

Bishop Cosin on the Doctrine of the Eucharist. (Continued).

by J.H. Newman

The sermon argues that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is not supported by Scripture or the writings of the Fathers, and that the Primitive Church believed in a spiritual and mystical presence of CHRIST in the Sacrament.

Scripture: Matthew 26:26, Luke 22:19, John 6:63, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 11:23

Topics: "Eucharist Theology", "Sacramental Presence"

Description

John Cosin, Bishop of Durham, refutes the doctrine of Transubstantiation, showing it to be a novelty not found in Scripture or the writings of the Fathers. He argues that the words of institution clearly indicate that the Bread is given as the Body of Christ, not that it is substantially changed into it. Cosin highlights the spiritual and mystic presence of Christ's Body in the Eucharist, as affirmed by the early Church Fathers like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen. He emphasizes that the Bread and Wine remain in their substance, becoming sacramental signs of the Body and Blood of Christ, not transformed into them. Cosin's defense of the orthodox doctrine against the rise of Transubstantiation is a testament to the faithfulness to Scripture and tradition.

Transcript

(By John Cosin, Bishop of Durham.)

(Continued.)

[Number 28]

CHAPTER V.

The doctrine of Transubstantiation is contained neither in Scripture nor in the writings of the Fathers.

THE word Transubstantiation is so far from being found either in the Sacred Records, or in the Monuments of the Ancient Fathers, that the maintainers of it do themselves acknowledge that it was no so much as heard of before the twelfth century. For though one Stephanus, Bishop of Autun, be said to have once used it, yet it is without proof that some modern writers make him one of the tenth century; nor yet doth he say, that the Bread is transubstantiated, but as it were transubstantiated, which well understood

might be admitted.

Nay, that the thing itself without the word, that the doctrine without the expression, cannot be found in Scripture, is ingeniously acknowledged by the most learned Schoolmen, Scotus, Durandus, Biel, Cameracensis, Cajetan, and many more, who finding it not brought in by the Pope's authority, and received in the Roman Church, till 1200 years after CHRIST, yet endeavoured to defend it by other arguments.

And indeed, the words of institution would plainly make it appear to any man that would prefer truth to wrangling, that it is with the Bread that the LORD'S Body is given, (as His Blood with the Wine,) for CHRIST, having taken, blessed, and broken the Bread, said, "This is My Body;" and St. Paul, than whom none could better understand the meaning of CHRIST, explains it thus; "The Bread which we break is the [koinonia], Communion or communication of the Body of CHRIST," that whereby His Body is given, and the faithful are made partakers of it. That it was Bread which He reached to them, there was no need of any proof, the receiver's senses sufficiently convinced them of it; but that therewith His Body was given, none could have known, had it not been declared by Him who is the Truth itself. And though, by the divine institution and the explication of the Apostle, every faithful communicant may be as certainly assured that he receives the LORD'S Body, as if he knew that the Bread is substantially turned into it; yet it doth not therefore follow, that the Bread is so changed, that its substance is quite done away, so that there remains nothing present, but the very natural Body of CHRIST, made of Bread; for certain it is, that the Bread is not the Body of CHRIST any otherwise than as the Cup is the New Testament, and two different consequences cannot be drawn from those two not different expressions. Therefore as the Cup cannot be the New Testament but by a Sacramental figure, no more can the Bread be the Body of CHRIST, but in the same sense.

As to what Bellarmine and others say, that it is not possible the words of CHRIST can be true, but by that conversion, which the Church of Rome calls Transubstantiation, that is so far from being so, that if it were admitted, it would first deny the Divine Omnipotency, as though GOD were not able to make the Body of CHRIST present, and truly to give it in the Sacrament, whilst the substance of the Bread remains. 2. It would be inconsistent with the Divine Benediction which preserves things in their proper being. 2. In [sic] would be contrary to the true nature of the Sacrament, which always consisteth of two parts. And lastly, it would in some manner destroy the true substance of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which cannot be said to be made of Bread and Wine by a Priest, without a most high presumption. But the truth of the words of CHRIST remains constant, and can be defended, without overthrowing so many other great truths. Suppose a testator puts deeds and titles in the hand of his heir, with these words, "Take the house which I bequeath thee;" there is no man will think that those writings and parchments are that very house which is made of wood or stones, and yet no man will say that the testator spake falsely or obscurely. Likewise our blessed SAVIOUR, having sanctified the Elements by His words and prayers, have them to His Disciples as seals of the New Testament, whereby they were as certainly secured of those rich and precious legacies which He left to them, as children are of their father's lands and inheritance, by deeds and instruments signed and delivered for that purpose.

