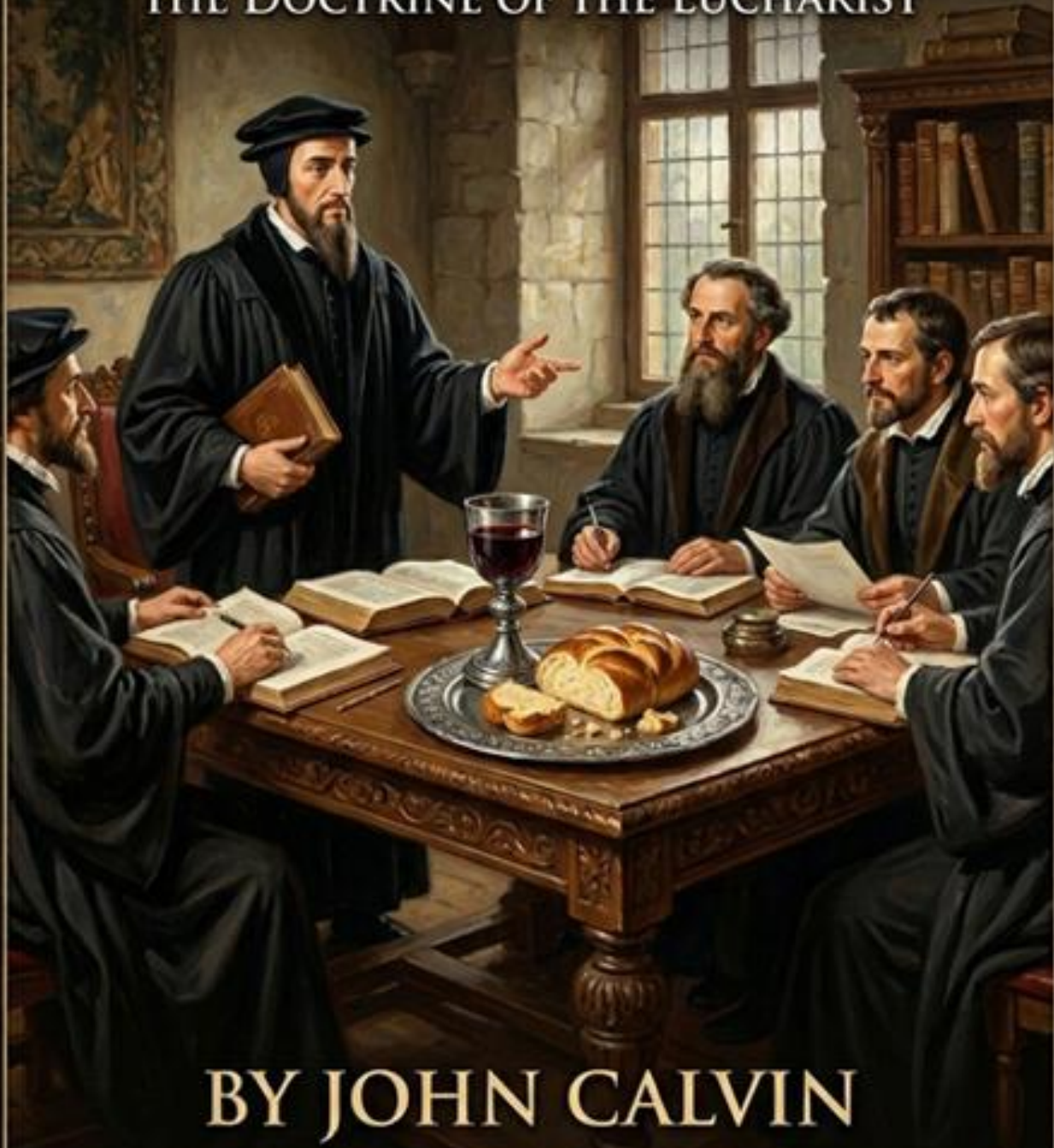


MONERGISM BOOKS

SACRAMENTAL DISPUTES RESOLVED

CONSENSUS TIGURINUS AND
THE DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST



BY JOHN CALVIN

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN GENEVA AND ZURICH

SACRAMENTAL DISPUTES RESOLVED

JOHN CALVIN

Monergism Books

The following work was fully translated by Claude. It was then thoroughly checked during the editing process to ensure accurate transcription throughout. Even so, please notify us if anything is found to be amiss, and we will work to remedy it as soon as possible.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

We used Claude to translate John Calvin's *Brieve Resolution sur les Disputes qui ont esté de nostre temps quant aux Sacremens* (Geneva, 1555) from French into English. The Translator's Note below is Claude's assessment of its work. Since the original title is rather long-winded when translated into English, we have given this translation the short title, *Sacramental Disputes Resolved*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This is a complete scholarly translation of Calvin's *Brieve Resolution* (1555), rendered into English as literally as the syntax permits while remaining intelligible. The work consists of three distinct sections: the prefatory letter to the Swiss Reformed pastors (dated 28 November 1554); the twenty-six articles of the *Consensus Tigurinus* or *Accord of Zurich* (originally agreed 1549); and Calvin's extended Exposition defending that *Accord* against Lutheran critics. The original 16th-century French uses extensive abbreviations in the printed text, which have been expanded silently throughout.

ORIGINAL TITLE PAGE

**A Brief Resolution on the Disputes of Our Time Concerning the
Sacraments**

**Containing the Approbation of the Accord Made Previously between
the Ministers and Pastors of the Churches of Zurich and Geneva,
Touching the Nature, Virtue, End, Use, and Fruit of the Sacraments: To
Show that Those Who Speak Evil of It are Scatter-brained Men Who
Seek Only to Obscure or Pervert Sound and Wholesome Doctrine.**

By John Calvin.

From the dark and hollow chambers, God draws out truth in his own time.

Luke 8.

At Geneva, from the press of Conrad Badius. M.D.LV.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

John Calvin to the Pastors of the City and Territory of Zurich, of Berne, Basel, Schaffhausen, Coire, and of all the lands of the Grisons, of Saint-Gall, Bienne, Mulhouse, and Neuchâtel, his well-beloved brethren and faithful servants of Jesus Christ.

It is now four years past, my dear and honoured brethren, since we caused to be printed a brief accord of our doctrine touching the Sacraments, which we thought well suited to extinguish the vexatious contentions that had for too long been debated among learned men and those fearing God. And indeed we had comprised enough in that little summary to appease and satisfy all good minds: as in fact many learned men and of good heart not only approved our counsel, but also declared that our doctrine, as it is there contained, pleased them very well. If some, either from being somewhat too obstinate in their own fancy, or, as it happens, after great troubles, from having some residue of suspicion rooted in their hearts, could not so quickly condescend to full accord with us, yet by their silence they showed that they found nothing better than to foster peace and friendship.

But meanwhile, certain ignorant and reckless persons give themselves such licence to disturb peaceable things that if one did not go forward to repress them, there would be cause to fear that they might kindle a new war. It is true, because they are few in number, and there is in them no virtue to give them authority or credit — and moreover by their foolish babble they expose themselves to the hatred and mockery of all the world — one might with good right despise them, were it not that by making a show of being advocates of the public cause, by such a cover, however vain it may be, they abuse the weak, who are not sufficiently shrewd. Wherefore, seeing that their audacity does great harm, and that the more patient we are, the more it grows and overflows, we can do no less than to resist it, since necessity constrains us thereto. I may well protest — though their books fly here and there, which serve to distress the good, to trouble the weak, and to arm the wicked to speak evil — that it is with great regret and as it were against my will that I have set myself to rebuff their folly. But because I would have thought it cruel had I not, by uncovering their deceits, delivered many good, simple people from error, I have not hesitated to oppose myself frankly to such rude fellows, who seek nothing but to put everything into confusion.

I have also wished to warn the men of authority and learning, whose name these scatter-brained persons pretend to, that it is a disgrace to them to give free rein to evil by their silence. For beyond the fact that all Christians ought to take pains to extinguish the fire that Satan endeavours to kindle by such bellows, the learned men whom these troublemakers wrap up in their quarrel have a greater interest therein than we, so that they ought to strive doubly to repress their importunity, which redounds to the common dishonour of many Churches. For these scatter-brained men of whom I speak, stirring up the contentions that have been held concerning the

Sacraments, pretend to sustain the doctrine that is preached in the land of Saxony and in lower Germany. Now when this is heard and believed, some are troubled for the reverence they bear to such Churches; others mock all the doctors of that region, seeing that they make use of such beasts to plead their cause; many, knowing well that the sounder part does not consent thereto, are astonished at their too great patience. Meanwhile the manifest enemies of Jesus Christ rejoice to see us fighting among ourselves, as one would be amused to see cocks jousting.

Now, since it is a perverse and villainous dissimulation to give free rein to evil, the men of letters and of renown who are in those lands ought well to bethink themselves, so as to do their duty — if it be possible for them to repress the impetuous rage of those who trouble the Church without cause. And because I desire to bring back to the right way those who are in some measure tractable, or who have not yet cast themselves too far beyond the pale — even so that it may be lawful for all to reduce themselves peaceably — I will touch here only one single man, indeed without naming him. This madman, after having vaunted himself bravely of being a great zealot of the catholic faith, entreats learned and renowned men — whom I love and honour, and whom he names his masters — to join with him and help. Behold the fine honour he does them, to arm them against us: that is, that they, being excellent doctors, should follow the temerity of their disciple, as archers follow a man-at-arms. Now against whom does he wish war to be made? He replies in one word, that it is against the Sacramentarians. But when he wishes to define the matter, he protests that he battles against those who leave to the Sacrament of the Supper nothing but naked and empty signs. If so, he might well have rested, and left this office to more sufficient men.

