

## St. Augustine

### Tractate 26 on the Gospel of John 6:41-59

1. When our Lord Jesus Christ, as we have heard in the Gospel when it was read, had said that He was Himself the bread which came down from heaven, the Jews murmured and said, Is not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he says, I came down from heaven? These Jews were far off from the bread of heaven, and knew not how to hunger after it. They had the jaws of their heart languid; with open ears they were deaf, they saw and stood blind. This bread, indeed, requires the hunger of the inner man: and hence He says in another place, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. But the Apostle Paul says that Christ is for us righteousness. And, consequently, he that hungers after this bread, hungers after righteousness—that righteousness however which comes down from heaven, the righteousness that God gives, not that which man works for himself. For if man were not making a righteousness for himself, the same apostle would not have said of the Jews: For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and wishing to establish their own righteousness, they are not subject to the righteousness of God. Of such were these who understood not the bread that comes down from heaven; because being satisfied with their own righteousness, they hungered not after the righteousness of God. What is this, God's righteousness and man's righteousness? God's righteousness here means, not that wherein God is righteous, but that which God bestows on man, that man may be righteous through God. But again, what was the righteousness of those Jews? A righteousness wrought of their own strength on which they presumed, and so declared themselves as if they were fulfillers of the law by their own virtue. But no man fulfills the law but he whom grace assists, that is, whom the bread that comes down from heaven assists. For the fulfilling of the law, as the apostle says in brief, is charity. Charity, that is, love, not of money, but of God; love, not of earth nor of heaven, but of Him who made Heaven and earth. Whence can man have that love? Let us hear the same: The love of God, says he, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. Wherefore, the Lord, about to give the Holy Spirit, said that Himself was the bread that came down from heaven, exhorting us to believe in Him. For to believe in Him is to eat the living bread. He that believes eats; he is sated invisibly, because invisibly is he born again. A babe within, a new man within. Where he is made new, there he is satisfied with food.

2. What then did the Lord answer to such murmurers? Murmur not among yourselves. As if He said, I know why you are not hungry, and do not understand nor seek after this bread. Murmur not among yourselves: no man can come unto me, except the Father that sent me draw him. Noble excellence of grace! No man comes unless drawn. There is whom He draws, and there is whom He draws not; why He draws one and draws not another, do not desire to judge, if you desire not to err. Accept it at once and then understand; you are not yet drawn? Pray that you may be drawn. What do we say here, brethren? If we are drawn to Christ, it follows that we believe against our will; so then is force applied, not the will moved. A man can come to Church unwillingly, can approach the altar unwillingly, partake of the sacrament unwillingly: but he cannot believe unless he is willing. If we believed with the body, men might be made to believe against their will. But believing is not a thing done with the body. Hear the apostle: With the heart man believes unto righteousness. And what follows? And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. That confession springs from the root of the heart. Sometimes you hear a man confessing, and know not whether he believes. But you ought not to call him one confessing, if you should judge him to be one not believing. For to confess is this, to utter the thing that you have in your heart: if you have one thing in your heart, and another thing on your tongue, you are speaking, not confessing. Since, then, with the heart man believes in Christ,

which no man assuredly does against his will, and since he that is drawn seems to be as if forced against his will, how are we to solve this question, No man comes unto me, except the Father that sent me draw him?

3. If he is drawn, says someone, he comes unwillingly. If he comes unwillingly, then he believes not; but if he believes not, neither does he come. For we do not run to Christ on foot, but by believing; nor is it by a motion of the body, but by the inclination of the heart that we draw near to Him. This is why that woman who touched the hem of His garment touched Him more than did the crowd that pressed Him. Therefore the Lord said, Who touched me? And the disciples wondering said, The multitude throng You, and press You, and sayest Thou, Who touched me? And He repeated it, Somebody has touched me. That woman touched, the multitude pressed. What is touched, except believed? Whence also He said to that woman that wished to throw herself at His feet after His resurrection: 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to the Father. You think me to be that alone which you see, touch me not. What is this? Thou suppose that I am that alone which I appear to you: do not thus believe; that is, touch me not for I am not yet ascended to the Father. To you I am not ascended, for thence I never departed. She touched Him not while He stood on the earth; how then could she touch Him while ascending to the Father? Thus, however, thus He willed Himself to be touched; thus He is touched by those by whom He is profitably touched, ascending to the Father, abiding with the Father, equal to the Father.