To the Sacred Records we may added [sic] the judgment of the Primitive Church. For those orthodox and holy Doctors of our holier religion, those great lights of the Catholic Church, do all clearly, constantly, and unanimously conspire in this, that the presence of the Body of CHRIST in the Sacrament is only mystic and spiritual. As for the entire annihilation of the substance of the Bread and Wine, or that new and strange tenet of Transubstantiation, they did not so much as hear or speak any thing of it; nay, the

constant stream of their doctrine doth clearly run against it, how great soever are the brags and pretences of the Papists to the contrary. And if you will hear them one by one, I shall bring some of their most noted passages only, that our labour may not be endless by rehearsing all that they have said to our purpose on this subject.

I shall begin with that holy and ancient Doctor, Justin Martyr, who is one of the first after the Apostles' times, whose undoubted writings are come to us. (A.D. 144.) What was believed at Rome and elsewhere in his time, concerning this holy mystery, may well be understood out of these his words: "After that the Bishop hath prayed and blessed, and the people said Amen, those whom we called Deacons or Ministers give to every one of them that are present a portion of the Bread and Wine; and that food we call the Eucharist, for we do not receive it as ordinary bread and wine." They received it as bread, yet not as common bread. And a little after; "By this food digested, our flesh and blood are fed, and we are taught that it is the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST." Therefore the substance of the bread remains, and remains corruptible food, even after the Consecration, which can in now wise be said of the immortal Body of CHRIST; for the Flesh of CHRIST is not turned into our flesh, neither doth it nourish it, as doth that food which is sacramentally called the Flesh of CHRIST. But the Flesh of CHRIST feeds our souls unto eternal life.

After the same manner, it is written by that holy Martyr Irenaeus, Bishop much about the same time. (A.D. 160.) "The bread which is from the earth is no more common bread, after the invocation of GOD upon it, but is become the Eucharist, consisting of two parts, the one earthly, and the other heavenly." There would be nothing earthly if the substance of the bread were removed. Again: "As the grain of wheat falling in the ground, and dying, riseth again much increased, and then receiving the word of GOD becomes the Eucharist; (which is the Body and Blood of CHRIST;) so likewise our bodies, nourished by it, laid in the ground and dissolved, shall rise again in their time." Again; "We are fed by the creature, but it is He Himself that gives it. He hath ordained and appointed that Cup which is a creature, and His Blood also, and that Bread which is a creature, and also His Body. And so when the Bread and the Cup are blessed by GOD'S word, they become the Eucharist of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, and from them our bodies receive nourishment and increase." Now that our flesh is fed and increased [sic] by the natural Body of CHRIST, cannot be said without great impiety by themselves that hold Transubstantiation. For naturally nothing nourisheth our bodies but what is made flesh and blood by the last digestion, which it would be blasphemous to say of the incorruptible Body of CHRIST. Yet the sacred Elements, which in some manner are, and are said to be the Body and Blood of CHRIST, yield nourishment and increase to our bodies by their earthly nature, in such sort, that by virtue also of the heavenly and spiritual food which the faithful receive by means of the material, our bodies are fitted for a blessed Resurrection to immortal glory.

Tertullian, who flourished about the two hundredth year after CHRIST, when as yet he was Catholic, and acted by a pious zeal, wrote against Marcion the Heretic, who, amongst his other impious opinions, taught that CHRIST had not taken of the Virgin Mary the very nature and substance of a human body, but only the outward forms and appearances; out of which fountain the Romish Transubstantiators seem to have drawn their doctrine of accidents abstracted from their subject hanging in the air, that is, subsisting on nothing. Tertullian, disputing against this wicked heresy, draws an argument from the Sacrament of the Eucharist, to prove that CHRIST had not a phantastic and imaginary, but a true and natural body, thus: the figure of the Body of CHRIST proves it to be natural, for there can be no figure of a ghost or phantasm. "But," saith he, "CHRIST having taken the Bread, and given it to his Disciples, made it His Body by saying,

“This is my Body, that is, the figure of my Body.” Now, it could not have been a figure except the Body was real, for a mere appearance, an imaginary phantasm is not capable of a figure.” Each part of this argument is true, and contains a necessary conclusion. For, 1. The bread must remain bread, otherwise Marcion would have returned the argument against Tertullian, saying as the Transubstantiators; it was not bread, but merely the accidents of bread, which seemed to be bread. 2. The Body of CHRIST is proved to be true by the figure of it, which is said to be bread, for the bread is fit to represent that Divine Body, because of its nourishing virtue, which in the bread is earthly, but in the Body is heavenly. Lastly, the reality of the Body is proved by that of its figure; and so if you deny the substance of the Bread, (as the Papists do,) you thereby destroy the truth and reality of the Body of CHRIST in the Sacrament.

