about to introduce. And this view has  
just so much truth in it, that there is no  
*emphasis* on the word **altar**. The altar  
bears only a secondary place in the figure;  
but still I cannot think that it has not a  
definite meaning. Others understand by  
the altar, *Christ himself*. This again has  
so much truth in it, that the Victim  
is so superior to the altar, as to cast it  
altogether into shade; but still is not  
Himself the altar. Some again understand,   
*the table of the Lord*, at which we  
eat the Lord’s Supper. This is so far true,  
that that table may be said to *represent* to  
us the Cross whereupon the Sacrifice was  
offered, just as the bread and wine, laid on  
it, represent the oblation itself: but it *is*  
not the altar, in any propriety of language,  
however we may be justified, in common  
parlance, in so calling it. Some again  
have interpreted it to mean the *heavenly  
place*, where Christ now offers the virtue  
of His Blood to the Father for us. This  
again is so far true, that it is the antitype  
of the Cross, just as the Cross is the antitype   
of the Lord’s table: but we do not  
want, in this word, the heavenly thing represented   
by, any more than the enduring  
ordinance representing, the original historic  
concrete material altar: we want that altar  
itself: and that altar is, the CROSS, on  
which the Lord suffered. That is our altar:  
not to be emphasized, nor exalted into any  
comparison with the adorable Victim thereon  
offered; but still our altar, that wherein  
we glory that for which as for our altars.  
we contend: of which our banners, our  
tokens, our adornments, our churches, are  
full: severed from which, we know not  
Christ; laid upon which, He is the power  
of God, and the wisdom of God. And so it  
is here explained by most of the best Commentators)   
**to eat of which** (see esp. 1 Cor.  
ix. 13) **they have not licence who serve  
the tabernacle** (who are these? Some,  
as Schlichting, Morus, and strange to say  
recently Hofmann, understand by them the  
same, viz. Christians, as the subject of **we**  
**have**. We Christians have an altar whereof  
[even] they who serve the [Christian] tabernacle   
have no right to eat: i.e. as explained  
by Hofmann, as the high priest himself did  
not eat of the sin-offerings whose blood was  
brought into the tabernacle, but they were  
burnt without the camp, so we Christians  
have no sacrifice of which we have any right  
to eat, no *further profit* to be derived from  
that one sacrifice, by which we have bee  
reconciled to God. But this is 1) false in  
fact. We *have a right* to eat of our Sacrifice,   
and are commanded so to do. All  
that our Lord says of eating His Flesh and  
drinking His Blood [explain it how we  
will] would be nullified and set aside by  
such an interpretation. And 2) it is directly  
against the whole context, in which the  
meats, whatever they are, are pronounced  
profitless, and they who walked in them  
contrasted with us who have higher privileges.   
To what purpose then would it be  
to say, that we have an altar of which we  
*cannot* eat? that we have a sacrifice which  
brings us no profit, but only shame? 1  
pass over the interpretation which understands   
by the words some particular class  
of Christians among the Hebrews, because  
it involves the anachronism of a distinction  
between clergy and laity which certainly  
then had no place: and also because it  
would furnish no sense at all suiting the  
passage, referring as it then would to *some*  
Christians only, not to all. The only true  
reference of our words, as also that which  
has been all but universally acknowledged,  
is that to the Jewish priesthood, and in  
them to those who have part with them in  
serving the rites and ordinances of the  
ceremonial law. These have no right to eat  
of our altar: for just as the bodies of those  
beasts whose blood was brought into the  
sanctuary were burnt without the camp, so  
Jesus suffered altogether without the gate  
of legal Judaism. Let us then not tarry  
serving that tabernacle which has no part  
in Him, but go forth to Him without the  
camp, bearing His reproach. For we cleave  
not to any abiding city, such as the earthly  
Jerusalem, but seek one to come. Let us  
then not tarry in the Jewish tabernacle,  
serving their rites, offering their sacrifices;  
but offer our now only possible sacrifice,  
that of praise, the fruit of a good confession,  
acceptable to God through Him. Thus,  
and thus only, does the whole context stand  
in harmony. Thus the words in *they that  
serve the tabernacle* keep their former  
meanings: see ch. viii. 5, where we have  
“*such as have the delineation and the  
shadow of heavenly things:*” and remember   
that “*the tabernacle,*” barely so placed,  
cannot by any possibility mean any part  
of the Christian apparatus of worship, nor