the
morrow, which was the Sabbath day, was xv luna; and so therefore
on that day was there great feast—that is to wit, the first day
of the Unleavened Bread; which began, they say, on Good Friday,
in the evening, at the rising of the moon. And for that cause they
say that Christ did consecrate in leavened bread... because he consecrated
on the Thursday, which was, they say, not xii luna, but

3 endure to: last until
4–5 “A... vestra”: “From evening to evening shall you keep this Sabbath of yours.”
6 in Feria quinta: on the fifth day of the week
8 Maundy: Passover observance 9 very: actual 9, 20 appointed: stipulated
10, 28 morrow: next day 11 Quintadecima luna: the fifteenth of the month
13 Sheer: i.e., Holy 14 was: took place
16 primus dies Azimorum: the first day of Unleavened Bread
17 appeareth: is shown 19 posterior: later 20 in: on
21 in vespere xiiii lunae: in the evening of the fourteenth of the month
21 prevene: act in advance of 23–24 xiii luna: the thirteenth of the month
24, 33 xiii luna: the fourteenth of the month 24 by: according to
28 xv luna: the fifteenth of the month 29 feast: festivity
And that the unleavened bread came not in until the evening in the fourteenth day of the month, which is called Nisan (or, in our translation, Sheer) in the Hebrew, and十三 (luna) in the Latin; that was (say they) not till Good Friday, in the evening.

Which they prove by the words of Saint John (13) “ante diem festum Paschae.” And they say festum Paschae was the feast of eating of the Paschal lamb. And so our Lord, they say, made his Maundy before the feast of the eating of the Paschal lamb; that is to wit, the day before thirteen luna. And so Sheer Thursday was, they say, thirteen luna. And therefore they say that the very day thereof (that is to wit, thirteen luna) was, they say, on Good Friday; and the Jews, they say, did eat it that day (after Christ’s death)—and that therefore they would not come “in praetorium... ut non contaminaretur, sed ut manducaret Pascha.” And that Christ because he knew that he should that day be crucified... did prevene the day... and did eat it the day before; and therefore (say they) he had none unleavened bread. And you shall understand that this is the cause for which they consecrate the Body of Christ in leavened bread, contrary to the Latin Church, which consecrateth in unleavened bread. For they say (and truth it is) that the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves began the fifteenth day. And then (say they) he consecrated his Blessed Body, at his Maundy, on the thirteenth day—that was, say they, Sheer Thursday—and therefore he consecrated then with leavened bread. Now, to this we have shown you... that the first day of that feast of Unleavened Bread—began the feast in the evening before; that is to wit, on Sheer Thursday, at night; and that Christ made, then, his Maundy in the very time that was by the Law appointed to the eating the Paschal lamb. And since he intended to fulfill the Law... so was it most convenient that he should, and most likely that he would, and so, of truth, he did—as the three Evangelists Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke plainly do declare. For they three agree together... that it was in the first day of the Unleavened Bread—and in which day the Paschal lamb must be killed. And so it appeareth
by them... that though the first day of that feast was the fifteenth day, yet the feast of that fifteenth day began in the evening before, in which the Paschal lamb was eaten—and eaten, as it appeareth plainly, with unleavened bread. And verily methinketh that if it so had been (as it was not) that Christ had made his Maundy a day before the time, yet would not that sufficiently serve for the proof of their purpose that he consecrated in leavened bread. For though it be a good proof that since he consecrated in the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves, he consecrated not in leavened bread, because the Law forbade them to have any leaven in the house: yet if he had consecrated five days before that feast began, it would not prove that he consecrated in leavened bread. For they might then and at all times have unleavened bread... since that was at no time forbidden. “Ante diem festum Paschae” is meant by the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Loaves, which was on Good Friday; that was xv luna. And that feast was called festum Paschae... because it began in the evening (on Sheer Thursday) wherein the Paschal lamb was eaten. “Quod abstinebant a praetorio ut mundi, manducarent Paschae” upon Good Friday... was for the Unleavened Bread, which was also called by the name of Pasch... and continued seven days. Burgensis maketh another manner of reckoning, with which we shall not need to meddle; this much is perplex enough.

But surely the church of Greece was far overseen in this point... and divers others, in which they partly acknowledged their errors after, and were reformed in general councils... and yet returned, of frowardness, to their errors again... and in conclusion we see whereto they be come.

But ye shall understand that when I speak of the “church of Greece” in this error, I speak but of the posteriors. For the old

5 Maundy: Last Supper  7 purpose: thesis; contention  8 good: valid; sound 8 in: on  12 might: could 14 “ante diem festum Paschae”: “before the day of the Feast of Passover” 14 ts meant by: refers to  15–16 xv luna: the fifteenth of the month 16 festum Paschae: the Feast of Passover  17 Sheer: i.e., Holy 18 “quod... Paschae”: “that they stayed away from the praetorium to remain clean, so as to be able to eat the Passover lamb” (see John 18:28). 19 for the: i.e., on account of the Feast of  20 Pasch: Passover 20 Burgensis: Paul of Burgos (d. 1435). 21 with... meddle: which we won’t need to go into 22 perplex: involved; complicated  23 surely: definitely 23 was far overseen: was very much mistaken; blundered badly  24 divers: several 25 after: later  26 of: out of  26 of: out of  26 of: out of // frowardness: perversity; refractoriness 29 in: i.e., being in  // posteriors: i.e., later Greeks 91/29—92/1 old... Greeks: early Greek theologians
holy doctors of the Greeks were of the contrary mind—as appeareth
Saint Eusebius and Saint Chrysostom both.

And that you may the more plainly perceive what peril it was
unto them... to fall to an opinion contrary to the Church... by construing
the Scripture after a few folks' fantasies: those Greeks
that began this opinion... were fain in conclusion, for the defense
of their error, to say that Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and
Saint Luke... wrote in that point wrong, all three. And that therefore
Saint John wrote otherwise... and corrected them. Which
untrue saying of theirs is so far out of all frame... that it is among
Christian men more than shame to say it—that any of the four
Evangelists should in the story write anything false. For then
which of them might we trust?... since we can be no more sure
of the one than of the other!

But now let us proceed forth in the letter:

“When his disciples had asked him where his pleasure was that
they should make ready the Pasch for him, he sent two of his
apostles—that is to wit, Peter and John—and said unto them, ‘Go
you and prepare the Paschal lamb for us, that we may eat it.’”

Our Savior, which said of himself, “Non veni solvere legem, sed
adimplere” (“I am not come to break the Law, but to fulfill it”)—likewise as
he would be circumcised first, before he changed that sacrament into
the more perfect sacrament of Baptism—so, for the fulfilling of the Old
Law, before he would offer up his own blessed body (the very
Unspotted Lamb) upon the cross; and before, also, that he would
institute the eating of his own blessed body, in form of bread and
wine, in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar: he would first fulfill
the precept of the Law... by the eating of the Paschal lamb in time
and manner appointed by the Law... and so fulfill and finish the
figure, and institute in the stead thereof... the sacrament of highest
perfection, the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and offer up
for the spots of our sin... his own unspotted body, as the most
sweet sacrifice, unto the Father... upon the altar of the cross.

It followeth: “Then they said unto him, ‘Where wilt thou that we

5 fall to: fall into  6 after: in accord with
6 fantasies: wild-eyed notions / instances of wishful thinking
7 fain: constrained // conclusion: the end 11 saying: assertion
11 out of all frame: out of the bounds of all right thinking
13 the story: i.e., his account  14 might: could  16 letter: text
17–18 where... Pasch: where he would like for them to prepare the Passover meal
21 which: who  22 break: abolish; do away with
26 unspotted: unblemished; defectless
28, 32 Blessed Sacrament of the Altar: i.e., Holy Eucharist 30 appointed: stipulated
30 so: thus 31 figure: prefiguration 33 spots: stains
33 unspotted: uncontaminated (by sin); innocent 34 sweet: agreeable; acceptable
92/35—93/1 “Where... ready?”: “Where do you want us to prepare it?”
shall make it ready?’ And he said unto them, ‘Go you into the city, to a certain man. Lo, as you be entering into the city, there shall a man meet you bearing a pot of water; follow you him into the house into which he entereth. And you shall say to the goodman of the house, ‘The Master saith to thee, ‘My time is near; with thee I make my Pasch. Where is my place where I may, with my disciples, eat the Pasch?’’” And he shall show you a great supping place—on high, paved—and there do you make it ready.”

In these words it appeareth well that our Lord, when he sent Saint Peter and Saint John unto the house where they should prepare his Maundy, he would neither name them the dweller of the house… nor tell them any known token of the house. Of which thing divers of the old doctors conjecture and tell divers causes. Some say he sent them to a man not named… in token that God will come not only to men that are in the world famous, and of great name, but also to folk of none estimation in the account of the world, nor of no name. Some others say (and both twain may well be true) that forasmuch as our Savior (to whom nothing was unknown) knew the promise of the false traitor Judas made unto the Jews upon the day before, to betray him… and that he went about ever after that to seek a time fit therefor, where he might betray him to them out of sight of the people—if he should have named the man or the place, the traitor might have caused him (and his disciples) to be taken before his Maundy made… and his Holy Body consecrated in the Blessed Sacrament. And therefore, albeit that if the traitor had come and all the whole town with him, our Savior could have kept them all off with one word of his mouth, or with one thought of his holy heart—yet this way liked his high wisdom, as the most meet and convenient… by which he would keep the traitor from the accomplishment of his traitorous purpose… till the time should come in which himself had determined to suffer it. And therefore our Savior used himself in this point wonderfully. For albeit that

3 hearing: carrying
4–5 Goodman of the house: man of the house; man who is the head of the household
5–6 with… Pasch: I.e., I’ll be making my Passover with you
7 Pasch: Passover meal // great: large // supping: dining
7 on high: i.e., one on an upper level // paved: furnished
8 there… ready: i.e., that’s where you are to prepare it
11, 24 Maundy: Last Supper // dweller: resident
12 token of: i.e., distinguishing characteristic of; way to identify
13 divers: various (ones) // old doctors: early exegetes
14 in token: as an indication; to get across indirectly // estimation: reputation
17 both twain: i.e., both of these two interpretations // true: correct
19 of: (that was) by // went about: was trying // seek: find
21 a time fit therefor: i.e., a good opportunity for that // taken: i.e., taken captive
25 made: i.e., was made // Blessed Sacrament: Holy Eucharist
29 liked: pleased // meet: fitting // convenient: suitable // himself: he himself
32 determined: decided // used: conducted // wonderfully: in an astonishing way
the two disciples whom he sent were, of all his apostles, the most specially chosen… and most in trust and favor with him—Saint Peter (which, as it appeareth in Scripture, and as the doctors say, specially loved him) and Saint John (which, as the Scripture saith, and the doctors thereon, specially was beloved of him)—yet would he not take them aside and tell them the name of the man, lest he might thereby have given occasion of envy or suspicion to Judas, or peradventure grief to the remnant, if Christ should have seemed to trust them with that errand secretly… with which he would trust none of them. He gave them, therefore, their errand in so strange a fashion… that neither themselves nor any of the other ten could wit what to think therein. For he answered them as though he would say, “Where you shall prepare I will not tell you; nor who shall bring you thither I will not show you; but, to let you see what I can do when me list, such a token shall I tell you to bring you thither… as neither no man knoweth nor no man can know… but myself, that am able at the time to make it so.”

Then it followeth, “And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and they found as Jesus had said unto them, and prepared there the Pasch.”

Here had his apostles, and by them we too, a proof of his glorious Godhead… secretly conveyed, and unseen, under the cloak of his seeming feeble manhead. And that not in this thing alone, but in this among many more—some of other kind of miracle, and some, also, like unto this. For as he did here show his disciples where they should meet the man with the water pot, and then what he would have them do further, and that his bidding should surely be fulfilled and obeyed—so did he on the Palm Sunday before, when he sent his disciples… and told them where they should find the ass and the colt tied, and bade them take them boldly, without any leave of the owner, and whosoever would say aught unto them therefor… they should say that their Master must
occupy them. A much like manner of message he gave his two apostles now, telling them where they should meet with a strange man, and so forth; what they should do further.

Now, who but God could surely send men on such manner messages... in which they should be sure to find such things as are unto all creatures unsure and uncertain, as things accounted to fall under chance and hap? And therefore, while they found everything come to pass as he had before told them, they might and we may... surely know him for God. For who could tell that the man with his pot of water walking on his errand... and the two apostles going forth on theirs... neither party looking for other... should so begin to set forth... and in such wise hold on their way... that they should at a place which neither of the both parties appointed... so justly meet together? This could none do but he... that not only beheld both parties at once... but was able also to put in both their minds to set forth in time... such as should serve therefor—and to moderate and measure their paces himself... in such wise as themselves wist not why—and by his sure providence (seeming to themselves hap, fortune, or chance) suddenly to meet together. This thing can there of himself none other do... but he that hath the acts and the deeds of all creatures in his own hand; that of two sparrows (being both not worth a halfpenny), not so much as the one falleth, as our Savior saith, upon the ground without him.

Matthew 10:29

Then it followeth further: “When the evening was come, Christ came with his Twelve. And when the hour was come, he sat him down at the table, and his twelve apostles with him.”

Notwithstanding that the bishops and the Pharisees had before given commandment (as appeareth in the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of Saint John) that if any man wist where Christ were, he should give them knowledge, that they might take him;

1 occupy: make use of // a... message: a very similar kind of mission
2 meet with: encounter; come across 3 strange man: stranger
4 surely: with assurance; with certainty of the outcome
5 manner messages: i.e., kinds of missions
6 unsure: unsettled; undeterminable 7 fall under: occur by
7, 19 hap: accident 7 while: when 9 might: could // may: can
9 surely: with certainty 12, 16 forth: i.e., out 12, 18 wise: ways
12 hold: continue 14 appointed: i.e., had arranged for them to do this
14 justly: exactly 14, 20 meet together: meet up with one another
14 none: no one 17 therefore: for that purpose
18 themselves: they themselves 18, 30 wise: knew 18 sure: failproof
19 fortune: luck 20–21 none other: no one else 22 both: i.e., together
23–24 the one: i.e., either one of them
24 him: i.e., his knowing about it and letting it happen 26 hour: i.e., right time
28 bishops: See note for 3/8. 29 commandment: an order 31 were: was
31 take: arrest
and notwithstanding also that his own disciple Judas had promised them to do that traitorous deed himself: yet our Savior, since his time came on… in which he was determined willingly to die, letted not to come into the city—and came also not alone, but with his twelve apostles waiting upon him, whereby his coming was well likely to be noted. But he wist well enough what would befall, and that upon any marking of that coming… he should not be taken. For he would not so be taken, nor would not so prevent his traitor of his purpose—nor so disturb him of his promise, nor so make him lose his reward—but, benignly suffering him and taking patience with him, and yet offering him grace and kindness to win him, brought him to the Maundy with him. And therefore saith Saint Mark, “He came, and his Twelve with him.” Whereby it should seem that Saint Peter and Saint John, after their errand done, resorted unto Christ again, and made him report of their speed, and so came in company with the other ten unto the Maundy with him.

Judas the traitor, in such places as the Evangelists make mention of his going to the council and assembly of the priests… to offer them his service in the treason—both Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke make specially mention that he was one of the Twelve. And here we see, therefore, by the Evangelists, not only mention that he came with our Lord, but also that he sat at the supper with our Lord—and so, for all the treason that the traitor wrought, yet was the traitor Christ’s apostle still. And this point the Evangelists again and again rehearse… not only to the shame of his traitorous falsehood, in betraying such a Master (with whom he was so taken forth, to be so near about him; one of that few chosen number, and so specially put in trust), but also that we should note well and mark thereby… that the vice of a vicious person… vitiateth not the company, or congregation. For Christ with his twelve apostles were a holy company as a company… though one companion of the company was a very false, traitorous wretch. And for all his falsehood—both before that, in theft, and then in treason too—Christ abode still with him among his other apostles, and his ungraciousness
letted not... but that of that company, as evil as he was, yet one he was. Nor now, likewise, the vices of vicious folk in Christ's church... cannot let but that his Catholic Church, of which they be part, is, for all their unholliness, his holy, catholic church... with which he hath promised to be unto the end of the world.

Upon this chapter, among many things that men may take occasion to note, I note specially twain. One, the example that our Savior here giveth us... to be diligent and studious in the keeping of his New Law (which he hath ordained to endure in this world as long as the world shall last)... while himself was so diligent in the observing of the Old Law (which, given unto Moses, himself came to change into so far the better, and to deliver us from the sore yoke thereof). But surely I fear me sore... that with a great part of Christian people... the law of Christ is worse kept, a great deal, than was with the Jews the law of Moses at the coming of Christ—when it was kept worst! As for the sovereign points, of patience and charity and contempt of the world—wherein our Savior saith (in the sixth chapter of Saint Matthew) that he would have his new church far pass and excel the old synagogue—be so far, I fear me, let slip and forgotten... that even in the very plain precepts... we be more negligent than they. The Jews were in the keeping of the spirit of the Law so negligent... that God therefore, by the mouths of his prophets David and Isaiah, showed himself to reject and set at naught... their outward ceremonies, sacrifices, and observances of their law; wherein he confessed them diligent, and said that with so little as they used of the other, he had of them so much... that he was fully thereof... fastidious and weary. Not that those things misliked him... either done of their private devotion... or for the fulfilling of the Law; but for that they rested and satisfied their hearts in them, and both left the better things undone... and also did much evil, too, trusting that those outward works, of their ceremonies and sacrifices, should recompense it... and before God bear it out. Which erroneous
mind of theirs... our Lord by the prophets reproved, declaring that on their fasting days... they would, while they fasted from
meat, not fast from sin, but strive and chide and fight, and sharply sue their debtors. He bade them amend those faults...
and be charitable and forgive and give—and then would he better allow their bare offering and sacrifice by word... than now, with these fashions used, he would their sacrifice in offering up of their beasts, unto their no little cost. This tale that I tell you doth

Psalm 50; Isaiah 58 well appear upon the forty-ninth psalm of David
and upon the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah; whose words to rehearse here were very long.

But, now, methink that we Christian folk wax in worse case. For in the deeds of charity... we walk, I fear me, nothing before them; and in those evil things... we be nothing behind them; and yet in the outward ceremonies, also, I ween we be nothing matches with them. For surely they did much more cost, and used more devotion, than we do. Of the cost... there can no man deny but that their offerings, and their sacrifices, were—besides their tithes—far more chargeable and costly to them... than the rites and ceremonies of Christendom are unto the Christian people. Of their diligence and devotion therein... we may well perceive both by the places that I have spoken of... in which our Lord rejecteth their diligence therein (because of their negligence of charity, and their froward, malicious manners besides)... and also by many other places in the Old Law... where the commendable devotion of their costly ceremonies and sacrifices appear. Their fastings were also very painful and precise—and ours negligent, slack, and remiss... and now almost worn away. Their Sabbaths and their feasts kept they very solemn. How slackly we keep ours in many places, and in what manner fashion, I cannot, for sorrow and very shame, rehearse. As for their faith, from those that among them held on the truth... the Jews were fallen into sects one or twain. But now if we should count and reckon the sundry sects which

1 mind: idea // declaring: pointing out
3 meat: food // strive: behave contentiously
3 chide: cuss people out // sharply: mercilessly // sue: go after / take to court
5–6 better allow: regard with more favor; consider more acceptable
6 their bare: their mere; just their // their: their
7 fashions: behaviors // used: engaged in
8 beasts: animals // this... your: this thing that I’m telling you
8–9 doth well appear: is well evidenced
9, 10 upon: i.e., by
11 rehearse: quote
11 were very long: i.e., would take a very long time / would take up a lot of space
12 wax in worse case: are getting into a worse state
13 I fear me: I’m afraid
13, 14, 15 nothing: not at all / in no way
13 before: ahead of
15 yet: even
15 outward: external // ween: think
16 did... cost: went to much more expense
16 did... matches: i.e., on a par
17 did: exercised
17, 21, 25 devotion: piety
19 chargeable: burdensome
21 may well perceive: can get a good idea
22, 25 places: (scriptural) texts
24 froward: perverse; obstreperous
24 manners: ways
25 Law: i.e., Testament
27 painful: painstaking
27 precise: strictly observed // negligent: careless
28 worn: faded
31 rehearse: mention // from: i.e., away from
31–32 held on: continued to hold
32, 33 sects: i.e., heretical sects
32 twain: two
33 reckon: take into consideration
from the true faith are fallen about in divers parts of Almaine… I fear me we should find almost as many score! I can no more but pray God, therefore, that we may have the grace to follow the example of our Savior… and observe his New Law (which we be bound to keep) as he observed the Old Law—which though he came to change it, yet he would first fulfill it, for all that he was not bound to keep it. The other thing that I note in this chapter… is

Theophylact, St. Bede,
that it appeareth thereupon (as
St. Chrysostom
Chrysostom also) that Christ had no house of his own, nor none of his apostles neither; as himself said of himself

Luke 9:57–58
(in the ninth chapter of Saint Luke), “Filius hominis non habet ubi caput suum reclinet”—“The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.” And therefore his apostles asked him in what house he would eat his Pasch. And our Savior again, to let them see that whoso for God’s sake is content to lack a house… shall not be disappointed when they should need it, sent them to another man’s house, they neither wist whose nor where, and yet were they there welcome and well received.

In this we may take example also… that those that will be the disciples of Christ and followers of his apostles… should not long to be great possessioners, and build up great palaces, in this wretched wilderness of the world. Wherein to show that we have, as Saint Paul saith, no dwelling city, our Savior and his apostles would have no dwelling house. One of the most special things to move us to the contempt of this world… and to regard much the world to come… is to consider that in that world we shall be forever at home, and that in this world we be but wayfaring folk. And verily, though it be (as indeed it is) easy enough for any man to say the word… that he is “here but a pilgrim,” yet is it hard for many a man to let it fall feelingly, and sink down deep, into his heart… which against that word slightly spoken once in a year… useth to
rejoice and boast many times in a day, by the space, peradventure, of many years together, what goodly places in this world he hath of his own… in every of which, continually, he calleth himself “at home.” And that such folk reckon themselves not for pilgrims here… they feel full well at such time as our Lord calleth them hence. For then find they themselves much more loath to part from this world… than pilgrims to go from their inn.

