

Bishop Cosin on the Doctrine of the Eucharist

by J.H. Newman

J.H. Newman explores the profound theological implications of the Eucharist, emphasizing its spiritual presence and significance in Christian faith.

Scripture: Matthew 26:26, Luke 22:19, John 6:55, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 11:27

Topics: "Eucharist Theology", "Sacramental Presence"

Description

John Cosin, Bishop of Durham, preaches about the spiritual presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, emphasizing the true and infallible nature of Christ's words in instituting the Eucharist. He explains that the Bread and Wine are consecrated by Christ's words to communicate His blessed Body and Blood to believers in a sacramental and mystic sense, not in a gross and carnal manner. Cosin contrasts the Protestant belief in a spiritual and true presence of Christ in the Sacrament with the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, highlighting the Protestants' reverence for the mystery of the Sacrament and their refusal to inquire into the manner of Christ's presence with perplexing inquiries.

Transcript

(By John Cosin, Bishop of Durham.)

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CHAPTER I.

The Spiritual Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

THOSE words which our Blessed SAVIOUR used in the institution of the blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, "This is My Body which is given for you; this is My Blood which is shed for you, for the remission of sins;" are held and acknowledged by the Universal Church to be most true and infallible: and if any one dares oppose them, or call in question CHRIST'S veracity, or the truth of His words, or refuse to yield his sincere assent to them, except he be allowed to make a mere figment, or a bare figure of them, we cannot, and ought not, either excuse or suffer him in our Churches; for we must embrace and hold for an undoubted truth whatever is taught by Divine Scripture. And therefore we can as little doubt of what CHRIST saith, John vi. 55, "My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed;" which, according to St. Paul, are both given to us by the consecrated Elements; for he calls the Bread, "the Communion of CHRIST'S Body," and the Cup, "the Communion of His Blood."

Hence it is most evident, that the Bread and Wine, (which according to St. Paul are the Elements of the holy Eucharist), are neither changed as to their substance, nor vanished, nor reduced to nothing, but are solemnly consecrated by the words of CHRIST, that by them His blessed Body and Blood may be communicated to us.

And further it appears from the same words, that the expression of CHRIST and the Apostle, is to be understood in a sacramental and mystic sense; and that no gross and carnal presence of body and blood can be maintained by them.

And though the word Sacrament be no where used in Scripture to signify the blessed Eucharist, yet the Christian Church, ever since its Primitive ages, hath given it that name, and always called the presence of CHRIST'S Body and Blood therein, Mystic and Sacramental. Now a Sacramental expression doth, without any inconvenience, give to the sign the name of the thing signified; and such is as well the usual way of speaking, as the nature of Sacraments, that not only the names, but even the properties and effects of what they represent and exhibit, are given to the outward Elements. Hence (as I said before) the Bread is as clearly or positively called by the Apostle, the Communion of the Body of CHRIST.

This also seems very plain, that our Blessed SAVIOUR'S design was not so much to teach, what the Elements of Bread and Wine are by nature and substance, as what is their use and office and signification in this mystery; for the Body and Blood of our SAVIOUR are not only fitly represented by the Elements, but also, by virtue of His institution, really offered to all, by them, and so eaten by the faithful mystically and sacramentally; whence it is, that "He truly is and abides in us, and we in Him."

This is the spiritual (and yet no less true and undoubted than if it were corporal) eating of CHRIST'S Flesh, not indeed simply as it is flesh, without any other respect, (for so it is not given, neither would it profit us), but as it is crucified and given for the redemption of the world; neither doth it hinder the truth and substance of the thing, that this eating of CHRIST'S body is spiritual, and that by it the souls of the faithful, and not their stomachs, are fed by the operation of the HOLY GHOST; for this none can deny, but they who being strangers to the Spirit and the divine virtue, can savour only carnal things, and to whom, what is spiritual and sacramental, is the same as if a mere nothing.