Origen also, about the same time as Tertullian, speaks much after the same manner. “If CHRIST,” saith he, “as these men (the Marcionites) falsely hold, had neither Flesh nor Blood, of what manner of Flesh, of what Body, of what Blood did He give the signs and images when He gave the Bread and Wine?” If they be the signs and representations of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, though they prove the truth of His Body and Blood, yet they being signs, cannot be what they signify; and they not being what they represent, the groundless contrivance of Transubstantiation is overthrown. Also upon Leviticus he doth expressly oppose it thus: “Acknowledge ye that they are figures, and therefore spiritual, not carnal; examine and understand what is said, otherwise if you receive as things carnal, they will hurt, but not nourish you. For in the Gospel there is the Letter, which kills him that understands not spiritually what is said; for if you understand this saying according to the Letter, “Except you eat My Flesh and drink My Blood,” the Letter will kill you.” Therefore as much as these words belong to the eating and drinking of CHRIST’S Body and Blood, they are to be understood mystically and spiritually.

St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, a glorious Martyr of CHRIST, (A.D. 250.) wrote a famous Epistle to Coecilius concerning the sacred Chalice in the LORD’S Supper, whereof this is the sum; “Let that cup which is offered to the people in commemoration of CHRIST be mixt with wine,” (against the opinion of the Aquarii, who were for water only,) “for it cannot represent the Body and Blood of CHRIST when there is no wine in the cup, because the Blood of CHRIST is exprest by the Wine, as the faithful are understood by the Water.” But the patrons of Transubstantiation have neither Wine nor Water in the Chalice they offer; and yet without them (especially the Wine appointed by our Blessed SAVIOUR, and whereof Cyprian chiefly speaks,) the Blood of CHRIST is not so much as sacramentally present. So far was the Primitive Church from any thing of believing a corporal presence of the Blood, the Wine being reduced to nothing, (that is, to a mere accident without the substance,) for then they must have said, that the Water was changed into the people, as well as the Wine into the Blood. But there is no need that I should bring many testimonies of that Father, when all his writings do plainly declare that the true substance of the Bread and Wine is given in the Eucharist; that the spiritual and quickening food which the faithful get from the Body and Blood of CHRIST, and the mutual union of the whole people joined into one body may answer their type, the Sacrament which represents them.

The words of the Council of Nice, (A.D. 325.) are well known, whereby the faithful are called from the consideration of the outward visible Elements of Bread and Wine, to attend the inward and spiritual act of the mind, whereby CHRIST is seen and apprehended. “Let not our thoughts dwell low, on that Bread and that Cup which are set before us, but lifting up our minds by faith, let us consider, that on this Sacred Table is laid the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sins of the world. And receiving truly His precious Body and Blood, let us believe these things to be the pledges and emblems of our resurrection; for we do not take much, but only a little, (of the Elements,) that we may be mindful, we do it not for satiety, but for

sanctification." Now, who is there, even among the maintainers of Transubstantiation, that will understand this, not much, but a little, of the Body of CHRIST; or who can believe that the Nicene Fathers would call His Body and Blood symbols in a proper sense? when nothing can be an image or sign of itself. And therefore, though we are not to rest in the Elements, minding nothing else, (for we should consider what is chiefest in the Sacrament, that we have our hearts lifted unto the LORD, who is given together with the signs,) yet Elements they are, and the earthly part of the Sacrament, both the Bread and the Wine, which destroys Transubstantiation.

