

Week 1: The Eucharist, the Altar and the Sacrificial Church

John 6:48-58

I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.

Malachi 1:11

For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name **a clean oblation**: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.

Luke 22:14-20

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer.

For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And having taken the chalice, he gave thanks, and said: Take, and divide it among you: For I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God come. And taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake; and gave to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you. **Do this for a commemoration of me.** In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you.

1 Corinthians 10:16-21

The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread. Behold Israel according to the flesh: are not they, that eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar? What then? Do I say, that what is offered in sacrifice to idols, is any thing? Or, that the idol is any thing? But the things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God. And I would not that you should be made partakers with devils.

You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils.

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. And giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye, and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me.

For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come. Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.

Ignatius Epistle to the Smyrnaeans 6-8

Unbelievers in the Blood of Christ Shall be Condemned. Let no man deceive himself. Both the things which are in heaven, and the glorious angels, and rulers, both visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, shall, in consequence, incur condemnation. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Let not [high] place puff any one up: for that which is worth all is faith and love, to which nothing is to be preferred. But consider those who are of a different opinion with respect to the grace of Christ which has come unto us, how opposed they are to the will of God. They have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the thirsty.

Let no man deceive himself. Unless he believes that Christ Jesus has lived in the flesh, and shall confess His cross and passion, and the blood which He shed for the salvation of the world, he shall not obtain eternal life, whether he be a king, or a priest, or a ruler, or a private person, a master or a servant, a man or a woman. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Let no man's place, or dignity, or riches, puff him up; and let no man's low condition or poverty abase him. For the chief points are faith towards God, hope towards Christ, the enjoyment of those good things for which we look, and love towards God and our neighbour. For, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." And the Lord says, "This is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." And again, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Do ye, therefore, notice those who preach other doctrines, how they affirm that the Father of Christ cannot be known, and how they exhibit enmity and deceit in their dealings with one another. They have no regard for love; they despise the good things we expect hereafter; they regard present things as if they were durable; they ridicule him that is in affliction; they laugh at him that is in bonds.

Let us Stand Aloof from Such Heretics.

They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again. Those, therefore, who speak against this gift of God, incur death in the midst of their disputes. But it were better for them to treat it with respect, that they also might rise again. It is fitting, therefore, that ye should keep aloof from such persons, and not to speak of them either in private or in public, but to give heed to the prophets, and above all, to the Gospel, in which the passion [of Christ] has been revealed to us, and the resurrection has been fully proved. But avoid all divisions, as the beginning of evils.

They are ashamed of the cross; they mock at the passion; they make a jest of the resurrection. They are the offspring of that spirit who is the author of all evil, who led Adam, by means of his wife, to transgress the commandment, who slew Abel by the hands of Cain, who fought against Job, who was the accuser of Joshua the son of Josedech, who sought to "sift the faith" of the apostles, who stirred up the multitude of the Jews against the Lord, who also now "worketh in the children of disobedience; from whom the Lord Jesus Christ will deliver us, who prayed that the faith of the apostles might not fail, not because He was not able of Himself to preserve it, but because He rejoiced in the pre-eminence of the Father. It is fitting, therefore, that ye should keep aloof from such persons, and neither in private nor in public to talk with them; but to give heed to the law, and the prophets, and to those who have preached to you the word of salvation. But flee from all abominable heresies, and those that cause schisms, as the beginning of evils.

Let Nothing be done Without the Bishop

See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid.

See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Christ Jesus does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the apostles. Do ye also reverence the deacons, as those that carry out [through their office] the appointment of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the

bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as where Christ is, there does all the heavenly host stand by, waiting upon Him as the Chief Captain of the Lord's might, and the Governor of every intelligent nature. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize, or to offer, or to present sacrifice, or to celebrate a love-feast. But that which seems good to him, is also well-pleasing to God, that everything ye do may be secure and valid.