4. Thence also He says here, if you turn your attention to it, No man comes to me except he whom the Father shall draw. Do not think that you are drawn against your will. The mind is drawn also by love. Nor ought we to be afraid, lest perchance we be censured in regard to this evangelic word of the Holy Scriptures by men who weigh words, but are far removed from things, most of all from divine things; and lest it be said to us, How can I believe with the will if I am drawn? I say it is not enough to be drawn by the will; you are drawn even by delight. What is it to be drawn by delight? Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. There is a pleasure of the heart to which that bread of heaven is sweet. Moreover, if it was right in the poet to say, Every man is drawn by his own pleasure, — not necessity, but pleasure; not obligation, but delight—how much more boldly ought we to say that a man is drawn to Christ when he delights in the truth, when he delights in blessedness, delights in righteousness, delights in everlasting life, all which Christ is? Or is it the case that, while the senses of the body have their pleasures, the mind is left without pleasures of its own? If the mind has no pleasures of its own, how is it said, The sons of men shall trust under the cover of Your wings: they shall be well satisfied with the fullness of Your house; and You shall give them drink from the river of Your pleasure. For with You is the fountain of life; and in Your light shall we see light? Give me a man that loves, and he feels what I say. Give me one that longs, one that hungers, one that is travelling in this wilderness, and thirsting and panting after the fountain of his eternal home; give such, and he knows what I say. But if I speak to the cold and indifferent, he knows not what I say. Such were those who murmured among themselves. He whom the Father shall draw, says He, comes unto me.

5. But what is this, Whom the Father shall draw, when Christ Himself draws? Why did He say, Whom the Father shall draw? If we must be drawn, let us be drawn by Him to whom one who loves says, We will run after the odor of Your ointment. But let us, brethren, turn our minds to, and, as far as we can, apprehend how He would have us understand it. The Father draws to the Son those who believe in the Son, because they consider that God is His Father. For God begot the Son equal to Himself, so that he who ponders, and in his faith feels and muses that He on whom he has believed is equal to the Father, this same is drawn of the Father to the Son.

Arius believed the Son to be creature: the Father drew not him; for he that believes not the Son to be equal to the Father, considers not the Father. What do you say, Arius? What, O heretic, do you speak? What is Christ? Not very God, says he, but one whom very God has made. The Father has not drawn you, for you have not understood the Father, whose Son you deny, it is not the Son Himself but something else that you are thinking of. You are neither drawn by the Father nor drawn to the Son; for the Son is very different from what you say. Photius said, Christ is only a man, he is not also God. The Father has not drawn him who thus believes. One whom the Father has drawn says: You are Christ, Son of the living God. Not as a prophet, not as John, not as some great and just man, but as the only, the equal, You are Christ, Son of the living God. See that he was drawn, and drawn by the Father. Blessed are you, Simon Barjonas: for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven. This revealing is itself the drawing. You hold out a green twig to a sheep, and you draw it. Nuts are shown to a child, and he is attracted; he is drawn by what he runs to, drawn by loving it, drawn without hurt to the body, drawn by a cord of the heart. If, then, these things, which among earthly delights and pleasures are shown to them that love them, draw them, since it is true that every man is drawn by his own pleasure, does not Christ, revealed by the Father, draw? For what does the soul more strongly desire than the truth? For what ought it to have a greedy appetite, with which to wish that there may be within a healthy palate for judging the things that are true, unless it be to eat and drink wisdom, righteousness, truth, eternity?

6. But where will this be? There better, there more truly, there more fully. For here we can more easily hunger than be satisfied, especially if we have good hope: for Blessed, says He, are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is here; for they shall be filled, that is there. Therefore when He had said, No man comes unto me except the Father that sent me draw him, what did He subjoin? And I will raise him up in the last day. I render unto him what he loves, what he hopes for: he will see what, not as yet by seeing, he has believed; he shall eat that which he hungers after; he shall be filled with that which he thirsts after. Where? In the resurrection of the dead; for I will raise him up on the last day.