St. Athanasius, famous in the time, and present in the Assembly of the Nicene Council, a stout Champion of the Catholic faith, acknowledgeth none other but a spiritual manducation of the Body of CHRIST in the Sacrament. "Our LORD," saith he, "made a difference betwixt the Flesh and the Spirit, that we might understand that what He said, was not carnal, but spiritual. For how many men could His Body have fed, that the whole world should be nourished by it? But therefore He mentioned His ascension into heaven, that they might not take what He said in a corporal sense, but might understand that His Flesh whereof He spake is a spiritual and heavenly food given by Himself from on high; for the words that I spake unto you they are spirit, and they are life, as if He should say, My Body which is shown and given for the world, shall be given in good, that it may be distributed spiritually to every one, and preserve them all to the resurrection to eternal life." Cardinal Perron having nothing to answer to these words of this holy Father, in a kind of despair, rejects the whole Tractate, and denies it to be Athanasius's, which nobody ever did before him, there being no reason for it.

Likewise St. Ambrose, (A.D. 380.) explaining what manner of alteration is in the Bread, when in the Eucharist it becomes the Body of CHRIST, saith, "Thou hadst indeed a being, but wert an old creature, but being now baptized or consecrated, thou art become a new creature." The same change that happens to man in baptism, happens to the Bread in the Sacrament: if the nature of man is not substantially altered by the new birth, no more is the Bread by consecration. Man becomes by baptism, not what nature made him, but what grace new-makes him; and the Bread becomes by consecration, not what it was by nature, but what the blessing consecrates it to be. For nature made only a mere man, and made only common bread; but Regeneration, of a mere man, makes a holy man, in whom CHRIST dwells spiritually; and likewise the Consecration of common Bread makes Mystic and Sacramental Bread. Yet this change doth not destroy nature, but to nature adds grace; as is yet more plainly exprest by that holy Father in the fore-cited place. "Perhaps thou wilt say," saith he, "this my bread is common bread; it is bread indeed before the blessing of the Sacrament, but when it is consecrated it becomes the Body of CHRIST. This we are therefore to declare, how can that which is Bread be also the Body of CHRIST? By Consecration. And Consecration is made by the words of our LORD, that the venerable Sacrament may be perfected. You see how efficacious is the word of CHRIST. If there be then so great a power in the Word of CHRIST to make the Bread and Wine to be what they were not, how much greater is that power which still preserves them to be what they were, and yet makes them to be what they were not? Therefore, that I may answer thee, it was not the Body of CHRIST before the Consecration, but now after the Consecration, it is the Body of CHRIST; He said the word and it was done. Thou thyself went before, but wert an old creature; after thou hadst been consecrated in Baptism thou art become a new creature." By these words St. Ambrose teacheth how we are to understand that the Bread is the Body of CHRIST, to wit, by such a change that the Bread and Wine do not cease to be what they were as to their substance, (for then they should not be what they were,) and yet by the blessing become what before they were not. For so they are said to remain, (as indeed they do,) what they were by nature, that yet they are changed by grace; that is, they become assured Sacraments of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, and by that means certain pledges

of our Justification and Redemption. What is there, can refute more expressly the dream of Transubstantiation?

St. Chrysostom (A.D. 390.) doth also clearly discard and reject this carnal Transubstantiation and eating of CHRIST'S Body, without eating the Bread. "Sacraments," saith he, "ought not to be contemplated and considered carnally, but with the eyes of our souls, that is, spiritually; for such is the nature of mysteries;" where observe the opposition betwixt carnally and spiritually, which admits of no plea or reply again. "As in Baptism the spiritual power of Regeneration is given to the material water; so also the immaterial gift of the Body and Blood of CHRIST is not received by any sensible corporal action, but by the spiritual discernment of our faith, and of our hearts and minds." Which is no more than this, that sensible things are called by the name of those spiritual things which they seal and signify. But he speaks more plainly in his Epistle to Caesarius; where he teacheth, that in this mystery, there is not in the bread a substantial, but a Sacramental change, according to the which, the outward Elements take the name of what they represent, and are changed in such a sort, that they still retain their former natural substance. "The Bread," saith he, "is made worthy to be honoured with the name of the Flesh of CHRIST, by the consecration of the Priest, yet the Flesh retains the properties of its incorruptible nature, as the Bread doth its natural substance. Before the Bread be sanctified we call it Bread; but when it is consecrated by the divine grace, it deserves to be called the LORD'S Body, though the substance of the real Bread remains." When Bellarmine could not answer this testimony of that great Doctor, he thought it enough to deny, that this Epistle is St. Chrysostom's; but both he and Possevin do vainly contend that it is not extant among the works of Chrysostom. For besides that at Florence and elsewhere it was to be found among them, it is cited in the collection against the Severians which are in the version of Turrianus the Jesuit, in the 4th tome of Antiqu. Lectionum of Henry Canisius, and in the end of the book of Joh. Damascenus against the Acephali.