As to the manner of the presence of the Body and Blood of our LORD in the Blessed Sacrament, we that are Protestant and Reformed according to the ancient Catholic Church, do not search into the manner of it with perplexing inquiries; but, after the example of the Primitive and purest Church of CHRIST, we leave it to the power and wisdom of our LORD, yielding a full and unfeigned assent to His words. Had the Romish maintainers of Transubstantiation done the same, they would not have determined and decreed, and then imposed as an article of faith absolutely necessary to salvation, a manner of presence, newly by them invented, under pain of the most direful curse, and there would have been in the Church less wrangling, and more peace and unity than now is.

CHAPTER II.

Illustrated from Protestant Authorities.

So then, none of the Protestant Churches doubt of the real (that is, true and not imaginary,) presence of CHRIST'S Body and Blood in the Sacrament; and there appears no reason why any man should suspect their common confession, of either fraud or error, as though in this particular they had in the least departed from the Catholic faith.

For it is easy to produce the consent of Reformed Churches and authors, whereby it will clearly appear, (to them that are not wilfully blind,) that they all zealously maintain and profess this truth, without forsaking in any wise the true Catholic faith in this matter. I begin with the Church of England ..It teacheth therefore, "that in the Blessed Sacrament, the Body of CHRIST is given, taken, and eaten; so that to the worthy receivers, the consecrated and broken Bread is the communication of the Body of CHRIST; and likewise the consecrated Cup the communication of His Blood; but that the wicked, and they that approach unworthily the Sacrament of so sacred a thing, eat and drink their own damnation, in that they become guilty of the Body and Blood of CHRIST.

"And the same Church, in a solemn prayer before the consecration, prays thus; "Grant us, gracious Lord, so to eat the Flesh of thy dear Son JESUS CHRIST, and to drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood; and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us." The Priest also, blessing or consecrating the Bread and Wine, saith thus; "Hear us, O merciful FATHER, we most humbly beseech Thee, and grant that we receiving these Thy creatures of Bread and Wine according to Thy Son our Saviour JESUS CHRIST'S holy institution, in remembrance of His Death and Passion, may be partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood." Â....

The same, when he gives the Sacrament to the people kneeling, giving the bread, saith; "The Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." Likewise when he gives the cup, he saith, "The Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life." Afterwards, when the Communion is done, follows a thanksgiving; " Almighty and everliving GOD, we most heartily thank Thee, for that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of Thy Son, our Saviour JESUS CHRIST ;" with the Hymn, Glory be to God on high, &c.

Also in the public authorised Catechism of our Church, appointed to be learned of all, it is answered to the question concerning the inward part of the Sacrament, that "it is the Body and Blood of CHRIST which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD'S Supper." And in the Apology for this Church, writ by that worthy and Reverend Prelate Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, it is expressly affirmed, "that to the faithful is truly given in the Sacrament the Body and Blood of our LORD, the life-giving Flesh of the SON of GOD which quickens our souls, the Bread that came from Heaven, the Food of immortality, grace and truth, and life; and that it is the Communion of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, that we may abide in Him, and He in us; and that He may be ascertained that the Flesh and Blood of CHRIST is the food of our souls, as bread and wine is of our bodies."

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The right Reverend Doctors, T. Bilson, and L. Andrews, Prelates both of them, thoroughly learned, and great defenders of the Primitive Faith, made it most evident by their printed writings, that the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of England is in all things agreeable to the holy Scriptures, and the Divinity of the Ancient Fathers. And as to what regards this mystery, the first treats of it, in his Answer to the Apology of Cardinal Alan, and the last in his Answer to the Apology of Cardinal Bellarmine, where you may find things worthy to be read and noted as follows. "CHRIST said, This is My Body; in this, the object, we are agreed with you, the manner only is controverted. We hold by a firm belief, that it is the Body of CHRIST, of the manner how it comes to be so, there is not a word in the Gospel; and because the Scripture is silent in this, we justly disown it to be a matter of faith; we may indeed rank it among tenets of the school, but, by no means, among the Articles of our Christian Belief. We like well of what Durandus is reported to have

said, "We hear the word, and feel the motion, we know not the manner, and yet believe the presence; for we believe a real presence no less than you do. We dare not be so bold as presumptuously to define any thing concerning the manner of a true presence; or rather, we do not so much as trouble ourselves with being inquisitive about it; no more than in Baptism, how the Blood of CHRIST washeth us: or in the Incarnation of our Redeemer, how the divine and human natures were united together. We put it in the number of sacred things, or sacrifices, (the Eucharist itself being a Sacred Mystery,) whereof the remnants ought to be consumed with fire; that is, (as the Fathers elegantly have it,) adored by faith, but not searched by reason."