There are notable Churches in the lands of Switzerland and of the Grisons, among which ours may well be reckoned: at the least one will find among us many better captains to maintain the dignity and virtue of the Sacraments than he is a good soldier. Moreover, there is an infinite number of persons who will supply better than he for the defence of this cause, and will acquit themselves faithfully enough in it. For who is there among us who does not labour to show that the Sacraments are conjoined with their truth and effect? But when this venerable doctor, after having set out so fine a preamble, not only puts in his roll many good personages who are as far removed from this crime as heaven from earth, but notably alleges our *Accord*, as if we had therein consented to the error of which he speaks — whereas it is therein so expressly reproved — is that not an impudence of contradiction too shameless, and an absurdity too gross? There is no need to seek arguments from far to defend ourselves, seeing that this calf recites a little after our own words, in which we confess openly that the body of Jesus Christ is truly communicated to the faithful in the Supper. I ask you, is it nothing to leave beyond bare and empty signs, when one affirms that what is figured is given at the same time, and that the effect is accomplished?

He, having reconsidered, escapes by a subterfuge so meagre and frivolous that nothing could be more so — it is that we speak of a spiritual manner of eating. How then? Would he have the flesh of Jesus Christ eaten as the oxen of his country? But he adds that he does not think we are speaking of the true body: as if we imagined that the body of Jesus Christ were a phantom. We leave this reverie to him and his like. For holding this point as resolved — that Jesus Christ has only one true and natural body — we say that as he was once sacrificed on the cross to reconcile us with God, so also he is

daily offered to us in the Supper. For it is necessary that the Lord Jesus, in order to communicate to us the grace of the salvation he has acquired for us, should first be made ours, and that his flesh should be to us meat and nourishment, since it is from it that we draw life. Behold the words whereby we speak plainly in our *Accord*. Now this good controller alleges what seems good to him, and leaves, as a traitor and falsifier, this article, which was the principal one. But since he had protested to recite our sentences word for word, by what right, or under what title, was it permitted him to separate — indeed to tear apart — the members that were conjoined, so that our intention is not put forward? Is that not to act like a mad dog, that bites at random every stone it encounters?

Nevertheless he cannot refrain from producing shortly after our testimonies touching the truth of the Sacraments, which he falsely makes it believed that we deny. Thereupon this troublemaker charges us with finesse and cunning — to such a degree, as he says, that in treating amply of receiving Jesus Christ in a spiritual manner, we abuse the simple people. As if we could spiritually communicate with Jesus Christ without having him dwelling in us by the virtue of faith, and being united to his body to live in him. Which cannot be, unless Jesus Christ, insofar as he was once offered in sacrifice for us, gives himself to us, so that we may enjoy him. Whence it follows that his flesh vivifies us.

Now this good protector of the faith, having made so fine a prologue to specify the error against which he battles, endeavours to show that there is great diversity of opinions among us, in order to render us odious by this means. He propounds this maxim, that it is the property of heretics to be discordant. When I have granted him what he demands, I say that this does not touch us. He replies that we are different, inasmuch as according to

some, the bread signifies the body; according to others, it is a mark or a token of the body of Christ; according to others, it is its sign; according to others, its figure; according to others, a memorial; according to others, a representation; according to others, a testimony or signature of the communion we have with Christ; according to others, a remembrance of the body that was given for us; according to others, an assurance to testify to us the spiritual grace; according to others, the communion that we have with the body of Christ. Who will not think, I ask you, that in speaking thus he is a downright prevaricator who is secretly in agreement with us? For one could not better praise and approve a good accord and full conformity than by amassing all these forms of speech which he opposes one to another as being very contrary, seeing that everyone perceives that they all tend to one end.

Moreover, to make himself appear the more subtle, he has not been content to make a simple recital, but has composed a table, to show the matter as in a picture. Meanwhile, because he saw well that Saint Matthew, as to the words, is less conformable to Saint Paul, and Saint Mark to Saint Luke, than are among themselves a dozen expositors whom he brings in as discordant — to escape from this difficulty he says that not only do we differ in words, but are also discordant in sense. Let us therefore make comparison of the whole to judge if it be so. What Saint Matthew and Saint Mark call blood, Saint Luke and Saint Paul name the Testament in his blood. Behold a great diversity. On our part, what will he find? Certainly the words Sign, Signification, Figure, Pledge, Memorial, Representation, are not a contrary sense, seeing that they are so well linked together that each one draws the rest after it.

You see by what reasons this scatter-brained man has been moved to forge in his cabinet darts of fire, to inflame all Europe if he could. But what will he reply for himself and his companions? In one place he affirms that the words of Christ are sufficiently clear of themselves and have no need of any gloss, when he says that the bread is his body. Presently after he does not deny that there is in it some figure. There is no further need for us to inquire against whom he wishes to strike, seeing that he breaks of himself in his frenzy. But at the least let him name this figure, which he says does not prevent the bread from being properly the body of Christ. For whatever the figure be, it already causes the sense to be neither simple nor literal. Here he is caught as in another trap. For wishing to advance his opinion — since he does not agree with those whom he calls heretics — it will follow according to his argument that he also is of their number, if by chance he does not show that his figure, which he conceals, is so holy and sacred that it is not lawful to think ill of it. In concealing it, he uses finesse, so that one cannot judge of it.

Furthermore, he confesses that some of us use the same words as those whom he holds for good Catholics, but that their intention is not such. If so, what will become of this great contrariety of words, which alone, according to what he says, makes people heretics — even though they are constrained to differ from others in order not to consent to errors? Certainly it is a great shame that an impetuosity so blind — which would not be pardoned in a young man — should so transport a poor old man, making himself the laughing stock of little children.

I will not dissemble that he also amasses some sentences of certain expositors, which have an appearance of not agreeing one with another, though in truth they can be reconciled. But the evil is that in the first place,

he maliciously wrests what is touched upon in passing, by this one or that one, as if it were to determine fully all the matter. And then, it is too great a tyranny or barbarity in him to wish to impose a law on all, to speak in the same style and language without differing a single syllable, seeing that each one has his own proper way of speaking, and that such liberty ought to be permitted. One man will have said that the mystical body of Jesus Christ is here figured. What? Has not Saint Augustine said the like? Indeed, even Saint Paul in saying that we are all one bread. Another will have said that the Supper is a solemn remembrance of the redemption that has been acquired for us. What? Does that not respond very well to what we are taught both by Saint Paul and by the sovereign Master, that this Sacrament is ordained for us to the end that his death may be preached therein? There was no occasion at all to make such a great noise, nor to raise any trouble. Far from it that a man who calls himself a minister of peace, and who in fact bears the message of reconciliation between God and men, should be excused when he makes such alarms without cause.

But let us suppose that there may have been some discords heretofore, because the matter could not be fully liquidated and settled at the first stroke: yet what humanity is there in renewing a wound that had been closed and healed? To the end that the faithful might not be distracted by disputes which had reigned only too long, we have proposed to them our *Accord*, to which they might hold. This good zealot saw clearly that all those whom he entitles Sacramentarians have the one same faith, and confess it as with the one same mouth: and even if the two good doctors Zwingli and Oecolampadius, who have been recognised as faithful servants of Jesus Christ, were living today, they would not change a single word in our doctrine. For our good brother and of sainted memory, Martin Bucer,

after having seen our *Accord* above-mentioned, wrote to me that it was an inestimable good for the whole Church. Wherefore it is so much the greater malice in this new controller to bear us envy for it.

On my part — not to render him the like coin, but to repulse this foolish calumny with which he has wished to charge us — I will reply in three words: that it is the property of the devil to calumniate, from which also he bears his name; that it is also his property to obscure clarity; thirdly, to be the father of quarrels and discords by troubling the peace; finally, to break and dissipate the unity of the faith. Since all these things are found in this blunderer, there is no further need for me to pronounce him son of the devil, since the matter shows to great and small what he is.

For the rest, my dear and honoured brethren, since we ought to take at least as much pains to maintain the truth and to foster concord as Satan endeavours to ruin the one and the other, I have wished to employ myself therein to the best of my power, and also to try whether by chance those who until now have been of too hard a brain may be tamed — if not, that those who are of sound judgment may be furnished with the defence of our cause, so as to know better how to rebuff them.

Now, the means I have here adopted of expressing our intention more fully has seemed to me the most proper. For the too great brevity of our first writing is subject to many cavillings, and does not remove the scruples that are too deeply rooted. I have therefore so expanded the Summary that was previously printed, that I have made a similar confession in more words, in order to render it more clear. This troublemaker, of whom it wearies me to speak so much, reproaches us that there is among us such a labyrinth of opinions that none understands what his companion means. Now it seems to me that I know so well what you believe and hold, that I am confident of

having here set down in writing what each of you would write on his own part. For I have not usurped the office of dictating to you what you ought to confess by my authority, but rather I submit the whole to your discretion. Meanwhile, I have boldly advanced to compose this little treatise, because I have found by experience heretofore how much my labour was agreeable to you, and because you have also testified it sufficiently.

Farewell, my brethren, whom I pray God to govern by his Spirit and to bless the pains you take to edify his Church. My companions, the Ministers of the Word, salute you.

From Geneva, the 28th of November, 1554.

THE ARTICLES OF THE ACCORD

Here are the Articles of the Accord.

Article 1. Since Jesus Christ is the end of the Law, and the knowledge of him comprises in itself the whole sum of the Gospel, there is no doubt that all the spiritual government of the Church tends to lead us to Christ, as it is by him alone that one attains to God, who is the ultimate end of our felicity. Wherefore whoever turns away or is diverted from him, by however little, will never speak rightly as is necessary of all the ordinances of God.