The Prayer

Almighty Jesus Christ, which wouldst for our example observe the law that thou camest to change, and, being Maker of the whole earth, wouldst have, yet, no dwelling house therein: give us thy grace so to keep thy holy law, and so to reckon ourselves for no dwellers, but for pilgrims, upon earth, that we may long and make haste, walking with faith in the way of virtuous works, to come to the glorious country… wherein thou hast bought us inheritance forever, with thine own precious blood!

De Ablutione Pedum: Ioannis 13

Caput Tertium


1 by the space: over the course // peradventure: perhaps
2 goodly: splendid
3 every: every one; each
4 hence: i.e., to depart from here
5 part: depart
6 from: away from
7 which: who
8 in the way: on the path
pedes lavet, sed est mundus totus. Et vos mundi estis—sed non omnes.’ Sciebat
namque quinam esset qui traderet eum; propterea dixit ‘Non estis mundi omnes.’
Postquam, ergo, lavit pedes eorum, accepit vestimenta sua; et cum recubuisset
iterum, dixit eis, ‘Scitis quid fecerim vobis? Vos vocatis me Magister et Domine—
et bene dicitis; sum etenim. Si, ergo, ego lavi pedes vestros—dominus et magister—
et vos debetis alter alterius lavare pedes. Exemplum enim dedi vobis, ut quemadmodum
ego feci vobis, ita et vos faciatis. Amen, amen, dico vobis: Non
est servus maior domino suo, neque apostolus maior eo qui misit illum. Si haec
scitis, beati eritis si feceritis ea.’

The Third Chapter

Of the Washing of the Feet; specified in the
thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Saint John

“And when supper was done, when the Devil had put into the
heart of Judas (the son of Simon of Scariot) to betray him,
Jesus… knowing that his Father had given him all things into his
hands, and that he was come from God, and goeth to God…
ariseth from supper, and putteth off his clothes, and took a linen
cloth and did gird it about him. Then he did put water
into a basin… and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and
wipe them with the linen cloth that he was girded with. Then
cometh he to Simon Peter, and Peter saith unto him, ‘Lord,
washest thou my feet?’ Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘What I
do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know after.’ Peter
saith unto him, ‘Thou shalt never wash my feet!’ Jesus answered
unto him, ‘If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me.’
Simon Peter said unto him, ‘Lord, not only my feet, but my
hands and my head too!’ Jesus saith unto him, ‘He that is washed
needeth no more but that he wash his feet, but is all clean. And
you be clean—but not all.’ For he knew who he was should betray
him; therefore he said, ‘You be not clean all.’ Then, after that he had
washed their feet, he took his clothes again. And when he was
set down again at the table, he said unto them, ‘Wot ye what I
have done to you? You call me Master and Lord—and you say

1 Of the: On the   //  specified: related in detail     16 goeth: is going
17 putteth: takes   //  clothes: outer garments. (See 106/14.)
22 washest thou: are you washing    23 do: am doing
25 part: association / inheritance   29 should: i.e., that would
31 took . . . again: put his outer garments back on    32 wot ye: do you know
101/33—102/1 say well: speak rightly
well; for so I am. Therefore, if I have washed your feet…
being your lord and your master: you ought also one to wash another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that likewise as I have
done to you, so should you do too. Verily—verily, I say to you—the
bondsman is not more than his lord, nor an apostle greater than
he that hath sent him. If you know these things… blessed shall
you be if you do these things.”

The Exposition

This holy Evangelist Saint John, in the beginning of the thirteenth chapter, beginning to speak of the Last Supper of our Lord,
showeth that our Savior, “cum dilexisset suos qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos”—“whereas he loved those that were his which were
in the world, he loved them even to the end.” That is to wit, as some
doctors say, “… he loved them to the uttermost.” For well ye wot, the “end” of everything is the uttermost. And Christ loved his to
the very uttermost; that is to wit, unto that extreme point of love…

John 15:13 beyond which no man could go. For he said himself, “Maiorem amorem nemo habet… quam ut
animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis”—“Greater love can there no man have… than that a man give his life for his friends.” This kind of
extreme kindness had Christ… not to his friends only, but to his enemies, too. For he gave his own life for both twain. And therefore, those that he loved… he loved unto the end; that is to wit, unto the very uttermost.

Some doctors expound those words, “‘He loved them to the end’: that is to wit, not for a while and then cast them off, as many
folk love in this world; but he loved them to the end… so that when he should part out of this world… by a death so painful
that thinking thereof would make a man forget all his
friends, for heaviness, dread, and fear—he, the nearer he drew toward
that painful, terrible death, the *more* he remembered his twelve apostles, whom he had specially loved in the world, and the *more* tenderly took he thought for them when he was parting out of this world. And for to show that, as himself said, ‘Qui ad me venit, non eiciam foras’ (‘He that cometh to me, I will not cast him out’): our Savior would not cast out Judas the traitor… till he cast out himself; but, for all his traitorous purpose, tenderly went about to amend him—and brought him to the supper with him.”

Some expound also those words “He loved them into the end”… to signify that the love that he bore them… was not such a kind of love as worldly-minded folk use to bear each to other—that is to wit, either for their commodity to take pleasure by them… while that in this passage toward the “end” (that is to wit, the world to come) they be by the way walking with them… or else to do them some such kind of commodity as may serve them, and stand them in some stead, for their use in the way—but our Savior, those that he loved in the world, he loved not into the way (that is to wit, not only unto their worldly commodities, that are transitory and shall pass from them; which they shall leave behind them in the way), but he loved them into the end; that is to wit, toward the bringing of them to the end that he, by his precious blood, bought them to.

And thus you see how all these expositions of the old holy doctors… are very meet for the matter which Saint John here beginneth to treat; which, in this thirteenth chapter, beginneth to enter toward the treating of Christ’s Passion… by which our Lord declared well that he loved unto the end; that is to wit, as I told you, to the uttermost. And first he beginneth therein to treat of his Last Supper… wherein he declared by many things, as shall after appear, that he loved his apostles to the end; that is to wit, that the nearer he drew to his death, the more tenderly he remembered them. He declared also at that supper… that he loved
them into the end; that is to wit, into the world to come, to the bliss of heaven—\(\text{the end that he by his death prepared for them.}\) This he declared specially at the Last Supper, both by the institution of the Blessed Sacrament… and by the godly doctrine that he taught them… to conduit them thitherward. Of which the very entry and open gate… our Savior showed them in these words of the Gospel that I have herebefore rehearsed you, as you shall well perceive by the perusing of the letter; which in this wise beginneth:

“When the supper was done, when the Devil had put into the heart of Judas (the son of Simon of Scariot) to betray him,” etc.

In these words “when the supper was done,” it is not to be taken that it was all done. For (as you see here) our Lord and all his apostles after their feet washed… sat down at the table again. But you shall understand… that the “supper” of the Paschal lamb was done. For that was then eaten—before that our Lord rose from the table to go about the washing of the apostles’ feet.

“Whereas the Devil had put into the heart of Judas (the son of Simon of Scariot) to betray him….”

By this—that the Devil did “put” that treason in his “heart”—is meant the secret suggestion of the Devil… by which he stirred the traitor Judas thereunto. By which we be learned to know and consider… that when an ungracious purpose falleth in our mind, we may well think that the Devil is then even busy about us—and not, as it is commonly said, at our elbow, but even at our very heart. For into the fleshly body can the Devil enter… and cast imagination in our mind—and offer us outward occasions, also—to illect, stir, and draw us to his purpose.

Judas was called not “Scariot,” but “Iscariot”—that is to wit, Iscariotes; of a place… named “Iscariot.”

“Jesus… knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he was come out from God, and goeth to God… ariseth
from the supper, and putteth off his garments, and took a linen
cloth and girded it about him, and then put water into the
basin... and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and wipe
them with the linen cloth with which he was girded.”

We need, I trust, to put no man in remembrance... that our
Savior Christ was as verily God as man. And therefore, where
the Evangelist saith that he “came out” from his Father and “goeth
again” to his Father... it is not meant that his Godhead was at any
time departed from the Father; but by his “going from” the Father... was
nothing meant but his being incarnate in the world; and his
“going again” to the Father, the taking up of his manhead into heaven
with him. For by his coming into the earth he left not heaven,
but ever was (and ever is, and ever shall be—with his Father and their
Holy Spirit) both in heaven and in earth, and everywhere else, at
once. Nor by that he saith “his Father had given him all things into
his hands” is not meant that God the Father giveth anything unto
(the equal) God the Son; but, like as he hath been eternally begotten
of him, so hath he had eternally... equal dominion of all things with
him. I mean not only as much dominion, but also the selfsame
dominion; in like manner as he is equally God with his Father and the
Holy Ghost... not by being another God, as great, but by being,
albeit another, distinct Person, yet the selfsame God that they be.
And therefore the Father hath nothing in time given the Son,
but eternally, before all time, gave him all (if a man may call it
“giving”) by his only begetting. Howbeit, Christ as man might receive
of God’s gift in time... as he was created in time. And therefore
is there in these words expressed... Christ’s marvelous, excellent
humility; as though the Evangelist had, in more words, declared it in this
manner: “Our Savior Christ (whereas Judas had by the suggestion
of the Devil... made promise to betray him, and continually
persevered in that traitorous purpose), notwithstanding that he was
very God, and descended from heaven to be incarnate, and should
ascend thither again in the glorious body and soul of his blessed
manhood; and that his Godhead had ever had of his Father (by his eternal generation)… and to his manhood (by the unity of person with his Godhead) belonged also… of althing the whole dominion—so that with the traitor and all those to whom he should be betrayed, he was able to do what himself list—yet would he, not only to his other apostles, but also to that very traitor too (whereby he should give his high, stubborn heart… occasion to relent and repent and amend, if it would be), so far humble himself… that being their master, their lord, and their God… he would vouchsafe to do them lowly service, in the washing… not of their heads or their hands, but even of their very feet… and wipe them, too, his own hands. And therefore he would have nobody help him therein, nor do a piece himself as for a countenance… and let another do the remnant; but he would put off his overgarments himself, put the water into the basin himself, wash all their feet himself, and wipe their feet all himself.

Then followeth it in the letter:
“He came, then, unto Simon Peter, and Peter saith unto him, ‘Lord, washeth thou my feet?’”

Saint Peter, having our Savior in such estimation and honor as it well became him to have, thought it in his mind unmeetly that his Lord and Master should wash his feet. And therefore he said unto him, “Lord, washest thou my feet?” To whom our Savior said, “That that I do, thou knowest not now. But thou shalt know afterward.” As though he would say, “Though thou think it not convenient… because thou canst not see for what cause I do it, yet I (all whose deeds are of such perfection that I do nothing for naught) know a great cause, necessary and convenient, for which I do it, which thou canst not conjecture. But when we have done, thou shalt know it. And therefore, suffer me first to do it.” But Saint Peter had so deep imprinted in his breast… the
marvelously high majesty of the Person of Christ... being the very Son of God, and with his Almighty Father and his Holy Ghost equal and one God, and therefore infinitely more in dignity above him... than the heaven is in distance above the earth—could not, for all that the heaven is in distance above the earth—could not, for all that word of our Savior, find in his heart to suffer him do such simple, humble service unto him. And therefore with plain refusing thereof... he withdrew his feet, and answered our Savior in this wise: “Thou shall never wash my feet in this world!” Our Lord then, as he sometimes did in other things touch and temper the zeal of Peter... through fervor and heat somewhat indiscreet, so to show him here that there could no virtue stand in steady without a humble obedience, but that it would work unto damnation (seemed the thing never so good) if it were joined with disobedience against the will of God, spoke sharply to him and said, “But if I wash thee, thou shalt have no part with me.” When Saint Peter heard that word, he cast off his indiscreet courtesy... and turned it into perfect obedience, submitting himself whole unto the will of Christ; and said, “Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands, and my head too!” As though he would say, “Though I would, for mine unworthiness, be loath to have thy most excellent Person do such simple service unto me: yet since I see that, for cause unknown to me, of which it becometh me not to ask thee a reckoning, thou hast so determined to wash mine unworthy feet... that if I therein obey not thy high pleasure, I shall by disobedience fall in thy displeasure, and be departed from thee and lose my part of thy glory—I rather will be content to suffer thee... not only, Lord, to wash my feet, but over that, my hands, and my head too!”

“Jesus answered and said unto him, 'He that is washed needeth not to wash... but his feet, but is all clean.'

Forasmuch as Saint Peter offered himself to suffer to be of Christ’s holy hands washed... not his feet only, that are the lowest

1 marvelously: stupendously  4–5 all that word of: that whole thing said by
5 suffer: let  6, 21 simple: menial  7 withdrew: withheld
8 in this wise: i.e., words to this effect  9 touch: rebuke
10, 16 indiscreet: injudicious  11–12 stand in stead: be of any avail
13 never so: no matter how  15 but if: unless / part: association / inheritance
16 word: statement // courtesy: politeness  20 for: because of
23 a reckoning: an account
25 thou... determined: you have so decided / you are so determined
25 fall in: incur // be departed: get separated  26 part of: share in
26, 31 suffer: allow  27 over: in addition to  30 but: except for  31 of: by
part, but his hands also, that are about the midst, and his head
too, which is the highest part—by which three he signified himself
content that Christ should wash all his whole body—Christ
answered him that that thing were more than needed. For he that is
washed once already by Baptism… is so clean washed altogether
from all sin, both actual and original, that he never needeth
to be *all* washed again—nor never *shall* be all washed again by
Baptism. For baptized shall no man be but once; the character and
spiritual token by Baptism imprinted in the soul… is indelible, and
never can be put out. But in them that for their unfaithfulness,
or for their evil living, *after* their Baptism… shall finally be
damned, that token shall in their soul perpetually remain to
their harm and shame… by which it shall evermore appear… that
they be neither paynims, Jews, nor Saracens, but (which
worst is of all) false and unkind Christian men. But there is none
washed so clean by Baptism but that (if he live) he shall have
need to have his feet washed often. For by his “feet” are meant his
affections. For likewise as our feet bear our body hither and
thither, so do our affections carry us to good works or bad.

For look which way that our affections lead us, and that way
commonly walk we. And therefore said our Savior to Saint
Peter when he offered to be all washed again, both feet, hands,
and head, “He that is washed is all clean, and needeth to
have no more washed but his feet”—that is to wit, his affections—
“and then is he all clean.” And with that… our Savior considering the
traitor Judas (the filthy feet of whose wretched covetous affection… had
borne him to the council of the Jews… to offer them his
Master for money to sell; and from which traitorous affection… Christ’s
great, marvelous humanity washing the traitor’s filthy feet… had
not cleansed him), “he said unto them all, ‘You be clean; but yet *all*
you be not clean.’ For he knew who it was that should betray him;
and therefore he said, ‘*All* you be not clean.’”

Upon the aforesaid words of Christ unto Peter “He that is washed
needeth but to wash his feet”… and those words “You be clean”…

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1 *about the midst*: at about the middle
2–3 *signified… should*: showed himself willing to have Christ
3 *all his whole*: his whole entire
4 *were*: would be
5 *needed*: i.e., what was needed
9, 12 *token*: mark
10 *put out*: expunged
11 *finally be*: end up being
13 *appear*: be obvious
14 *paynims*: pagans / *Saracens*: Muslims
15 *false*: unfaithful / *unkind*: degenerate; not-true-to-the-name / wicked
16 *none*: no one
18, 19, etc. *affection(s)*: disposition(s); mindset(s)
19–20 *hither and thither*: here and there
26 *covetous*: greedy
27–28 *offer… sell*: i.e., offer to sell them his Master for money
29 *marvelous*: wondrous
31 *should*: would
108/33—109/1 *upon… appeareth*: from… is evident
it appeareth, as the old holy doctors say, that the apostles were
before that all baptized and clean. But Judas had by his filthy affection
of his wretched covetousness… defiled himself by his false treason
again.

“Then, after that he had washed their feet, he took his clothes
again, and when he was set at the table again, he said unto
them, ‘Wot ye what I have done to you?’”

Our Savior here giveth us, in these words, a good occasion to
perceive that his outward works… had, besides those visible, apparent
things which every man might behold and see, such secret
spiritual mysteries meant and signified—and not only signified, but
also wrought and done—in them… that those spiritual things unseen…
were so much the more principal parts of his deed… that whoso
know not them, though they know his outward deed, yet may it be
said that they know not what he did.

So where our Savior healed a man in his body outwardly… and

John 7:23

inwardly also in his soul; whereof it is said,

“Totum hominem sanum fecit in Sabbato” (“He made all
the man whole in the Sabbath day”); that is to wit, not the body only—

for the body alone is not all the man—but the soul, too): they that
looked on, though they wist what he had outwardly done, in the
healing of the body, yet was that inward work of his, in healing
of the soul, so far passing that… that it may well be said they
wist not what he did. And so was it in his works that he wrought
in the Blessed Sacrament. As when he consecrated his Blessed Body
and Blood, in the form of bread and wine, at this his Last
Supper—had he not told them that point himself, who could
have told what he did? And therefore here, in the washing of his
disciples’ feet, albeit that they could not but both see and feel
what he did, yet because his outward work therein… was not
in such a special manner his deed… as was the inward mystery that
he did and meant therein, he asked them:

“Know you what I have done to you?” As though he would
say, “I have done more than you know. For by the outward
washing of your feet, I have given you example of humility”…
which thing he declared unto them with most effectual words. For first—to the intent that they should consider of what weight and authority... both his deed and his word should be with them—
he plainly declared... taking occasion upon their own confession... that he was their very lord and their very master. And therefore he
said unto them, “You call me Master and Lord—and you say well. For so I am indeed.”

He was very lord of them as of his creatures; he was very
master of them as of his disciples. Now, putting this first in their remembrance for a foundation, thereupon he built them a marvelously fruitful lesson... with the declaration of his former deed,
saying unto them, “Therefore, if I have washed your feet... being your Lord and your Master: you must also wash one another’s feet.”
Then goeth he farther and declareth wherefore he washed their feet—
as he before said to Saint Peter... that he should know it afterward. And therefore now he telleth that he did it to give example by his own deed unto them... that they should each to other do the like. And therefore he said:

“An example have I given you, that likewise as I have done to you, so should you do also; that is to wit, do each of you to other
as I have done to you all.” Then goeth our Savior further yet... and enforceth his doctrine and his example with a strong, mighty reason, saying:

“Verily—verily, I tell you—the bondsman is not greater than his lord, nor a messenger more than he that hath sent him.” As though he would say, “Since the bondsman is no better than his lord—and I, that am your Creator, am more highly lord over you, that are my creatures, than any earthly lord is over his bondsman—how should you disdain to wash your fellows' feet, when I,
your high lord, have not disdained to wash yours? And since the messenger is not better than he that hath sent him... and all you be but my apostles (that is to wit, but my messengers, to do my message in preaching my word about the world); since I that send you...
and therefore so far your better… and yet have not disdained to wash
your feet—there can none of you without very sinful and shameful
pride… disdain to wash the feet of his fellow.” And, finally, Christ
knitteth up all the whole matter with a very short, substantial lesson:

“If you know these things… blessed shall you be if you do
these things.” In which words our Savior well declareth… that
the bliss of heaven will not be gotten by knowing of virtue, but by
the use and doing thereof. For as no man can come at Canterbury
by the bare knowledge of the way thither, if he will sit still at
home: so by knowing the way to heaven… we can never the more come
there… but if we will walk therein. And therefore saith our Lord by the
Psalm 119:1, 3 mouth of the prophet, “Beati immaculati qui
ambulant in lege Domini. Non enim qui operantur
iniquitatem in viis eius ambulaverunt”—“Blessed are they that are undefiled,
that walk in the law of our Lord. But they that work wickedness…
walk not in his ways.” And our Savior saith his own mouth…
that the knowledge without works… not only doth no profit,
but also causeth increase of a man’s punishment… in respect that
his punishment should be if (without his willful ignorance) his
knowledge had been much less. For thus saith our Lord: “The
Luke 12:47–48 bondsman that knoweth not the will of his lord
and doth it not… shall be beaten with few stripes.
But the bondsman that knoweth his lord’s will and doth it not… shall
be beaten with many stripes.” And therefore, with this necessary, fruitful
doctrine, our Lord did knit up all, and said, “If you know these
things (that is to wit, that my washing of your feet is done for
your example; that since I am indeed, as yourselves do call me,
your Lord and your Master, and that the bondsman is not better
than his lord, nor the messenger more than his master that sent
him, you should not be so proud as to disdain to do as lowly
service each of you to other… as I have done to you all)—if you know
this and do it, in deed, then shall you be blessed; or else for the bare
knowledge… shall you be but the worse.”

1 and: i.e., and am        3 fellow: equal
4 knitteth . . . matter: finishes off the whole entire affair // substantial: pithy
6 well declareth: makes very clear        8 use: practice
8 come at: arrive at; get to        9, 32 bare: mere        9 sit still: continue to sit
10–11 we . . . there: we’ll have no more ability to get there
11 but if: unless        16 saith: i.e., says with        17 works: deeds
17 doth no profit: i.e., yields no profit; does one no good
18 in respect that: in comparison to what        19 should: would
19 his willful ignorance: his ignorance having been deliberate
22, 24 stripes: lashes of the whip        25 doctrine: teaching
25 knit up all: finish off the whole thing / tie everything together
26–27 for your example: as an example for you
33 but the worse: only the worse off
Upon these words before-rehearsed… had
between our Savior and Saint Peter, that
refused for reverence the thing that our Lord would do to him,
holy doctors note that no man lawfully may for any private
mind of reverence or devotion to God… do the thing that God
forbiddeth, nor leave the thing undone that God biddeth. For
it is an indiscreet “devotion” and an irreverent “reverence,” and no
right humility, but an unperceived pride, to stand stiff against
God’s will and disobey his pleasure. For, as the Scripture saith,

1 Samuel 15:22  “Better is obedience than sacrifice.” Nor never
shall God’s precepts be obeyed… if every man
may boldly frame himself a conscience… with a gloss of his own
making… after his own fantasy put unto God’s word. For of such
manner dealing, whereby folk will, of their private “devotions,” against the
commandment of God… follow their own way, may these

Proverbs 14:12  words of the Scripture be verified: “Est via quae
videtur hominibus iusta… et novissima eius tendit ad
infernum”—“There is a way that unto men seemeth just… and the last
end thereof leadeth unto hell.”