Justin Martyr, First Apology 65-67

Chapter 65. Administration of the sacraments

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to *γένοιτο* [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

Chapter 66. Of the Eucharist

And this food is called among us Εὐχαριστία [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, This do in remembrance of Me, Luke 22:19 this is My body; and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, This is My blood; and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.

Chapter 67. Weekly worship of the Christians

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings,

according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies IV 17-18,V 2

Proof that God did not appoint the Levitical dispensation for His own sake, or as requiring such service; for He does, in fact, need nothing from men.

1. Moreover, the prophets indicate in the fullest manner that God stood in no need of their slavish obedience, but that it was upon their own account that He enjoined certain observances in the law. And again, that God needed not their oblation, but [merely demanded it], on account of man himself who offers it, the Lord taught distinctly, as I have pointed out. For when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God, and imagining that God was to be propitiated by sacrifices and the other typical observances, Samuel did even thus speak to them: God does not desire whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but He will have His voice to be hearkened to. Behold, a ready obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of

rams. 1 Samuel 15:22 David also says: Sacrifice and oblation You did not desire, but my ears have You perfected; burnt-offerings also for sin You have not required. He thus teaches them that God desires obedience, which renders them secure, rather than sacrifices and holocausts, which avail them nothing towards righteousness; and [by this declaration] he prophesies the new covenant at the same time. Still clearer, too, does he speak of these things in the fiftieth Psalm: For if You had desired sacrifice, then would I have given it: You will not delight in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise. Because, therefore, God stands in need of nothing, He declares in the preceding Psalm: I will take no calves out of your house, nor he-goats out of your fold. For Mine are all the beasts of the earth, the herds and the oxen on the mountains: I know all the fowls of heaven, and the various tribes of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Then, lest it might be supposed that He refused these things in His anger, He continues, giving him (man) counsel: Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay your vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of your trouble, and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me; rejecting, indeed, those things by which sinners imagined they could propitiate God, and showing that He does Himself stand in need of nothing; but He exhorts and advises them to those things by which man is justified and draws near to God. This same declaration does Esaias make: To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? Says the Lord. I am full. Isaiah 1:11 And when He had repudiated holocausts, and sacrifices, and oblations, as likewise the new moons, and the sabbaths, and the festivals, and all the rest of the services accompanying these, He continues, exhorting them to what pertained to salvation: Wash you, make you clean, take away wickedness from your hearts from

before my eyes: cease from your evil ways, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, says the Lord.

2. For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. As He elsewhere declares: The sacrifice to God is an afflicted heart: a sweet savour to God is a heart glorifying Him who formed it. For if, when angry, He had repudiated these sacrifices of theirs, as if they were persons unworthy to obtain His compassion, He would not certainly have urged these same things upon them as those by which they might be saved. But inasmuch as God is merciful, He did not cut them off from good counsel. For after He had said by Jeremiah, To what purpose did you bring Me incense from Saba, and cinnamon from a far country? Your whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices are not acceptable to Me; Jeremiah 6:20 He proceeds: Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah. These things says the Lord, the God of Israel, Make straight your ways and your doings, and I will establish you in this place. Put not your trust in lying words, for they will not at all profit you, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, it is [here]. Jeremiah 7:2-3

3. And again, when He points out that it was not for this that He led them out of Egypt, that they might offer sacrifice to Him, but that, forgetting the idolatry of the Egyptians, they should be able to hear the voice of the Lord, which was to them salvation and glory, He declares by this same Jeremiah: Thus says the Lord; Collect together your burnt-offerings with your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spoke not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this word I