Article 2. Now, since the Sacraments are dependencies and accessories of the Gospel, one cannot properly and in edification treat of their nature, virtue, office, and of the fruit that comes to us from them, without beginning with Christ. And not only to touch his name in passing, but to know in truth why and to what intention he is given to us by the Father, and what goods he has brought to us.

Article 3. We must therefore understand that Christ, being the eternal Son of God, of one same essence and glory with the Father, clothed himself with

our flesh to the end that he might communicate to us what he had proper to his nature, in the title of adoption — that is to say, that we might be children of God. Which is effected when, being engrafted into the body of Christ — indeed by the virtue of the Holy Spirit — we are, in the first place, accepted by God as just, of a pure gratuity; secondly, we are regenerated to new life, so that being reformed to the image of the heavenly Father, we renounce our old man.

Article 4. Therefore, we have to consider Christ in his flesh as Sacrificer who, by the oblation made on the cross, has obtained pardon of our sins, and by his obedience has blotted out all our iniquities, who has acquired for us perfect justice, and who now intercedes for us, in order to give us access to God. We must consider him as a sacrifice abolishing sins, by means of which God has been appeased towards the world. We must consider him as a brother, who has made us blessed children of God — even us who were the miserable race of Adam. We must consider him as a restorer, who by the virtue of his Spirit reforms all that is vicious in us, to the end that we may cease to live according to the world and the flesh, but that God may live in us. We must consider him as king, who enriches us with all good things; who governs and maintains us under his protection; who furnishes us with all spiritual arms; who delivers us from all evil and harm; who leads and rules us by the sceptre of his mouth. And we must consider him so in all these qualities, that he may lift us up to his divine majesty and that of his Father, until what shall happen once be accomplished — that is, that God be all in all.

Article 5. Now, that Jesus Christ may show himself such towards us, and produce such effects, it is fitting that we be united with him, and assembled in his body. For he does not spread his life upon us, except insofar as he is

our head, from which all the body receives its increase and vigour to distribute to each member — the body being bound and conjoined with its head by firm joints.

Article 6. This is the spiritual communication that we have with the Son of God, when he dwelling in us by his Spirit makes us participants of all the goods that reside in him: to testify which, both the preaching of the Gospel and the use of the Sacraments have been ordained to us — namely, Baptism and the holy Supper.

Article 7. True it is that this end befits also the Sacraments: that they may be as marks and tokens of the confession of our Christianity, and of the fraternal fellowship that we have together; that they may incite us to give thanks to God; that they may be as exercises to confirm us in faith and holy life; and finally that they may be as bonds and instruments obliging us thereto. But the principal end of their office is that God by them testifies to us his grace, represents it to us, and seals it. For although they signify nothing but what is announced to us by the Word, yet it is a great and singular good that God puts before our eyes as it were living images that touch all our senses more nearly — as if we were brought to the thing itself — inasmuch as the death of Jesus Christ, with all the goods that have been acquired therein, is set before us to better exercise our faith. And also, it is no small thing that what God had pronounced with his mouth should be confirmed and ratified as by seals.

Article 8. For the rest, since the testimonies and seals that God has given us of his grace are true, there is no doubt that he accomplishes truly within us by his Spirit all that the Sacraments figure outwardly: that is, that we may enjoy Christ as the fountain of all goods, so that by means of his death we may be reconciled to God and renewed in holiness of life; that being

justified, we may obtain salvation; and consequently that we may render thanks for such benefits, which were once given us on the cross, and which we receive each day by faith.

Article 9. Wherefore, although we make distinction — as is expedient — between the signs and the things figured, we do not separate the truth from the signs, so that we do not confess that all those who receive there the promises offered to them receive also Christ spiritually with all his spiritual riches: and even that those who have previously been made participants of him restore and continue the communication they already have of him.

Article 10. For one must not look to the bare signs, but rather to the promise annexed thereto. Thus, insofar as our faith profits in the promise, this virtue and efficacy of which we have spoken shows itself and unfolds. Wherefore, the simple matter of the water, the bread, and the wine does not present or give us Christ, nor put us in possession of his spiritual gifts: but rather one must have regard to the promise, of which the office is to lead us straight to Jesus Christ, by the way of faith, which is that which makes us communicate with him.

Article 11. By this, is overthrown the error of those who amuse themselves as blunderers at the elements, and attach thereto the confidence of their salvation. Since the Sacraments separated from Christ are nothing but frivolous masks, and this voice resounds clearly therein, that one must stop only at Jesus Christ alone, and that one must not seek elsewhere the grace of salvation.

Article 12. Furthermore, as to what is given us by the Sacraments, it is not by their own virtue, even though one includes therein the promise wherewith they are qualified: for it is God alone who works by his Spirit. And in that he uses the means of the Sacraments, it is not to enclose his

virtue therein, nor to derogate in any way from the efficacy and vigour of his Spirit: but in so doing, he uses them as inferior aids — indeed in such a way that all the virtue resides nonetheless in him alone.

Article 13. As therefore Saint Paul declares that he who plants or waters is nothing, but that all is in God who gives the increase: so one may say of the Sacraments — that is, that they are nothing and would profit nothing if God did not work alone. They are indeed instruments by which God works with efficacy and virtue when it pleases him: in such a manner, nonetheless, that all the perfection of our salvation ought to be attributed to him.

Article 14. We conclude, therefore, that there is only Christ who baptises inwardly, who makes us participants of himself in faith in the Supper, and who accomplishes what the Sacraments figure: and that he uses these aids in such a way that all the virtue proceeds from his Spirit, and the whole effect resides therein.

Article 15. Following this, the Sacraments are sometimes named seals; it is said that they nourish, confirm, and advance the faith. And yet to speak properly, there is only the Spirit of God who is the sovereign seal: as it is he himself who begins and perfects the faith. For all these titles of the Sacraments ought to be placed in an inferior degree, so that no portion of our salvation, however small it may be, may be taken away from him who is the entire author, to give it to creatures or elements.

Article 16. Furthermore, we teach that God does not deploy his virtue indifferently in all those who receive the Sacraments, but only in his elect. And as he illumines only those whom he has already ordained to eternal life, so also he causes by the secret virtue of his Spirit that they enjoy in truth what is offered at the Sacraments.

Article 17. By this doctrine is overturned the reverie of the Sorbonnists, who teach that the Sacraments of the New Testament confer and give grace to all those who place no obstacle of mortal sin. For beyond the fact that one receives nothing in the Sacraments but by faith, one must hold it as resolved that the grace of God is not attached thereto, so that whoever has the sign possesses at the same time the thing signified. For the signs are just as well administered to the reprobate as to the elect, but the truth comes only to the latter.

Article 18. It is indeed certain that Christ with his gifts is offered in common to all: and that the truth of God is not overthrown by the unbelief of men, so that the Sacraments do not always retain their nature and vigour, but all are not capable of Christ, nor of his gifts. Thus, nothing changes on the side of God, but as to men, each receives according to the measure of his faith.

Article 19. Now, as the use of the Sacraments brings nothing more to unbelievers than if they abstained from them — indeed it turns only to evil and confusion for them — so also the truth that is figured there does not fail to be communicated to the faithful outside the use of the signs. In this way, the sins of Saint Paul were washed by Baptism, which had already been washed away previously. Similarly, Baptism was a washing of regeneration to Cornelius, who had already received the Holy Spirit. According to this rule, Jesus Christ communicates himself to us in the Supper — he who will have given himself to us previously and who dwells perpetually in us. For since it is commanded to each to examine himself, it follows that faith is required before one approaches the Sacrament of the Supper. Now faith cannot be without Christ: but according as it is confirmed and augmented

by the Sacraments, so also the gifts of God are confirmed therein — and by way of speaking, Jesus Christ grows in us and we in him.

Article 20. Furthermore, the utility that we receive from the Sacraments ought not to be restricted to the time of their reception: as if the visible sign, as soon as it is proposed to us, brought with it in the same moment the grace of God. For those who have been baptised from their earliest infancy are sometimes not regenerated by God until the age of manhood, or even in old age. Thus, the utility of Baptism extends to the whole course of our life. For the promise that is contained therein remains always. It may also happen that the use of the Supper, which would have profited us but little in the act, by reason of our negligence or tardiness, may afterwards produce better fruit.

Article 21. Above all, one must remove all imagination of local presence. For since the signs are here in this world — that they may be seen with the eye and touched with the hand — we must not seek Jesus Christ, insofar as he is man, except in heaven: nor in any other way than in spirit and in faith. Wherefore it is a wicked and perverse superstition to enclose him under the elements of this world.

Article 22. We therefore reject as bad expositors those who insist rigorously on the literal sense of these words: *This is my body: this is my blood*. For we hold it as altogether notorious that these words must be healthily interpreted and with discretion: namely, that the names of what the bread and the wine signify are attributed to them. And this ought not to be found novel or strange — that by a figure called Metonymy, the sign borrows the name of the truth it figures — seeing that such ways of speaking are more than frequent in Scripture: and we, in speaking thus, put

nothing forward that the best doctors of the ancient Church, and the most approved, have not said before us.

Article 23. For the rest, that Christ by faith in the virtue of his Spirit feeds and nourishes our souls by the meat of his body and the drink of his blood: this is not because there takes place some mutation or mixture of his substance with ours, but inasmuch as we draw life from the flesh that was once offered in sacrifice, and from the blood that was shed for our purification.