King Saul thought, after his own mind, that he did very well…
when he kept and spared the goodly oxen for sacrifice. But while
he broke, in his so doing, the commandment of God, this false-framed
devotion helped him not… but that he lost his kingdom
therefor.

Saint Peter here thought he did well… when he for reverence
toward Christ… would not suffer him wash his feet. But our
Savior showed him that if he would for any such-framed
“reverence” of his own… stand obstinately disobedient unto God’s
pleasure—he should have no part with him. And therefore, while
Christ was presently conversant with him… he was the interpreter
of his own precept! And King Saul should not have
followed his own wit, but should have asked the prophet by
whom that precept came to him. And in like wise, if a man
doubt of the sentence and understanding of anything written in

1 before-rehearsed: above-quoted  2 that: who  3 would: wanted to
4 holy doctors: theologians  // lawfully: licitly  // private: personal / idiosyncratic
5 mind: intent  // to: toward  6 biddeth: commands
7 indiscreet: injudicious; ill-advised  8 right: true; authentic  12 frame: form
12 gloss: interpretation  13 making: inventing  13, 20 after: according to
13 fantasy: idea / wishful thinking  // of: by  14 manner dealing: a way of behaving
20, 25 did (very) well: was acting (very) rightly; was doing a (very) good thing
21 goodly: i.e., nice fat  // while: since
22 false-framed: falsely formed / badly constructed  24 therefore: on account of it
26 suffer: let  27 showed: told  // such-framed: such-contrived
29 part: association / inheritance  // while: given that
30 presently: in person  // conversant: speaking  32 wit: intellect
33 in like wise: likewise  33–34 a man doubt of: one is in doubt as to
34 sentence: meaning  // understanding: i.e., correct understanding
the Scripture, it is no wisdom for him then to take upon him such authority of interpretation himself... as that he shall therein boldly stand unto his own mind; but lean unto the interpretation of the old holy doctors and saints, and unto that interpretation that is received and allowed by the universal church... by which church the Scripture is come to our hands and delivered unto us, and without

Saint Augustine which we could not (as Saint Augustine saith) know which books were Holy Scripture.

Our Savior here saith, “I have given you an example, that likewise as I have done to you... so should you do also.”

Would God that all the prelates, and all curates, and all preachers—yea, and fathers and mothers, and all masters of households, too—would here of our Savior take example... for to give good example. There are many that can be well content to be preaching—some to show their cunning... and some to show their authority—but would God they would use the fashion that our Savior used; that is to wit, the things that they bid other men do... do it first themselves. The

Acts 1:1 Scripture saith of our Savior, “Cepit Iesus facere et docere”—“Jesus began to do and to teach”; so that he not only taught men to do this or that,

“Cum ieiunatis nolite fieri sicut hypocritae tristes” (Matthew 6:16). but he gave them also the example... and did the thing first himself. To stir us to fast, he not only taught us what fashion we should use in fasting, but also for our example fasted forty days himself. To stir us to wake and pray, he not only taught us by word, but used also by night to go forth into the Mount of Olives... and there to wake and pray by night himself; by which custom the traitor knew where to find him. To set naught by the royalty of the world... he not only taught us by word, but also by his poor birth—and all the course of his poor life—he gave us the example himself. To stir us to patience and suffering of tribulation, he not only taught us and exhorted us by word...

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3 stand... mind: abide by his own view; go by his own thinking
3 but lean: i.e., but rather, he should defer 4 old holy doctors: early theologians
5 received: accepted // allowed: approved
5–8: See Saint Augustine, Against the Fundamental Epistle of Manichaeus, 5.6.
11 curates: pastors 12 masters: heads 15 cunning: learnedness
16, 23 fashion: approach 25, 27 wake: keep vigil 26 ised: was wont
26 into: unto 28–29 set naught by: place no value on; care nothing about
29 the royalty of the world: worldly splendor
30 his poor birth: i.e., the circumstances of poverty that he was born in
30 all the: the whole 30–31 poor life: life of poverty
32 suffering of: bearing with
but gave us the example by his own cross, his own Passion, and 
his own painful death. And surely, albeit that the best is, for him 
that hath a good thing taught him by one whom he seeth do the contrary 
himself, to do as he is well taught, and not follow the lewd example 
of his evil deed—yet is our common condition such... that whereas 
word and deed both... be scant able to draw us to do good, every 
one of the both is able enough to draw us to naught. And therefore he 
that bideth other folk do well... and giveth evil example with the 
contrary deed himself... fareth even like a foolish weaver that 
would weave apace with the one hand and unweave as fast 
with the other.

The example of Christ in washing the apostles' feet... with his 
exhortation unto them by his example to do the like... bindeth not 
mens to follow the literal fashion thereof, in washing of folks' feet...
as for a rite or a ceremony, or a sacrament, of the Church. Howbeit, 
much it hath been used, ever since; and yet in every country of Christendom, 
in places of religion used it is—and noble princes and great 
estates use that godly ceremony very religiously. And none, I suppose, 
nowhere more godly than our sovereign lord the King's Grace here 
of this realm—both in humble manner washing and wiping, and 
kissing also, many poor folks' feet... after the number of the years 
of his age... and with right liberal and princely alms therewith.

And surely, if the interpretation of the Scripture... were not by 
the Spirit of God put in the whole corps of the Catholic Church— 
he that would upon his own head... stick upon the letter of the 
Gospel... and his own exposition thereto... might contend that the 
Washing of the Feet were a sacrament, unto which our Savior 
bound his Church of necessity. But as the universal church 
believeth... so is it not. Howbeit, in time and place convenient it is 
Saint Augustine (as Saint Augustine saith) a thing of the more 
perfection... if we not only do not disdain in
our hearts... but do it also in deed with our hands, as our Lord did with his.

When our Lord said, “You be clean—but not all,” he meant that the congregation and company of his twelve apostles... as a congregation and a company... was a clean company, though Judas, one of the company, was not clean. For many a right honest company is there... that hath, yet, some not-honest among them. And so is the Catholic Church called Sancta Ecclesia (Holy Church)... because that out thereof there is no holiness... and for those that are holy therein; which are always many—both priests and laymen, too—though there be therein besides... many bad, of both sorts, also.

Finally, where our Savior saith, “Si haec scitis, beati eritis si feceritis ea”—“If you know these things... you shall be blessed if you do them”—two things in those words he giveth us warning of.

The one, that without faith there can be no good work that can be meritorious touching the bliss of heaven. The other, that have we the faith never so great, yet if we will not work well... our faith shall fail of the bliss. And therefore, to give us warning of the necessity that we have of faith, he said not these words alone—“If you do this, you shall be blessed”—but he began with these words: “If you know these things.” Now, the knowledge of those things that pertain to such kind of well-doing... as shall stand us in stead toward salvation—that knowledge have we not but by faith. As the apostles there, though they saw him wash their feet, yet that he did it to give them an example of humility... and that such humility should be requisite to help them to heaven... and to be rewarded there—this knew they not but by the faith that they gave therein.

Romans 10:17 unto Christ’s word. For “fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Dei”—“Faith,” saith Saint Paul, cometh of hearing, and the hearing thereof is by the word of God.”

Therefore, as I say, our Lord began their blessedness with faith. For Hebrews 11:6 faith is the very gate and first entry toward heaven. “Accedentem ad Deum oportet credere”—“He that is coming to God must give credence and believe.” For if a man that

5 one: someone; a member 6, 7 honest: honorable
8 because: i.e., because of the fact // out: outside 9 for: on account of
10 which: who 11 sorts: classes; groups 14, 18 give(th) us warning of: alert(s) us to
16 touching: with respect to; as regards
16–17 have... great: no matter how greatly we have the faith
17 work well: act rightly; do good deeds 18 of the bliss: i.e., to get us into heaven
18 necessity: need 22 well-doing: right-doing; doing of good
26 to heaven: i.e., get to heaven
believeth not... do the selfsame thing, either by chance or of some other affection... which thing done by a faithful man in faith... were meritorious—that deed done by the faithless is not meritorious at all. But yet, though faith be the first gate into heaven, he that standeth still at the gate... and will not walk forth in the way of good works... shall not come where the reward is. And therefore our Savior left not with these words—"Si haec scitis, beati eritis" ("If you know these things, you shall be blessed")—but went further, and to make up his tale perfect, he added "si feceritis ea" ("if you do them").

I fear me there be many folk that for delight of knowledge... or, for a foolish vainglory, to show and make it known how much themselves know... labor to know the law of God (and know it right well indeed, and can well preach it out again) that shall yet see many a poor simple soul... with a gross, plain faith, with no learning, but good, devout affection, walking the way of good works in this world... sit after full high with our Lord in heaven, when those great clerks wandering here in evil works... shall, for all their great knowledge, and for all gay preaching in the name of Christ, hear our Lord say to them (as in the thirteenth chapter of Saint Luke he saith he will say to such),

Luke 13:27

“Discedite a me, operarii iniquitatis!”—“Walk you from me, you workers of wickedness!”

And for conclusion, all the work with this example of his and all his declaration thereupon... our Savior instructeth and exhorteth his apostles to... is the work of humility. For likewise as pride threw down the Devil out of heaven, so shall there never none ascend but with meekness thither. And since the Devil, that fell himself by pride, is ever most busy to tempt every man to the same sin—and especially those that he seeth aspire toward any excellence in spiritual kind of virtue, or that he espieth put in prelacy and authority over other men, whereby he hopeth to find a gate open to enter—our Savior therefore, to keep against the ghostly enemy that gate well warded and sure, in sundry places again and

1 of: out of 2 affection: motivation // faithful: faith-possessing; believing 3 were: would be 5 standeth still: continues to stand // in the way: on the pathway 6 come: get to; arrive at 7 left not: did not leave off 9 make... perfect: i.e., make this speech of his complete 10 fear me: am afraid // delight of: delight in; enjoyment of 12 themselves: they 14 gross: rudimentary // plain: unsophisticated 15 affection: disposition; attitude 17 clerks: scholars // wandering: going morally astray 18 and for all: i.e., and for all their // gay: showy / good-sounding 21 walk: get yourselves away 23 with: i.e., that with 24 all his declaration thereupon: his whole elucidation thereof 26 none: i.e., anyone 28 busy: eager; industriously endeavoring 32 ghostly: spiritual 33 warded: guarded // sure: secure // places: (scriptural) passages
again giveth his apostles (whom he made prelates and spiritual
governors of his flock) special counsel against the prick of
pride; and with words, and with this example of washing their
feet his own hands, exhorteth them by meekness and humility… to
account and reckon and use themselves as far under others… as himself
doeth in order and authority prefer and enhance them
above; and would that we should, of duty, for their degree, do
great honor unto them… and that they should themselves, of meekness,
as fast again put it from them.

The Prayer

Almighty Jesus, my sweet Savior Christ, which wouldst vouchsafe…
thee own almighty hands to wash the feet of thy twelve
apostles—not only of the good, but of the very traitor, too: vouchsafe,
good Lord, of thine excellent goodness, in such wise to wash
the foul feet of mine affections… that I never have such pride
enter into my heart… as to disdain, either in friend or foe, with
meekness and charity… for the love of thee… to defile my hands with
washing of their feet.

The Fourth Chapter

Of the institution of the Sacrament; written in the twenty-sixth of Saint
Matthew, the fourteenth of Saint Mark, and in the twenty-second of Saint Luke

The First Lecture upon the Blessed Sacrament
(The Fourth Chapter)

“And as they were sitting at the table and (Mk) eating, Jesus saith,
‘With desire (Lk) have I desired to eat the Pasch with you, before I
suffer. I say to you that from this time I shall not eat it… till it be
fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ As (Mt) they were at supper, Jesus
took bread, gave thanks, (Lk) and blessed (Mt) and broke it, (Mt/Lk)
and gave it to his disciples, and saith, ‘Take, you, and eat, you: this is (Mk)

2 prick: spur; impetus  4 his: i.e., with his
5 use themselves: comport themselves (as being) // under: beneath
5 himself: he himself  6 order: rank // prefer: advance // enhance: elevate
7 would: willest // for: on account of // degree: position; office
9 fast: firmly, fixedly // again: in turn // put: deflect 11 which: who
12 thine: i.e. with thine  14 excellent: superlative // wise: a way
15 affections: dispositions  20 Of the: On the  20, 22 (Blessed) Sacrament: Holy Eucharist
20 twenty-sixth: i.e., twenty-sixth chapter  25 Pasch: Passover meal
my (Lk) body (Mk), the which for you shall be delivered. This do you for
the remembrance of me.’ Likewise taking the chalice… after that
he had supped, (Mt) gave thanks and gave it them, saying, ‘Take, (Lk)
and divide it among you, and drink (Mt) of this, all: this is my blood,
of the new testament. This (Lk) is the chalice the new testament in
my blood, (Lk) which for you and (Mt) for many shall be shed for remission
of sins. I say verily to you that I shall not drink from hence forth
of this generation of the vine… until that day when I shall
drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father God.’ And
they drank all thereof.’

Albeit, good readers, that I have rehearsed you this chapter in
such wise as the right famous clerk Master Jean Gerson rehearseth it
in his work called Monotessaron—gathered of the words of all the
three Evangelists Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke, and,
in a convenient order, linked and chained ensuingly together—yet
seemeth me that for the beginning, the thing shall somewhat the
better appear if we rehearse the words of Saint Luke somewhat
more fully… which words he writeth upon the end of the eating of the
Paschal lamb… and before the institution of the Blessed Sacrament
of the Altar. For, in his twelfth chapter, thus beginneth he this
matter: “Et cum facta esset hora, discubuit, et duodecim apostoli cum eo. Et
ait illis, ‘Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobiscum, antequam
patiar. Dico enim vobis quia ex hoc non manducabo illud… donec impleatur in
Dico enim vobis quod non bibam de generatione vitis… donec regnum Dei veniat’”—
“And when the hour was come, he sat down at the table, and his
twelve apostles with him. And he saith unto them, ‘With desire have I
desired to eat this Paschal lamb with you, before I suffer. For I
tell you that from this time I shall not eat it… till it be fulfilled in the
kingdom of God.’ And the cup taken, he gave thanks and said,
‘Take, you, and divide you it among you. For I say to you that I shall
not drink of the generation of the vine… till the kingdom of God
come.’”

These words hath Saint Luke whole together… of the finishing
of the old Pasch… before he entereth into the rehearsing of the new Pasch, whereof the old was a figure; that is to wit, before he beginneth to rehearse the institution of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar—of which he beginneth to speak forthwith after these words ended.

In the beginning of these words (written in the twenty-second chapter of Saint Luke), our Savior expresseth the great desire that he had to eat the Paschal lamb at that time with his apostles, saying: “Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobiscum, antequam patiar”—

“With desire have I desired to eat this Paschal lamb with you, before my Passion.” These words “with desire have I desired” are spoken after the manner of the Hebrew speech… in which speech our Savior spoke at the time himself. For the Hebrews, to express a thing vehemently, use oftentimes (as it appeareth in sundry places of Scripture) to double a word, sometimes by the participle and the verb, sometimes by the noun and the verb… as our Savior did here, saying, “With desire have I desired”; that is to wit, “Very sore have I desired”—or “Very desirously have I longed for”—“to eat this Paschal lamb with you.”

Two causes there were for which our Savior so sore longed at that time to eat the Paschal lamb with his disciples. The one appeareth upon that I have shown you before; that is to wit, because that, as Saint John saith, “Cum dilexisset suos qui erant in mundo, usque in finem dilexit eos”—“Whereas he had loved his that were in the world, he loved them to the end”—and therefore, since he was now so near drawing to his Passion, which he had determined to suffer on the morrow, he, like a most tender lover, longed with that last supper… to make them his farewell, at his departing from them.

Wherein, as I before have said, appeared his wonderfully loving heart. For had he been after the manner of other men (since himself saw his Passion drawing so near, to which he should be so violently taken… so shortly upon his supper, and that Passion so bitter as himself well wist it should… of which he was so afeard, and for which he was so sorrowful within so few hours after), he would have

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1; 2 Pasch: Passover celebration    1 rehearsing of: telling about
2 figure: prefigurement    3 rehearse: relate
3–4 Blessed Sacrament of the Altar: Holy Eucharist    4 forthwith: immediately
5 ended: i.e., are at an end    12 speech: vernacular; parlance
14 vehemently: emphatically    // it appeareth: is evident    15, 16 by: i.e., by use of
18, 20 sore: intensely    22 appeareth upon that: is shown by what
22 shown you: called to your attention    24 whereas: given that
26 determined: decided    27 morrow: next day    29 wonderfully: wondrously
30 after the manner of: similar in comportment to    31 himself: he    32 upon: after
33 wist: knew    // should: would (be)    // for: on account of
taken little pleasure or comfort in the company of his apostles, nor list to make them a supper at that time.

But he loved them so tenderly... that all the pain, sorrow, dread, and fear that was toward him... could not so master and overwhelm his kind, loving affection toward them... but that the desire and longing to make his last supper with them... so much increased greater... as he surely saw that his bitter Passion drew nearer. And that was, therefore, as I say, one of the causes for which he said unto them at the eating thereof, “With desire have I desired”—that is to say, “Sore have I longed”—“to eat this Paschal lamb with you, before my Passion.”

The other cause for which he longed so sore to eat that Paschal lamb with them... was because that he longed for the time in which he should, with his bitter Passion, pay the price of our redemption... and restore the kind of man unto the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. And because that he would before the offering up of his own blessed body (the very Lamb innocent and immaculate) unto the Father... institute the new Pasch (the very eating of the selfsame holy, unspotted Lamb, his own blessed body and blood... to be continually sacrificed, offered up unto the Father, and eaten, in remembrance of his bitter Passion, under the form of bread and wine), he would, as was convenient, before the institution of the new, very Pasch... reverently finish the old Pasch, that was the figure thereof.

And therefore at the Last Supper, to declare the desire that he had so to do—that is to wit, to institute his new Pasch by the finishing of the old—he said unto them, “With desire have I desired to eat this Paschal lamb with you, before my Passion.”

And for to declare the more clearly that the cause of his “desire” was to the intent that he would finish it... and offer up himself (the very Lamb, whereof the other was the figure), and would by that pleasant sacrifice bring the nature of man into the kingdom of heaven, he therefore said farther unto them, “Dico enim vobis quia ex hoc non manducabo illud... donec impleatur in regno Dei”—“I say verily to you...
that from this time I shall eat that no more... till it be performed in
the kingdom of God.”

The fulfilling, or performing, of the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb
being a figure... was the offering of his own blessed body in
sacrifice... by which the nature of man was restored unto the kingdom
of heaven. And by that new offering up of that innocent
Lamb so offered... which offering was the verity... was that old offering
of the Paschal lamb in Jerusalem... that was the figure...
fully performed—and thereupon took its full perfection in the
kingdom of heaven.

But here must we consider that our Savior, in saying that he
would eat the old Paschal lamb no more... till it were performed
in the kingdom of heaven, did not mean that after that the
figure were performed and had its perfection in heaven, he
would then use, or have used, the same figure again in earth; but he
meant that he would no more eat it at all. For this word donec,
in Latin—that is to say, “until” in English—when it limiteth a time
before which it denieth a certain thing to be done... doth not always
mean or imply (though sometimes it do) the doing of the same

Note thing after that time. As when the Gospel saith
Matthew 1:25 “Non cognovit eam... donec peperit filium suum primogenitum”
(“Joseph knew not her... till she had brought forth her first-begotten
son”)... meaneth not that he “knew” her after. Nor where
the prophet speaketh as in the person of the Father unto Christ,
Psalm 110:1 “Sede a dextris meis... donec ponam inimicos tuos
scabellum pedum tuorum” (“Sit on my right hand... till I put thine enemies for a footstool under thy feet”)—the
prophet there meaneth not... that when the enemies of Christ be
thrown under his feet, he shall then sit on the Father’s right hand
no longer! Nor here, in like wise, our Savior meant not... that after
the verity fulfilled and perfected in the kingdom of God... he would
use, or have used, the figure here still in earth.

And that appeareth plainly by two things. One, by this word
impleatur—till “it be fulfilled.” For since “it” was but a figure, and he

1, 9, etc. performed: brought to completion 4 being: i.e., which was
4, 8, etc. figure: prefigurement 5 nature: species 7, 31 verity: i.e., real thing
14 had: received 15, 32 have used: i.e., have people use // in: on 17 limiteth: specifies
24 speaketh: says 26, 29 on: at 30 in like wise: likewise
31 fulfilled and perfected: i.e., had fulfilled and perfected it 33 appeareth: is shown
said he would use “it” no more till it were *fulfilled*: he must needs mean that he would use it no more at all. For being but a figure, it had no cause of use after that it was by the verity fulfilled.

And therefore, as touching the Paschal lamb... when our Savior said, “I will from hence forth eat this no more till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God”... was as much as to say, “After this, I will never eat it more”... after such manner of speaking as one might say that looked for to die, or that were entering into the Charterhouse, “I will never eat flesh more in this world,” or thus: “I trust to be in heaven ere I eat any more flesh,” or such other kind of speaking like... not meaning that he *would* eat flesh in another world; but that he would eat *none here*... and, consequently, never eat flesh more.