7. For it is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Why have I said this, O Jews? The Father has not taught you; how can you know me? For all the men of that kingdom shall be taught of God, not learn from men. And though they do learn from men, yet what they understand is given them within, flashes within, is revealed within. What do men that proclaim tidings from without? What am I doing even now while I speak? I am pouring a clatter of words into your ears. What is that that I say or that I speak, unless He that is within reveal it? Without is the planter of the tree, within is the tree's Creator. He that plants and He that waters work from without: this is what we do. But neither he that plants is anything, nor he that waters; but God that gives the increase. That is, they shall be all taught of God. All who? Everyone who has heard and learned of the Father comes unto me. See how the Father draws: He delights by teaching, not by imposing a necessity. Behold how He draws: They shall be all taught of God. This is God's drawing. Every man that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto me. This is God's drawing.

8. What then, brethren? If every man who has heard and learned of the Father, the same comes unto Christ, has Christ taught nothing here? What shall we say to this, that men who have not seen the Father as their teacher have seen the Son? The Son spoke, but the Father taught. I, being a man, whom do I teach? Whom, brethren, but him who has heard my word? If I, being a man, do teach him who hears my word, the Father also teaches him who hears His word. And if the Father teaches him that hears His word, ask what Christ is, and you will find the word of the Father. In the beginning was the Word. Not in the beginning God made the Word, just as in the

beginning God made the heaven and the earth. Behold how that He is not a creature. Learn to be drawn to the Son by the Father: that the Father may teach you, hear His Word. What Word of Him, do you say, do I hear? In the beginning was the Word (it is not was made, but was), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. How can men abiding in the flesh hear such a Word? The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

9. He Himself explains this also, and shows us His meaning when He said, He that has heard and learned of the Father comes unto me. He immediately subjoined what we were able to conceive: Not that any man has seen the Father, save he who is of God, he has seen the Father. What is that which He says? I have seen the Father, you have not seen the Father; and yet ye come not unto me unless you are drawn by the Father. And what is it for you to be drawn by the Father but to learn of the Father? What is to learn of the Father but to hear of the Father? What is to hear of the Father but to hear the Word of the Father—that is, to hear me? In case, therefore, when I say to you, Every man that has heard and learned of the Father, you should say within yourselves, But we have never seen the Father, how could we learn of the Father? Hear from myself: Not that any man has seen the Father, save He who is of God, He has seen the Father. I know the Father, I am from Him; but in that manner in which the Word is from Him where the Word is, not that which sounds and passes away, but that which remains with the speaker and attracts the hearer.

10. Let what follows admonish us: Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believes in me has eternal life. He willed to reveal Himself, what He was: He might have said in brief, He that believes in me has me. For Christ is Himself true God and eternal life. Therefore, he that believes in me, says He, goes into me; and he that goes into me, has me. But what is the meaning of to have me? To have eternal life. Eternal life took death upon itself; eternal life willed to die; but of you, not of itself; of you it received that whereby it may die in your behalf. Of men, indeed, He took flesh, but yet not in the manner of men. For having His Father in heaven, He chose a mother on earth; both there begotten without mother, and here born without father. Accordingly, life took upon itself death, that life might slay death. For he that believes in me, says He, has eternal life: not what is open, but what is hid. For eternal life is the Word, that in the beginning was with God, and the Word was God, and the life was the light of men. The same eternal life gave eternal life also to the flesh which it assumed. He came to die; but on the third day He rose again. Between the Word taking flesh and the flesh rising again, death which came between was consumed.

11. I am, says He, the bread of life. And what was the source of their pride? Your fathers, says He, did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. What is it whereof you are proud? They ate manna, and are dead. Why they ate and are dead? Because they believed that which they saw; what they saw not, they did not understand. Therefore were they your fathers, because you are like them. For so far, my brethren, as relates to this visible corporeal death, do not we too die who eat the bread that comes down from heaven? They died just as we shall die, so far, as I said, as relates to the visible and carnal death of this body. But so far as relates to that death, concerning which the Lord warns us by fear, and in which their fathers died: Moses ate manna, Aaron ate manna, Phinehas ate manna, and many ate manna, who were pleasing to the Lord, and they are not dead. Why? Because they understood the visible food spiritually, hungered spiritually, tasted spiritually, that they might be filled spiritually. For even we at this day receive visible food: but the sacrament is one thing, the virtue of the sacrament another. How many do receive at the altar and die, and die indeed by receiving? Whence the apostle says, Eats and drinks judgment to himself. For it was not the mouthful given by the Lord that was the poison to Judas. And yet he took it; and when he took it, the enemy entered into him: not because he