Article 24. By this, not only is the foolish imagination of the Papists reproved — in that they make it believed that the bread is transubstantiated into the flesh of Christ — but also all other gross fancies or frivolous subtleties that many have advanced, whether to derogate from the heavenly glory of Christ, or not suitable to the truth of his human nature. Now we do not esteem it to be a lesser absurdity to enclose Jesus Christ under the bread, or to couple him to the bread, than to say that the bread is transubstantiated into his body.

Article 25. And to the end that no doubt may remain: when we teach that Jesus Christ is to be sought in heaven, we understand that there is a true distance of place between him and us. For although speaking in the manner of the philosophers there is no place above the heavens: yet since the body of Christ, according as the nature and property of a human body requires it, has its certain measure, so as not to be infinite — and is comprised in heaven as in a space of place — it is necessary that there be also as great a distance from him to us as heaven is far from earth.

Article 26. Now, if it is not lawful by our foolish reveries to attach Jesus Christ to the bread and wine, it is still worse to adore him as being there. For although the bread is given to us as a token and pledge of the

communication we have with Jesus Christ, yet because it is the sign thereof, and not the thing itself, and does not have the thing enclosed within it, those who stop their mind there, in adoring Jesus Christ, make of him an idol.

EXPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINE CONTAINED IN THE ARTICLES

Because the contention that has been stirred in our time touching the Sacraments has been very vexatious to all men fearing God and of right judgment — seeing that they perceived that by it the course of the Gospel was retarded — not only have they always desired that it might be buried or smothered by some good means, but also some have taken great pains to appease it. Now if they did not succeed in bringing it to a conclusion at the first stroke, in this we see how difficult it is to extinguish a fire that will have been kindled by the artifice of Satan. Yet these good people of whom I speak have so far prevailed that the excess which had been too ardent has been appeased, and that one has on either side given oneself to teaching peaceably, rather than to fighting. Yet because one still saw some sparks flying from embers that had been smothered, and there was cause to fear that a new fire might be kindled again, we the Ministers and Pastors of the Churches of Zurich and Geneva — together with our good brother and faithful servant of Jesus Christ Guillaume Farel — had endeavoured to apply the remedy that we thought most suitable for

abolishing completely all occasions of discord: that is, in having printed a brief Summary, containing the doctrine that we preach in such a way that it is also a testimony that comprises truly and simply what is preached in the land of Switzerland and of the Grisons, where the Gospel is purely announced.

We, after having published such a testimony, were sufficiently persuaded of having altogether satisfied those who would be equitable and of settled sense: at the least we thought well that the most peevish and difficult to satisfy would keep quiet. For, as will be shown presently, there is therein so clear a declaration of all the articles that had been previously debated, that all scruples ought well to have been removed. Indeed, our Lord showed himself so favourable towards us in this matter that in large measure we obtained what we wished for, but the devil, being vexed at our tranquillity, has shortly after again stirred up new troubles. For there is no doubt that it is he who pushes and inflames certain scatter-brained men, to make us sound alarms without cause. It seems properly that such people feed on quarrels and disputes, and they must not cover themselves with a shadow of good zeal to excuse their rage.

We know well that one must not abandon the truth to purchase peace: indeed, I confess that it would be better that heaven and earth should be mixed together than to suffer that the true doctrine should be trampled underfoot through lack of being maintained. Wherefore I am far from reproving those who oppose themselves to all sophistries, and resist valiantly all cavillings that serve to disguise and mask the pure simplicity of things, or that tend to make the black resemble the white. Moreover, I may boast that if there are any in the world who love a simple directness, I will not be found the last. Wherefore it is no longer necessary that these scatter-

brained persons who trouble us should pretend this colour, that it is sometimes better to stir up war than to betray or trample underfoot the truth. For in the first place, I am very ready to show that in this matter we have enveloped nothing under obscure propositions, we have hidden nothing by cunning, we have put nothing in oblivion, nor left out what was to be said. Secondly, our intention has not been to hinder the truth from having its free course, but rather we have endeavoured — insofar as in us was — to seek the means whereby one might teach peaceably, whereby one might speak of the Sacraments in edification, and read what would be written thereof, without scandal. But I do not wish to use language here: only I will pray the readers to open their eyes and to render themselves attentive and docile to receive what I will show them to the letter.

First, one cannot deny that in treating of the Sacraments one must above all regard the institution of the Lord, and its end. For from thence both the nature and property of the Sacraments, and their use, may be known: so that all those who tend to that end to which the Lord calls us will never be in danger of failing. Now the most malicious cannot deny that we have rightly shown to what end the Sacraments have been instituted — namely, to lead us to the communion of Christ. I will speak yet more frankly: that none of all those who murmur against our *Accord* has ever put forward anything that expressed better the intention of God, to which one must hold fast. If the dignity of the Sacraments is of concern to them, it is not possible to better adorn and magnify them than by saying that they are aids and means to incorporate us in Jesus Christ, or when we are already of his body, to confirm us therein more and more, until he unites us fully to himself in the heavenly life. If these people have the care of our salvation, so that it may be aided by the Sacraments, is there anything more proper thereto than to

lead us to the fountain of life, which is Jesus Christ, so that we may be vivified in him? Wherefore whether one regards our profit and edification, or whether one wishes to maintain the dignity and reverence due to the Sacraments, we have very well set forth the end and the cause for which they have been given to us.

Certainly, what Saint Paul reproaches to false doctors — who do nothing but puff up souls with vain ambition or fine show — is very far from us: that is, that they do not hold fast to the head. For one sees that we refer all things to Christ; that we gather all in him; that we strive to retain all under him; and in sum, that we declare that all the force of the Sacraments rests in him and proceeds from him. Now, therefore, it will be necessary that these controllers who are not content with us contrive a better rule of teaching than that which is given us by Saint Paul. For they could not more openly resist him than by not being able to suffer that the Sacraments be appropriated and compassed as we have said — that is, that Jesus Christ be their beginning and their end — seeing that Saint Paul places in this point all perfection of doctrine.

Wherefore we have very well begun in wishing to treat of the Sacraments, and have so well described their end, that all equitable people and of settled sense will approve without dispute our manner of teaching. It remains now to know the legitimate use of the Sacraments, in which one must guard against two vices. For if one too greatly exalts their dignity, soon some superstition works its way in. If one speaks coolly of their virtue and of the fruit that comes to us from them, by this, the world takes occasion to despise them as profane things. If we have kept a good mean between these two extremities, I ask you, does it not appear that those who prefer to grumble against us rather than to receive gently, or to approve our doctrine

in silence, are well obstinate enemies of the truth? For we do not constrain them to speak word for word as we do: only that they keep quiet, and do not bark against those who know better how to speak than they, and more rightly.

They will perhaps pretend that the difference they have with us is because we do not attribute to the Sacraments the force that belongs to them, but if this comes to showing how some, as senseless ones, skirmish without cause, and pay us in fine injuries: others, to better maintain their gravity, condemn without reason or proof what they have never read. So much so that it appears by experience that they mutiny and plead inconsiderately.

All the world is only too well informed how the doctor Martin Luther has been sharp in conducting this cause. I know that many excessive words escaped him in this contention, by which he was too much moved: yet so much so that in order to render his party favourable to all good believers, behold how he has protested — it is that he could not suffer that the Sacraments should be held merely as external signs serving to make confession of our faith before men, without being recognised as pledges and assurances of the grace of God towards us. Secondly, that he combated to the end that the Sacraments might not be reputed similar to vain and empty figures, seeing that God testifies therein truly what he shows us by signs, and accomplishes by his secret virtue what he testifies therein. Behold with what the doctor Luther combated, if one wishes to believe him. Whether it was rightly or wrongly that he so heated himself, I do not dispute at present: for it suffices me that the principal author and master of these people — whom they make a show of following — after having deployed all his wits, finds no better foundation for making his cause prevail than by making such a protestation as we have said. For the rest, in leaving off speaking of him,

as for the honour and reverence I bear him, I desire to spare him — let us only attend to the fact. I say therefore that this cover being removed, all those who bring quarrel against us cannot escape but that all good and upright judges reject and hate them as people who cannot be content with reason.

And indeed, they always have this song in their mouth, that they fight to the end that the virtue of the Sacraments may not be annihilated. Now if their intention is such, and not to deceive the simple by vain colours — when they hear that we confess with full mouth that the Sacraments are not figures without effect, nor even ensigns or marks to confess our religion before men: but that they are truly seals of the promises of God, testimonies of spiritual grace to nourish and confirm the faith; likewise that they are organs by which God works effectually in his elect; and although insofar as they are signs, one must distinguish them from the things they represent, yet that one must not separate the one from the other; likewise that they are given to confirm and ratify what God has given us by his Word, and above all to seal the high and mystical communication that we have with Jesus Christ — what reason have they to hold us for enemies? For since they do not cease to cry — as I have said — if they seek nothing but that this doctrine be held and observed: namely that God uses the Sacraments as aids and means to nourish our faith; that the promises of eternal salvation are engraved therein to offer them to us; that they are not empty and bare signs devoid of their effect, since God conjoins the efficacy of the Spirit thereto — when all these things are granted to them by us, what is it that prevents them from declaring themselves friends?

And to the end that I may not be too long in leafing through the particular writings of each, it ought well to suffice that one will find in our *Accord* all

that the confession of the Protestant estates contains — such as it was produced at Regensburg — provided one does not disguise it to gratify the Papists, for fear of persecution. The words are these: that in the holy Supper with the bread and wine, the body and blood of Jesus Christ are truly given. Now let it never happen that we should wish to take from the holy Supper its truth, or to deprive the faithful souls of so great a benefit. We say therefore and affirm that our senses are not frustrated there by the sight of the bread and wine, but that the true effect is conjoined with the external figure, so that the faithful receive therein the body and blood of Christ.