Which also hath been said by St. Austin (A.D. 400.) above a thousand times; but out of so many almost numberless places, I shall choose only three, which are as the sum of all the rest. "You are not to eat this Body which you see, nor drink this Blood which My crucifiers shall shed; I have left you a Sacrament which, spiritually understood, will vivify you." Thus St. Austin, rehearsing the words of CHRIST again; "If Sacraments had not some resemblance with those things whereof they are Sacraments, they could not be Sacraments at all. From this resemblance they often take the names of what they represent. Therefore as the Sacrament of CHRIST'S Body is in some sort His Body; so the Sacrament of Faith, is faith also." To the same sense is what he writes against Maximinus the Arian. "We mind in the Sacraments, not what they are, but what they show; for they are signs, which are one thing, and signifies another." And in another place, speaking of what they signify, for our LORD was pleased to say, 'this is My Body,' when He gave the sign of His Body."

And the same kind of expressions were also used by venerable Bede, our countryman, who lived in the eighth century, in his Sermon upon the Epiphany; of whom we also take these two testimonies following: "In the room of the Flesh and Blood of the Lamb, CHRIST substituted the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, in the figure of Bread and Wine." Also, "At Supper He gave to His Disciples the figure of His holy Body and Blood." These utterly destroy Transubstantiation.

In the same century Charles the Great wrote an Epistle to our Alcuinus, wherein we find these words. "CHRIST at Supper broke the Bread to His Disciples, and likewise gave them the Cup, in figure of His Body and Blood, and so left to us this great Sacrament for our benefit." If it was the figure of His Body, it could not be the Body itself; indeed the Body of CHRIST is given in the Eucharist, but to the faithful only, and that by means of the Sacrament of consecrated Bread.

But now, about the beginning of the ninth century, started up Paschasius, a Monk of Corbie, who first, (as some say whose judgment I follow not,) among the Latines, taught that CHRIST was consubstantiated, or rather inclosed in the Bread, and corporally united to it in the Sacrament; for as yet there was no thoughts of the Transubstantiation of the Bread. But these new sorts of expressions not agreeing with the Catholic doctrine, and the writings of the ancient Fathers, had few or no abettors before the eleventh century. And in the ninth, whereof we now treat, there were not wanting learned men, (as Amalarius, Archdeacon of Triars; Rabanus, at first Abbot of Fulda, and afterwards Archbishop of Ments; John Erigena, an English Divine; Waldfridus Strabo, a German Abbot; Ratramus or Bertramus, first Priest of Corbie, afterward Abbot of Orbec in France; and many more;) who by their writings opposed this new opinion of Paschasius, or of some others rather, and delivered to posterity the Doctrine of the Ancient Church. Yet we have something more to say concerning Paschasius, whom Bellarmine and Sirmondus esteemed so highly, that they were not ashamed to say, that he was the first that had writ to the purpose concerning the Eucharist; and that he had so explained the meaning of the Church, that he had shown and opened the way to all them who treated of that subject after him. Yet in that whole book of Paschasius, there is nothing that favours the Transubstantiation of the Bread, or its destruction or removal. Indeed, he asserts the truth of the Body and Blood of CHRIST'S being in the Eucharist, which Protestants deny not; he denies that the consecrated Bread is a bare figure, a representation void of truth, which Protestants assert not. But he has many things repugnant to Transubstantiation, which, as I have said, the Church of Rome itself had not yet quite found out. I shall mention a few of them. "CHRIST," saith he, "left us this Sacrament, a visible figure and character of His Body and Blood, that by them our spirit might the better embrace spiritual and invisible things, and be more fully fed by faith." Again, "We must receive our spiritual Sacrament with the mouth of the soul, and the taste of faith." Item, "Whilst therein we savour nothing carnal, but we being spiritual, and understanding the whole spiritually, we remain in CHRIST." And a little after, "The Flesh and Blood of CHRIST are received spiritually." And again, "To savour according to the Flesh, is death; and yet to receive spiritually the true Flesh of CHRIST, is life eternal." Lastly, "The Flesh and Blood of CHRIST are not received carnally, but spiritually.