received an evil thing, but because he being evil received a good thing in an evil way. See ye then, brethren, that you eat the heavenly bread in a spiritual sense; bring innocence to the altar. Though your sins are daily, at least let them not be deadly. Before ye approach the altar, consider well what you are to say: Forgive us our debts, even as we forgive our debtors. You forgive, it shall be forgiven you: approach in peace, it is bread, not poison. But see whether you forgive, for if you do not forgive, you lie, and lie to Him whom you cannot deceive. You can lie to God, but you cannot deceive God. He knows what you do. He sees you within, examines you within, inspects within, judges within, and within He either condemns or crowns. But the fathers of these Jews were evil fathers of evil sons, unbelieving fathers of unbelieving sons, murmuring fathers of murmurers. For in no other thing is that people said to have offended the Lord more than in murmuring against God. And for that reason, the Lord, willing to show those men to be the children of such murmurers, thus begins His address to them: Why murmur ye among yourselves, ye murmurers, children of murmurers? Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; not because manna was an evil thing, but because they ate it in an evil manner.

12. This is the bread which comes down from heaven. Manna signified this bread; God's altar signified this bread. Those were sacraments. In the signs they were diverse; in the thing which was signified they were alike. Hear the apostle: For I would not that you should be ignorant, brethren, says he, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat. Of course, the same spiritual meat; for corporally it was another: since they ate manna, we eat another thing; but the spiritual was the same as that which we eat. But our fathers, not the fathers of those Jews; those to whom we are like, not those to whom they were like. Moreover he adds: And did all drink the same spiritual drink. They one kind of drink, we another, but only in the visible form, which, however, signified the same thing in its spiritual virtue. For how was it that they drank the same drink? They drank, says he of the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. Thence the bread, thence the drink. The rock was Christ in sign; the real Christ is in the Word and in flesh. And how did they drink? The rock was smitten twice with a rod; the double smiting signified the two wooden beams of the cross. This, then, is the bread that comes down from heaven, that if any man eat thereof, he shall not die. But this is what belongs to the virtue of the sacrament, not to the visible sacrament; he that eats within, not without; who eats in his heart, not who presses with his teeth.

13. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. For that reason living, because I came down from heaven. The manna also came down from heaven; but the manna was only a shadow, this is the truth. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world. When did flesh comprehend this flesh which He called bread? That is called flesh which flesh does not comprehend, and for that reason all the more flesh does not comprehend it, that it is called flesh. For they were terrified at this: they said it was too much for them; they thought it impossible. Is my flesh, says He, for the life of the world. Believers know the body of Christ, if they neglect not to be the body of Christ. Let them become the body of Christ, if they wish to live by the Spirit of Christ. None lives by the Spirit of Christ but the body of Christ. Understand, my brethren, what I mean to say. You are a man; you have both a spirit and a body. I call that a spirit which is called the soul; that whereby it consists that you are a man, for you consist of soul and body. And so you have an invisible spirit and a visible body. Tell me which lives of the other: does your spirit live of your body, or your body of your spirit? Every man that lives can answer; and he that cannot answer this, I know not whether he lives: what does every man that lives answer? My body, of course, lives by my spirit. Would you then also live by the Spirit of Christ. Be in the body of Christ. For surely my body does not live by your spirit. My body lives by my spirit, and your body by your spirit. The body of Christ

cannot live but by the Spirit of Christ. It is for this that the Apostle Paul, expounding this bread, says: One bread, says he, we being many are one body. O mystery of piety! O sign of unity! O bond of charity! He that would live has where to live, has whence to live. Let him draw near, let him believe; let him be embodied, that he may be made to live. Let him not shrink from the compact of members; let him not be a rotten member that deserves to be cut off; let him not be a deformed member whereof to be ashamed; let him be a fair, fit, and sound member; let him cleave to the body, live for God by God: now let him labor on earth, that hereafter he may reign in heaven.

14. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? They strove, and that among themselves, since they understood not, neither wished to take the bread of concord: for they who eat such bread do not strive with one another; for we being many are one bread, one body. And by this bread, God makes people of one sort to dwell in a house.

15. But that which they ask, while striving among themselves, namely, how the Lord can give His flesh to be eaten, they do not immediately hear: but further it is said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you will have no life in you. How, indeed, it may be eaten, and what may be the mode of eating this bread, you are ignorant of; nevertheless, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you will not have life in you. He spoke these words, not certainly to corpses, but to living men. Whereupon, lest they, understanding it to mean this life, should strive about this thing also, He going on added, Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life. Wherefore, he that eats not this bread, nor drinks this blood, has not this life; for men can have temporal life without that, but they can no ways have eternal life. He then that eats not His flesh, nor drinks His blood, has no life in him; and he that eats His flesh, and drinks His blood, has life. This epithet, *eternal*, which He used, answers to both. It is not so in the case of that food which we take for the purpose of sustaining this temporal life. For he who will not take it shall not live, nor yet shall he who will take it live. For very many, even who have taken it, die; it may be by old age, or by disease, or by some other casualty. But in this food and drink, that is, in the body and blood of the Lord, it is not so. For both he that does not take it has no life, and he that does take it has life, and that indeed eternal life. And thus He would have this meat and drink to be understood as meaning the fellowship of His own body and members, which is the holy Church in his predestinated, and called, and justified, and glorified saints and believers. Of these, the first is already effected, namely, predestination; the second and third, that is, the vocation and justification, have taken place, are taking place, and will take place; but the fourth, namely, the glorifying, is at present in hope; but a thing future in realization. The sacrament of this thing, namely, of the unity of the body and blood of Christ, is prepared on the Lord's table in some places daily, in some places at certain intervals of days, and from the Lord's table it is taken, by some to life, by some to destruction: but the thing itself, of which it is the sacrament, is for every man to life, for no man to destruction, whosoever shall have been a partaker thereof.

16. But lest they should suppose that eternal life was promised in this meat and drink in such manner that they who should take it should not even now die in the body, He condescended to meet this thought; for when He had said, He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life, He immediately subjoined, and I will raise him up on the last day. That meanwhile, according to the Spirit, he may have eternal life in that rest into which the spirits of the saints are received; but as to the body, he shall not be defrauded of its eternal life, but, on the contrary, he shall have it in the resurrection of the dead at the last day.

17. For my flesh, says He, is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. For while by meat and drink men seek to attain to this, neither to hunger nor thirst, there is nothing that truly affords this, except this meat and drink, which does render them by whom it is taken immortal and incorruptible; that is, the very fellowship of the saints, where will be peace and unity, full and perfect. Therefore, indeed, it is, even as men of God understood this before us, that our Lord Jesus Christ has pointed our minds to His body and blood in those things, which from being many are reduced to some one thing. For a unity is formed by many grains forming together; and another unity is effected by the clustering together of many berries.

18. In a word, He now explains how that which He speaks of comes to pass, and what it is to eat His body and to drink His blood. He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him. This it is, therefore, for a man to eat that meat and to drink that drink, to dwell in Christ, and to have Christ dwelling in him. Consequently, he that dwells not in Christ, and in whom Christ dwells not, doubtless neither eats His flesh nor drinks His blood, but rather does he eat and drink the sacrament of so great a thing to his own judgment, because he, being unclean, has presumed to come to the sacraments of Christ, which no man takes worthily except he that is pure: of such it is said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