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As for the opinion and belief of the German Protestants, it will be known chiefly by the Augustan Confession, presented to Charles the Fifth by the Princes of the Empire, and other great persons. For they teach, that "not only the bread and wine, but the Body and Blood of CHRIST, are truly given to the receivers;" or, as it is in another edition, that "the Body and Blood of CHRIST are truly present, and distributed to the communicants in the LORD'S Supper;" and refute those that teach otherwise. They also declare, "that we must so use the Sacraments, as to believe and embrace by faith, those things promised which the Sacraments offer and convey to us." Yet we may observe here, that faith makes not those things present which are promised; for faith, as it is well known, is more properly said to take and apprehend, than to promise or perform: but the Word and Promise of GOD, on which our faith is grounded, (and not faith itself,) make that present which is promised; as it was agreed at a conference at St. German, betwixt some Protestants and Papists; and therefore it is unjustly laid to our charge by some in the Church of Rome, as if we should believe, that the presence and participation of CHRIST, in the Sacrament, is effected merely by the power of faith. The Saxon Confession, approved by other churches, seems to be a repetition of the Augustan. Therein we are taught, that "Sacraments are actions divinely instituted; and that, although the same things or actions in common use, have nothing of the nature of Sacraments, yet when used according to the divine institution, CHRIST is truly and substantially present in the Communion, and His Body and Blood truly given to the receivers; so that He testifies that He is in them; as St. Hilary saith, "these things taken and received make us to be in CHRIST, and CHRIST to be in us."

The Confession of Wittemberg, which in the year 1552, was propounded to the Council of Trent, is like unto this: for it teacheth that "the true Body and Blood of CHRIST are given in the Holy Communion;" and refutes those that say, "that the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament are only signs of the absent Body and Blood of CHRIST."

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Luther was once of opinion, that the Divines of Basil and Strasbourg did acknowledge nothing in the LORD'S Supper besides Bread and Wine. To him Bucerus, in the name of all the rest, did freely answer; "That they all unanimously did condemn that error; that neither they, nor the Switzers, ever believed or taught any such thing; that none could expressly be charged with that error, except the Anabaptists; and that he also had once been persuaded, that Luther in his writings, attributed too much to the outward symbols, and maintained a grosser union of CHRIST with the bread than the Scriptures did allow; as though CHRIST had been corporally present with it, united into a natural substance with the bread; so that the wicked as well as the faithful were made partakers of grace by receiving the Element; but that their own doctrine and belief concerning that Sacrament was, that the true Body and Blood of CHRIST was

truly presented, given, and received together with the visible signs of Bread and Wine, by the operation of our LORD, and by virtue of His institution, according to the plain sound and sense of His words; and that not only Zuinglius and OEcolampadius had so taught, but they also, in the public confessions of the Churches of the Upper Germany, and other writings, confessed it; so that the controversy was rather about the manner of the presence or absence, than about the presence or absence itself."

All which Bucer's associates confirm after him. He also adds; "That the magistrates in their Churches had denounced very severe punishments to any that should deny the presence of the Body and Blood of CHRIST in the LORD'S Supper." Bucerus did also maintain this doctrine of the blessed Sacrament in presence of the Landgrave of Hesse, and Melancthon, confessing, "That together with the sacrament we truly and substantially receive the Body of CHRIST." Also, "That the Bread and Wine are conferring signs, giving what they represent, so that together with them the Body of CHRIST is given and received."