Moreover, since our intention was to remove all scruple and doubt as to this article, we have taken pains to set forth more fully and more clearly what is touched upon briefly in the confession of the Germans. For if one asks what is the virtue, the use, and the office of the Sacraments, our *Accord* responds thereto: since all the salvation of the faithful depends upon the spiritual communication they have with the Son of God, God has ordained both the Gospel and the Sacraments to testify it to us. It is well to note here that the Sacraments are conjoined with the Gospel to profit us for our salvation, in such a way that we receive a like fruit from them as when the Gospel is preached to us: whence it follows that what Saint Paul says of preaching applies also according to us to the Sacraments. Wherefore we agree that God by them deploys in part his power in salvation to all believers, and that the message of our reconciliation with God is contained therein. For since we have always declared that this sentence of Saint Augustine pleases us very well — namely, that the Sacraments are as visible words — we also hold without contradiction that our salvation is advanced by them, as by preaching.

For the rest, if one asks what this communication with Jesus Christ is, it is also so described therein that one cannot say that we imagine it as in a picture or in the air. It is that the principal virtue of faith appears therein, to incorporate us in Jesus Christ and to unite us with him, in such a way that he makes us participants of all graces and makes us feel their effect: for he does not spread his life in us, except insofar as he is our head, from whom the whole body receives its bonds and joints, and from whom the virtue flows in each member, to the end that they may all be together edified in their body.

After, we add this fuller declaration of which I touched not long ago: namely, although the Sacraments may be marks or ensigns of our Christianity before men; likewise goads to incite us to give thanks to God, and means to exercise us in his fear; finally, that they may be as bonds to oblige us to him — yet that their principal end is to testify to us the grace of God, to represent it to us and seal it. Secondly, that they are not simple mirrors or images that are put before our eyes, but that in them the spiritual graces of God are communicated to us, as our souls feel their effect if we have such faith as belongs. The words are these: Since the testimonies and seals that God has given us to ratify his grace are true and infallible, there is no doubt that he does not accomplish in us all that he figures by the Sacraments: that is, that we may enjoy Christ who is the source of all goods; then, that by the virtue of his death we may be reconciled to God and renewed in holiness of life, and in sum obtain justice and salvation. We add also shortly after that, in distinguishing between the signs and the things signified, we do not separate the one from the other to strip the Sacraments of their truth, but rather confess that those who embrace the

promises of God offered to them there receive likewise Jesus Christ with all his goods and gifts.

If I had to do with Papists, I would gather more carefully a wealth of passages both from Scripture and from the ancient doctors, to show that God has never pronounced anything, and that nothing has ever been believed and received in the Church touching the Sacraments, that we have not summarily comprised in the words I have recited. But since those who plead against us have on their lips, “Word of God, Word of God” — it is marvellous if they have not shame to contest further. They cannot deny that it is too great an absurdity to elevate and magnify the Sacraments above the Word, seeing that they are nothing but its seals and accessories. Now they will find that all that applies to the doctrine one preaches, we have also appropriated to the Sacraments. In sum, if they recognise God as the unique author of our salvation, what more do they want one to attribute to the Sacraments, than to hold them for inferior instruments of which God uses according to our infirmity to distribute to us his grace?

On the other hand, there is no need to fear that one may despise the Sacraments when one says that not only are they pledges and tokens of all the goods that God has once given us in Jesus Christ, and that we receive each day: but also that the secret virtue of the Holy Spirit is conjoined with what is there represented, so that they may not be vain and empty paintings without substance.

Now, how necessary it is on the other side to prevent the superstition into which the world might be led in too greatly magnifying the Sacraments — not only is this known by the experience that has always been from the creation of the world, but also each can judge it of himself, attending to the rudeness that we feel in our nature. For as we are earthly — without being

abused from elsewhere, and without our eyes being dazzled by the high titles that shall be attributed to the Sacraments — the external signs will attract us only too much to them. If with that we hear excessive praises, we are so rapt thereby that there will scarcely be found one in a hundred who does not imagine some foolish devotion. Thence it comes that the majority place and attach thereto the confidence of their salvation, and assign to them against all reason what is proper to God alone. In which one sees how blind is the obstinacy of those who set themselves against us. For although they are constrained to cry out against the Papists, yet, for fear that it should seem they agree with us, they do not dare openly to declare their intention. Worse still, for fear of approaching to this moderation that we maintain, they involve themselves knowingly, and leave the readers in suspense and trouble.

To the end that one may not think I charge them wrongly, I will show to the letter that there is nothing at all in our *Accord* that can offend those who are of good character, or that prevents them from acquiescing therein without reply. To the end of preventing all superstition, we say there in the first place that those who amuse themselves at bare signs, and rather do not at all regard the promises annexed thereto, go about it inconsiderately. By these words, we understand only what has been very well said by Saint Augustine, and what each confesses to be true: namely, that the elements become Sacraments when the Word is added thereto — not because one merely pronounces it with the mouth, but insofar as it is received by faith. And it is the cause why Jesus Christ says to his disciples that they are pure and clean, for the Word they had heard, and not for the Baptism by which they had been washed. For if all the visible figures that one puts forward for Sacraments are not founded in the Word of God, and do not proceed from it,

not only are they useless trifles, but also deadly impostures — what will it be to look at the external Sacrament without being attentive to the promise, but a pure illusion? Certainly, if we bring there only the eyes to speculate, having the ears stopped so as not to hear anything of what God promises therein, they will differ in nothing from the fine mysteries of the Pagans.

For so it is, although we confess that a great part of the ancient ceremonies that the Pagans have had may have had their source from the tradition of the holy Fathers: yet because being empty of doctrine they retained no truth, and could not edify the faith, we say that they have been bastard, vicious, and false. In brief, if the external sign draws no flavour and savour from the promise, there is neither salt nor sense in it, as one says. For what do we gain that a mortal and earthly man throws water on our head in baptising us, if Jesus Christ did not pronounce from heaven that it is he who purges and cleanses us by his blood, who renews us by his Spirit? What would it serve us to eat a little piece of bread, and to drink three drops of wine, if that voice did not resound from on high: that the flesh of Jesus Christ is the true food of our souls, his blood is truly the spiritual drink? Thus it is with good right that we conclude that we are not made participants of Jesus Christ and his spiritual gifts by the bread, the wine, and the water: but that we are led to him by the promise, to the end that he may give himself to us, and that dwelling in us by faith, he may accomplish what is promised and offered to us by the signs.

I do not see what it is that one can find to object to this doctrine, unless one thinks to honour the Sacraments well by stopping at what one sees therein, without understanding what God proposes therein, which would be nothing but a frivolous mummary.

This is why we have again exhorted the faithful in our *Accord* to address themselves to Jesus Christ, to the end of not seeking anywhere else anything at all of what is proposed to them in the Sacraments, as also the Sacraments being pledges and earnest of what is found in Jesus Christ, send us back solely to him. In so doing, we follow the rule that God gave to Moses in instituting the Tabernacle with its accessories and dependencies — that is, that he should refer and frame all things to the pattern that had been shown to him on the mountain. For it is not without cause that Saint Stephen in Acts 7, and the Apostle in chapter 8 of Hebrews, weigh so much this passage and stop upon it. Now as this was formerly the true means of correcting the rudeness of the Jews, and of withdrawing them from that error to which they were given — it was to put Jesus Christ before their eyes, and to retain them entirely to him, to the end that they might not be abused at the visible tabernacle and the sacrifice of brute animals — so also today, if we do not wish to be deceived in giving ourselves overmuch to external signs, we must elevate our senses to this spiritual pattern, to which the Scripture brings us back. And indeed, Jesus Christ, in ordaining the Sacraments, has not wished to enclose or captivate us in impediments that might retain us to the world, but rather has addressed to us ladders by which we might mount on high to come to Christ, who will not be found anywhere else. Now it is the fact that we ought to have our contentment in him alone: otherwise, I ask you, what would it be? For he is not dead and risen to send us to insensible elements, in order to seek our salvation therein, as if he were no longer the matter and cause thereof, but rather, wishing to remain in his entirety, has given us aids to bring us to himself.

There follows in our *Accord* another article tending to correct a superstition which is only too common and very evil: that is, that the world

supposes that the Sacraments by their own virtue bring us the grace of God, and work so in us that our salvation is attributed to them. We say therefore that what is given us by the Sacraments is not by their own virtue, but according as it pleases God to deploy the force of his Spirit therein. Now the human spirit cannot contain itself from imagining that the grace of God is enclosed in the signs, and that by this means does not place them in the stead of God himself: whence it comes that God is stripped of his praise, inasmuch as one attributes to dead and insensible creatures what is proper to him. Behold therefore the sum of our doctrine, which we have set forth in clear and pure words: that God alone perfects all that we have from the Sacraments — indeed by his secret virtue, which is contained in him. Yet to the end that one could not reply that the Sacraments also have their office and property — otherwise they would have been given in vain — we prevent this objection by saying that God works by them in such a way that he does not resign to them his virtue so as to derogate from the efficacy of his Spirit.

What is it that these good and worthy men who torment us will require here beyond this? If they want God to use the Sacraments as instruments of his grace, we say it is so. If they want our faith to be aided, nourished, and confirmed by them, we affirm it. If they want the virtue of the Holy Spirit to be manifested therein, to the end that they may profit for the salvation of the elect, we agree to it. Behold the knot of the whole question: namely, whether one ought to attribute to God entirely all the parts of our salvation; or whether, in the use of the Sacraments, he quits to them some portion and strips himself of it. And who is it who would dare to put this in difficulty, if he has not lost all shame? We allege Saint Paul to support our doctrine, who

says that the ministers — whether they plant or water — are nothing, and could profit nothing, if God did not work alone.