19. As the living Father has sent me, says He, and I live by the Father; so he that eats me, even he shall live by me. He says not: As I eat the Father, and live by the Father; so he that eats me, the same shall live by me. For the Son, who was begotten equal, does not become better by participation of the Father; just as we are made better by participation of the Son, through the unity of His body and blood, which thing that eating and drinking signifies. We live then by Him, by eating Him; that is, by receiving Himself as the eternal life, which we did not have from ourselves. Himself, however, lives by the Father, being sent by Him, because He emptied Himself, being made obedient even unto the death of the cross. For if we take this declaration, I live by the Father, according to that which He says in another place, The Father is greater than I; just as we, too, live by Him who is greater than we; this results from His being sent. The sending is in fact the emptying of Himself, and His taking upon Him the form of a servant: and this is rightly understood, while also the Son's equality of nature with the Father is preserved. For the Father is greater than the Son as man, but He has the Son as God equal—while the same is both God and man, Son of God and Son of man, one Christ Jesus. To this effect, if these words are rightly understood, He spoke thus: As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eats me, even he shall live by me: just as if He were to say, My emptying of myself (in that He sent me) effected that I should live by the Father; that is, should refer my life to Him as the greater; but that any should live by me is effected by that participation in which he eats me. Therefore, I being humbled, do live by the Father, man being raised up, lives by me. But if it was said, I live by the Father, so as to mean, that He is of the Father, not the Father of Him, it was said without detriment to His equality. And yet further, by saying, And he that eats me, even he shall live by me, He did not signify that His own equality was the same as our equality, but He thereby showed the grace of the Mediator.

20. This is the bread that comes down from heaven; that by eating it we may live, since we cannot have eternal life from ourselves. Not, says He, as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats this bread shall live forever. That those fathers are dead, He would have to be understood as meaning, that they do not live forever. For even they who eat Christ shall certainly die temporally; but they live forever, because Christ is eternal life.

## St. John Damascene

### Exposition of the Faith, Book IV, 12-13

12. It is not without reason or by chance that we worship towards the East. But seeing that we are composed of a visible and an invisible nature, that is to say, of a nature partly of spirit and partly of sense, we render also a twofold worship to the Creator; just as we sing both with our spirit and our bodily lips, and are baptized with both water and Spirit, and are united with the Lord in a twofold manner, being sharers in the mysteries and in the grace of the Spirit.

Since, therefore, God is spiritual light, and Christ is called in the Scriptures Sun of Righteousness and Dayspring, the East is the direction that must be assigned to His worship. For everything good must be assigned to Him from Whom every good thing arises. Indeed the divine David also says, *Sing unto God, you kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the Lord: to Him that rides upon the Heavens of heavens towards the East.* Moreover the Scripture also says, *And God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed:* and when he had transgressed His command He expelled him and made him to dwell over against the delights of Paradise, which clearly is the West. So, then, we worship God seeking and striving after our old fatherland. Moreover the tent of Moses had its veil and mercy seat towards the East. Also the tribe of Judah as the most precious pitched their camp on the East. Also in the celebrated temple of Solomon the Gate of the Lord was placed eastward. Moreover Christ, when He hung on the Cross, had His face turned towards the West, and so we worship, striving after Him. And when He was received again into Heaven He was borne towards the East, and thus His apostles worship Him, and thus He will come again in the way in which they beheld Him going towards Heaven; as the Lord Himself said, *As the lightning comes out of the East and shines even unto the West, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be.* So, then, in expectation of His coming we worship towards the East. But this tradition of the apostles is unwritten. For much that has been handed down to us by tradition is unwritten.

13. God Who is good and altogether good and more than good, Who is goodness throughout, by reason of the exceeding riches of His goodness did not suffer Himself, that is His nature, only to be good, with no other to participate therein, but because of this He made first the spiritual and heavenly powers: next the visible and sensible universe: next man with his spiritual and sentient nature. All things, therefore, which he made, share in His goodness in respect of their existence. For He Himself is existence to all, since all things that are, are in Him, not only because it was He that brought them out of nothing into being, but because His energy preserves and maintains all that He made: and in special the living creatures. For both in that they exist and in that they enjoy life they share in His goodness. But in truth those of them that have reason have a still greater share in that, both because of what has been already said and also because of the very reason which they possess. For they are somehow more dearly akin to Him, even though He is incomparably higher than they.

Man, however, being endowed with reason and free will, received the power of continuous union with God through his own choice, if indeed he should abide in goodness, that is in obedience to his Maker. Since, however, he transgressed the command of his Creator and became liable to death and corruption, the Creator and Maker of our race, because of His bowels of compassion, took on our likeness, becoming man in all things but without sin, and was united to our nature. For since He bestowed on us His own image and His own spirit and we did not keep them safe, He took Himself a share in our poor and weak nature, in order that He might cleanse us and make us incorruptible, and establish us once more as partakers of His divinity.