The other thing by which it appeareth plainly that our Savior intended not to have the figurative, old Paschal lamb any longer continue... is that he forthwith instituted the verity thereof: the new sacrifice, his Blessed Body and Blood, the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

But before the institution of his own, Christian sacrament, to the intent it should appear that he would fully finish the old Pasch of the Jews and, as who say, wash it away: himself with his apostles, as for a final end thereof, after the eating thereof... drank thereunto. Whereof Saint Luke proceedeth farther, and saith: “Accepto calice, gratias egit, et dixit, ‘Accipite et dividite inter vos’”—“He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, ‘Take and divide among you.’”

Our Savior, as man, gave thanks unto God the Father... that the old sacrifice of the Paschal lamb was now come to an end... and that he was now come to the institution of the new sacrifice: his own blessed body, in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Then our Lord commanded them to take and divide the cup of wine among them and drink, all, thereof... as the farewell of the old Pasch. And then said he further unto them, “Dico enim vobis...”

3 *figure*: prefiguration  //  *verity*: i.e., real thing
5 *as... Savior*: i.e., when with reference to the Paschal lamb, our Savior
6 *from hence forth*: from now on  //  8, 10, 14 *more*: again  //  8 *one*: someone
9 *looked for to die*: i.e., expected to die soon  //  *Charterhouse*: Carthusian monastery
10, 11, etc. *flesh*: meat  //  11 *ere*: before  //  15 *appeareth*: is shown
16 *figurative*: prefiguring; representative
17 *verity thereof*: i.e., the reality that it prefigured
18–19, 31 *Blessed Sacrament of the Altar*: (Holy) Eucharist
21 *appear*: i.e., be made evident  //  22, 34 *Pasch*: Passover celebration
22 *as who say*: as one might say  //  *himself*: he himself
33 *all*: i.e., all of them  //  *of*: i.e., to
quod non bibam de generatione vitis… donec regnum Dei veniat”—“I say to you that I shall not drink of the generation of the vine… till the kingdom of God come.”

“The kingdom of God” he calleth here… the state of his glory after his Resurrection—in which he rose immortal, impassible, and glorious. Before which time he said here, unto them, that he would drink no wine. As though he would say, “Such drink as I now drink with you to the old sacrifice of the Paschal lamb… will I drink no more till I arise again in my glory, after my Passion.”

But after his Resurrection, he did verily eat and drink with them again—as appeareth plainly by the Evangelists, and as Saint Peter beareth witness where he saith, “Qui manducavimus et bibimus cum illo postquam resurrexit a mortuis” (“We have eaten and drunk with him… after that he was arisen from death”).

After this done, our Savior Christ by and by… in the stead of that old sacrifice of the Paschal lamb so ended… did institute the new sacrifice, and the only sacrifice, to be continued in his Church: the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Which new sacrifice in stead of that old sacrifice… and of all the old sacrifices which among the Jews forefigured the very, fruitful sacrifice of Christ’s blessed body upon the cross… should in his own church, of Jews and Gentiles together, continually with the selfsame body and blood offered in the Mass under the form of bread and wine… represent that sacrifice in which on Good Friday Christ once for ever… offered the selfsame body and blood in their proper form… to the Father, upon the cross.

And therefore, after the old sacrifice of the Paschal lamb clearly finished (as ye have heard), ere ever they rose from the board… our Savior forthwith went in hand with the instituting of that that should be the new sacrifice: the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar—his own holy body and blood, under form of bread and wine.
The manner of which institution… in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke… is rehearsed in this wise:

“Jesus took bread, gave thanks and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it his disciples, saying, ‘Take, you, and eat, you: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you.’”

First our Savior, in the beginning of this excellent work, gave thanks and blessed the bread… to give us example, as saith Saint Bede, that in the beginning of every good work, we should give thank to God.

Then he broke it, and gave it unto them, himself… to signify, saith Saint Bede, that he gave himself to his Passion of his own free will. But to the intent they should well understand that this holy sacrament that himself instituted in his own holy person… wonderfully far passed the old sacrifice of the Paschal lamb… instituted by the ministry of Moses in the Old Law; lest they might, peradventure, take it for a far lesser thing than it was (as they should have had a great cause to do… if it had been none other substance than the substance of bread, as to their eyes it seemed; for then had the lamb, which was a living, sensible creature, been, of the proper nature, much more excellent than the insensible substance of bread!): our Savior therefore, to give them sure knowledge how great a gift it was that he there gave them, and how incomparably far above all the merit of man to receive, that they should thereby consider how deeply they were bounden and beholden to him therefor… and with devout thanks inwardly remember his inestimable bounty therein, he gave them knowledge that though it was bread when he took it in hand, and that to their bodily senses seemed yet bread still—yet it was now his own very body in deed. And therefore he said unto them, “Take, you, and eat, you: this is my body.” As though he might say, “Think not that for my special, new sacrifice that I institute… to represent forever in mine own Church (till I return to the General Judgment) my most precious Passion… I give you a thing of more base nature than was the thing that was wont to be sacrificed to forefigure

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2 rehearsed: related // in this wise: as follows  4 it: i.e., it to
6 excellent: superlative  9 thank: (the) credit
13 wonderfully: wondrously; astoundingly  14 passed: surpassed
16 peradventure: perhaps  19, 20 (in)sensible: (in)sensate
20 of the proper nature: of its own nature; intrinsically
25 therefore: on account thereof  26 inwardly: intently; feelingly
26 inestimable: incalculable; unfathomable // bounty: generosity
29 deed: actuality  32 represent: represent / re-present / make present // to: i.e., for
it in the short and soon-passing Synagogue—which you might think… if my sacrifice of representation were but insensible bread, whereas their forefiguring sacrifice was celebrated in a living creature (a fair unspotted lamb)—but I will that you shall understand and know that the thing which I give you here to eat… is of a nature above all measure more excellent. For though it seem bread, yet is it flesh. And though it seem dead, yet is it living. The lamb, though it was quick taken to the sacrifice, yet was it eaten dead. But this shall you eat quick—and it shall rest and abide quick in you. And the lamb did feed and nourish your bodies; but this shall feed and nourish your souls. For this is mine own body—and not my dead body, but animated, and living, with my soul. And mine own body shall never be separated from my Godhead; so that if you receive and eat virtuously the one into your body… you receive the other graciously into your souls.”

In these few compendious words of our Savior “this is my body” is all this long tale included… and many a long holy process more. And albeit that in these words alone he told them the thing plainly enough; and notwithstanding that he had also declared them before that he would give them his own body to eat, inculcating that point into them with many words, at length John 6 mentioned in the sixth chapter of Saint John: yet, to make them the more clearly perceive that this was the thing that he then told them of, he said not only “this is my body,” but he farther also added thereunto… “which shall be delivered for you.” As though he would say, “If any would be so far from believing of the truth… that, rather than believe this to be my very body, he would seek a gloss against mine own word… and say that by this word ‘my body’ I meant but a sign, or a figure, or a token, of my body: to put all such folk out of doubt, I say that this which I give you here to receive and eat… is that selfsame body that shall be delivered for you to the Jews and to Gentiles… and by them to the cross and to the death.”
Now, to the intent that it should appear plainly... that he gave them not his body for that only time, as a special show of kindness to their own persons alone, but that they should perceive that he did it to begin and institute a new sacrament (in stead of the old Pasch), which should endure in his Church (in the stead of the other, there finished): he said unto them, “Hoc facite in meam commemorationem”—“This do you in the remembrance of me.” As though he would say to them, “Likewise as the synagogue of the Jews... have hitherto used for a figure of my Passion... the old sacrifice of the Paschal lamb: so do you use, in my Church, from hence forth, in remembrance of my Passion, this new sacrifice... of mine own body, that shall suffer that Passion... and be sacrificed once for ever upon the cross.”

Which sentence of our Savior’s words is also declared by 1 Corinthians 11:25–26 Saint Paul, in the eleventh chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians; of which we shall speak hereafter. But first shall we peruse the words of our Savior himself.

After that he had thus given them his own blessed body to eat in the form of bread, he gave them likewise his blessed blood to drink in the form of wine, whereof it followeth in the Gospel: “And likewise taking the chalice after supper, he gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, ‘Take you and drink, all you, of this: this is my blood, of the new testament. This is the chalice the new testament in my blood—which for you and for many... shall be shed into the remission of sins.’”

Our Savior, at the converting and turning of the wine into his own precious blood... which he should so shortly after shed for our sins upon his painful cross, murmured not... nor grudged not... at the remembrance of his bitter Passion, but was glad, and gave God the Father thanks, that he vouchsafed to suffer him by his pain to pay our ransom... and buy our souls from pain; as say Saint Remigius and Saint Chrysostom. And our Savior in his so doing (saith Saint

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2 that only time: that time only  4, 5 stead: place
5 Pasch: Passover celebration  9 figure: prefigurement // old: former
10 from hence forth: from now on  14 sentence: meaning // declared: made clear
17 peruse: carefully examine  24, 25 testament: covenant
24 chalice: i.e., chalice of; chalice that is  26 into: unto
29 grudged not: i.e., had any misgivings  31 suffer: allow  32 buy: redeem
Chrysostom) teacheth us what pain soever we suffer, to suffer it in such wise… as we give God thank therefor.

“And after his thanks given to God, he gave the chalice to his apostles… and commanded them all drink thereof, saying, ‘This is my blood, of the new testament; this is the chalice the new testament in my blood.'”

In these words our Savior showed them what thing it was that he gave them to drink in the chalice (that is to wit, that it was his own blood), saying “This is my blood, of the new testament,” as Saint Matthew rehearseth it, or “This is the chalice the new testament in my blood,” as Saint Luke rehearseth it—either for that our Savior spoke both the one words and the other… or else for that both of the one words and the other the sentence is all one. For in the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus is it specified how that Moses in the confirmation of the Old Law… put half the blood of the sacrifice into a cup, and the other half he shed upon the altar; and after the volume of the Law read… he besprinkled the blood upon the people, and said unto them, “Hic est sanguis federis, quod pepigit Dominus vobiscum super cunctis sermonibus his”—“This is the blood of the league that our Lord hath made with you upon all these words.” And so was the old testament ratified and confirmed with blood. And in like wise was the new testament confirmed with blood—saving that, for to declare the great excellence of the new testament brought by the Son of God… above the old testament brought by the prophet Moses, whereas the old testament was ratified with the blood of a brute beast… the new testament was ratified with the blood of a reasonable man… and of that man that was also God; that is to wit, with the blessed blood of our Holy Savior himself. And the selfsame blood gave our Lord here unto his apostles in this blessed sacrament—as he plainly declared himself, saying, “Hic est sanguis meus novi testamenti” (“This is my blood, of the new testament”), or “Hic est calix novum testamentum in meo sanguine, qui pro vobis et pro multis fundetur in remissionem peccatorum” (“This is the chalice
the new testament in my blood—which shall be shed for you
and for many, for remission of sins”).

Here you see… that by the words of our Savior rehearsed by
Saint Matthew… and upon his words rehearsed by Saint Luke, our
Lord very plainly declared unto his apostles that in that cup was
the same blood, of his own, with which he could ratify his new
testament… and which blood should be shed upon the altar of
the cross for the remission of sins… not of themselves alone, but
also of many more.

When our Lord said, “This is the cup of the new testament in
my blood—which shall be shed for you and for many into remission
of sins,” he declared therein the efficacy of the new testament
above the old, in that the Old Law in the blood of beasts… could
but promise the remission-of-sin afterward to come; for as Saint
Paul saith, it was “impossible that
sin should be taken away with the blood of
brute beasts”; but the New Law with the blood of Christ… performeth
the thing that the Old Law promised: that is to wit,
remission of sins. And therefore our Savior said, “This is the
chalice the new testament in my blood”—that is to wit, “. . . to be confirmed
in my blood”—“which shall be shed into remission of sins.”

His words also declared the wonderful excellence of this new,
blessed sacrament above the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb… in these
Chrysostom words “pro vobis et pro multis” (“for you and for
many”). For in these words our Savior spoke (saith
Saint Chrysostom) as though he would say, “The blood of the Paschal
lamb was shed only for the first-begotten among the children of
Israel; but this blood of mine shall be shed for remission of
sins of all the whole world!” And so was it, according as Saint
Chrysostom saith, shed for the sins of the whole world. For
sufficient it was for the sins of the whole world… and as many more, too.

But it was effectually shed for those only that shall take the effect
thereof; which are only those that shall be saved thereby; which
Remigius shall be, as Saint Remigius saith, and as the
truth is, not the apostles only… but also many

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1, 7, etc. testament: covenant  3, 4 rehearsed: related  5 declared: stated
7 should: would  11, 21 into: unto  12, 22 declared: made known
17 performeth: brings to fulfillment; accomplishes  22 wonderful: wondrous
22 excellence: superiority  23 above: over  32 effectually: efficaciously
others of many regions, according to the aforesaid words of our
Savior “This is the chalice the new testament in my blood—
which shall be shed for you and for many, into remission
of sins.”

Then, likewise as he had before said (as you have heard
rehearsed by Saint Luke) that when he had with his disciples
drunk after the Paschal lamb, he would drink no more of
“the generation of the vine” till the kingdom of God were come, so
said he here again to them after the institution of his holy Blessed
Sacrament, “Dico enim vobis quia non bibam amodo de hoc genimine vitis
usque in diem illum cum illud bibam novum vobiscum in regno Patris mei Dei.”

These words diverse doctors do declare diversely. Some take
this saying of our Savior, rehearsed by Saint Matthew and
Saint Mark, to be the selfsame that Saint Luke rehearseth—and
that they were spoken only after the institution of the Sacrament;
and that Saint Luke observed the verity of the saying… and not
Gerson observed the time. And of this mind seemeth
Master Gerson to have been, as appeareth by
his rehearsing of the matter.

But divers other doctors take them as spoken at diverse times:
the one after the Pasch finished; the other after that—at the
institution of the Blessed Sacrament. And so seemeth it most plainly
to appear upon the words of Saint Luke. And albeit that the
first words, rehearsed by Saint Luke, and these others rehearsed
by Saint Matthew and Saint Mark… may be both understood
in one sentence, and as one thing twice said; that is to
wit, that in both the times of that saying, our Savior meant
that he would no more drink with his apostles after that time
in which they should then depart, after that supper, until himself
were risen again from death, and his body forever immortal
and impassible… which glory of his he called the kingdom of his
Father; after which entry thereinto by his Resurrection, he would both
eat and drink with them again… and so, would drink with

2 testament: covenant 3 into: unto 6, 13, 24 rehearsed: related
7 after: i.e., in connection with 8 generation: fruit
12, 20 diverse(ly): different(ly) // doctors: exegetes 12 declare: interpret
13 saying of: thing said by 14 rehearseth: relates 16 observed: adhered to
16 the verity of the saying: the truth of what was said
16–17 not observed: did not adhere to 19 rehearsing: relating
20 divers: several 21 Pasch: Passover celebration
21 finished: i.e., was finished 23 words of: i.e., wording given by
24 words: set of words 26 in one sentence: i.e., as having the same meaning
27 that saying: i.e., his saying such words 31 impassible: incapable of suffering
them the wine new in the kingdom of his Father (that is to wit, himself being in the kingdom of his Father… should drink the wine with them in a new manner; that is to wit, when he should be forever immortal and impassible); and that he would no more drink of that kind of wine of which he consecrated, and which he turned into his Blessed Blood, till his Passion were past and his new life come—albeit, I say, that I deny not but that thus they may be taken, and by some of the old holy doctors thus are declared indeed—yet are they by divers others of those old holy doctors expounded divers other wise… and, as it seemeth, may well be declared thus.

In the words rehearsed by Saint Luke—when our Savior said, “Dico enim vobis quod non bibam de generatione vitis donec regnum Dei veniat” (“I say verily to you that I shall not drink of the generation of the vine till the kingdom of God come”—our Savior meant in these words that not only not after the supper… but also not after the time of that draught there drunk to the Paschal lamb… he would drink no more of “the generation of the vine” till the “kingdom of God” were come; that is to wit, that he would before his Resurrection drink no more wine after that draught of wine which he drank next before those words spoken. And so did he, then, by those words also teach them to know and perceive well afterward… that the wine which before his other words (that Saint Matthew and Saint Mark rehearse, spoken at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament) was in the chalice—and which wine he there converted into his own precious blood—was at the time of the drinking thereof… not wine, but his own holy blood under the form of wine. Which thing they were, I say… besides his other, plain words “This is my blood, of the new testament, which shall be shed for you and for many into remission of sins”… well shown and taught in that he told them before the drinking of that (of which, as I shall after show, he drank himself with them)… that before his Resurrection (which was not then come), he would drink no wine.
Now, in his second words (rehearsed by Saint Matthew and Saint Mark; which words he spoke at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament); when that, after the wine turned into his blood… and taken to his apostles, he said, “Dico autem vobis quia non bibam amodo de hoc genimine vitis usque in diem illum cum illud bibam novum vobiscum in regno Patris mei Dei”—in these words (gathered together in one, out of the Gospels of the two aforesaid Evangelists) our Savior meant that he would after that draught… no more drink with them of his own Blessed Blood (which he drank with them then)... until his bitter Passion and his glorious Resurrection were performed.

For after his glorious Resurrection... it is very probable (both upon these words and some other places of the Scripture, too) that he not only did eat with them common meat, but also did consecrate and eat with them the Blessed Sacrament, also.

Now, that he should call here his own Blessed Blood by the name of “the generation of the vine” is nothing to be marveled, while we see it the common manner of Holy Scripture... to call his Blessed Body and Blood by the former names of the things which he converted into them—as God in the Scripture calleth Adam

Genesis 3:19 “earth” because he was made of the earth, saying,
Exodus 7:1o–12 “Terra es, et in terram reverteris”; and the Scripture calleth the serpent into which the rod of Aaron was turned… by the name of a rod (or a yard), while it was not rod but a serpent: “Virga Aaron... devoravit virgas magorum Aegyptiorum.” And over this, our Savior in those second words, as some holy doctors declare, by the “vine” meant himself—which afterward unto his apostles he declared himself, saying (in the fifteenth chapter of Saint John), “Ego sum vitis vera” (“I am the very vine”).

And so may every way... these words of our Savior spoken after the conversion of the wine into his Blessed Blood be well thus understood: “I say verily to you that I shall not from this time, in which I drink now thereof with you,
drink again of the generation of the vine—that is to wit, of my blood which I have here consecrated, and into which I have here converted and turned the generation of the vine (that is to say, the wine that came of the vine, and was in the chalice before)—until that day when,” etc.

Or else, after those other holy doctors that expound the “vine” to be himself, they may be well understood thus: “I say verily to you that I shall not from this time, in which I drink thereof with you now, drink any more of this ‘generation of the vine’ that we now drink of—that is to say, of mine own blood of the new testament (as I have told you), which is the generation of that vine...

*John 15:1* of which these other words of mine are verified, ‘Ego sum vitis vera’ (‘I am the very vine’), for of mine own body is mine own blood—of this ‘generation of the vine’ will I no more drink after this time… until that day in which I shall drink it with you new; that is to wit, when it shall be new in the kingdom of my Father God. That is to say that, I being in the kingdom of God (my very, natural father)—that is to wit, after my Resurrection, when my body shall be forever immortal and impassible, and in eternal glory—until that day will I not after this time drink any more of this generation of the vine… that is myself, which am the very vine. And then, after that, will I drink it again with you—at which time it shall be new.”

Now, that with those words this exposition (by which they be understood not of wine, but of his Blessed Blood) most properly should agree—it appeareth both by divers other things that well may be gathered upon the circumstance of the matter… and also upon this latter saying of our Savior compared with the former. For in the former, he said that he would after that draught of wine that he drank to the Paschal lamb… drink no more wine till after his Resurrection. And now had he drunk wine again after that and before his Resurrection… if that which he drank the second time had been wine—as it was not, but was only his

1, 3, etc. generation: fruit 4 of: from 6 after: in accord with
6 holy doctors: theologians / exegetes 7 verily: with literal truthfulness
11 testament: covenant 12 of which: i.e., by which 13 verified: borne out
13, 22 very: true 18 very: actual 20 impossible: incapable of suffering
22 which: who 24 exposition: interpretation
25 not: i.e., to refer not  // of: i.e., to  // properly: truly; well
26 agree: be in accord // it appeareth: i.e., this is made evident
26 divers: several  // well: rightly 27 may be gathered: can be inferred
27, 28 upon: i.e. from 27 circumstance: context
28 saying of: utterance of; thing said by 29 draught: drink
31 had he: would he have 33 only: solely
own Blessed Blood. And therefore is it very probable that in his
second saying, by these words “this generation of the vine” he
meant not any wine... but the blessed blood of himself.

Also, in the words that he spoke before of the Paschal lamb,
when he said he would eat the Paschal lamb after that no
more... till it were “fulfilled and perfected in the kingdom of God,” he
meant that the Mosaic sacrifice, of the Paschal lamb that was
the only figure, he would never eat more.

But the very Paschal lamb, that was the verity of that figure;
that is to wit, his own Blessed Body and Blood: after that the
figure were (by his new sacrament instituted, and by his Passion
suffered, and by his glorious body risen again from death) fulfilled
in the kingdom of God—that would he then eat again with them,
in the Blessed Sacrament, under the form of bread, as he now
would when he instituted it... and as he did after indeed.

And so are these words of the “chalice” understood, in like
wise, of his Blessed Blood in the Sacrament—which it seemeth that he,
by those words, in like wise promised to drink again with them
after his Resurrection.