commanded them, saying, Hear My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; and walk in all My ways whatsoever I have commanded you, that it may be well with you. But they obeyed not, nor hearkened; but walked in the imaginations of their own evil heart, and went backwards, and not forwards. Jeremiah 7:21 And again, when He declares by the same man, But let him that glories, glory in this, to understand and know that I am the Lord, who does exercise loving-kindness, and righteousness, and judgment in the earth; Jeremiah 9:24 He adds, For in these things I delight, says the Lord, but not in sacrifices, nor in holocausts, nor in oblations. For the people did not receive these precepts as of primary importance (*principaliter*), but as secondary, and for the reason already alleged, as Isaiah again says: You have not [brought to] Me the sheep of your holocaust, nor in your sacrifices have you glorified Me: you have not served Me in sacrifices, nor in [the matter of] frankincense have you done anything laboriously; neither have you bought for Me incense with money, nor have I desired the fat of your sacrifices; but you have stood before Me in your sins and in your iniquities. Isaiah 43:23-24 He says, therefore, Upon this man will I look, even upon him that is humble, and meek, and who trembles at My words. Isaiah 46:2 For the fat and the fat flesh shall not take away from you your unrighteousness. Jeremiah 11:15 This is the fast which I have chosen, says the Lord. Loose every band of wickedness, dissolve the connections of violent agreements, give rest to those that are shaken, and cancel every unjust document. Deal your bread to the hungry willingly, and lead into your house the roofless stranger. If you have seen the naked, cover him, and you shall not despise those of your own flesh and blood (*domesticos seminis tui*). Then shall your morning light break forth, and your health shall spring forth more speedily; and righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall surround you: and while you are yet speaking, I will say, Behold, here I

am. Isaiah 58:6, etc. And Zechariah also, among the twelve prophets, pointing out to the people the will of God, says: These things does the Lord Omnipotent declare: Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion each one to his brother. And oppress not the widow, and the orphan, and the proselyte, and the poor; and let none imagine evil against your brother in his heart. Zechariah 7:9-10 And again, he says: These are the words which you shall utter. Speak the truth every man to his neighbour, and execute peaceful judgment in your gates, and let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his brother, and you shall not love false swearing: for all these things I hate, says the Lord Almighty. Zechariah 8:16-17 Moreover, David also says in like manner: What man is there who desires life, and would fain see good days? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips that they speak no guile. Shun evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it.

4. From all these it is evident that God did not seek sacrifices and holocausts from them, but faith, and obedience, and righteousness, because of their salvation. As God, when teaching them His will in Hosea the prophet, said, I desire mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings. Hosea 6:6 Besides, our Lord also exhorted them to the same effect, when He said, But if you had known what [this] means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless. Matthew 12:7 Thus does He bear witness to the prophets, that they preached the truth; but accuses these men (His hearers) of being foolish through their own fault.

5. Again, giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own, created things — not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful — He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, This is My body. Matthew 26:26, etc. And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation

to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand: I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord Omnipotent, and I will not accept sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice; for great is My name among the Gentiles, says the Lord Omnipotent; Malachi 1:10-11 — indicating in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former people [the Jews] shall indeed cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to Him, and that a pure one; and His name is glorified among the Gentiles.

6. But what other name is there which is glorified among the Gentiles than that of our Lord, by whom the Father is glorified, and man also? And because it is [the name] of His own Son, who was made man by Him, He calls it His own. Just as a king, if he himself paints a likeness of his son, is right in calling this likeness his own, for both these reasons, because it is [the likeness] of his son, and because it is his own production; so also does the Father confess the name of Jesus Christ, which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be His own, both because it is that of His Son, and because He who thus describes it gave Him for the salvation of men. Since, therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds, And in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice. Now John, in the Apocalypse, declares that the incense is the prayers of the saints.

Against Heresies (Book IV, Chapter 18)

Concerning sacrifices and oblations, and those who truly offer them.

1. The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted. For by the gift both honour and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: Therefore, when you offer your gift upon the altar, and shall remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then return and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24 We are bound, therefore, to offer to God the first-fruits of His creation, as Moses also says, You shall not appear in the presence of the Lord your God empty; Deuteronomy 16:16 so that man, being accounted as grateful, by those things in which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honour which flows from Him.