And to these he adds; "That the Body and Bread are not united in the mixture of their substance, but in that the Sacrament gives what it promiseth, that is, the one is never without the other; and so they agreeing on both parts, that the Bread and Wine are not changed, he holds such a Sacramental Union." Luther having heard this, declared also his opinion thus; "That he did not locally include the Body and Blood of CHRIST with the Bread and Wine, and unite them together by any natural connexion; and that he did not make proper to the Sacraments that virtue whereby they brought salvation to the receivers; but that he maintained only a sacramental union betwixt the Body of CHRIST and the Bread, and betwixt His Blood and the Wine; and did teach, that the power of confirming our faith, which he attributed to the Sacraments, was not naturally inherent in the outward signs, but proceeded from the operation of CHRIST, and was given by His SPIRIT, by His words, and by the Elements."

And finally, in this manner he spake to all that were present; "If you believe and teach, that in the LORD'S Supper the true Body and Blood of CHRIST is given and received and not the Bread and Wine only; and that this giving and receiving is real and not imaginary, we are agreed, and we own you for dear Brethren in the LORD." All this is set down at large in the twentieth tome of Luther's Works, and in the English Works of Bucer. The next will be the Gallican Confession, made at Paris in a National Synod, and presented to King Charles IX. at the Conference of Poissy.

Which speaks of the Sacrament on this wise; "Although CHRIST be in Heaven, where He is to remain until He come to judge the world, yet we believe that by the secret and incomprehensible virtue of His Spirit, He feeds and vivifies us by the substance of His Body and Blood received by faith. Now we say that this is done in a spiritual manner; not that we believe it to be a fancy and imagination, instead of a truth and real effect, but rather because that mystery of our union with CHRIST is of so sublime a nature, that it is as much above the capacity of our senses, as it is above the order of nature."

Item; "We believe that in the LORD'S Supper God gives us really, that is, truly and efficaciously, whatever is represented by the Sacrament. With the signs we join the true profession and fruition of the thing by them offered to us; and so, that Bread and Wine which are given to us, become our spiritual nourishment, in that they make in some manner visible to us that the Flesh of CHRIST is our food, and His Blood our drink. Therefore those fanatics that reject these signs and symbols are by us rejected, our blessed SAVIOUR having said, 'this is My Body, and this cup is My blood.'" This Confession hath been subscribed by the Church of Geneva.

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Now because great is the fame of Calvin (who subscribed the Augustan Confession, and that of the Switzers), let us hear what he writ and believed concerning this sacred mystery. His words in his Institutions and elsewhere are such, so conformable to the style and mind of the Ancient Fathers, that no Catholic Protestant would wish to use any other. "I understand," saith he, "what is to be understood by the words of CHRIST; that He doth not only offer us the benefits of His Death and Resurrection, but His very Body, wherein He died and rose again.

I assert that the Body of CHRIST is really (as the usual expression is), that is truly given to us in the Sacrament, to be the saving food of our souls." Also in another place; Item; "That word cannot lie, neither can it mock us; and except one presumes to call GOD a deceiver, he will never dare to say, that the symbols are empty, and that CHRIST is not in them. Therefore if by the breaking of the bread our SAVIOUR doth represent the participation of His Body, it is not to be doubted but that He truly gives and confers it.

If it be true that the visible sign is given us, to seal the gift of an invisible thing, we most firmly believe that receiving the signs of the Body, we also certainly receive the Body itself. Setting aside all absurdities, I do willingly admit all those terms that can most strongly express the true and substantial Communication of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, granted to the faithful with the symbols of the LORD'S Supper; and that, not as if they received only by the force of their imagination, or an act of their minds, but really, so as to be fed thereby unto Eternal Life."

Again, "We must therefore confess that the inward substance of the Sacrament is joined with the visible sign, so that, as the bread is put into our hand, the Body of CHRIST is also given to us. This certainly, if there were nothing else, should abundantly satisfy us, that we understand, that CHRIST, in His Holy Supper, gives us the true and proper substance of His Body and Blood, that it being wholly ours, we may be made partakers of all His benefits and graces." Again, " The SON of GOD offers daily to us in the Holy Sacrament, the same Body which He once offered in sacrifice to His FATHER, that it may be our spiritual food."