Finally, for this exposition, I note this word novum; that is to say,
“new.” Where our Savior, in the said latter saying, saith, “Dico
autem vobis quia amodo non bibam de hoc genimine vitis usque in diem illum
cum illud bibam novum vobiscum in regno Patris mei Dei”—
“I say verily to you that from hence forth I shall not drink
of this generation of the vine until that day when I shall drink
it with you new in the kingdom of my Father God”—
in these words, I say, I note and mark this word novum
(“new”). For albeit that divers doctors expound it “novum: id est, ‘novo
modo’” (“‘new’: that is to wit, ‘in a new manner!’”), because our Lord after
his Resurrection... did both eat and drink with his disciples
such common meat and drink as he was before wont to do, but
yet in a new manner; that is to wit, now immortal and impassible,
and not for the necessary food of the body, but for the proof
of that he was risen with his very body—albeit, I say, that some
doctors expound that word novum thus—yet seemeth me that the

1 probable: tenable 1–2 his second saying: i.e., that second thing he said
2, 25 generation: fruit 8 the only: only the 8, 9, 11 figure: prefiguration
8 more: again 9 very: true // verity of: i.e., reality being represented by
12 glorious: glorified 14 Blessed Sacrament: Holy Eucharist
16 of: about // understood: i.e., to be understood
17, 18 wise: manner 17 of: i.e., to refer to 20 exposition: commentary
21 saying: statement 24 verily: with literal truthfulness
24 from hence forth: from now on 28 divers: several 28, 35 doctors: exegetes
31 common: ordinary // meat: food 32 impassible: incapable of suffering
33 food: nourishment 34 of that: of the fact that // very: actual
35 seemeth me: it seems to me
other exposition is much more apt and consonant thereunto. For this word *novum* seemeth not there to be put for an adverb, but is a noun adjective—and therefore it signifieth some kind of newness in the drink itself; whereas by that exposition, all the

newness is in the drinker (that is to wit, in the person of Christ)… and in the act of drinking (as done for a new cause), but no manner of newness in the drink itself at all.

For in the common wine that our Savior drank with them after his Resurrection… was there none other manner of newness than there was therein before. And therefore, as I said, this other exposition that I have here shown seemeth much more agreeable unto the text; that is to wit, that after that time he would no more drink with them his own Blessed Blood, which he drank with them then in the Blessed Sacrament, until that day when he should in the kingdom of God his Father… drink that Blood with them *new*. For after his glorious Resurrection, that holy blood of his—and *all* his blessed body—was waxen new; that is to wit, of a new condition… other than it was at *that* time in which they received it in the Blessed Sacrament.

For albeit that his body so delivered them at that time… suffered not, nor by their eating and receiving into their bodies was not pained: yet was it such… that afterward it did suffer pain and death upon the cross.

But when they received it again sacramentally after his Resurrection—then was it in eternal glory so confirmed, and in such wise immortal and impassible, that it should never die, nor never suffer pain, after.

And so, though there were in his Blessed Body and his Blood given them in the Sacrament before his Passion… such a secret wonderful glory of impassibility for the time… as was in his body, for the time, a visible, open glory at his marvelous Transfiguration: yet in the sacramental receiving after his glorious Resurrection, it had that point of newness… which it had not actually before—that is to wit, without loss, diminishment, or intermission, eternal enduring of impassible and immortal glory.

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1, 4, 11 exposition: interpretation
1 apt and consonant thereunto: i.e., apposite thereto and consonant therewith
3 a noun adjective: a noun modifier (now simply called an adjective)
4 that: i.e., that first  8 common: ordinary  11 shown: set forth
11 agreeable: correspondent  17 waxen: become
20 at that time: i.e., the time of the Last Supper  22 pained: afflicted with pain
25 confirmed: firmly established  26 impassible: incapable of suffering
28 were: i.e., was  29 secret: hidden; unperceivable  30 wonderful: wondrous
30 impassibility: immunity to suffering
30, 31 for the time: for the time being; temporarily  31 marvelous: astounding
33 point: aspect  // actually: i.e., except only potentially
34 intermission: temporary cessation  35 enduring: perduring / experiencing
35 impassible: suffering-free; uninjurable
And so should, as I say, that generation of that vine (that is to wit, the blessed blood of his own holy person) which he drank with them—consecrated of the generation of the common vine, and in the likeness and form of common wine—be new after his glorious Resurrection; before which time... he there told them that he would drink no more thereof after that time... in which, at his Maundy, in the first institution, he and all they did drink thereof together; of which their drinking with him... Saint Mark maketh mention, saying, “Et biberunt ex eo omnes” (“And they drank thereof, all”; that is to wit, all the twelve apostles).

That all the apostles drank thereof appeareth well by these words; at the leastwise, as many as were present at the time—and that were they all twelve. For though some have doubted, and some also thought, that Judas was gone before, yet is it the most common sentence of all the old holy men, and most received for the truth among all Christian people, that the traitor received it too; whereof we shall have occasion to speak after, in other places.

But, now, that our Savior did receive and eat his own blessed body, and drink his own blessed blood, in the Blessed Sacrament, at his Maundy, with his apostles, himself... if any man doubt: it seemeth me that his own holy words afore-rehearsed will well declare it... in which words he said that himself would drink no more thereof... till he would drink it with them “new” in “the kingdom of God”; that is to wit, in his glory, as I have before shown you.

And that he called his glory “the kingdom of God” appeareth both by other places of Scripture... and also by his own words where, intending to show to some of his disciples (that is to wit, Saint Peter, Saint James, and Saint John) a sight and show of his glory in his Transfiguration, he said, “Sunt quidam de hic stantibus qui non gustabunt mortem donec videbunt regnum Dei”—“There be some here standing that shall not taste the death till they shall see the kingdom of God.”

Besides this, likewise as he did himself... both eat and drink with them of the old Paschal lamb, that was but the figure: so is
it none other to be thought but that in the instituting of this new, blessed sacrament, the verity of that figure, he did himself eat and drink with them too.

_Saint Chrysostom_ 
And that he so did indeed... holy Saint Chrysostom declareth; which in a homily upon these words of Christ “Bibite ex hoc omnes” (“Drink you of this, all”) saith thus:

“No autem hoc audientes turbarentur, primum ipse sanguine suum bibit, inducens eos sine turbatione in communionem mysteriorum”—“Lest that they hearing that word should be troubled therewith, he drank his Blood first himself, inducing them into the communion of the Sacraments without abashment” (or “trouble”).

_Saint Jerome_ 
Holy Saint Jerome also, in his book against the great heretic Helvidius, writeth in this wise: “Sic igitur Dominus Iesus fuit conviva et convivium; ipse comedens et qui comeditur”—“So, therefore, was our Lord Jesus both the guest and the feast. He was both the eater... and was also he that was eaten.”

Now, forasmuch as we shall somewhat farther enter into the treating of this blessed sacrament, let us pray him that hath instituted it... that we may in such wise treat thereof... that it may both in the writer and the reader... stretch to the fruit of their souls.

_The Prayer_

Our most dear Savior Christ, which after the finishing of the old Paschal sacrifice... hath instituted the new sacrament of thine own Blessed Body and Blood... for a memorial of thy bitter Passion: give us such true faith therein, and such fervent devotion thereto, that our souls may take fruitful ghostly food thereby.

_The Second Lecture upon the Blessed Sacrament_
So excellent is, good Christian readers, this holy, blessed sacrament above all others… that neither is there any man able to enter, pierce, and perceive so many great, wonderful things as are to be noted therein… nor those that of the old holy doctors are already noted, and of all Christian regions already received and believed, able (as the dignity of the thing requireth) well to declare or worthily to speak of. For in this holy sacrament… is the very body and the very blood of him… of whom all other sacraments receive their virtue and strength. For it is (as you have heard of Christ’s own words) the selfsame sacred body of Christ, and the selfsame blessed blood of his, that was delivered and shed for our sins.

Now, albeit that there are in divers countries of Christendom some (and hard it is to find any country so fortunate as to be clear and clean without) that labor in this blessed sacrament to subvert the very, true Christian faith… and would make men ween that those plain words of Christ “This is my body,” etc., were otherwise meant than they were indeed, and that our Savior in his so saying… did not affirm or intend… that the thing which he gave his apostles to eat and to drink was his very body and his very blood; but that they were still bread and wine, which he called then (say they) by the names of his “body” and his “blood”… because he would institute them for to stand as tokens of his body and his blood, for perpetual remembrance of his Passion—albeit there lack not, I say, some that labor to bring good faithful folk out of the true belief into this erroneous mind—yet is it not my present purpose to dispute the matter with them… but to show and set forth the truth before the eyes of the reader, that he may rather of the truth read… increase in faith, and conceive devotion, than with much time bestowed in the reading of their erroneous fallacies… misoccupy his ears, and heap up in his heart a dunghill of their devilish vanities.

Howbeit, somewhat of theirs is it, good readers, in my mind necessary
that you know, to the intent you may the better beware of their wiliness.

Three special engines use these manner of folk... with which they busily, with all their might, oppugn the inexpugnable person of our Savior Christ, enforcing themselves by force... to put out his glorious body out of the Blessed Sacrament.

First, using the name of “sacrament of Christ’s body” with us, whereby good simple folk would ween they meant as we do, they misuse the meaning of that word against us, and in corners corrupt some well-minded men... before they perceive the train of their crafty purpose.

For they make them ween that since we call it all... the “blessed sacrament of Christ’s body and blood,” therefore it is none other but “a bare sacrament only”; that is to wit, a token, a figure, a sign or memorial of his body and his blood crucified and shed... and not his own very body and his blood in deed.

Secondly, they say that those words of Christ... may be well and conveniently expounded in such wise as they may serve to prove the Sacrament a figure. And upon that they conclude that since they may be so expounded, conveniently, by an allegory... there is no necessity to expound them otherwise; nor that those words should not be so taken and declared... as to say that they signify... that in the Sacrament is Christ’s blessed body in deed.

Thirdly, they enforce that reason with the expositions of old holy men... which have expounded those words in an allegory sense... and have, in their writings, called this blessed holy housel by the name of a “sacrament,” a “sign,” a “memorial,” and a “figure.” By which words of those old holy saints... those new folk labor to blear the unlearned reader’s eye... and make him therewith ween that those old holy men, in that they called it a “sign,” a “token,” or a “figure,” did well declare that they took it not for the very body in deed, for that body cannot be (they say), by no means, a figure of itself.
These three are, I say, good reader, their three special darts. For I deny not but that they use more: as the words of Scripture whereby they would prove Christ’s body not in earth—because he said, before his ascension to heaven, that they should not have him here still in earth—but he meant of his corporeal conversation as they had him before—

And where they would also by the words of Scripture… prove the Blessed Sacrament bread. But the custom of the Scripture is so common in that point—to call a thing not as it is, but as it was, or as it seemeth (whereof I have told you an example or two before)—that all the hold they can take thereof… slippeth out of their hand.

I deny not also but that they lay against the Sacrament… and say that Christ’s blessed body is not there… because, they say, it cannot. For it cannot be, they say, in so many places at once. But, now, since the truth is… that himself saith it is there, and in his so saying… so meant in very deed (as both before is proved and yet shall hereafter): all that reason of theirs (that it cannot be so) hath to any Christian man (that taketh Christ for God) no manner taste of any reason at all. For it standeth, you see well, upon this ground only: that God is not able to perform his word!

Therefore, albeit that, as I say, they say such other things too: yet are those three things that I have rehearsed you… the special things—and, in effect, the only things—with which they have their special hope to deceive unlearned folk.

Now purpose I not, yet, in this present treatise upon the Passion, to enter much in disputations with them upon these three points neither—for that thing would require a whole volume alone (the labor whereof, if God hereafter give me time and opportunity thereto, I purpose not to refuse)—but I will, in effect, for this while, only rehearse you some of those things that holy cunning men before my days… have of this holy, blessed sacrament, concerning this matter, left us behind them in writing. Which things if the
reader diligently consider... shall, I trust, be able somewhat to serve and suffice him to spy the fallacies, and soil the subtleties, of all those folks' false arguments and objections by himself.

Consider now, good readers, and remember... that since this excellent, high sacrament... under a form and likeness so common, and so simple, in sight... covertly containeth in it a wonderful secret treasure... and signifieth and betokeneth, also, manifold marvelous mysteries: the holy cunning fathers before our days... have had much ado to find names enough and convenient... with which they might in any wise insinuate and show so many such manner things of this blessed sacrament... as are partly contained therein... and partly signified thereby. And therefore, by the secret instinct of the Spirit of God... by which the Catholic Church of Christ is in such things led and ruled, the old holy, virtuous fathers... have not only called (upon effectual causes) this holy sacrament by sundry diverse names... to signify thereby sundry singular things thereof, but have also for the same intent (upon divers effectual respects that they saw and considered therein) called some two sundry things... both by one common name.

For the better perceiving thereof, we must mark and consider that in this blessed sacrament... there are two things actually and really contained. One... that is a very, bodily substance; and that is the very Blessed Body and Blood of our Savior himself. The other... that is not any substance, but accidents; that is to wit, those accidents that were before in the bread and wine... which bread and wine are converted, by the almighty power of God, into the very Body and Blood of Christ. Those accidents, I say, of whiteness, redness, hardness, softness, weight, savor, and taste, and such other like, remain and abide in the Blessed Sacrament... and, by the mighty power of almighty God, they remain without the body of which they be the accidents. Which while they be now neither accidents in the bread and wine (since bread or wine none is there) nor accidents unto the Blessed Body and Blood of Christ

2 soil the subtleties: i.e., clear away the smoke screens
4 excellent: superlative // simple: lowly / insignificant // wonderful: wondrous
6 secret: hidden // betokeneth: points to // cunning: learned
9 convenient: befitting // might: could // wise: way // insinuate: intimate; hint at
10 show: call attention to // manner: kinds of
12 secret: mysterious; unperceivable
13 instinct: prompting
14 old: early
15 upon effectual causes: i.e., for sound, substantial reasons
16 sundry: various // diverse: different
17 singular: individual
18 upon: on the basis of // divers: several
19 sundry: separate
22, 23 very: real; actual // 24, 25, etc. accidents: nonsubsistent, nonintrinsic properties
28 savor: smell // while: since
(which two things are the only corporeal substance that are there); and accidents are not naturally, nor the mind of a living man cannot well imagine how any accident can be, but in a bodily substance whereunto it is accident, and whereupon it dependeth: much folly were it, therefore, much to muse thereupon… how, and in what wise, and wherein, these accidents abide and are conserved; but that question (with many such others more… wherewith a proud curious mind hath carried many a man out of faith) let us remit unto God. For as he only… can make those miracles, so can he only… tell how.

Now, albeit that an accident, by a general manner of speaking, is a thing (since it is not nothing)—and in such wise I mean by this word “a thing”… when I say there are in the Blessed Sacrament two “things”—yet, forasmuch as the name of “sacrament” properly signifieth a sign, or token, which betokeneth a holy thing, the “thing” of a sacrament… is properly called… that holy thing that the sacrament betokeneth. As in Baptism, the washing of the body with water, signifying the washing of the soul by grace, is, properly, the sacrament, and the washing of the soul from sin is called the thing of the sacrament; that is to say, the thing that the sacrament, or sacramental sign… I mean the washing in the water… betokeneth.

Now, in this holy Sacrament of the Altar (which hath, as reason is, above all other sacraments sundry special prerogatives) there are two “sacraments,” or sacramental signs, of sundry kinds: the one an outward sacrament, or sacramental sign sensible (as Baptism hath, and Confirmation, and the other four), the other an inward sacrament, or sacramental sign unsensible; which none of the remnant have.

The outward, sensible sacrament, or sacramental sign, is the form of bread and the form of wine.

The inward sacrament and sacramental sign unsensible… is the very Blessed Body of Christ under that form of bread, and the very Blessed Blood of Christ under the form of wine.

5 much folly were it: very foolish would it be  6 wise: way
6 abide: remain  8 curious: inappropriately inquisitive
9 remit unto God: refer to God; leave it to God to answer // make: work; do
9, 10 only: alone  12 in such wise: i.e., something like this is what
13 word: expression  14 name: term // properly: in the strict sense
15 token: indicator  15, 17, 22 betokeneth: points to / gives evidence of
16 properly: with strict correctness  18 properly: strictly speaking
23–24 as reason is: as stands to reason  24 sundry: several
24 prerogatives: marks of distinction  25 sundry: distinct
26, 28, etc. (unsensible: (not) sensorily perceivable; (not) visible, audible, etc.
28, 32 inward: inner  29 remnant: rest (of the sacraments)
33, 34 very: actual; really-for-real
Now are there likewise in this blessed sacrament—above the nature, also, of all the other six—two things of the sacrament, or two sacramental things; that is to wit, two things that are by the two sacramental signs betokened. And those two things—though they be both secret and unsensible—yet are they of diverse, sundry kinds too. For the one is both by the sacrament (that is to wit, by the sacramental sign) signified... and also in the sacrament contained. The other is only by the sacrament signified, but in the sacrament is it not contained.

The “thing” of the sacrament that is both signified and contained... is the very Body and the very Blood of our Savior himself... therein actually and really present.

The “thing” of this blessed sacrament that is signified thereby and not contained therein... is the unity, or society, of all good, holy folk... in the Mystical Body of Christ.

For this must we now first understand: that the first kind of “sacrament” that we spoke of (that is to wit, the outward sacramental signs) be sacraments (that is to wit, signs and tokens) of both these two sacramental things; that is to wit, of the very, natural body of Christ, that is in the Sacrament contained, and also of the society of all saints in the Mystical Body of Christ—that is not contained in it, but signified and betokened by it.

For the outward sacramental signs (that is to wit, the forms of bread and wine) betoken the very, natural body and blood of Christ being in the Sacrament. For as the holy doctors declare, likewise as bread specially refresheth and sustaineth the body—Psalm 104:14-15 whereof the Scripture saith, “Panis confirmat cor hominis” (“Bread strengtheneth a man’s heart”)—and wine gladdeneth the heart (whereof the Scripture saith also, “Vinum laetificat cor hominis”): so the very Blessed Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament received worthily... doth specially, above all other sacraments, refresh, make strong, and confirm the soul in grace, and so filleth in some good folk the soul with spiritual consolation...
that the soul is in a certain manner of a heavenly drunkenness.

In proof whereof... our Savior saith of his body in the Sacrament,

\[ \text{John 6:51, 58} \]

"Panis quem ego dabo, caro mea est: qui manducat hunc panem... vivet in aeternum" ("The bread that I shall
give... is my flesh: he that eateth this bread... shall live everlastingly");

and of his blessed blood in the Sacrament... he saith by

\[ \text{Psalm 23:5} \]

the mouth of the prophet, "Calix meus inebrians, quam praeclarus est!" ("My cup—that maketh men
drunk—how noble it is!").

These outward sacramental signs... the forms of bread and wine...
do also signify and betoken unto us the other sacramental thing, or
the other "thing of the sacrament"; that is to wit, that "thing of the
sacrament" that is signified by the Sacrament, but not contained

therein: that is to wit, the society of all saints in the Mystical Body
of Christ. For likewise as the bread which is, in this holy sacrament,
turned into Christ’s very Body (of which bread the form still
remaineth) was made of many corns of wheat into one loaf, and
the wine that is converted into his Blessed Blood (of which wine the
form remaineth) was made of many grapes flowing into one wine:

so be all holy saints gathered together in one... into the unity of

\[ \text{1 Corinthians 10:16–17} \]

Christ’s holy Mystical Body, as Saint Paul
toucheth in his Epistle to the Corinthians, saying,

"Unus panis et unum corpus multi sumus, omnes qui de uno pane et de uno
calice participamus" ("We many be one bread and one body—as many as
be partakers of one bread and one cup").

Saint Augustine also, upon the sixth chapter of Saint John, in his
twenty-sixth treatise saith thus:

\[ \text{Saint Augustine} \]

"Propterea quippe, sicut etiam ante nos hoc intelleaxterunt
homines Dei, Dominus noster Iesus Christus corpus
et sanguine suum in eis rebus commendavit quae ad unum aliquid rediguntur
ex multis. Namque aliud in unum ex multis granis conficitur, aliud in unum ex
multis acinis confluit. Denique iam exponit quomodo id fiat quod loquitur, et

1 manner: kind 3, 7, 14 Sacrament: i.e., Eucharist 9 that: which
10 noble: splendid 15 society: togetherness; communion
18 of many corns: from many grains 23 toucheth: mentions in passing
27–28 his... treatise: i.e., his Tractates on the Gospel of John, 26.17–18.
quid sit manducare corpus eius, et sanguine bibere: ‘Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.’ Hoc est ergo manducare illam escam, et illum bibere potum: in Christo manere, et illum manentem in se habere. Ac per hoc qui non manet in Christo, et in quo non manet Christus, procul dubbio nee manducat spiritualiter carnem eius, nec bibit eius sanguine, licet carnaliter et visibiliter premat dentibus sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Christi sed magis tantum rei sacramentum ad iudicium sibi manducat et bibit, quia immunus praesumpsit ad Christi accedere sacramenta; quae aliquis non digne sumit nisi qui mundus est, de quibus dicitur, ‘Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt’”—

“Therefore, verily, as also before us the men of God understood this, our Lord Jesus Christ commended” (or “left”) “his Body and Blood in such things as of many are brought unto some one thing. For of many corns” (or “grains”) “together… there cometh one other thing; and out of many grapes” (or “berries”) “there followeth one other thing. Finally he declareth how it may come to pass, that which he speaketh, and what it is to eat his body and drink his blood: ‘He that eateth my flesh… and drinketh my blood… dwelleth in me, and I in him.’ Then, this it is to eat that flesh and to drink that drink: to dwell in Christ, and to have Christ dwelling in him.

And by this thing, he that dwelleth not in Christ, and in whom Christ dwelleth not—without doubt, he neither eateth spiritually his flesh… neither drinketh he spiritually his blood… though he do carnally and visibly tear or gnaw with his teeth the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; but rather, he eateth and drinketh the Sacrament of so worthy a thing unto his own judgment” (or “condemnation”); “the which no man receiveth worthily but such as are clean and pure, of whom it is written, ‘Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.’”

The other kind of sacrament (or sacramental sign)—that is to wit, the sacrament (or sacramental sign) secret and unsensible—is, I say, the very, natural body and blood of our Savior in the form of bread and wine. For his very body, and his very blood, in these forms so known and seen unto us… not by our senses, but by the truth of our faith, do betoken and represent unto us the selfsame body and the selfsame blood… crucified and shed upon the cross. For our Savior at his Last Supper, at the institution

11 verily: truly 13 of: from 16 declareth: explains // may: can
21 by this thing: i.e., accordingly; consequently 23 neither: nor 31 secret: hidden
31 unsensible: not sensorily perceivable 32, 33 very: actual; real
35 betoken: symbolize // represent: represent / render present
of the Blessed Sacrament, did ordain, institute, and appoint
them… to signify, betoken, and represent unto his Church, under
those forms, the selfsame body crucified, and the selfsame
blood also shed, for remission of man’s sins at his bitter Passion.