For it was fitting that not only the first-fruits of our nature should partake in the higher good but every man who wished it, and that a second birth should take place and that the nourishment should be new and suitable to the birth and thus the measure of perfection be attained. Through His birth, that is, His incarnation, and baptism and passion and resurrection, He delivered our nature from the sin of our first parent and death and corruption, and became the first-fruits of the resurrection, and made Himself the way and image and pattern, in order that we, too, following in His footsteps, may become by adoption what He is Himself by nature, sons and heirs of God and joint heirs with Him. He gave us therefore, as I said, a second birth in order that, just as we who are born of Adam are in his image and are the heirs of the curse and corruption, so also being born of Him we may be in His likeness and heirs of His incorruption and blessing and glory.

Now seeing that this Adam is spiritual, it was meet that both the birth and likewise the food should be spiritual too, but since we are of a double and compound nature, it is meet that both the birth should be double and likewise the food compound. We were therefore given a birth by water and Spirit: I mean, by the holy baptism : and the food is the very bread of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who came down from heaven. For when He was about to take on Himself a voluntary death for our sakes, on the night on which He gave Himself up, He laid a new covenant on His holy disciples and apostles, and through them on all who believe in Him. In the upper chamber, then, of holy and illustrious Sion, after He had eaten the ancient Passover with His disciples and had fulfilled the ancient covenant, He washed His disciples' feet in token of the holy baptism. Then having broken bread He gave it to them saying, *Take, eat, this is My body broken for you for the remission of sins.* Likewise also He took the cup of wine and water and gave it to them saying, *Drink ye all of it: for this is My blood, the blood of the New Testament which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the death of the Son of man and confess His resurrection until He come.*

If then the Word of God is quick and energising, and the Lord did all that He willed ; if He said, Let there be light and there was light, let there be a firmament and there was a firmament ; if the heavens were established by the Word of the Lord and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth ; if the heaven and the earth, water and fire and air and the whole glory of these, and, in truth, this most noble creature, man, were perfected by the Word of the Lord; if God the Word of His own will became man and the pure and undefiled blood of the holy and ever-virginal One made His flesh without the aid of seed , can He not then make the bread His body and the wine and water His blood? He said in the beginning, *Let the earth bring forth grass,* and even until this present day, when the rain comes it brings forth its proper fruits, urged on and strengthened by the divine command. God said, *This is My body,* and *This is My blood,* and *this do ye in remembrance of Me.* And so it is at His omnipotent command *until He come:* for it was in this sense that He said *until He come:* and the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit becomes through the invocation the rain to this new tillage. For just as God made all that He made by the energy of the Holy Spirit, so also now the energy of the Spirit performs those things that are supernatural and which it is not possible to comprehend unless by faith alone. *How shall this be,* said the holy Virgin, *seeing I know not a man?* And the archangel Gabriel answered her: *The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you.* And now you ask, how the bread became Christ's body and the wine and water Christ's blood. And I say unto you, The Holy Spirit is present and does those things which surpass reason and thought.

Further, bread and wine are employed: for God knows man's infirmity: for in general man turns away discontentedly from what is not well-worn by custom: and so with His usual indulgence He

performs His supernatural works through familiar objects: and just as, in the case of baptism, since it is man's custom to wash himself with water and anoint himself with oil, He connected the grace of the Spirit with the oil and the water and made it the water of regeneration, in like manner since it is man's custom to eat and to drink water and wine, He connected His divinity with these and made them His body and blood in order that we may rise to what is supernatural through what is familiar and natural.

The body which is born of the holy Virgin is in truth body united with divinity, not that the body which was received up into the heavens descends, but that the bread itself and the wine are changed into God's body and blood. But if you enquire how this happens, it is enough for you to learn that it was through the Holy Spirit, just as the Lord took on Himself flesh that subsisted in Him and was born of the holy Mother of God through the Spirit. And we know nothing further save that the Word of God is true and energises and is omnipotent, but the manner of this cannot be searched out. But one can put it well thus, that just as in nature the bread by the eating and the wine and the water by the drinking are changed into the body and blood of the eater and drinker, and do not become a different body from the former one, so the bread of the table and the wine and water are supernaturally changed by the invocation and presence of the Holy Spirit into the body and blood of Christ, and are not two but one and the same.