In these he asserts, as clearly as any one can, the true, real, and substantial Presence and Communication of the Body of CHRIST, but how, he undertakes not to determine. "If any one," saith he, "ask me concerning the manner, I will not be ashamed to confess that it is a secret too high for my reason to comprehend, or my tongue to express; or to speak more properly, I rather feel than understand it: therefore without disputing I embrace the truth of GOD, and confidently repose on it.

He declares that His Flesh is the food, and His Blood the drink of my soul; and my soul I offer to Him to be fed by such nourishment. He bids me take, eat, and drink His Body and Blood, which in His holy Supper He offers me under the symbols of Bread and Wine: I make no scruple, but He doth reach them to me, and I receive them." All these are Calvin's own words.

I was the more willing to be long in transcribing these things at large, out of Public Confessions of Churches, and the best of Authors; that it might the better appear, how injuriously Protestant Divines are calumniated by others unacquainted with their opinions, as though by these words, Spiritually and Sacramentally, they did not acknowledge a true and well-understood real Presence and Communication of the Body and Blood of CHRIST in the Blessed Sacrament; whereas, on the contrary, they do professedly own it, in terms as express as any can be used.

CHAPTER III.

How the Papists understand the Doctrine of the Spiritual Presence.

HAVING now, by what I have said, put it out of doubt, that the Protestants believe a spiritual and true presence of CHRIST in the Sacrament, which is the reason, that according to the example of the Fathers, they use so frequently the term spiritual in this subject, it may not be amiss to consider, in the next place, how the Roman Church understands that same word. Now they make it to signify, "That CHRIST is not present in the Sacrament, either after that manner which is natural to corporal things, or that wherein His own body subsists in heaven, but according to the manner of existence proper to spirits, whole and entire in each part of the host: and though by Himself He be neither seen, touched, nor moved, yet in respect of the species or accidents joined with Him, He may be said to be seen, touched, and moved; and so the accidents being moved, the Body of CHRIST is truly moved accidentally, as the soul truly changeth place with the body; so that we truly and properly say, that the Body of CHRIST is removed, lifted up, and set down, put on the Paten, or on the Altar, and carried from hand to mouth, and from the mouth to the stomach; as Berengarius was forced to acknowledge in the Roman Council under Pope Nicholas, that the Body of CHRIST was sensually touched by the hands, and broken and chewed by the teeth of the Priest." But all this, and much more to the same effect, was never delivered to us, either by holy Scripture, or the ancient Fathers. And if souls or spirits could be present, as here Bellarmine teacheth, yet it would be absurd to say that bodies could be so likewise, it being inconsistent with their nature.

Indeed Bellarmine confesseth with St. Bernard, that "CHRIST in the Sacrament is not given to us carnally, but spiritually;" and would to GOD he had rested here, and not outgone the holy Scriptures, and the doctrine of the Fathers. For endeavouring, with Pope Innocent III. and the Council of Trent, to determine the manner of the presence and manducation of CHRIST'S Body, with more nicety than was fitting, he thereby foolishly overthrew all that he had wisely said before, denied what he had affirmed, and opposed his own opinion. His fear was lest his adversaries should apply that word spiritually, not so much to express the manner of presence, as to exclude the very substance of the Body and Blood of CHRIST; "therefore," saith he, "upon that account it is not safe to use too much that of St. Bernard, 'the body of CHRIST is not corporally in the Sacrament', without adding presently the above mentioned explanation." How much do we comply with human pride, and curiosity, which would seem to understand all things! Where is the danger? And what does he fear, as long as all they that believe the Gospel, own the true nature, and the real and substantial presence of the Body of CHRIST in the Sacrament, using that explication of St. Bernard, concerning the manner, which he himself, for the too great evidence of truth, durst not but admit? and why doth he own that the manner is spiritual, not carnal, and then require a carnal presence, as to the manner itself? As for us, we all openly profess with St. Bernard, that the presence of the Body of CHRIST in the Sacrament, is spiritual, and therefore true and real; and with the same Bernard, and all the Ancients, we deny that the Body of CHRIST is carnally either present or given. The thing we willingly admit, but humbly and religiously forbear to enquire into the manner.