And therefore, when our Savior gave his Blessed Body, in
Matthew 26:26–28 form of bread, unto his apostles, saying
tradetur,” and “Hic est sanguis meus, qui pro vobis et
multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum” (“This is my body, which
shall be delivered for you”; “this is my blood, which for you and for
many shall be shed into remission of sins”), he said unto them
Ibid. farther: “Hoc facite in meam commemorationem”—“This
do ye in the remembrance of me.”

So that there we may see that he there instituted the same body
of his… that should be delivered for us unto death, and the same
blood that should be shed for our sins, to be in his Church
continually consecrated and celebrated… as a monument, and a
memorial, representing to us himself.

Now, in what wise those secret, invisible sacraments his own
very, natural Blessed Body and Blood… under those visible sacraments
those forms of bread and wine… should signify, betoken,
and represent unto us himself—that is to say, the same body and
blood in their proper form—the Apostle explaineth in the eleventh
1 Corinthians 11:26 chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians,
saying, “Quotienscumque manducabis panem hunc
et calicem bibes, moriemur Domini annuntiabis
donec veniat” (“As often as you shall eat this bread and drink this
cup, you shall show the death of our Lord till he come”).

Here we see that whereas our Savior in his own words
ordained his own, very Body and Blood in the Sacrament… to signify,
betoken, and represent himself unto our “remembrance”:
Saint Paul showeth here… that it is the remembrance of him as in
his Passion; and so betoken his Body and his Blood in the Sacrament…
the selfsame body in its own likeness hanging on the
cross, and the selfsame blood in the proper likeness... on the same... shed for our sins.

The selfsame unsensible sacrament also (the natural body of Christ, that is under the sensible “sacrament” of bread) signifieth and betokeneth the other aforesaid sacramental thing: that is to wit, the society of saints. For like as the natural body of Christ is many members in one natural body—so is that society of saints many lively members in the unity of Christ’s Mystical Body.

And thus we see, good Christian readers, that the outward, sensible sacraments—the forms of bread and wine—be in such wise figures, tokens, and sacramental signs... that they be only sacramental signs, and not sacramental things.

And, on the other side, the secret sacramental thing... which is, both by the outward, sensible sacraments and by the secret, unsensible sacraments, signified and not contained—that is to wit, the society of saints in the unity of Christ’s Body Mystical—is only the thing of the sacrament (or the sacramental thing), and not a sacramental sign—neither sensible nor unsensible. For it is signified, only, and signifieth not. But the very, natural Body and Blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine... be both sacramental signs, because they signify; and also sacramental things, because they be signified.

Yet must we further know... that albeit we speak only of the Blessed Body and Blood of Christ... that are verily present in form of bread and wine, yet is there with them... the soul of our Savior, also. For his Blessed Body and Blood in the Sacrament... though they seem dead (for the more full representation andfiguring of the same body and blood remaining dead on the cross... after his holy soul given up to the Father; whereby his bitter Passion was fully performed and finished)—yet be they not dead in the Sacrament, but quick and animated with his blissful soul; which after the return thereof, and copulation again with his immortal and impassible body, never departed after from it, nor never shall.
There is with it also, besides his blessed soul, his Almighty-Godhead. For the Godhead from the first time of his Incarnation… never departed neither from the soul nor from the body.

But when they two were by death parted and severed asunder, the Godhead (that is to wit, the almighty, natural Son of the almighty Father; the Second Person in Trinity; of which Father and Son… the third almighty Person of the coeternal Trinity proceeded) was still in unity of person… both with the blessed soul delivering the old fathers in hell… and with the body lying dead in the sepulchre, too.

Moreover, albeit that the Blessed Blood is consecrated severally, under the form of wine, to signify and represent unto us that in the Passion (of which the Blessed Sacrament is a memorial) the blood was severed from the body: yet is there in the Blessed Sacrament… both the blood with the body that is in the form of bread… and the body with the blood that is under form of wine; that is to wit, the Body under the form of bread immediately… as by the form of bread most especially signified, and the Blood by concomitance… because the Body is never without it; and likewise, under the form of wine… the Blessed Blood immediately—because there, by that form of wine, the Blood is chiefly signified—and the whole Blessed Body is there with it by concomitance, because that the Blood, since his glorious Resurrection, never was nor is, nor never shall be, separate from his whole Blessed Body.

If men ask then the question what we may think of the holy blood of Christ out of the Sacrament… continually kept and honored in divers places, and with many great miracles approved: methinketh it may be answered in two manner wise without any peril of our faith. For I see no necessity to say that all the blood that Christ had in his body at any time here in earth… is in his body now. And so may some part of his very holy blood… that hath been sometime in his blessed body… be now remaining in earth. And also, since his blessed body may be where it will, his very glorious blood may be by miracle… in sundry places sensible where it pleaseth himself—and his blessed body, invisible, also therewith.
In a crucifix struck… God may also create new blood which is none of his. And over this, the blissful soul of Christ… and his Almighty-Godhead, also… be both twain, I say, not immediately contained in the Sacrament, because they be neither immediately signifyed by those sensible sacramental signs the forms of bread and wine… nor be there as secret, unsensible signs appointed to signify any other things, as the Blessed Body and the Blood be; but be, therefore, there by concomitance, because from the body and the blood… neither the soul nor the Godhead is at no time since the Resurrection asunder.

And by concomitance are there also… both the Father and the Holy Ghost. For since the Godhead of the Son… and the Godhead of them both… is all one self Godhead: neither of them both can be severed from him, but it must needs be that where he is, there be they both—not only by a general manner of being (by which each of them is ever with any of all the things that they have created), but also by that special manner of being by which (whatsoever manner that be) any of those Three Persons is with himself… except the only personal distinction.

It seemeth also that by concomitance—though not a concomitance following of like necessity, yet by a certain concomitance following of convenient congruity—there is everywhere evermore about this blessed sacrament… a glorious heavenly company of blessed angels and saints, as divers holy doctors declare.

Now, forasmuch as under any of the two outward, sensible sacraments (the forms either of the bread or the wine)… the whole inward, unsensible sacrament (the very Body and Blood of Christ) is, as I have shown you, verily and fully contained; and also under every part thereof, be it divided into never so many: therefore, whosoever worthily do receive his Holy Housel under any one of those two forms only… doth verily and sufficiently receive both the Blessed Body and Blood of our Savior—and therewith his blessed soul, and his Godhead, too… yea, and all the whole Trinity—together.
And albeit that of old time, lay people did commonly receive their Housel under both the forms, yet always—from the beginning—did they sometimes receive it some under the one form… and some under the other… alone, as by the old writings of the old holy saints it doth, in divers places, appear. Howbeit, when they received their Housel under the one kind alone, it was most commonly under the form of bread… because that under that form, it was most able both to be carried without peril of spilling… and longest to be kept without peril of turning.

Upon which thing so long ago begun and used, it came to that point afterward that—for divers inconveniences which many times mishapped in the Blessed Blood under the form of wine… when the common people were houseled under both the forms—the whole people through Christendom fell in a custom uniform… all in one fashion to receive their Holy Housel: that is to wit, the very, whole Body of Christ… and Blood, both… under the form of bread only. Of which custom no man hath heard or read any beginning; which thing alone may well suffice to make indifferent men perceive… that it began even forthwith after Christ’s death… and that the lawfulness thereof was known and taught by the tradition of the apostles themselves. For surely if it had not been known for lawful of old, the whole people of all Christendom would never have taken it up of new… being a thing of neither pleasure nor winning… nor being nothing forced unto it. For law was there none made to command it.

Bohemia

Howbeit, when that the country of Bohemia, falling into many heresies, began… only to do the contrary, receiving it under both the forms (wherein the body of Christendom would not have stuck to suffer them, as a thing lawful to them that would), but also took upon them farther… to reprove, and reproach for damnable, the common, long-continued custom of the whole corps of Christendom—upon this demeanor of

1 of old time: in days of old  2, 6, 15 Housel: Communion  4 old: early
5, 11 divers: various 6 the one kind alone: just the one species or the other 9 turning: spoiling; going bad (on the accident level) 10 upon: from 10 used: practiced 11 for: on account of // inconveniences: improprieties 12 mishapped in: unfortunately took place in connection with 13 houseled: given Communion 14, 22 whole people: entire population 14 through: throughout // fell in: settled into 14 custom uniform: i.e., uniform custom 15 one: the same 18 indifferent: impartial; unbiased 19 even forthwith after: i.e., all the way back to right after 20, 21 lawfulness: licit(ness) 23 being: i.e., it being // winning: (any) gain 24 being nothing: i.e., they being in any way // stuck: hesitated 29 suffer: bear with 30 them that would: i.e., whoever wanted to do it 31 reprove: criticize // reproach for: censure as 32 whole corps: entire body 32 demeanor: conduct
theirs, the General Council of Constance... condemned in their so doing their over-arrogant error. For, upon that point of theirs, if the whole body of Christendom may damnably be deceived in matter concerning our faith or the use of the sacraments, then followeth there an inevitable confusion, and nothing can there in the Catholic Church be sure: neither Tradition, law, custom, nor Scripture—neither to know how it is to be understood... nor yet so much as which the very books be; as holy Saint Augustine, against the great heretics the Manichæans, doth very clearly declare.

Now is this custom (and long was ere their heresies began in Bohemia) so universal... that neither lay nor priest, man nor woman, good nor bad, either otherwise used in receiving the Holy Housel beside the Mass... or anything repugned thereat.

Howbeit—though, as I say, this guise and custom was universal, both with lay people and priests, in being houseled of another man’s hand (as the priests be themselves always, save only when they say Mass)—yet did there never priest in the Mass... use to consecrate in the one form alone. And the cause is because that in the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is (as the old holy doctors all with one voice agree; and all the corps of Christendom with them, from the apostles’ days) not only a sacrament, but also a sacrifice... that, by the offering of the Body and Blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine upon the altar, representeth the sacrifice in which the selfsame body and blood in their own proper form... was offered upon the cross.

And therefore, albeit that in each of the two forms is the whole Sacrament (both for the thing that it signifieth and for the thing that it containeth), yet under the one kind only was it never used to offer that Holy Sacrifice, but under the both twain together,

Genesis 14:18 that the thing should be correspondent unto the figure. For this Holy Sacrifice was forefigured in the offering of Melchizedek—that offered both bread and wine.

2 over-arrogant: beyond-arrogant
2 upon... theirs: i.e., supposing that tenet of theirs to be correct 3 may: can
3 be deceived: go wrong 4 matter: something // use: celebrating 7 yet: even
7–10: See Saint Augustine, Against the Fundamental Epistle of Manichæus, 5.6.
8 very books: i.e., actual books of it 10 declare: state 11 ere: before
13 used: behaved // the Holy Housel: Holy Communion 14 beside the: outside of
14 anything repugned thereat: made any objection to it 15 guise: practice
16 houseled of: given Communion by 16–17 another man’s: someone else’s
18 use: make it his practice 19 the one form alone: just the one form or the other
20 Blessed Sacrament: i.e., Eucharist // old holy doctors: early theologians
20–21 with one voice: unanimously 21 all the corps: the whole body
24 representeth: makes present / reenacts 25 proper: natural 29 kind: species
29 used: i.e., the practice 30 the both twain: both of the two 33 that: who
Yet is there, also, put into the wine before the Consecration… a little water, always; whereof we find no word written in the Gospel, nor any plain place in all the Scripture for it. And yet may it not be lawfully left out, as all the old holy doctors teach us. And divers causes they lay of that institution—partly for that out of the holy heart of Christ, when it was pierced with the spear, there issued both blood and water. And some allege that it is done for to signify the joining of the people with Christ. For as it appeareth in the Apocalypse, by water is signified people. And finally, some holy saints say that it is done because that our Savior himself at his Maundy… tempered his wine with water.

And all these may be good causes… with the truth, and the will of God, well known; but else I verily believe that no good man, upon any of these considerations (or any other), when he should consecrate… would presume or adventure to put water into his wine, where the Gospel of the institution… speaketh of no water at all, but only of wine, alone.

And therefore it well and clearly appeareth, both by this point and divers others more (as in the very words and manner of Consecration), that the rites and the manner of this holy sacrament… were more at large shown, and more fully taught, by Christ’s apostles by mouth… than afterward written by their pen.

And so appeareth it also by Saint Paul, which first taught it the Corinthians without any book written thereof, and after writing

1 Corinthians 11:34 them somewhat thereof… saith, yet, finally: “Cetera cum venero ipse disponam”—“The remnant I will order when I come myself.” And never wrote he those orders after… that he took further at his coming, as far as ever I could hear proved. Origen saith also (and divers other old holy doctors) that many things of the Mass were taught by the apostles by tradition, without writing;
Saint Dionysius, by mouth. Saint Dionysius also, in his book De Ecclesiastica hierarchia, saith that the apostles taught the manner of consecrating in the Mass... by mouth.

Now, because of these wonderful things (and many others) wherein this most blessed sacrament so far excelleth all others, as that sacrament that not only signifieth and betokeneth... but also verily and really containeth... the holy and blessed blood of him... of whom all the other sacraments take their strength (for he is, as I have said, not only man but also God, and with his holy body and blood is also his holy soul, and with both his body and soul... joined his inseparable Godhead; and of him, his Father, and their Holy Spirit is all one Godhead... and therefore there present all three)—for these causes, I say, for which this blessed sacrament so many manner ways differeth from all others, the old holy doctors have accustomed to speak of this holy sacrament in diverse wise... and, to signify and insinuate thereby the diverse properties thereof, by sundry diverse names have been accustomed to call it.

Whereas the Sacrament of Baptism is not called “the Sacrament” alone, but “the Sacrament of Baptism”; nor any of the remnant without the addition of their own proper name (as “the Sacrament of Confirmation,” “the Sacrament of Penance,” and so forth the remnant)—only this blessed sacrament is called and known by the name of “Sacrament” alone; signifying and showing thereby... that this blessed sacrament is the most excellent, and of all holy sacraments the chief. And that I see not why it were... if it were not (as it is) the very body of Christ. For the Sacrament of Baptism is unto salvation of more necessity than it; and the Sacrament of Penance, too.

This blessed sacrament, of the Body and Blood of Christ, is called also distinctly by the name of either form—“Sacramentum panis” and “Sacramentum vini” (“the Sacrament of Bread” and “the Sacrament of Wine”—because that the form of bread betokeneth and immediately containeth the one, and the form of wine the other. And albeit that they be indeed two distinct “sacraments”—that is to wit, both two distinct sacramental outward signs (for neither is the form of

4 wonderful: wondrous  7 verily and really: really and truly
11 Godhead: Godhood; divinity  12 one Godhead: one same divine being
14 manner: kinds of  14–15 old holy doctors: early theologians
15, 17 accustomed: (been) wont  15, 16, 17 diverse: different
16 insinuate: intimate; subtly call attention to
18–19 “the Sacrament” alone: i.e., just “the Sacrament”
19, 21 remnant: rest (of the sacraments)  20 proper: distinctive // as: such as
23 alone: by itself  25 why it were: why it would be // very: actual
26 unto: with regard to; for  27 and: i.e., and so is
31 immediately: directly; without intermediary
bread the form of wine... nor the form of wine the form of bread) and two distinct sacramental inward signs, too (and two distinct sacramental things, also), of that kind of thing that is contained therein (for neither is the Body the Blood... nor the Blood the Body)—yet is altogether called by the name of “the Blessed Sacrament,” in the singular number; Sacramentum altaris (“the Sacrament of the Altar”); and yet is it never used at the altar but in both the forms. But for because that the very, real thing that is contained under both those forms... is one entire body (that is to wit, the very, lively, natural, glorious body of our Savior Christ himself), to the integrity whereof... the blood of the same pertaineth, and whereof it is now an inseparable part; which Blessed Body and Blood—though they, being in the Sacrament under several forms, severally do signify, and therefore be well and with good reason called several sacraments—be yet never severally separated asunder in deed: therefore, to give us knowledge that all that is really contained in both those sacramental forms... is one very, real thing (that is to wit, the very, blessed, one entire Body of Christ), all the whole, under the both forms together, is called by the name of “the Sacrament of the Altar,” in the singular number.

It is called Sacramentum panis (“the Sacrament of Bread”), and it is called also Panis (that is to say, “Bread”), because that of bread it was consecrated... and that after the bread converted and turned into the Body of Christ, the form and accidents of the bread abide and remain—as I before have shown you that in Scripture a man is called “earth”... because he was made of the earth; and in the Scripture Moses’ yard was called still a “yard” when it was turned from a dead yard into a quick serpent... that devoured all the serpents that the witches of Egypt had by their enchantment brought forth before Pharaoh, their king.

But yet, lest the naming it “Bread” might make some men ween it were but bread in deed, it is called also plainly by the name of the thing that it is in deed: the Body and Blood of our Lord.
It is also called *Sacramentum communionis* (“the Sacrament of Communion”), because that the thing that all the “sacraments,” or sacramental signs, both outward signs and inward, both sensible and unsensible, do signify… is, as I showed you, the communion—that is to wit, the union together—of all holy saints in one society, as lively members in the Mystical Body of Christ.

It is also called… not only the sacrament of communion, but, over that, the communion itself; which is called in Latin *communio*, and *synaxis* in the Greek. And this blessed sacrament is called the communion—that is to say, the union, or gathering together in one—because that this sacrament doth not only signify that communion, but that the very, real thing that is in this blessed sacrament… besides the signification thereof… doth also effectually make it. For the blessed person of our Savior Christ, being verily both God and man, doth… as God, of his almighty power; by his manhead, as by his instrument (not an instrument dead and separate, as are all his other sacraments, but by his instrument lively, quick, conjoined, united, and forever inseparable)… in special manner, by grace that he giveth with the joining of his own Holy Body and Blood unto them that effectually receive it—doth work, I say, this wonderful work of this communion of men together with God.

And over this, our Savior, that is in the sacrament, is not only the worker of this communion; but since that this communion is a gathering together of all saints into his own Mystical Body: this holy sacrament, therefore, in which his own very body is… may be well called the communion.

And so, by their calling this blessed sacrament by the name of Communion, the old holy doctors and all the congregation of all Christian people… have, and do, put every man and woman of the same congregation in remembrance that in that blessed sacrament is the very body and blood, and by concomitance (as I have before declared)… the very whole person, of our sovereign Lord and almighty Savior Christ—from whom, as I have said, neither his almighty Father nor their almighty Spirit either is or can be sundered.
This blessed sacrament is also called *Eucharistia*—which in the Greek tongue signifieth “Giving of Thanks”—to put us in remembrance how high, hearty thanks we be bounden of duty to give unto God for this inestimable benefit.

This holy sacrament is also called *Sacrificium* (“the Sacrifice”), because it is, as I have told you, the only sacrifice betaken by Christ unto his Christian church… in stead of the old Pasch (which was the figure thereof)… to be offered up while the world standeth: instead of flesh and blood of beasts, the very flesh and blood of our Savior himself… immortal and impassible, under the forms of bread and wine… representing the most acceptable Sacrifice of the same flesh and blood offered up once for ever… mortal and passible, upon the cross, at his bitter Passion.

This holy sacrament is also called of the old holy doctors *Cena Dominica* (“the Supper of our Lord”)—by which name there are signified unto us two things. One is the excellence of this blessed sacrament… this new, very Paschal Lamb, the Sacred Body of our Savior himself… over and above the old Paschal lamb of the Jews. For that Pasch being but the figure; and this, of that figure the verity: the figure past and finished, this only verity—the Blessed Body and Blood of Christ—bearereth now the name alone… of “the Supper of the Lord,” to signify the other to be nothing in the respect of this.

The other thing which that name signifieth and representeth unto us… is the verity of the Blessed Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament. For it is called “the Supper of our Lord” to put us in mind, and to let us know, that it is not another thing… but the selfsame thing… that our Lord gave there to his apostles; not another supper, but the selfsame supper. For his Body is the selfsame body now… that it was then; and his Blessed Blood the selfsame in like wise. And that was the supper that he last gave unto them—after the Paschal lamb eaten. And that selfsame Body and Blood… is the thing that he giveth us. And therefore is it called *the* Supper of the Lord—to let us, as I say, perceive that the thing that we receive at God’s board now… is the very selfsame
thing that the apostles received then. And that is not the same
bread and the same wine that were then turned… but the very selfsame
Body and Blood into which they were then turned.

Finally (besides yet divers other names diversely signifying the
manifold great graces thereof), it is, as I have said, both by the Scripture
and all the holy doctors… plainly and clearly called… by the
proper name of the thing that in deed it is: that is to wit, Corpus Domini
et Sanguis Domini—“the Body and Blood of our Lord.” And likewise as by
all these names afore-rehearsed (and yet others more), for the cause above
remembered, this blessed sacrament is called by the old holy doctors
and all the corps of Christendom… not in Latin only, and in Greek,
but in other, vulgar tongues, too: so in our English tongue is it also called
“the Holy Housel.” Which name of “Housel” doth not only signify
unto us the Blessed Body and Blood of our Lord in the sacramental
form, but also, like as this English word “God” signifieth unto
us not only the unity of the Godhead, but also the trinity of the
Three Persons, and not only their supersubstantial substance…
but also every gracious property, as justice, mercy, troth, almightiness,
eternity… and every good thing more than we can
imagine: so doth unto us English folk this English word “housel”…
though not express… yet imply, and under a reverent, devout silence
signifieth, both the sacramental signs and the sacramental things—
as well the things contained… as the things holily signified—with all
the secret, unsearchable mysteries of the same. All which holy
things… right many persons very little learned, but yet in grace
godly-minded… with heart humble and religious, not arrogant,
proud, and curious… under the name of “Holy Housel,” with inward
heavenly comfort, do full devoutly reverence; as many a good
poor, simple, unlearned soul… honoreth God full devoutly under
the name of “God”… that cannot, yet, tell such a tale of God as some
great clerks can… that are, yet, for lack of like devotion, nothing
near so much in God’s grace and favor.