As for the opinion of Bertram, otherwise called Ratramnus, or Ratramus, perhaps not rightly, it is known enough by that books which the Emperor Charles the Bald, (who loved and honoured him, as all good men did, for his great learning and piety,) commanded him to write concerning the Body and Blood of our LORD. For when men began to be disturbed at the book of Paschasius, some saying one thing, and some another, the Emperor being moved by their disputes propounded himself two questions to Bertram. 1.

Whether, what the faithful eat in the Church, be made the Body and Blood of CHRIST in figure and mystery. 2. Or whether that natural Body which was born of the Virgin Mary, which suffered, died, and was buried, and now sitteth on the right hand of GOD the Father, be itself daily received by the mouth of the faithful in the mystery of the Sacrament. The first of these Bertram resolved affirmatively, the second negatively; and said, that there was as great a difference betwixt those two bodies, as betwixt the earnest and that whereof it is the earnest.

"It is evident," saith he, "that that Bread and Wine are figuratively the Body and Blood of CHRIST. According to the substance of the Elements, they are after the Consecration what they were before. For the Bread is not CHRIST substantially. If this mystery be not done in a figure, it cannot well be called a mystery. The Wine also which is made the Sacrament of the Blood of CHRIST by the Consecration of the Priest, shews one thing by its outward appearance, and contains another inwardly.

For what is there visible in its outside but only the substance of the Wine? These things are changed, but not according to the material part, and by this change they are not what they truly appear to be but are something else besides what is their proper being; for they are made spiritually the Body and Blood of CHRIST; not that the Elements be two different things, but in one respect they are, as they appear, Bread and Wine, and in another the Body and Blood of CHRIST. Hence, according to the visible creature they feed the body; but according to the virtue of a more excellent substance they nourish and sanctify the souls of the faithful."

Then having brought many testimonies of holy Scripture and the ancient Fathers to confirm this, he at last prevents that calumny which the followers of Paschasius did then lay on the orthodox, as though they had taught that bare signs, figures, and shadows, and not the Body and Blood of CHRIST were given in the Sacrament. "Let it not be thought," saith he, "because we say this, that therefore the Body and Blood of CHRIST are not received in the mystery of the Sacrament, where faith apprehends what it believeth, and not what the eyes see; for this meat and drink are spiritual, feed the soul spiritually, and entertain that life whose fulness is eternal."

For the question is not simply about the real truth, or the thing signified being present, without which it could not be a mystery, but about the false reality of things subsisting in imaginary appearances, and about the carnal presence.

All this the Fathers of Trent, and the Romish Inquisitors could not brook, and therefore they utterly condemned Bertram, and put his book in the Catalogue of those that are forbidden.

CHAPTER VI.

Romish objections considered, as drawn from the writings of the Fathers.

...LET us see what props these new builders pretend to borrow from Antiquity to uphold their castle in the air, Transubstantiation. They use indeed to scrape together many testimonies of the Fathers of the first and middle age, whereby they would fain prove, that those Fathers believed and taught the Transubstantiation of the Bread and Wine into the natural Body and Blood of CHRIST, just as the Roman Church, as this day, doth teach and believe. We will therefore briefly examine them, that it may yet more fully appear that Antiquity and all Fathers did not in the least favour the new tenet of Transubstantiation; but that, that true doctrine which I have set down in the beginning of this book, was constantly owned and preserved in the Church of CHRIST.

Now, almost all that they produce out of the Fathers will be conveniently reduced to certain heads, that we may not be too tedious in answering each testimony by itself.

1. To the first head belong those that call the Eucharist the Body and Blood of CHRIST. But I answer, those Fathers explain themselves in many places, and interpret those their expressions in a manner, that they must be understood in a mystic and spiritual sense, in that Sacraments usually take the names of those things they represent, because of that resemblance which they have with them; not by the reality of the thing, but by the signification of the mystery; as we have been shown before out of St Austin and others. For nobody can deny, but that the things that are seen are signs and figures, and those that are not seen, the Body and Blood of CHRIST. And that therefore the nature of this mystery is such, that when we receive the Bread and Wine, we also together with them receive at the same time the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which, in the celebration of the holy Eucharist, are as truly given as they are represented.

Hence came into the Church this manner of speaking, 'The consecrated Bread is CHRIST'S Body.'