We believe a presence and union of CHRIST with our soul and body, which we know not how to call better than sacramental, that is, effected by eating; that while we eat and drink the consecrated Bread and Wine, we eat and drink therewithal the Body and Blood of CHRIST, not in a corporal manner, but some other way, incomprehensible, known only to GOD, which we call spiritual; for if with St. Bernard and the Fathers a man goes no further, we do not find fault with a general explication of the manner, but with the presumption and self-conceitedness of those who boldly and curiously inquire what is a spiritual presence, as presuming that they can understand the manner of acting of GOD'S Holy Spirit. We contrariwise confess with the Fathers, that this manner of presence is unaccountable, and past finding out, not to be

searched and pried into by reason, but believed by faith. And if it seems impossible that the flesh of CHRIST should descend, and come to be our food, through so great a distance; we must remember how much the power of the Holy Spirit exceeds our sense and our apprehensions, and how absurd it would be to undertake to measure His immensity by our weakness and narrow capacity; and so make our faith to conceive and believe what our reason cannot comprehend.

Yet our faith doth not cause or make that presence, but apprehends it as most truly and really effected by the word of CHRIST: and the faith whereby we are said to eat the flesh of CHRIST, is not that only whereby we believe that He died for our sins, (for this faith is required and supposed to precede the Sacramental Manducation,) but more properly, that whereby we believe those words of CHRIST, This is my Body; which was St. Austin's meaning when he said, "why dost thou prepare thy stomach and thy teeth? believe and thou hast eaten." For in this mystical eating by the wonderful power of the HOLY GHOST, we do invisibly receive the substance of CHRIST'S Body and Blood, as much as if we should eat and drink both visibly.

The result of all this is, that the Body and Blood of CHRIST are sacramentally united to the Bread and Wine, so that CHRIST is truly given to the faithful; and yet is not to be here considered with sense or worldly reason, but by faith, resting on the words of the Gospel. Now it is said, that the Body and Blood of CHRIST are joined to the Bread and Wine, because, that in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Flesh is given together with the Bread, and the Blood together with the Wine. All that remains is, that we should with faith and humility admire this high and sacred mystery, which our tongue cannot sufficiently explain, nor our heart conceive.

CHAPTER IV.

The Popish Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

IT is an Article of Faith in the Church of Rome, that in the blessed Eucharist the substance of the Bread and Wine is reduced to nothing, and that in its place succeeds the Body and Blood of CHRIST. . . . The Protestants are much of another mind; and yet none of them denies altogether but that there is a conversion of the Bread into the Body, (and consequently the Wine into the Blood,) of CHRIST; for they know and acknowledge, that in the Sacrament, by virtue of the words and blessing of CHRIST, the condition, use, and office of the Bread is wholly changed, that is, of common and ordinary, it becomes our mystical and sacramental food; whereby, as they affirm and believe, the true Body of CHRIST is not only shadowed and figured, but also given indeed, and by worthy communicants truly received. Yet they believe not that the bread loseth its own, to become the substance of the Body of CHRIST; for the holy Scripture, and the ancient interpreters thereof for many ages, never taught such an essential change and conversion, as that the very substance, the matter, and form of the bread should be wholly taken away, but only a mysterious and sacramental one, whereby our ordinary is changed into mystic bread, and thereby designed and appointed to another use, end, and office than before. This change, whereby supernatural effects are wrought by things natural, while their essence is preserved entire, doth best agree with the grace and power of GOD.