Here have I, good Christian readers, rehearsed you some of those
many names by which, for the manifold mysteries contained
therein and signified thereby, this blessed sacrament is called. And

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4 divers: several // diversely: in different ways
6, 10 holy doctors: theologians
7 proper: exact // deed: fact
9 names afore-rehearsed: afore-mentioned names
10 remembered: related; noted
11 all the corps: the whole body
12 vulgar: vernacular
13, 20, 27 Housel: Host
16 Godhead: Supreme Being
17 supersubstantial: substance-transcending
18 as: such as // troth: truthfulness
19 more than: i.e., beyond what
24 secret: unperceivable
26 religious: pious
27 curious: inappropriately inquisitive // inward: interior / heartfelt
28, 29 full: very
30 tell:… God: give such a talk about God
31 clerks: scholars
31 devotion: devoutness // nothing: i.e., nowhere
33 rehearsed: related (to)
34 for: on account of
this have I done… to the intent that if it hap you at any time hereafter
to hear or read… any of these things that are said or
written by them that use of some of these names to take occasion of
oppugning the truth, you may have ready before, at your hand,
the fallacy of their sophism soiled.

As, for example, because it is called (as it is in deed) “the sacrament
of Christ’s Body”—that is to wit, a figure, a token, or a representation
of his body—they labor to make men ween that it cannot
be his very body in deed. But I have herebefore shown you…
in what wise it is a sacrament… and doth betoken, and in what wise
it is the thing of the sacrament… and is betokened.

Howbeit, whereas we say that the very Body in form of bread
betokeneth and representeth unto us the selfsame body in its own
proper form hanging upon the cross: they say that nothing
can be a figure or a token of itself—which thing I marvel much
that any man taketh for so strange. For if there were but even in a
play or an interlude… the personages of two or three known princes
represented; if one of them now liked, for his pleasure, to play his own
part himself: did he not there—his own person, under the form
of a player—represent his own person in form of his own estate?

Saint Augustine

Our Savior (as Saint Augustine saith) walking
with his two disciples toward the castle of
Emmaus in form of a wayfaring man… betokened,
and was a figure of, himself in form of his own person

Luke 24:13–32

and glorified… going out of the corporeal conversation of this world by his

John 20:15

wonderful ascension unto heaven. And in
like wise our Savior appearing to Mary
Magdalene in the form of a gardener… was a figure of himself in his
own proper form… planting the faith and other virtues in the
garden of our souls.

Now, as you see, good readers, that these folk trifle in this point—
so do they (as earnest and as great as the matter is) but in a manner
utterly trifle in the remnant! As, for another example, because

1 it hap you: i.e., you happen
3 use: are wont
4 oppugning: controverting
5 soiled: refuted
6, 9 deed: fact; reality
8 labor: try // ween: think
9 very: actual // shown: explained to
10 wise: ways
14 proper: natural
16 strange: outlandish
18 liked: chose
20 estate: (actual) social status
22 castle: village
25 conversation: society; social intercourse
26 wonderful: wondrous
27 like wise: a similar way
29 proper: natural (glorified)
31, 33 trifle: play silly games
32 earnest: serious
33 remnant: rest
the Sacrament is called in Scripture “bread”... they say it is bread in deed. And surely, if that argument be so sure as they would have it seem... the selfsame reason must of reason serve sufficiently (since it is in Scripture as plainly called “flesh”) to drive them to grant that it is very

flesh in deed.

Howbeit, in deed the most part of these that are fallen from the right belief of the Sacrament... are not yet in that point fallen fully so foul... but that they let not to confess that in the Blessed Sacrament is Christ’s very flesh in deed. But then say they that it is very bread too. Howbeit, the custom of Scripture in calling it “bread” though it be not bread—that have I twice touched before.

But then say the other sort (the far worse sort) again, “If the calling it ‘bread’ in Scripture prove it not bread in deed—then, by the same reason, the calling it ‘flesh’ in Scripture... proveth it not flesh in deed.” To that we say that if it were but a bare word spoken, it might be taken for an allegory, or some other trope or figure of common speaking; but in this point so many things in Scripture agree together upon the very thing... that it is very clear and plain that in calling it “bread,” the Scripture meaneth not that it is bread, but calleth it by the name that it did bear before... and that it seemeth still; but in calling it the Body of Christ... though it useth (as it doth in many places) an allegorical sense besides—yet appeareth it, I say, plainly upon the circumstances... that the Scripture meaneth that it is the very Blessed Body of our Savior himself in deed. To this say they again, “Yea, but we can, and do, construe all those texts another way, with an allegory sense—and prove by the old doctors that our exposition is true.”

To this we answer them and say, “If you construe all those texts divers other good ways with your allegories, so that you do not with any of those ways take away the true sense of the letter: we will not withstand your allegories, but will well allow them; for the old holy doctors did the same. But, on the other side, if with any of your ‘allegorical expositions’ you deny the very literal sense besides, and say that the body of our Savior is not really, under the form of

1, 7 Sacrament: i.e., consecrated host 1, 5, etc. deed: reality; actuality
2 sure: solid; sound 3 selfsame reason: the very same reasoning
3 of: i.e., according to // it: i.e., the consecrated host
6 most part: majority 7 of: about
7 fallen fully so foul: gone quite so horribly wrong 8 let not: do not forbear
12 sort: group 12, 24 again: in reply 14 reason: reasoning
15 a bare word spoken: i.e., something said only once, and without any elaboration
18 the very thing: i.e., what the thing really is
22–23 yet... circumstances: yet, I say, it is plain to see from the context 24 yea: well
26, 30 old: early 26 doctors: exegetes 26, 32 exposition(s): interpretation(s)
26 true: correct 27 divers: various 29 sense of the letter: literal meaning
29 withstand: gainsay; contradict 30 allow: approve; sanction
30–31 holy doctors: theologians 31 side: i.e., hand 32 very: actual
bread, in the Sacrament: then say we that in your such expounding, you plain expound it false. For we say that such manner of your ‘expositions’… is plain against the very sentence and the meaning of the text. And we say… that in this point you report the old holy doctors untruly. For all the holy doctors and saints, from the apostles’ days to your own, declare the Scripture clear against you.” I will not here enter into the declaring of all the places of Scripture… by which places opened and explained with the circumstances of the letter, good Christian people may well and plainly perceive that the very meaning of the Scripture is against these folk, and proveth plain for the Catholic Church. For that were both a very long work… and also a digression somewhat too long from my present purpose, which is only to declare those words that I have already declared—that is to wit, the words of our Savior himself… rehearsed by the three aforesaid Evangelists Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke, and spoken by our Savior at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament—and not to declare here all his other words, his words that he spoke thereof before (rehearsed in the sixth chapter of Saint John), where he said, “Panis quem ego dabo vobis, caro mea est, pro mundi vita” (“The bread that I shall give you is my flesh, for the life of the world”), and “Caro mea vere est cibus, et sanguis meus vere est potus” (“My flesh is verily meat, and my blood is verily drink”), with many more plain words further; nor to declare the words of Saint Paul either, where he saith (in the eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians), “Dominus Iesus, in qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem, et gracias agens fregit, et dixit, ‘Accipite et manducate: hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur’” (“Our Lord Jesus, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and said, ‘Take and eat: this is my body, which shall be betrayed for you’”), and “Quicumque manducaverit panem hunc et biberit calicem Domini indigne… reus erit corporis et sanguinis
Domini” (“Whosoever eateth this bread and drinketh the cup of our Lord unworthily… shall be guilty of the body and blood of our Lord”). And by and by after, he saith also: “Probet autem seipsum homo… et sic de pane illo edat, et de calice bibat. Qui enim manducat et bibit indigne… iudicium sibi manducat et bibit, non diiudicans corpus Domini”—“Let a man examine and judge himself… and so eat of this bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily… eateth and drinketh judgment and damnation to himself… not discerning and esteeming the body of our Lord.”

These places of Scripture, and yet others more, plainly proving the presence of Christ’s very Body and Blood in the Blessed Sacrament… is not, as I say, my present purpose to declare.

But yet, to the intent you shall see that in the aforesaid exposition of those words of our Savior at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament… where he calleth it his own body and his own blood, I have not told you a tale of mine own head, but that the old holy doctors and saints (contrary to these new men’s tale) do plainly declare the same, and plainly do affirm that in the Blessed Sacrament is the very body and blood of our Savior Christ himself: I shall rehearse you the plain words of some of them.

Saint Ignatius

Saint Ignatius writeth in his Epistle to the Ephesians, “Festinate ergo frequenter accedere ad Eucharistiam et gloriam Dei; quando enim assidue hoc ipsum agitur, expelluntur potestates Satanae, qui actus suos convertit in sagittas ignitas ad peccatum”; et ad Romanos, “Non comedam escam corruptionis, neque voluptates huius mundi desidero. Panem Dei volo, panem caelestem, panem vitae, qui est caro Christi filii Dei vivi. Et potum volo sanguinis eius qui est dilectio incorruptibilis et vita aeterna”—“Wherefore, make haste to come oftentimes to this Eucharist” (or “Sacrament of the Altar”) “and the glory of God. For when we do that thing diligently, the power of the Devil is expelled, who turneth his doings into fiery darts to drive man to sin”; and in his Epistle to
the Romans saith thus: “I will not eat the meat of corruption, nor I desire not the pleasures of this world. I long for the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life… which is the flesh of Christ the Son of the living God. And I long for the drink of his blood… who is love incorruptible and life everlasting.”

Justin Martyr

Justin, the holy martyr, writing of our faith (in his Second Apology) to the unfaithful emperor Antoninus, saith thus of this blessed sacrament: “Neque vero haec pro pane potuwe communi sumimus, imo quemadmodum verbo Dei Jesus Christus, Servator noster incarnatus, habuit pro salute nostra carnem et sanguine: ita per orationem illius verbi consecratum hoc alimentum (quo sanguis et carnes nostrae per immutacionem enutiuntur) eiusdem incarnati Iesu carnem et sanguine esse sumus edocti. Siquidem apostoli, in illis suis quae vocantur Evangelia monumentis, ita sibi Iesum imperasse docuerunt: accepto nimirum pane, peractisque gratiss dixisse, ‘Hoc facite in meam commemorationem; hoc est corpus meum,’ ad eundem modum, accepto poculo, postquam egisset gratias dixisse, ‘Hic est sanguis meus’… illis quae tradidisse”—“We do not take these things for common bread or common drink, but, like as by the word of God… Jesus Christ our Savior, being incarnate, had flesh and blood for our salvation, so this food wherewith our flesh and blood by alteration be nourished after it be consecrated by the same word… we be taught that it is the flesh and blood of the same Jesus incarnate. For the apostles, in their books which they call gospels, did teach that Jesus did so command them… when he, taking the bread and giving thanks, said, ‘Do this in remembrance of me; this is my body,’ and likewise, taking the cup, when he had given thanks said, ‘This is my blood’… and to them alone did he give them.”

Saint Irenaeus

Saint Irenaeus writeth thus (in his Fourth Book and thirty-fourth chapter): “Quomodo autem constabit eis eum panem in quo gratiae actae sunt corpus Domini sui, et calicem, sanguinis eius, si non ipsum fabricatoris mundi Filium dicant?”; et paulo post: “Quomodo autem rursus dicunt carnem in corruptionem devenire… et non percipere vitam… quae corpore Domini et sanguine alitur? Ergo aut sententiam mutent, aut abstineant offerendo ea quae praedicta sunt”—“How shall it appear to them to be true that the [Eucharistic] bread upon which thanks be given is the Body of their Lord, and the cup… of his Blood, except they say that he is the Son of him that made the world?”;

1 meat: food 4 his blood: the blood of him
7 Second: Actually, the first (in More’s day thought to be the second).
7 unfaithful: infidel 18 common: ordinary 23 books: writings
29 thirty-fourth: Actually, the eighteenth (of Book 4 of Against Heresies).
37 except: unless
and a little after, he saith: “How do they affirm that man’s flesh goeth to corruption… and receiveth not life again… which is nourished of the Body and Blood of our Lord? Therefore, either let them change their opinion… or abstain from offering of those aforesaid things.”

Tertullian also writeth, in a book concerning the resurrection of our flesh, in this manner: “Caro corpore et sanguine Chrisri vescitur… ut et anima de Doé saginetur”—“The flesh eateth the Body and Blood of Christ… that the soul also may be made fat of God.”

Likewise Origen writeth, in his like homily, after this manner: “Quando sanctum cibum illudque incorruptum epulum accipis; quando vitae pane et poculo frueris, manducas et bibis Corpus et Sanguine Domini: tunc Dominus sub tectum tuum ingreditur. Et tu, ergo, humilians temetipsum, imitare hunc centurionem… et dicito, ‘Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum.’ Ubi enim indigne ingreditur, ibi ad iudicium ingreditur accipienti”—“When thou dost receive this holy meat… and incorruptible food; when thou does take and enjoy the Bread and Cup of Life, and dost eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Lord: then our Lord entereth under thy house. And therefore, humbling thyself, imitate [and follow] this centurion… and say [with him], ‘Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my house.’ For where he entereth unworthily… there he entereth to the damnation of the receiver.”

Saint Cyprian, in his sermon which he made of the Supper of our Lord, writeth thus: “Significata olim a tempore Melchisedech prodeunt sacramenta, et filiiis Abrahae facientibus opera eius, Summus Sacerdos panem profert, et vinum. ‘Hoc est,’ inquit, ‘corpus meum.’ Manducaverunt et biberunt de eisdem pane et vino, secundum formam visibilem. Sed ante verba illa, cibus ille communis tantummodo nutriendo corpora commodus erat, et vitae corporalis subsidium ministrabat; sed postquam a Domino dictum est, ‘Hoc facite in meam commemorationem; haec est caro mea, et hic est sanguis meus,’ quotiescumque his verbis et hac fide actum est… panis ille supersubstantialis et calix benedictione solemi consecratus…

1, 2 that man’s flesh: i.e., that the flesh of that person 2 which: who 3 of the: by the
7–8 in this manner: words to this effect 10 be made fat of: fatten on
11 Origen: Actually, Pseudo-Origen. 17 meat: food 18 food: nourishment
20, 22 house: roof 23 unworthily: i.e., without the communicant’s being in the state of grace
25–26 made of: wrote on
ad totius hominis vitam salutemque proficit, simul medicamentum et holocaustum, ad sanandas infirmitates et purgandas iniquitates existens”—

“The sacraments which of old were signified from the time of Melchizedek… are now set abroad, and to the sons of Abraham doing the works of Abraham… the Most High Priest bringeth forth bread and wine. ‘This is,’ saith he, ‘my body.’ Of the same bread and wine, according to the visible form, they did eat and drink. But before those words, that common bread did only serve for the nourishing of the body, and did relieve and sustain corporeal life; but after that our Lord said, ‘Do this in remembrance of me; this is my flesh, and this is my blood,’ as often as it is done with these words and with this faith… that heavenly and supersubstantial bread, and cup being consecrated with that solemn benediction, is profitable to the life and salvation of the whole man, being both a medicine to heal infirmities… and a sacrifice to purge iniquities.”

Saint Hilary, also, in his (Eighth Book) De Trinitate, writeth in this wise: “Eos qui inter Patrem et Filium non naturae sed voluntatis ingerunt unitatem, interrogo utrumne per naturae veritatem hodie Christus in nobis sit… an per concordiam voluntatis. Si enim vere Verbum caro factum est, et nos vere Verbum carnem cibo Dominico sumimus, quomodo non naturaliter manere in nobis existimandus est… qui et naturam carnis nostrae iam inseparabili sibi homo natus assumpsit, et naturam carnis suae ad naturam aeternitatis sub sacramento nobis communicandaes carnis admiscuit? Ita enim omnes unum sumus . . .”; et paulo post: “Si vere igitur caruem corporis nostri Christus assumpsit, et vere homo ille qui ex Maria natus fuit… Christus est; nosque vere sub mysterio carnem corporis sui sumimus, et per hoc unum erimus (quia Pater in eo est, et ille in nobis): quomodo voluntatis unitas asseritur, cum naturalis per sacramentum proprietas perfectae sacramentum sit unitatis? Non est humano aut saeculi sensu in Dei rebus loquendum, neque per violentam atque impudentem praedicationem caelestium dictorum sanitati alienae atque impiae intelligentiae extorquenda perversitas est. Quae scripta sunt legamus, et quae legerimus intelligamus, et tunc perfectae fidei officio fungemur. De naturali enim in nobis Christi veritate quae dicimus… nisi ab eo discimus… stulte atque impie dicimus. Ipse enim ait, ‘Caro mea vere est esca, et sanguis meus vere est potus’; ‘Qui edit carnem meam et bibit sanguine meum… in me manet, et ego

3 of old: formerly 8 common: ordinary 9 relieve: fuel 13 supersubstantial: substance-transcending / life-sustaining 17–18 his . . . Trinitate: i.e., Book 8 of his De Trinitate 18 in this wise: as follows
in eo.’ De veritate carnis et sanguinis Domini non relictus est ambigendi locus. Nunc enim et ipsius Domini professione et fide nostra, vere caro est et vere sanguis est. Et haec accepta atque hausta id efficiunt… ut et nos in Christo, et Christus in nobis sit”—“These men that between the Father and the Son bring us in… not a unity of nature, but of will: them ask I now whether that Christ be in us, at this day, by unity of nature… or only by a concord and agreement of will. For if the Word was verily made flesh… and if we also verily receive that Word-being-flesh in our Lord’s Meat, how shall he be thought not to be in us naturally… who both, being born man, hath taken upon him the nature of our flesh (which is now inseparable from him)… and hath also put together the nature of his flesh and the nature of eternity under the sacrament of his flesh to be communicated unto us? And so be we all one . . .”; and a little after: “If Christ, therefore, hath verily taken upon him the flesh of our body… and also, that man which was born of Mary be verily Christ; and if we also verily receive, under a sacrament, the flesh of his body, and shall thereby be one with his Father and him (because his Father is in him, and he in us): how affirm they the unity to be only in will, considering that the propriety of nature by the Sacrament… is the sacrament of perfect unity? We may not speak after man’s fantasy, or the imagination of the world, in the things of God; nor we may not by a violent and shameless ‘exposition’ of heavenly things wring out a wicked and a false understanding wrested away from the truth. Let us read the words as they be written; and the things that we read, let us understand aright; and then shall we exercise the duty of perfect faith. For the things that we say of the natural, very being of Christ in us, except we learn them of himself, foolishly and wickedly do we speak. Thus, he himself saith: ‘My flesh is verily meat, and my blood is verily

4 bring us in: propose to us 5 that: i.e., it is the case that 9 Meat: Supper 16 which: who 20 that . . . is: i.e., that it is the distinctive nature of the Eucharist… to be 21 after: according to 22 fantasy: ideation; forming of notions 22 imagination: thinking 23 violent: forced // exposition: expounding 27 exercise: carry out 28 very: actual // except: unless 29 of: from 30 meat: food // verily: truly; literally
drink’; ‘He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood—he dwelleth in me, and I in him.’ Of the truth and verity, therefore, of his flesh and his blood… is there now no place left for any man to doubt. For now both by the word of our Lord himself… and by our faith also… verily is it his flesh, and verily is it his blood. And these two received and drunk bring this to pass: that both we be in Christ and Christ is in us.”

Eusebius Emesenus, in his oration of this sacrament, writeth thus: “Recedat omne infidelitatis ambiguum; quandoquidem qui author est muneris, ipse est etiam testis veritatis. Nam invisibilis Sacerdos visibles creaturas in substantiam corporis et sanguinis sui verbo suo secreta potestate convertit, ita dicens: ‘Accipite et comedite, hoc est corpus meum.’ Et sanctificatione repetita: ‘Accipite et bibite, hic est sanguis meus’”; et paulo post: “Nec dubitet quisquam primarias creaturas nutu potentiae, presentia maiestatis, in Dominici corporis transire posse naturam, cum ipsum hominem videat artificio caelestis misericordiae Christi corpus effectum. Sicut autem quicumque ad fidem veniens ante verba baptismi adhuc in vinculo est veteris debiti; his vero commemoratis mox exuitur omni faece peccati: ita quando benedicendae verbis caelestibus creaturae sacrarum altaris imponuntur, substantia illic est panis et vini; post verba autem Christi, corpus et sanguis est Christi. Quid autem mirum est si ea quae verbo potuit creare, verbo posset creata convertere? Imo iam minoris miraculi videtur esse si id quod ex nihilo agnoscitur condidisse… iam conditum in melius valeat commutare”—

“Let all doubt of infidelity pass away; for he that is the author of the gift… is also witness of the truth of it. For the invisible Priest by his word and secret power… doth change and convert the visible creatures into the substance of his body and blood, saying thus: ‘Take and eat, this is my body’; and, repeating the consecration, saith: ‘Take and drink, this is my blood’”; and a little after, he saith: “Let no man doubt but that the former creatures may be turned into the nature of Christ’s body, by his almighty power, and the presence of his Majesty… seeing he seeth man

8 Eusebius Emesenus: Not the actual author, who is now believed to have been Caesarius of Arles.
8 of: on 24 of: i.e., that really constitutes 26 secret: hidden; unperceivable
27 creatures: created things 31 may: can 32 seeing: i.e., seeing that
himself made the body of Christ by the workmanship of his
heavenly mercy. For like as any man that cometh to the faith…
before the words of Baptism is yet still under the bond of his
old sin; but when the words be spoken, by and by is he
delivered from all dregs of sin: even so, when the creatures
which are to be consecrated by the heavenly words… are set upon
the holy altars, there is the substance of bread and wine; but
after the words of Christ, there is the body and blood of Christ.
For what marvel is it for him to be able to convert and change
those creatures with his words… which he was able to create
and make of nothing… with his word? Yea, rather it seemeth to be less
miracle… if that thing which he is known to have made of nothing,
he be now able to change the same thing already made… into a
better.”