Now, when we speak thus, one sees clearly that we do not intend to take away or diminish anything from the Sacraments, provided that what is proper to God remains to him. One knows how Saint Paul in other passages magnifies the preaching of the Gospel: whence comes it therefore that he seems to wish to abolish it here — unless it is reason, when one compares God with creatures, that he alone should be recognised as author of all good, and that he uses all that is in his hand to make it avail as it pleases him? For the rest, what wrong does one do to earthly elements, if one does not rob God of his honour to vest and adorn them with it?

As to the sentence that we add, taken from Saint Augustine — namely, that it is Jesus Christ who baptises inwardly; likewise, that it is he who makes us participants of himself in the Supper — it is to declare to us the dignity of these two mysteries. For from thence one must understand that these are not human acts, seeing that the Son of God, who is their author, presides over them, and in which he deploys his virtue as if he stretched out his hand from heaven. And then there is nothing more useful than to withdraw our senses from the regard of mortal men and of signs that are earthly elements, to the end that our faith may stop entirely at Jesus Christ, as if he were there present. For the rest, this also serves to maintain in Jesus Christ his right, to the end that it may not seem that in ordaining men as ministers of external signs, he resigns to them the praise of the spiritual effect that he retains towards himself.

As to what we say that the Sacraments do not profit indifferently to all, but only to the elect of God, in whom the Holy Spirit works by his secret efficacy: this is so clear that there is no need to hold long discourse thereon.

For if one wishes to make the effect of the Sacraments common to all, beyond the fact that the Scripture contradicts such reveries, experience also resists it. For as the voice of a preacher cannot of itself pierce the hearts, and does not give itself an entry to change men: but when the Gospel is preached to many, those whom God the heavenly Father draws to himself gather thereto — as also Isaiah speaks of it, that none believes the Word except the arm of God be revealed to him — so no one profits in the external use of the Sacraments, unless it be given to him from on high: and this is in the pure and liberal gratuity of God, to work in those that seem good to him.

Yet in speaking thus, we do not intend to derogate in any way from the Sacraments, so that they do not remain in their entirety. For when Saint Augustine restricts the effect and virtue of the Supper to the body of the Church — which he says consists of those whom God has predestined to salvation — he does not intend to annihilate towards the reprobate the grace that is offered us in the Supper, if one esteems what this Sacrament means and what it imports: but only he signifies that the fruit thereof is not common to all. Now, because there is nothing that prevents the reprobate from enjoying Christ, but their own unbelief, all the fault ought to be imputed to them, as it resides in them. In brief, the representation of the sign is never in itself fruitless, but only of those who deprive themselves of it and, by their malice, are frustrated of it. For it is a very true thing that we draw no other fruit from the Sacraments than what each receives in the vessel of his faith.

Thus it is with good right that we reject the invention of the Sorbonnist doctors — namely, that the Sacraments of the new law — as they say — profit all those who place no bar of mortal sin: for it is a superstition too

gross and foolish, indeed a sorcery, to esteem that the simple use of the Sacraments makes the grace of God to flow into us. Now, if it is necessary that faith intervene, no one of sound judgment will be able to deny that God — who wishes to relieve our infirmity by such aids — also himself gives faith, which, being borne and lifted up on high by means of the Sacraments, mounts to Jesus Christ to possess his goods.

And indeed it is fitting for us to hold this as resolved: as it would not suffice that the sun should enlighten the world and spread its rays everywhere, if the eyes were not first given to us to receive its clarity and to enjoy it — so also God would enlighten us in vain and without fruit by external signs, if he did not open our eyes. Moreover, as the heat of the sun in giving vigour to living bodies causes or raises stench in carcasses, so the Sacraments will give rather the odour of death than of life to all those who have not the soul of faith to be vivified.

For the rest, so that no one might think that by this doctrine the virtue of the Sacraments is diminished, or that the truth of God is annulled and brought low by the unbelief and malice of men: we have, as I believe, well remedied this in declaring that nonetheless the Sacraments remain in their entirety to offer the grace of God to those who render themselves unworthy of it. And although the unbelievers do not receive what is offered to them, yet nothing falls for that from the promises of God. We do not treat here the question that was foolishly debated formerly, namely, whether the unworthiness of the Ministers corrupts the Sacraments. For the institution of God ought to be so sacred to us that one must not esteem its force from elsewhere. Thus, the virtue of the Sacraments does not depend on men, so that they could change anything on their side. When, therefore, the Minister of Baptism and of the Supper were an Epicurean or a despiser of God and

all his mysteries, the faithful would not fail to receive just as well by his hand the washing of regeneration and the spiritual nourishment of their souls, as if an Angel descended to them from heaven.

Not that we ought to be negligent in reforming vices: for if those who call themselves pastors are debauched people, and pollute the holy place they occupy by their wicked life, all the faithful in public, and each in private, ought to endeavour to purge the sanctuary of God from such infection. But if it happens that a wicked hypocrite insinuates himself, or that by ambition or favour one prevents that the dissolute Ministers unworthy of their estate should be repressed as quickly as were to be wished — however detestable their impiety may be — yet it derogates nothing from the Sacraments: because Jesus Christ takes from himself alone what he bestows on us therein, and does not borrow it from the Ministers. Wherefore what the Papists have devised — namely, that the intention of him who consecrates is required to make the Sacraments avail — we doubt not that it is a damnable and perverse invention.

Yet when we say that God is ready to do and accomplish in his faithful what he figures to them by the Sacraments — even though the Ministers of them may be disloyal — this is not to say that we receive therein anything but by faith: whence it follows that the unbelievers return therefrom also as empty and indigent as when they came thither. So much so that the virtue of the Sacraments is not at all diminished by their vice or fault. All unbelievers shut the door to God so that his grace has no entry into their souls. We say that for that God does not withdraw his hand, but rather — in order to be firm and constant in his purpose — he offers and gives what men refuse to accept, and by this means battles with his infinite goodness against their malice. But these are two very different things: that God is faithful to

accomplish what he demonstrates by the sign, and that man, on his side, gives room to the promise to enjoy the grace it contains. For before a man receives what is given to him, he must be capable of it, according to what is said in Psalm 81: *Open your mouth, and I will fill it.*

Wherefore, those who cry that the Supper of Jesus Christ will be nothing but a vain and fruitless figure if the unbelievers do not receive therein as much as the faithful, show well enough that they are people destitute of sense and reason. If they said that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are given to all indifferently as far as the part of God is concerned, we would be in agreement: but to wish to make it believed that one receives Jesus Christ without faith — this is as folly as absurd as if one said that wheat germinates in fire. And I ask you, by what title do they give themselves leave to separate and dismember Jesus Christ from his Spirit? For that is a detestable sacrilege. They wish the unbelievers to receive Jesus Christ, who have not a single drop of his Spirit. What does that mean, unless they were striving to enclose the Son of God again in the sepulchre?

If they reply that Saint Paul in saying that those who participate in the Supper unworthily are guilty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, signifies that they receive the body and blood as the faithful do: the response is easy — that quite to the contrary, if Jesus Christ entered into them and were lodged therein, he would deliver them from all condemnation. When, therefore, they are condemned, it is a sign that they have no part with him who is the justice of God. But inasmuch as they trample vilely underfoot the pledge that Jesus Christ gives us of the sacred communication that we have with him, it is no wonder if, on account of such contempt — indeed sacrilege — they are reputed guilty of the body and blood of Christ.

Thus, it is too gross a folly for such people to think that this menace of Saint Paul falls only on those who handle with their hands, chew with their teeth, and swallow in their gullet the body of Christ.

Moreover, I demand what manner of reception they wish to forge for us here. For Saint Paul notably declares that faith is the sole means by which Jesus Christ dwells in us: thus, faith being removed, it would have to be that if someone received Jesus Christ, it could only be for one minute of time, and that immediately he vanished away — which is too childish a reverie.

Let us rather follow Saint Augustine, who speaks as a man duly exercised in the Scripture, saying that just as the angel of Satan was given to Paul, to the end that by it he might be perfected in Christ, to the contrary, the bread of the Lord was given to Judas to subject him still more to the devil. Now, he had said a little previously that the other disciples, in eating the bread, had received the Lord, but that Judas had only eaten the bread of the Lord, in order to conspire against him.

In another passage, he also weighs — as it is with good reason — these words of Jesus Christ: that those who will have eaten his flesh and drunk his blood will never die. And thereupon he says that those who receive the virtue of the Sacrament, and not the visible sign, obtain eternal life. Those — says he — who eat within, and not without: of the heart, and not of the teeth.

Finally, he concludes that the sign of this is proposed to us at the table of the Lord: and that some receive it to their perdition, some to life, but when the substance of the Sacrament is received — namely Jesus Christ — to all those who are participants of him it never turns but to life and salvation.

And to the end that the intention of this good doctor may not be obscure, I will here deduce at more length certain sentences of his, suitable to this

purpose. After having said that, the spiritual bread of which Jesus Christ speaks requires a hunger in the inner man; he adds that Moses, Aaron, Phineas, and certain others, having pleased God, ate the manna, and are not dead. And why? Since they took the visible food spiritually, they desired and tasted it as spiritual, to be spiritually satisfied thereby. As today — says he — we receive in the Supper visible bread, but it is another thing, the Sacrament from the virtue thereof. A little after he says again: he who does not remain in Christ, or in whom Christ does not remain, does not eat spiritually his flesh nor drink his blood — although he chews visibly with the teeth the signs of the body and blood: but it is only to his damnation that he takes the sign of a thing so worthy and high: because, being polluted, he presumes to approach the Sacraments of Christ. We see that he does not give the substance of the Supper to those who are profane and impure, but only a visible reception of the sign.