There is no reason why we should dispute concerning GOD'S Omnipotency, whether it can do this or that, presuming to measure an Infinite Power by our poor ability, which is but weakness. We may grant that He is able to do beyond what we can think or apprehend, and resolve His most wonderful acts into His absolute will and power, but we may not charge Him with working contradictions. And though GOD'S

Almightiness were able in this mystery to destroy the substance of Bread and Wine, and essentially to change it into the Body and Blood of CHRIST, while the accidents of Bread and Wine subsist of themselves without a subject, yet we desire to have it proved that GOD will have it so, and that it is so indeed. For, that GOD doth it because He can, is no argument; and that He wills it, we have no other proof but the confident assertion of our adversaries. Tertullian against Praxeas declared "that we should not conclude GOD doth things because He is able, but that we should inquire what He hath done;" for GOD will never own that praise of His Omnipotency, whereby His unchangeableness and His truth are impaired, and those things overthrown and destroyed, which, in His Word, He affirms to be; for, take away the Bread and Wine, and there remains no Sacrament.

They that say, that the matter and form of the Bread are wholly abolished, yet will have the accidents to remain. But if the substance of the Bread be changed into the substance of CHRIST'S Body by virtue of His words, what hinders that the accidents of the Bread are not also changed into the accidents of CHRIST'S Body? They that urge the express letter, should show that CHRIST said, "This is the substance of My body without its accidents." But He did not say, that He gave His Disciples a phantastic body, such a visionary figment as Marcion believed, but that very body which is given for us, without being deprived of that extension and other accidents of human bodies, without which it could not have been crucified; since the maintainers of transubstantiation grant that the Body of CHRIST keeps its quantity in heaven, and say it is without the same in the Sacrament; they must either acknowledge their contradiction in the matter, or give over their opinion.

Protestants dare not be so curious, or presume to know more than is delivered by Scripture and antiquity, they firmly believing the words of CHRIST make the form of this Sacrament to consist in the union of the thing signified with the sign, that is, the exhibition of the Body of CHRIST with the consecrated Bread, still remaining bread; by divine appointment these two are made one; and though this union be not natural, substantial, personal, or local by their being one within another, yet it is so straight and so true, that in eating the blessed Bread, the true Body of CHRIST is given to us, and the names of the sign and thing signified are reciprocally changed, what is proper to the Body is attributed to the Bread, and what belongs only to the Bread, is affirmed of the Body, and both are united in time, though not in place. For the presence of CHRIST in this mystery is not opposed to distance but to absence, which only could deprive us of the benefit and fruition of the object.

From what has been said it appears, that this whole controversy may be reduced to four heads; 1. Concerning the Signs; 2. Concerning the thing signified; 3. Concerning the union of both; and 4. Concerning their participation. As to the first, the Protestants differ from the Papists in this; that according to the nature of Sacraments, and the doctrine of the holy Scripture, we make the substance of Bread and Wine, and they accidents only to be signs. In the second, they not understanding our opinion, do misrepresent it, for we do not hold, (as they say we do,) that only the merits of the death of CHRIST are represented by the blessed Elements, but also that His very Body which was crucified, and His Blood which was shed for us, are truly signified and offered, that our souls may receive and possess CHRIST, as truly and certainly as the material and visible signs are by us seen and received.

And so in the third place, because the thing signified is offered and given to us, as truly as the sign itself, in this respect we own the union betwixt the Body and Blood of CHRIST, and the Elements, whose use and office we hold to be changed from what it was before. But we deny what the Papists affirm, that the substance of Bread and Wine are quite abolished, and changed into the Body and Blood of our LORD in such sort, that the bare accidents of the Elements do alone remain united with CHRIST'S Body and

Blood.

And we also deny that the Elements still retain the nature of Sacraments when not used according, to divine institution, that is, given by CHRIST'S Ministers, and received by His people; so that CHRIST in the consecrated bread ought not, cannot be kept and preserved to be carried about, because He is present only to the communicants. As for the fourth and last point, we do not say, that in the LORD'S Supper we receive only the benefits of CHRIST'S death and passion, but we join the ground wish its fruits, that is, CHRIST with those advantages we receive from Him; affirming with St.