2. And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen. For the Lord is [ever] one and the same; but the character of a servile oblation is peculiar [to itself], as is also that of freemen, in order that, by the very oblations, the indication of liberty may be set forth. For with Him there is nothing purposeless, nor without signification, nor without design. And for this reason they (the Jews) had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received liberty

set aside all their possessions for the Lord's purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of better things [hereafter]; as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God.

3. For at the beginning God had respect to the gifts of Abel, because he offered with single-mindedness and righteousness; but He had no respect unto the offering of Cain, because his heart was divided with envy and malice, which he cherished against his brother, as God says when reproving his hidden [thoughts], Though you offer rightly, yet, if you do not divide rightly, have you not sinned? Be at rest; since God is not appeased by sacrifice. For if any one shall endeavour to offer a sacrifice merely to outward appearance, unexceptionably, in due order, and according to appointment, while in his soul he does not assign to his neighbour that fellowship with him which is right and proper, nor is under the fear of God — he who thus cherishes secret sin does not deceive God by that sacrifice which is offered correctly as to outward appearance; nor will such an oblation profit him anything, but [only] the giving up of that evil which has been conceived within him, so that sin may not the more, by means of the hypocritical action, render him the destroyer of himself. Wherefore did the Lord also declare: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like whited sepulchres. For the sepulchre appears beautiful outside, but within it is full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness; even so you also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within you are full of wickedness and hypocrisy. Matthew 23:27-28 For while they were thought to offer correctly so far as outward appearance went, they had in themselves jealousy like to Cain; therefore they slew the Just One, slighting the counsel of the Word, as did also Cain. For [God] said to him, Be at rest; but he did not assent. Now what else is it to be at rest than to forego purposed violence? And saying similar things to these

men, He declares: You blind Pharisee, cleanse that which is within the cup, that the outside may be clean also. Matthew 23:26 And they did not listen to Him. For Jeremiah says, Behold, neither your eyes nor your heart are good; but [they are turned] to your covetousness, and to shed innocent blood, and for injustice, and for man-slaying, that you may do it. Jeremiah 22:17 And again Isaiah says, You have taken counsel, but not of Me; and made covenants, [but] not by My Spirit. Isaiah 30:1 In order, therefore, that their inner wish and thought, being brought to light, may show that God is without blame, and works no evil — that God who reveals what is hidden [in the heart], but who works not evil— when Cain was by no means at rest, He says to him: To you shall be his desire, and you shall rule over him. Genesis 4:7 Thus did He in like manner speak to Pilate: You should have no power at all against Me, unless it were given you from above; John 19:11 God always giving up the righteous one [in this life to suffering], that he, having been tested by what he suffered and endured, may [at last] be accepted; but that the evildoer, being judged by the actions he has performed, may be rejected. Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as from a friend. But the sinner, says He, who kills a calf [in sacrifice] to Me, is as if he slew a dog. Isaiah 66:3

4. Inasmuch, then, as the Church offers with single-mindedness, her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God. As Paul also says to the Philippians, I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things that were sent from you, the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, pleasing to God. Philippians 4:18 For it behooves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things. And the Church

alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks, [the things taken] from His creation. But the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, **Who is offered to God. [The text here fluctuates between quod offertur Deo ("Who is offered to God") and per quod offertur Deo ("through Whom it is offered to God").]** Nor, again, do any of the conventicles (synagogæ) of the heretics [offer this]. For some, by maintaining that the Father is different from the Creator, do, when they offer to Him what belongs to this creation of ours, set Him forth as being covetous of another's property, and desirous of what is not His own. Those, again, who maintain that the things around us originated from apostasy, ignorance, and passion, do, while offering unto Him the fruits of ignorance, passion, and apostasy, sin against their Father, rather subjecting Him to insult than giving Him thanks. But how can they be consistent with themselves, [when they say] that the bread over which thanks have been given is the body of their Lord, and the cup His blood, if they do not call Himself the Son of the Creator of the world, that is, His Word, through whom the wood fructifies, and the fountains gush forth, and the earth gives first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. Mark 4:28

5. Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the

Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.

6. Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift, and thus sanctifying what has been created. For even as God does not need our possessions, so do we need to offer something to God; as Solomon says: He that has pity upon the poor, lends unto the Lord. Proverbs 19:17 For God, who stands in need of nothing, takes our good works to Himself for this purpose, that He may grant us a recompense of His own good things, as our Lord says: Come, you blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you. For I was an hungered, and you gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked, and you clothed Me; sick, and you visited Me; in prison, and you came to Me. Matthew 25:34, etc. As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [services], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission. The altar, then, is in heaven (for towards that place are our prayers and oblations directed); the temple likewise [is there], as John says in the Apocalypse, And the temple of God was opened: Revelation 11:19 the tabernacle also: For, behold, He says, the tabernacle of God, in which He will dwell with men.

Against Heresies (Book V, Chapter 2)

When Christ visited us in His grace, He did not come to what did not belong to Him: also, by shedding His true blood for us, and exhibiting to us His true flesh in the Eucharist, He conferred upon our flesh the capacity of salvation.

1. And vain likewise are those who say that God came to those things which did not belong to Him, as if covetous of another's property; in order that He might deliver up that man who had been created by another, to that God who had neither made nor formed anything, but who also was deprived from the beginning of His own proper formation of men. The advent, therefore, of Him whom these men represent as coming to the things of others, was not righteous; nor did He truly redeem us by His own blood, if He did not really become man, restoring to His own handiwork what was said [of it] in the beginning, that man was made after the image and likeness of God; not snatching away by stratagem the property of another, but taking possession of His own in a righteous and gracious manner. As far as concerned the apostasy, indeed, He redeems us righteously from it by His own blood; but as regards us who have been redeemed, [He does this] graciously. For we have given nothing to Him previously, nor does He desire anything from us, as if He stood in need of it; but we do stand in need of fellowship with Him. And for this reason it was that He graciously poured Himself out, that He might gather us into the bosom of the Father.

2. But vain in every respect are they who despise the entire dispensation of God, and disallow the salvation of the flesh, and treat with contempt its regeneration, maintaining that it is not capable of incorruption. But if this indeed do not attain salvation, then neither did the Lord redeem us with His blood, nor is the cup of the Eucharist the communion of His blood, nor the bread which we break the communion of His body.

1 Corinthians 10:16 For blood can only come from veins and flesh, and whatsoever else makes up the substance of man, such as the Word of God was actually made. By His own blood he redeemed us, as also His apostle declares, In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins. Colossians 1:14 And as we are His members, we are also nourished by means of the creation (and He Himself grants the creation to us, for He causes His sun to rise, and sends rain when He wills Matthew 5:45). He has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of the creation) as His own blood, from which He bedews our blood; and the bread (also a part of the creation) He has established as His own body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.

3. When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which [flesh] is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him? even as the blessed Paul declares in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Ephesians 5:30 He does not speak these words of some spiritual and invisible man, for a spirit has not bones nor flesh; Luke 24:39 but [he refers to] that dispensation [by which the Lord became] an actual man, consisting of flesh, and nerves, and bones that [flesh] which is nourished by the cup which is His blood, and receives increase from the bread which is His body. And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a grain of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ; so also

our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption, 1 Corinthians 15:53 because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness, 2 Corinthians 12:3 in order that we may never become puffed up, as if we had life from ourselves, and exalted against God, our minds becoming ungrateful; but learning by experience that we possess eternal duration from the excelling power of this Being, not from our own nature, we may neither undervalue that glory which surrounds God as He is, nor be ignorant of our own nature, but that we may know what God can effect, and what benefits man receives, and thus never wander from the true comprehension of things as they are, that is, both with regard to God and with regard to man. And might it not be the case, perhaps, as I have already observed, that for this purpose God permitted our resolution into the common dust of mortality, that we, being instructed by every mode, may be accurate in all things for the future, being ignorant neither of God nor of ourselves?