Wherefore to those who partake worthily with faith, it is for the remission of sins and for life everlasting and for the safeguarding of soul and body; but to those who partake unworthily without faith, it is for chastisement and punishment, just as also the death of the Lord became to those who believe life and incorruption for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness, while to those who do not believe and to the murderers of the Lord it is for everlasting chastisement and punishment.

The bread and the wine are not merely figures of the body and blood of Christ (God forbid!) but the deified body of the Lord itself: for the Lord has said, This is My body, not, this is a figure of My body: and My blood, not, a figure of My blood. And on a previous occasion He had said to the Jews, *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. For My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed. And again, He that eats Me, shall live.*

Wherefore with all fear and a pure conscience and certain faith let us draw near and it will assuredly be to us as we believe, doubting nothing. Let us pay homage to it in all purity both of soul and body: for it is twofold. Let us draw near to it with an ardent desire, and with our hands held in the form of the cross let us receive the body of the Crucified One: and let us apply our eyes and lips and brows and partake of the divine coal, in order that the fire of the longing, that is in us, with the additional heat derived from the coal may utterly consume our sins and illumine our hearts, and that we may be inflamed and deified by the participation in the divine fire. Isaiah saw the coal. But coal is not plain wood but wood united with fire: in like manner also the bread of the communion is not plain bread but bread united with divinity. But a body which is united with divinity is not one nature, but has one nature belonging to the body and another belonging to the divinity that is united to it, so that the compound is not one nature but two.

With bread and wine Melchisedek, the priest of the most high God, received Abraham on his return from the slaughter of the Gentiles. That table pre-imagined this mystical table, just as that priest was a type and image of Christ, the true high-priest. *For you are a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.* Of this bread the show-bread was an image. This surely is that pure

and bloodless sacrifice which the Lord through the prophet said is offered to Him from the rising to the setting of the sun .

The body and blood of Christ are making for the support of our soul and body, without being consumed or suffering corruption, not making for the draught (God forbid!) but for our being and preservation, a protection against all kinds of injury, a purging from all uncleanness: should one receive base gold, they purify it by the critical burning lest in the future we be condemned with this world. They purify from diseases and all kinds of calamities; according to the words of the divine Apostle, *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* This too is what he says, *So that he that partakes of the body and blood of Christ unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself.* Being purified by this, we are united to the body of Christ and to His Spirit and become the body of Christ.

This bread is the first-fruits of the future bread which is ἐπιούσιος, i.e. necessary for existence. For the word ἐπιούσιον signifies either the future, that is Him Who is for a future age, or else Him of Whom we partake for the preservation of our essence. Whether then it is in this sense or that, it is fitting to speak so of the Lord's body. For the Lord's flesh is life-giving spirit because it was conceived of the life-giving Spirit. For what is born of the Spirit is spirit. But I do not say this to take away the nature of the body, but I wish to make clear its life-giving and divine power. But if some persons called the bread and the wine antitypes of the body and blood of the Lord, as did the divinely inspired Basil, they said so not after the consecration but before the consecration, so calling the offering itself.

Participation is spoken of; for through it we partake of the divinity of Jesus. Communion, too, is spoken of, and it is an actual communion, because through it we have communion with Christ and share in His flesh and His divinity: yea, we have communion and are united with one another through it. For since we partake of one bread, we all become one body of Christ and one blood, and members one of another, being of one body with Christ.

With all our strength, therefore, let us beware lest we receive communion from or grant it to heretics; *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, says the Lord, neither cast ye your pearls before swine*, lest we become partakers in their dishonour and condemnation. For if union is in truth with Christ and with one another, we are assuredly voluntarily united also with all those who partake with us. For this union is effected voluntarily and not against our inclination. *For we are all one body because we partake of the one bread*, as the divine Apostle says .

Further, antitypes of future things are spoken of, not as though they were not in reality Christ's body and blood, but that now through them we partake of Christ's divinity, while then we shall partake mentally through the vision alone.