Paul, "That the bread which we break is [koinonia] the Communion of the Body of CHRIST, and the cup which we bless, the Communion of His Blood," (1 Cor. x. 16.); of that very substance which He took of the blessed Virgin, and after wards carried into Heaven; differing from those of Rome only in this, that they will have our union with CHRIST to be corporal, and our eating of Him likewise; and we on the contrary maintain it to be, indeed as true, but not carnal or natural. And as he that receives unworthily, (that is, with the mouth only, but not with a faithful heart,) eats and drinks his own damnation; so he that doeth it worthily, receives his absolution and justification; that is, he that discerns, and then receives the LORD'S Body as torn, and His Blood as shed for the redemption of the world. But that CHRIST (as the Papists affirm) should give His Flesh and Blood to be received with the mouth, and ground with the teeth, this our words and hearts do utterly deny.

So then, (to sum up this controversy by applying it to all that hath been said,) it is not questioned whether the Body of CHRIST be absent from the Sacrament duly administered according to his institution, which we Protestants neither affirm nor believe; for it being given and received in the Communion, it must needs be that it is present, though in some manner veiled under the Sacrament, so that of itself it cannot be seen. neither is it doubted or disputed whether the Bread and Wine, by the power of GOD and a supernatural virtue, be set apart and fitted for a much nobler use, and raised to a higher dignity than their nature bears; for we confess the necessity of a supernatural and heavenly change, and that the signs cannot become Sacraments but by the infinite power of GOD, whose proper right it is to institute Sacraments in His Church, being able alone to endue them with virtue and efficacy. Finally, we do not say that our Blessed SAVIOUR gave only the figure and sign of His body; neither do we deny a Sacramental Union of the Body and Blood of CHRIST with the sacred Bread and Wine, so that both are really and substantially received together: but (that we may avoid all ambiguity) we deny that after the words and prayer of Consecration, the Bread should remain bread no longer, but should be changed into the substance of the Body of CHRIST, nothing of the bread, but only the accidents continuing to be what they were before; and so the whole question is concerning the Transubstantiation of the outward Elements; whether the substance of the Bread be turned into the substance of CHRIST'S Body, and the substance of the Wine into the substance of His Blood; or, as the Romish Doctors describe their Transubstantiation, whether the substance of bread and wine doth utterly perish, and the substance of CHRIST'S Body and Blood succeed in their place, which are both denied by Protestants.

The Church of Rome sings on Corpus Christi day, This is not bread, but GOD and Man my SAVIOUR. And the Council of Trent doth thus define it; "Because CHRIST our Redeemer said truly, that that was His Body, which he gave in the appearance of bread; therefore it was ever believed by the Church of GOD, and is now declared by this sacred Synod, that by the power of Consecration the whole substance of the bread is changed into the substance of CHRIST'S Body, and the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood; which change it fitly and properly called Transubstantiation by the holy Catholic (Roman) Church. Therefore, if any one shall say, that the substance of Bread and Wine remains with the

Body and Blood of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the Bread and Wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, the only appearance and outward form of the Bread and Wine remaining, which conversion the Catholic (Roman) Church doth fitly call Transubstantiation, let him be accursed."

* * * *

Now we leave inquiring what GOD is able to do, for we should first know His will in this matter, before we examine His power; yet thus much we say, that this Roman Transubstantiation is so strange and monstrous, that it exceeds the nature of all miracles. And though GOD by His Almightyness be able to turn the substance of bread into some other substance, yet none will believe that He doth it, as long as it appears to our senses, that the substance of the Bread doth still remain whole and entire. Certain it is, that hitherto we read of no such thing done in the Old or New Testament, and therefore this tenet, being as unknown to the Ancients as it is ungrounded in Scripture, appears as yet to be very incredible, and there is no reason we should believe such an unauthorised figment, newly invented by men, and now imposed as an article of Christian Religion. For it is in vain that they bring Scripture to defend this their stupendous doctrine; and it is not true, what they so often and so confidently affirm, that the Universal Church hath always constantly owned it, being it was not so much as heard of in the Church for many ages, and hath been but lately approved by the Pope's authority in the Councils of Lateran and Trent.

OXFORD.

The Feast of St. Matthias.

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