I indeed confess that in one passage, he says that the bread of the Supper has not failed to be the body of Christ to those to whom Saint Paul said: whoever eats thereof unworthily does so to his damnation, not discerning the body of the Lord. And although they received it ill, yet this is not to say that they received nothing. But he expounds himself more fully in another place, to show how this must be taken. For in treating this article deliberately — how the wicked and dissolute who have faith only in their mouth eat the body of Christ — he reproves the opinion of those who think that such people are in fact participants of the body of Christ: and says, one must not think that those who are not members of Christ eat his flesh or drink his blood — for even though we leave there many reasons, it is impossible that he who is a member of a harlot should be a member of Jesus Christ. And the Lord in speaking thus: whoever eats my flesh and drinks my

blood, remains in me and I in him — shows well what it is to eat in truth and in fact, and not only in sign: namely that for doing this it is required that he remain in us and we in him: for it is as much as if he said: whoever does not remain in me, and he in whom I do not remain, deceives himself, if he thinks to eat my flesh and drink my blood.

Behold the words of Saint Augustine. Wherefore, let these inconsiderate people who debate against us desist from pleading the cause of Judas, if they do not want one to suspect that under his person they speak for themselves, wishing to have Jesus Christ without having him.

As to what we say that the faithful outside the use of the Sacraments do not fail to have the effect of the spiritual goods that are figured therein: this ought well to be received by all without contradiction, seeing that every day we find by experience that it is so, and that it is also proved clearly by the Scripture. For although it is not free for the martyrs — when one holds them in prison — to receive the external sign of the Supper, yet they are not for that deprived of Christ, who triumphs in them in a magnificent glory: indeed, none who is empty of Christ ought to approach his holy table. As also in fact, Cornelius already had in himself the truth of Baptism before being plunged in the water. And Moses, in giving the sign of the sacred and divine unction to his brothers and to his nephews — although he did not receive it himself — has not failed to have the substance and truth thereof. We do not intend, nevertheless, to induce men to quit the use of the signs as if it sufficed them to be inspired from heaven. For although God — to show that his virtue is not subject or bound to any inferior means — perfects what is figured in the Sacraments without their aid, yet by this he does not reject as superfluous what he himself has ordained for our salvation. Wherefore so

much the less will it be lawful for us to do so: for us, I say, who must be attentive to the Word and to the signs, as our faith is obligated thereto.

For what Saint Augustine says is most true: namely, although God sanctifies those he wishes, using visible signs, yet that he who despises the sign merits to be deprived of the thing. To which also responds and is conformable what we have said in our *Accord* — that is, that the utility that comes to us from the Sacraments ought not to be restricted to the time of the visible reception that is made thereof, as if they brought to us the grace of God in the same minute they are received. Which sentence is so clear that whoever would wish to reprove it would be constrained to overturn the whole order of God.

In brief, if one wants the Sacraments to bring with them their present effect, it would be necessary to anticipate the grace of God in some, and for others, it would be necessary to forge infinite Baptisms. For so it is, we see that the virtue of Baptism is null for a time in some, and then shows itself by succession. As, for example, one who will have been baptised from his mother's womb — coming to age, so far from showing himself to have been baptised in Spirit, rather in extinguishing, insofar as in him is, the Spirit of God, effaces and annihilates his Baptism: in the end God recalls him to himself. Wherefore those who wish to enclose the grace of God in the Sacrament as in a purse — thinking to adorn and magnify the Sacrament — do great injury to God. Moreover, since Christians ought to apply all their life to doing penitence, if one restricts the fruit of Baptism to the time it is given and due, that is to cut away the greatest part of its virtue, for one would make it only a sign of penitence for one day, whereas it lasts until death. In sum, one cannot better annihilate the virtue of the Sacraments, nor

do them greater outrage, than in imagining that the truth does not pass beyond the external use.

I understand this word thus: although the visible figure passes, yet the grace that is testified therein remains and does not vanish with the sight of the sign. Meanwhile, my intention is not to adhere to the foolish superstition of those who keep the bread of the Supper in the temple, as if the consecration that was made thereof retained its vigour after the Supper is celebrated. Now this article well merits being expounded, to the end that one may not attach the hope of our eternal salvation to what is transitory: so that faith may conceive no more than what we comprehend by the regard of the eyes.

I come now to the question that has engendered such great combats and violent ones in our time: namely, what is the communication that Jesus Christ gives us of his body and blood in the holy Supper. Now in our *Accord*, before determining on this point, we had well wished to repulse the fantasy that has reigned in the world touching local presence: we had also wished to expound this word of Jesus Christ, *Behold my body*, because one has so sharply debated it. But because now I deliberate to abate the anger of these unlearned and peevish people who are so transported inconsiderately to calumniate all that one says — unless one prevents the doubts and scruples that vex them, or to appease the simple people who are badly imbued with the propositions by which the malicious defame us — I prefer here to begin at this end: namely, how Jesus Christ communicates himself to us in the Supper.

In the first place, we confess that Jesus Christ truly accomplishes what he figures by the signs of the bread and wine: that is, to nourish our souls, giving them his flesh for food and his blood for drink. Wherefore this

frivolous calumny must be brought low — that we make of the Supper as of a farce that would be played on a scaffold: as if we made it believed that Jesus Christ shows us there something by sign, without effect. For we do not intend that anything should be signified therein that is not truly given therein and received. The Lord commands us to take there the bread and wine: meanwhile he pronounces that he gives us for nourishment of our souls his body and his blood: we say that he does not present to us a simple and bare figure to frustrate us: but that under the bread and wine he gives us good pledges to which the truth responds and is conjoined — that is, that our souls are truly nourished by his body and blood.

For the rest, under the name of Faith, we do not intend any imagination, as if the faithful received only by thought or by memory what is promised to them: but we add expressly that faith is required therein, to the end that one may not think that Jesus Christ is so thrown to abandon that the unbelievers participate in him. For also Saint Paul, in saying that Jesus Christ dwells in us by faith, does not introduce an imaginary dwelling that is only by fantasy, but only shows how we enter into possession of so great and singular a good as to have Jesus Christ dwelling in us.

Thus we confess without circuit or cavilling that the flesh of Jesus Christ is vivifying — not only insofar as by it our salvation was once acquired for us: but that now, being united with Jesus Christ, it inspires life of itself in us: or to say it more briefly, that we being engrafted in the body of Christ by the virtue of the Holy Spirit, we communicate with his life. For the life that resides properly in the divine essence, as in its source, has been spread in the flesh of Christ to flow into us: so that it is from thence that we must draw it.

But because our understandings are inclined to conceiving gross follies when one treats of the celestial mysteries of God, it is necessary in this matter to cut short the absurdities that the world makes itself believe. And it is to this that we have had regard in our *Accord*, declaring notably that the faithful do not participate in Jesus Christ as if some mixture or distillation of substance were made, but since we draw life from the flesh that was once hung on the cross for us.

If someone is not content with this declaration, I say first that he has devised from his own brain more than one finds in Scripture, and more than the rule of faith permits: and then I say that it is too great a pride to wish to impose a law on others to subject them to an opinion forged at a venture. If they want the substance of the flesh of Jesus Christ to be mixed with our souls, into how many absurdities will they not involve themselves?

They allege that one must not lower so high a mystery to the order of the world, nor measure its infinite greatness according to the smallness of our spirits, which I willingly grant them. But must one, under the colour of this modesty that ought to be in the faith, disguise all the doctrine of our religion and confound it amid monsters altogether repugnant to reason and truth? If, so it were, what would be the most extravagant would best suit Jesus Christ, and the most foolish and nature-repugnant reveries would be the best articles of faith.

We confess well that the sacred unity that we have with Jesus Christ is incomprehensible to our carnal sense: we also say that what he causes his life to flow into us after having conjoined us to himself — and not only that, but that we are made one with him, as he is one with his Father — this is a secret surpassing our capacity, unless insofar as it is revealed to us in his Word. But must one, for that, imagine that his substance is transfused

into us to be soiled by our filths? These good people make a show of closing their eyes, so as not to inquire too curiously into what God holds hidden, but it appears that it is nothing but pretence and lying, since they will not and cannot suffer that one teach them by the Word of God.

Indeed, behold the true sobriety of faith: it is to rest entirely on what God pronounces, and to conceive nothing beyond what is declared to us by his sacred mouth: and then, in the second place, to range oneself diligently to the Spirit of Prophecy, and to receive in all gentleness and docility all interpretations conformable to the faith. It is, therefore, as it were, an arrogance that the man should be so addicted to his sense as to reject and disdain all clarity of good and right understanding — and meanwhile not to keep himself within his limits, but to forge such inventions as seem good to him.

None of us denies that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are communicated to us: only it is a question of knowing what this communication is. I am astonished if our opposing parties dare to affirm that it is carnal, without disguising so gross an error by some cover. Yet when we say that it is spiritual, they murmur as if we meant that it is not real or in fact. Now, if on their side in saying that we communicate really with Jesus Christ, they understood that it is not in shadow nor by fantasy — we would make no combat with them on that. For we know how unbecoming it is to the servants of Christ to stir up contention for some words: but because though one grants them all that one can, one profits little — seeing that they are people so difficult that they take no reason in payment — it will suffice me to testify to all people fearing God and of settled sense, that in saying that the faithful communicate spiritually with Jesus Christ, we understand that they possess him truly and in fact.