Saint Basil, in his book of short questions,
asked this question, and answereth it himself
by and by after, in these words: “Quanto cum timore, qualive cum fide et
animi persuasione, corpus et sanguinem Christi communicemus? Responsio:
De timore, quidem habemus Apostolum, qui ait, ‘Qui manducat et
babit indigne… iudicium sibi manducat et bibit.’ Fidem autem faciunt verba
Domini, qui dixit, ‘Hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis datus; hoc facite in meam
commemorationem’”—“With what fear, and with what faith and persuasion
of mind, should we receive the Body and Blood of Christ?
The answer: Concerning our fear, we have the Apostle, that saith,
‘He that eateth and drinketh unworthily… eateth and drinketh
damnation to himself.’ And as concerning our faith, it is taught
and framed by the words of our Lord, who said, ‘This is my body,
which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’”

Hesychius, an old author, writeth thus (in
his Sixth Book, the twenty-second chapter, Upon Leviticus):
“Sanctificationem mystici sacrificii, et a sensibilibus ad intelligibilia translationem,
sive commutationem, ei qui verus est sacerdos, videlicet Christo, oportet
dari; id est, ipsi de eis miraculum cedere et imputare: quia per eius virtutem
et prolatum ab eo verbum tam sanctificata sunt, quam cunctum carnis excedant
sensum”—
“The sanctifying of the mystical sacrifice, and the translation, or
changing, of it from things sensible to things intelligible, ought to be given and ascribed to Christ, who is the true priest; that is to say, we ought to grant and impute to him the miracle wrought in them. For by his virtue, and the word pronounced of him, they be sanctified so, as they exceed and pass all the senses of the flesh.”


“The sacrament before it be consecrated is bread; but when Christ’s words be come to it, it is the body of Christ. Last of all… hear him saying, ‘Take and eat of this, all you: this is my body.’ And before the words of Christ, the cup is full of wine and water; but when the words of Christ have wrought, there is made the blood… that redeemed the people. Therefore, see by what manner and sort… the word of Christ is able to convert all things. Also, our Lord Jesus himself doth testify unto us that we receive his body and blood. Ought we to doubt of his fidelity and testimony?”

Saint John Chrysostom, in his eighty-third homily upon Saint Matthew, writeth thus: “Credamus, itaque, ubique Deo, nec repugnemus ei, etiamsi sensui et cogitationi nostrae absurdum esse videatur quod dicit. Superet et sensum et rationem nostrum… verbum ipsius. Quod in omnibus, et praeipue in ministeriis, faciamus: non illa quae ante nos iacent solummodo aspicientes, sed verba quoque eius tenentes. Nam verbis eius defraudari non possimus; sensus vero noster deceptu facillimus est. Illa falsa esse non possunt; hic saepius atque saepius fallitur. Quoniam ergo ille dixit, ‘Hoc est corpus meum,’ nulla teneamur ambiguitate, sed credamus, et oculis intellectus id prospcionamus”—“Therefore, let us believe God in all things, and not repugn against him, although that which he saith seemeth to our senses and thoughts to be against reason. Let his word exceed and overcome our sense and reason! Which thing we ought to do in all things, and especially in the sacraments: not beholding only those things which lie before us, but also understanding and remembering his words. For we cannot be deceived by his words;

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1. sensible: sensorily perceivable
2. intelligible: perceivable only by the intellect, not by the senses
3. virtue: power
4. pass: i.e., bypass
5. sacrament: i.e., host
6. exceed: transcend the limits of
7. sort: way
8. doubt of: call into question
9. fidelity: veracity
10. repug against: contend against; contradict
11. although: even if
12. exceed: trump
13. overcame: win out over
14. sense: i.e., sense perception
15. in: with regard to
16. remembering: keeping in mind
yet our senses be most easy to be deceived. His words cannot be false; but our sense is deceived very oftentimes. Therefore, because he said, ‘This is my body,’ let us remain in no doubt or ambiguity, but let us believe and look upon it with the eyes of our understanding.”

Saint Jerome, in his epistle ad Heliodorum, writeth thus: “Absit ut de his quicquam sinistrum loquar qui apostolico gradui succedentes… Christi corpus sacro ore conficiunt, per quos et nos Christiani sumus, qui claves regni caelorum habentes… quodammodo ante diem iudicii iudicant”—“God forbid that I should speak anything amiss of them who, in degree succeeding the apostles, do consecrate Christ’s body with their holy mouth; by whose ministry we be also Christian men; who also having the keys of the kingdom of heaven… after a certain manner do judge us before the Day of Judgment.”

Saint Cyril also writeth (in his Tenth Book, the thirteenth chapter, Upon Saint John’s Gospel) after this manner:

“Quemadmodum si quis igne liquefactam ceram alii cerae liquefactae ita miscuerit, ut unum quid ex utrisque factum videatur: sic communicatione corporis et sanguinis Christi… ipse in nobis est, et nos in ipso. Non poterat aliter corruptibilis haec natura corporis ad incorruptibilitatem et vitam perduci, nisi naturalis vitae corpus ei coniungeretur”—“Like as if a man should mingle one wax melted by the fire with another piece of wax likewise melted, so that one [mass or lump] be made of them both: even so, by communicating and receiving of Christ’s Body and Blood… he is in us, and we in him. For otherwise it is not possible for this corruptible nature of our bodies to be brought to life and incorruption, except the body of natural life be joined unto it.”

Saint Augustine, upon the thirty-third Psalm, writeth thus:


1 *be most easy to*; i.e., can most easily 2 *oftentimes*; frequently 3 *ambiguity*; uncertainty 5 *epistle ad Heliodorum*; letter to Heliodorus. (This letter of Saint Jerome’s is now numbered as his fourteenth.) 9 *anything*; at all 10 *in… apostles*; i.e., succeeding the apostles in rank and office 15 *Cyril*; i.e., Cyril of Alexandria 15–16 *his… chapter*; i.e., Book 10, chapter 13, of his 21 *wax*; i.e., piece of wax 23 *ever*; just 26 *except*; unless 36 “*He… hands*”. This is from Psalm 119:109. // *bore*; carried; i.e., held

and by what means, my brethren, this might be possible, who
can perceive and understand? For who is borne in his own hands?
A man may be borne in the hands of another; but with his own
hands no man is borne. How it might be understood literally
of David, I cannot find nor perceive. But how it might be verified
of Christ, we find. For Christ bore himself in his own hands… when
he commended his body and said on this wise: ‘This is my body.’
For Christ bore that body in his hands. This is the humility of our
Lord Jesus Christ; and his humility is greatly commended unto men.”

Saint Augustine in his 118th epistle, to Januarius,

"Liquido apparet quando primum
acceperunt discipuli corpus et sanguine Domini, non eos accepsisse
ieiunos. Numquid tamen propter a calumniis est universae ecclesiae, quod a
ieiunis semper accipitur? Ex hoc enim placuit Spiritui Sancto ut in honorem
tanti sacramenti in os Christiani prius Dominicum corpus intraret quam exeri
cibi. Nam ideo per universum orbem mos iste servatur”—

“'It appeareth clearly that when the disciples first of all received
the Body and Blood of our Lord, they received it not fasting. But
what then? Should we therefore wrongfully accuse the Church because
it is always received of none but such as are fasting? For from that time
so forth, it hath pleased the Holy Ghost that in the honor of that
so high a sacrament, the Body of our Lord should be received and
taken into the mouth of a Christian man before any bodily meat.
For upon this cause… this custom is kept… throughout all the world.”

Saint Gregory writeth (in his twenty-second homily)

thus, alluding to the Paschal lamb, which was
the figure of this sacrament: “Quid namque sit sanguis Agni… non iam audiendo,
sed bibendo didicistis. Qui sanguis super utrumque postem ponitur…
quando non solum ore corporis, sed etiam ore cordis hauritur. In utroque enim
poste sanguis Agni positus est… quando sacramentum passionis illius cum ore ad
redemptionem sumitur, ad imitationem quoque intent mente cogitator. Nam
qui sic redemptoris sui sanguine accipit, ut imitari passionem
illius neendum velit, in uno poste sanguine posuit, qui etiam in superliminaribus
domorum ponendus est”—“What is the blood of the Lamb… ye have

learned not now by hearing, but by drinking. Which blood is put

2, 3, etc. borne / bore: carried / held 7 commended: presented
7 on this wise: i.e., the following 9 commended: recommended
10 his 118th epistle: Now numbered as his Letter 54
17 appeareth clearly: is clearly evident; is quite obvious.
17 first of all: for the very first time 19 what then?: so what?
19 wrongfully accuse the Church: accuse the Church of wrongdoing; find fault with the Church
20 of: by 22 high: exalted; sublime 23 meat: food
25 his twenty-second homily: i.e., the twenty-second of his forty homilies on the Gospel
27 figure: prefigurement
upon both the posts… when it is drunk and received not only by
the mouth of the body, but also by the mouth of the heart. For the
blood of the Lamb is put upon both the posts… when the sacrament
of his Passion is received with the mouth, for redemption, and
also is thought upon with a mindful and attentive mind… for imitation.
For he that so receiveth the blood of his Redeemer… that he will
not, yet, imitate and follow his Passion: he hath put the blood but
upon one post… which ought to be put upon both the posts of the
house.”

Saint Bede, in his book De mysteriis, saith thus:
“Ibi forma panis videtur… ubi substantia panis non est.
Nec est ibi alius panis quam panis qui de caelo descendit”—“There appeareth
the form of bread… where the substance of bread is not. Neither
is there any other bread… than the Bread which descended from heaven.”

Theophylact, upon the twenty-sixth chapter of
Saint Matthew, writeth thus: “Porro, dicens ‘Hoc
est corpus meum,’ ostendit quod ipsum corpus Domini est panis qui sanctificatur
altario, et non respondens figura. Non enim dixit, ‘Hoc est figura,’ sed
‘Hoc est corpus meum.’ Ineffabili enim operatione transformatur, etiamsi
nobis videatur panis, qui infirmi sumus et abhorremus crudas carnem comedere,
maxime hominis carnem, et ideo panis quidem apparat, sed caro est”—
“Furthermore, saying ‘This is my body,’ he showeth that the bread which
is sanctified upon the altar… is the very body of our Lord, and not
a figure answering to it. For it is changed by an unspeakable
working, although it seem bread to us… that be weak, and abhor
to eat raw flesh, especially the flesh of man… and therefore it
appeareth bread—but it is flesh.”

Saint Anselm (in the Second Book of The
Body and Blood of our Lord, and in the
second chapter) saith thus: “In illis speciebus panis et vini… aut nulla
est substantia aut Dominici corporis et sanguinis substantia est; aut fides
nostra irrita est”—“In those kinds of bread and wine… either there is no
substance or else it is the substance of our Lord’s Body and Blood;
or else our faith is of no effect or force.”

Here have you, good Christian readers, heard the very plain, open
words of divers of the old holy doctors… by which we may plainly perceive and see that they were of the selfsame belief of old… that we be now—and which hath ever been the belief of Christ’s whole church, since the institution of the Blessed Sacrament unto this day.

And many years was it ere any man began to doubt, but that as well Catholics as all others… that were, yet, in sundry other points heretics… agreed together, all in one, that in this blessed sacrament is the very Body and the very Blood of Christ. For, like as it was known to the apostles by the teaching of our Savior Christ himself, and so forth unto the primitive Church, or congregation of Christian people that were gathered together in many parts of the world in the apostles’ days: so was the selfsame truth taught by the apostles themselves… first, fully and thoroughly, by mouth and tradition (or delivery without writing), and afterward by writing, conveniently, also. Of the understanding of which writing… there could at that time no doubt or debate arise, forasmuch as the whole people knew the truth of the thing before the writing of the apostles and Evangelists… by the faith that the apostles and Evangelists had taught them before by mouth;

And so using and teaching the sacraments, and understanding without any difficulty the words of the Scripture therein… by their before-taught and from time to time kept and continued faith, lived in unity and concord of belief concerning this blessed sacrament—no man gainsaying the very Blessed Body and Blood to be therein—even after that many folk were fallen in many other points from the true, Catholic faith.

And this appeareth very plain by that we see both

*St. Irenaeus, St. Hilary,* Saint Irenaeus confound the Valentinians…

*St. Augustine* and Saint Hilary confound the Arians… and

*Saint Augustine* confound the Manicheans… by certain arguments grounded upon the verity of the very Body and Blood of our Blessed Savior in this holy sacrament; which had been, you wot well, nothing to the purpose… if those three sects of heretics had not agreed with those three holy saints, and with
the Catholic Church, that in the Sacrament is the very Body and
Blood of Christ.

Howbeit, after that... began there some among their other heresies... to fall then unto some of these concerning the Blessed Sacrament.
For when men began once to take the bridle in the teeth and
run forth at rovers out of the common trade of the before taught and
received... and by the whole Catholic Church believed and professed...
faith: then could there not... nor yet can... with such manner of folk the
letter of Holy Scripture be any bridle to refrain them back. For,
setting the authority of the whole corps of the known Catholic
Church at naught, and challenging the Spirit of God from the same...
and ascribing that Holy Spirit, some to such a known church of
heretics as themselves assigned, and the more part of them ascribing
that Spirit to an only unknown church—and challenging, yet, nevertheless,
contrary to their own position, the truth of understanding
and interpreting of Holy Scripture (to which they confessed the inspiration
of that Holy Spirit requisite) every man of them to himself—
using, I say, themselves in this wise... the Scripture could not hold them.
For they would and did, and yet such folk do, deny for Scripture
which books of Scripture they list; and such as they list to
receive, interpret and construe as they list. By reason whereof, at
sundry times sundry heresies sprang and spread abroad, and—
with great trouble of the good Catholic folk, and great decay of the
true Catholic folk, and eternal destruction of their souls that took
those wrong ways—flowered for a little while. Howbeit, our Lord
(laud and thanks be to him!) ever provided with his Holy Spirit...
that all these heresies were in short space by his Catholic Church
condemned and suppressed. And so hath his Catholic faith in his
Catholic church... as well in this article, of the Blessed Sacrament, as
in all the remnant... this fifteen hundred years continued—and ever
continue shall while this world lasteth, what wrestling soever the infidels
shall make with it.

Howbeit, men may gather upon the Scripture... that like as
Christendom hath now in some places lost many lands, and in
some others won many lands again: so shall it be after the
faith spread so full round about it… that there shall be no land in any part thereof, in which part people are dwelling, but that they shall have heard of the name and faith of Christ. Which was not all done, as Saint Augustine saith, in the time of the apostles themselves; but like these words of Christ (saith Saint Augustine) “Qui vos audit… me audit” (“He that heareth you… heareth me”), though they were spoken only to the apostles, were not, yet, only meant for the apostles’ persons only, but spoken to them in the name of the Church, as governors of the same, and therefore to those governors of the Church, also, as to the world’s end should succeed in their places:

Saint Augustine

Luke 10:16

so this prophecy of “In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum” (“Into all the world is gone out the sound of them, and into the ends of the roundel of the earth, the words of them”)—which words were written by the prophet David many years ere the apostles were born, and yet prophesied by the verb of the pretertemps, or time past, to signify that the thing prophesied should as surely succeed and be verified as though it were past already—were not meant that the thing should be fully performed by their own persons, but part in one time, part in other, by such as the governors of the Catholic Church which should succeed in their places… should, in times and opportunity convenient, send forth about it and appoint thereunto. But afterward, when it is all preached round about upon all parts of the earth, the time shall come when it shall so sore decay again, and the Church by persecution so straited into so narrow a corner, that in respect of the countries into which Christendom hath been and shall be dilated and spread before, it shall seem that there shall be then no Christian countries left at all. Whereof our Savior said, “Cum venerit Filius Hominis, putas inveniet fidem in terra?”—“When the Son of Man shall come” (that is to wit, at the Day of Doom, to judge the world), “trowest thou that he shall find faith in the earth?” But that time shall be but short. For our Savior saith,
Matthew 24:22  “Propter electos breviabuntur dies illi.” And then shall our Lord come soon after, and finish this present world, and reward every good man after his good works wrought in his true, Catholic faith.

Romans 2:6  “Reddet unicuique secundum opera sua”—“He shall yield every man according to his works.”

But yet such works we must understand as are wrought in faith.

Hebrews 11:6  For as Saint Paul saith, “Sine fide impossibile est placere Deo”—“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Matthew 16:27  But, finally, this Catholic faith of the presence of Christ’s very Body and Blood in the Blessed Sacrament… hath, as I have shown, been the faith of Christ’s whole Catholic Church… ever since Christ’s first institution thereof until this present time, and ever shall be while the world endureth. Whereagainst whoso wrestleth… cannot fail in conclusion to take a very foul fall—as far down, except he repent, as from the place that he walketh on in earth… into the deep pit of hell. From which fall our Lord, of his goodness, defend every Christian man!

The Third Lecture of the Sacrament

I have in the First Lecture, good readers, expounded you the words of our Savior at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. And after have I, in the Second, shown you somewhat of the sacramental signs… and of the sacramental things… that are either contained therein… or signified thereby; and have also somewhat rehearsed you the very words of the old holy doctors… whereby we may plainly perceive that the old holy saints believed the presence of the very Body and Blood of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament in like wise as we do.

Now is it convenient that we somewhat speak… in what manner wise we ought to use ourselves in the receiving. We must understand that of this holy sacrament… there are three manners of receiving. For some folk receive it only sacramentally… and some only spiritually… and some receive it both.
Only sacramentally do they receive it… which receive the Blessed Sacrament unworthily. For they verily receive the very Body and Blood of our Blessed Savior into their body in the Blessed Sacrament—in form of bread, out of the Mass… or in the form of bread and wine, in the Mass. For as holy Saint Augustine saith of the false traitor Judas, though he was naught and received it at the Maundy to his damnation… yet was it our Lord’s Body that he received. But because they receive it in deadly sin (that is to wit, either in will to commit deadly sin again or impenent of that they have committed before), therefore they receive it not spiritually. That is to say, they receive not the spiritual thing of the Sacrament, which (as I before have shown) is the sacramental thing that is signified thereby: that is to wit, the society of holy saints. That is to say, he is not by the Spirit of God united with holy saints as a lively member of Christ’s Mystical Body.

For we must understand that Christ, in giving his own very body into the very body of every Christian man—he doth, in a certain manner, incorporate all Christian folk and his own body together, in one corporation mystical. And therefore saith Saint Paul,

1 Corinthians 10:17 “Omnes de uno pane manducamus”—“All we eat of one loaf.” Not that all the people eat of one material loaf; for there were among them distributed many; but he meaneth that that very thing that is there under the form of that loaf of bread… is that one thing that the Apostle and all they, and all we too, eat. And then saith he also, “Unus panis multi sumus”—“We many be of one loaf.” And so are we, as I say, by the receiving, each of us, that loaf that is himself mystically… all incorporated together—and all made that one loaf. And therefore when our Lord, in giving that loaf at the first institution… unto his apostles, that there represented his Church, said, “This is my body”—in giving, I say, to his Church his very body—he… not by word, but by his deed… called (as Saint Cyprian saith in his sermon “De Cena Domini”) his Church his body, too!

But, now, though that every Christian man so receiving… is, in a certain manner, a member of his mystical body the Church by this
sacramental receiving: yet for his receiving it in deadly sin… he receiveth it not spiritually. That is to say, though he receive Christ’s holy flesh into his body… he receiveth not, yet, Christ’s Holy Spirit into his soul.

And therefore this manner, of deadly receiving his quick flesh, giveth no quickness or life unto the soul. And in such a receiver of Christ’s flesh… are these words of Christ verified: “Spiritus est qui vivificat; caro non prodest quicquam”—“The flesh availeth nothing; the spirit is it that giveth life.”

And therefore I say… that without the spiritual receiving, the sacramental receiving nothing availeth. And not only that it nothing availeth… but, over that, it sore noyeth and hurteth. For Saint Paul, after that he hath plainly told and shown the Corinthians that the thing which they did eat and drink was the body and blood of Christ, he said unto them: “Quicumque manducaverit panem et biberit calicem Domini indigne… reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini . . . [et] iudicium sibi manducat et bibit, non diuidicans corpus Domini”—“Whosoever eat the bread and drink the cup of our Lord unworthily… shall be guilty of the body and blood of our Lord . . . [and] eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, for that he discerneth not the body of our Lord”; that is to wit, considereth it not and useth it like as he ought to do: it being the body of our Lord, as it is.

Here we see that, notwithstanding that he that receiveth the Blessed Sacrament receiveth the very body of our Lord, yet receiving it unworthily and therefore not spiritually—though he be by the only sacramental receiving of Christ’s body… incorporated as a member, in a certain manner, in the mystical body of his Catholic Church—yet, for lack of the spiritual receiving by cleanness of spirit, he attaineth not the fruitful thing of the sacrament: that is to wit, the society of saints. That is to say, he is not by the spirit of Christ… animated and quickened… and made a lively member in the pure Mystical Body… the fellowship and society of saints.

Some, as I said before, receive this blessed sacrament only spiritually, and not sacramentally; and so do all they receive it which are in clean life… and are at their High Mass devoutly.
For there the curate offereth it for him and them too. And although that only himself receive it sacramentally (that is to wit, the Very Body and Blood under the sacramental signs the forms of bread and wine), yet as many of them as are present at it... and are in clean life... receive it spiritually; that is to wit, the fruitful thing of the sacrament. That is to wit, they receive grace... by which they be, by the Spirit of Christ, more firmly knit and united quick, lively members in the spiritual society of saints.

Sir Thomas More wrote no more in English of this treatise of the Passion of Christ. But he (still prisoner in the Tower of London) wrote more thereof in Latin, after the same order as he wrote thereof in English.

1 curate: parish priest
1–2 although... receive: i.e., even when he is the only one who receives
4–5 clean life: i.e., the state of grace 7 knit: joined // quick: vivified
7 lively: living 8 in: i.e., of // society: communion 9 of the: on the
11 after the same order: i.e., along the same lines