Yet let us not be contentious nor importunate in pleading against a doctrine so right and certain as this one — namely, that the flesh of Jesus Christ vivifies us, inasmuch as Jesus Christ instils from it and causes the spiritual life to flow in our souls; likewise that we eat it when we are united by faith in one body with Christ, to the end that he being made ours, we may share all his goods.

As to the local presence — which is to attach or enclose Jesus Christ in the bread — it is marvellous if our opposing parties have not shame to molest us any more about it: yet they cover themselves with this cavilling — that they do not intend to enclose the body of Jesus Christ in some determined place: but since he is infinite, he can well be everywhere. And on our side, behold what we say: since the Scripture protests that he is held in heaven until he appears from there in judgment, one must not seek him anywhere else. Yet if someone wished to calumniate us as if we said that Jesus Christ is absent from us, in separating the head from his members, he would do us great wrong. True it is, according to what Saint Paul says, that during this mortal life in conversing in this world we are pilgrims far from God: it will be lawful for us by the same reason to say that in some sort of absence we are separated from Christ — indeed inasmuch as we have not yet mounted to heaven to dwell there with him. Thus according to the body, Christ is far from us — at such a distance as heaven is far from the earth: but according to his Spirit, he dwells in us to lift us up to himself even unto heaven: indeed in such a way that he makes us feel a present vigour of his flesh, to vivify us altogether — just as our bodies are refreshed and nourished by the substance of the sun by means of its rays.

What some have been accustomed to saying — that Jesus Christ is invisible with us — amounts to as much as if they placed his form and

figure in heaven, and forged for us a hidden substance that resided throughout the world without having a proper place or seat. Now the true religion leads us rather to the contrary: that is, that he does not spread the life upon us from his flesh, unless dwelling entirely in the heavens, he descends to us by his virtue. To which also is related what we add in our *Accord*: that by this doctrine not only is the error the Papists have forged of transubstantiation overthrown, but also all the gross reveries and petty subtleties that many have advanced, whether to derogate from the heavenly glory of Christ, or not suitable to the truth of his human nature.

And there is no need to deduce at great length why this exception was notably added by us. Some, in imagining an infinite body for Jesus Christ, take away from him what is inseparable from a body according to its nature; others enclose his divine essence under a piece of bread. Now, if someone has previously erred by ignorance: if others have heated themselves too much in dispute and thrown themselves beyond the pale — I will willingly suffer that what has foolishly escaped them be buried. I do not touch upon the persons to defame them, I do not pursue and sting them: as also in our *Accord* we have spared them, contenting ourselves with cutting short the errors. If we ask that one leave to Jesus Christ in his entirety all that is proper to his two natures, what occasion is there to be vexed? For we tend to no other end than that this unique Mediator, who has conjoined us to God, may not be torn to pieces. When they imagine an infinite body, it is a diabolical illusion to overturn all the hope of our resurrection. For after they have brought all their subterfuges touching the properties or qualities of a glorified body — it will be necessary to return to what Saint Paul says: namely, that we await Jesus Christ from heaven, who will reform our body of base condition to render it conformable to his glorious one — it would

follow therefore that each body of the faithful should then fill the whole world: in which there is an absurdity so enormous that there is no need to speak of it further.

Wherefore let these obstinate ones learn to moderate themselves, and let them permit us to expound peaceably our doctrine, which is sound and right. For if they continue to make their skirmishes, we will be constrained to discover to their great shame what we leave as hidden. Let not our modesty embolden them, since until now we have borne with them. For although it displeases us to attach ourselves to persons, if they cannot bear that we debouch the errors, in the end it will be necessary to handle them according as their importunity merits.

What they have most favourable is that in maintaining that the body of Christ is conjoined with the bread, or is given under the bread, they pretend to maintain nothing but the truth of the Sacrament. But meanwhile, must one tear him from his celestial seat to hold him recluse under a piece of bread? For on our side, if one says that the body of Jesus Christ is offered to us under the bread as under a pledge, we do not reply to the contrary: as when we do not want one to couple in a carnal fashion Jesus Christ with the bread, we do not intend to make a divorce of the figure from its substance. We therefore confess simply and purely that the faithful under the sign of the bread receive the body of Jesus Christ, because he who promised it is veracious, and is not about to frustrate us in showing us an empty sign: but meanwhile that one should also guard against imagining that his body is enclosed in the bread: or that there is some carnal infusion or mixing of his substance with ours.

It remains to have the right exposition of the words of Jesus Christ, when he says, *This is my body*: in which there would be no scruple if one

deliberated to acquiesce in what is shown to us by all the Scripture. Wherefore let those who find themselves impeded therein impute the evil to their obstinacy, inasmuch as they prefer to obscure everything in crying and storming, rather than to weigh the things well to judge them in integrity. What Jesus Christ named the bread, his body — they take that rigorously, and receive no declaration: which is yet necessary therein. For if they wish to hold with a precise rigour that the bread is body, it will follow that Jesus Christ is also as much bread as man. Moreover, if this way of speaking did not contain in itself some figure — they themselves would speak falsely, in saying that the body of Jesus Christ is given to us in the bread, under the bread, and with the bread: for by this means they make them diverse things, as in truth they are: which seems at first sight to be repugnant to the words. Now, if they dispense with speaking so grossly against the letter, why will it not be lawful for us to open the mouth to bring a more right, natural, and clear exposition?

To find the sense of the words, we say that one must have regard to the common and customary way of speaking that one sees throughout all Scripture, when it is a question of the Sacraments: namely, that the name of the thing signified is attributed to the sign. I believe that this rule ought well to be received. Now they will not at all hear it, under the pretext that it is simply said: *Behold my body*. But I ask you, is it not also said just as well that the rock was Christ? And in what sense, unless that the water that came out of the rock was the same spiritual drink as that which we taste today in the chalice of the Supper? These obstinate ones — for fear of obeying reason — dissipate things that one cannot separate: for they cannot reject this similitude without declaring themselves to be mad. But still, even if all

that were permitted to them, by what title do they give themselves leave to resolve in diverse ways the word they wish to be so sacredly observed?

Behold, they say, it is a settled point that this word *to be* carries no sign or figure. Now, if they want the bread to be Jesus Christ, why do they turn aside to glosses all diverse? Whence comes from them this mastery in wishing to oblige all the world to their foolish and absurd glosses, and where there is a contradiction altogether notorious, they do not permit others to bring any sound understanding, whatever foundation there may be? If the bread ought to be reputed the body, because it is thus called, it will also be just as well the communication of the body — witness Saint Paul. Indeed, when I say that Saint Paul, as faithful expositor, has clarified what was obscure in the words of our Lord Jesus, I think that no man of settled sense will contradict me. Behold the Lord who names in one word the bread his body: the disciple comes after, who did not wish to embroil what would have been clear of itself, but in declaring more fully what was too brief in one word, he says that the bread that we break is the communication that we have with the body of Christ. If our opposing parties pass this article, the process will presently be void, since we confess that the faithful, when the bread is distributed to them in the Supper, receive the body of Jesus Christ.

But since they wish to stop so much at the words, we will still have a fine advantage over them. For since Jesus Christ in Saint Paul — instead of naming the wine his blood — says that it is the testament in his blood: every time they cry that the bread is body, inasmuch as it is thus entitled — I will have immediately my reply: that this amounts to as much as if it were said, the testament in his body. Wherefore let them desist from this foolish

and brutal obstinacy, in which they do nothing but entangle themselves until rendering themselves altogether confused.

And because there is no need at this hour to enter into a longer dispute, I will hold myself to this article. After they have debated much that the bread is the body, yet they are constrained to confess that it is the sign of the body. And whence have they fished that, unless that the very words of Jesus Christ draw them there by force? One sees, therefore, that after having much pleaded that the words of Jesus Christ ought not to be taken but in a simple and literal sense, they draw from them as by stealth the word of Sign. On our side, when we say that there is figure, we bring nothing that each does not see to be altogether true and natural, and conformable to the rule of faith: and in so doing we have our refuge — as they falsely reproach us — neither in allegories nor in parables: but according as the Scripture speaks everywhere of the Sacraments — that the name of the thing signified is attributed to the sign, by a figure called Metonymy, which amounts to as much as a transfer of name. And this is a maxim so received and common among all the faithful that it is a great shame to resist it: for the examples are so frequent that the most obstinate of those who battle against us would not dare to deny that this is ordinary everywhere.

Wherefore, as the manna was formerly spiritual food, as the rock was Christ, as the dove was the Holy Spirit, as Baptism is the washing of regeneration, so also the bread and wine are named the body and blood of Jesus Christ. If they prefer another figure, this combat ought rather to be sent back to the schools of grammar: so far is it from meriting that all Christianity be troubled thereby. But even though the matter be disputed among grammarians, what will they profit unless they make themselves laughed at by little children?

For the rest, leaving that aside, I say simply that all those who seek contentions about words show well enough that they are not servants of Jesus Christ. For when one is in agreement on the thing, it is too great a villainy to break and dissipate the union of the Churches and to stir up great troubles under the pretext that some will say that the bread is named the body of Christ — inasmuch as the body of Christ is given to us under it or with it: others since it is the sign and pledge thereof — indeed not vain and fruitless, but accompanied by its truth and its effect — that is, that those who receive the sign in the mouth and the promise by faith are truly participants of the body of Christ.

In the end, if our opposing parties have determined not to cease from speaking evil and disgorging their injuries against us, I hope that all peaceable people will recognise that our doctrine is pure and right, and that we proceed therein in all simplicity. Meanwhile, that we take pains insofar as in us is to foster peace and concord: this will suffice well to absolve us. For the rest, I fear not at all that anyone will avow them or agree with their senseless cries, unless he be agitated and stung by the same fury.

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