2. We put in the second rank those places that say, that the Bishops and Priests make the Body of CHRIST with the sacred words of their mouth, as St. Hierom speaks in his Epistle to Heliodorus, and St. Ambrose, and others. To this I say, that at the prayer and blessing of the Priest, the common bread is made Sacramental Bread, which, when broke and eaten, is the Communion of the Body of CHRIST, and therefore may well be called so, sacramentally. For the Bread, (as I have often said before,) doth not only represent the Body of our LORD, but also being received, we are truly made partakers of that precious Body. For so saith St. Hierom; "The Body and Blood of CHRIST is made at the prayer of the Priest;" that is, the Element is so qualified, that being received it becomes the Communion of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which it could not without the preceding prayers. The Greeks call this, "to prepare and consecrate the Body of the LORD." As St. Chrysostom saith well; "These are not the works of man's power, but still the operation of Him, who made them in the last Supper; as for us, we are only Ministers, but He it is that sanctifies and changeth them."

3. In the third place, to what is brought out of the Fathers, concerning the conversion, change, transmutation, transfiguration, and transelementation of the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist, (wherein the Papists do greatly glory, boasting of the consent of Antiquity with them,) I answer, that there is no such consequence. Transubstantiation being another species of change, the enumeration was not full, for it doth not follow, that because there is a conversion, a transmutation, a transelementation, there should be also a Transubstantiation; which the Fathers never so much as mentioned. For because this is a Sacrament, the change must be understood to be sacramental also, whereby common Bread and Wine become the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST; which could not be, did not the substance of the Bread and Wine remain, for a Sacrament consisteth of two parts, an earthly and a heavenly. And so, because ordinary Bread is changed by consecration into a Bread which is no more of common use, but appointed by divine institution to be a sacramental sign, whereby is represented the Body of CHRIST, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and being thereby dignified, having great excellencies superadded, and so made what it was not before, it is therefore said by some of the Fathers to be changed, to be made another thing. And truly that change is great and supernatural, but yet not substantial, not of a substance which substantially ceaseth to be, into another substance which substantially beginneth to be, but it is a change of state and condition which alters not the spiritual properties of the Element. This is also confirmed by Scripture, which usually describes and represents the conversion of men, and the supernatural change of things, as though it were natural, though it be not so. So those that are renewed by the Word, and Spirit, and Faith of CHRIST, are said to be regenerated, converted, and transformed, to put off the old man, and put on the new man, and to be new creatures; but they are not said to become another substance, to be transubstantiated; for men thus converted are still the same human body, and the same rational soul as before, though in a far better state and condition, as every Christian will acknowledge. Nay, the Fathers themselves used those words, Transmutation, Transformation, Transelementation, upon other occasions, when they speak of things whose substance is neither lost nor changed.

4. To the fourth head I refer what the Fathers say of our touching and seeing the Body of CHRIST, and drinking His Blood in the Sacrament; and thereto I answer, that we deny not but that some things emphatical, and even hyperbolical, have been said of the Sacrament by Chrysostom, and some others; and that those things may easy lead unwary men into error. That was the ancient Fathers' care, as it is ours still, to instruct the people not to look barely on the outward Elements, but in them to eye with their

minds the Body and Blood of CHRIST, and with their hearts lift up to feed on that heavenly meat; for all the benefit of a Sacrament is lost, if we look no further than the Elements.

Hence it is that those holy men, the better to teach this lesson to their hearers, and move their hearts more efficaciously, spake of the signs as if they had been the things signified, and like orators said many things which will not bear a literal sense, nor a strict examen. Such is this, of an uncertain author under the name of St. Cyprian; "We are close to the Cross, we such the Blood, and we put our tongues in the very wounds of our REDEEMER, so that, both outwardly and inwardly we are made red thereby."

Such is that of St. Chrysostom; "In the Sacrament the Blood of drawn out of the side of CHRIST, the tongue is made bloody with that wonderful Blood." Again, "Thou seest thy LORD sacrificed, and the crowding multitude round about sprinkled with His Blood; He that sits above with the FATHER is at the same time in our hands. Thou doest see and touch and eat Him. For I do not shew thee either Angels or Archangels, but the LORD of them Himself." Again; "He incorporates us with Himself, as if we were but the same thing.

He makes us His Body indeed, and suffers us not only to see, but even to touch, to eat Him, and to put our teeth in His Flesh; so that by that food which He gives us, we become His Flesh." Such is that of St. Austin; "Let us give thanks, not only that we are made Christians, but also made CHRIST." Lastly, such is that of Leo; "In that mystical distribution, it is given us to be made His Flesh." Certainly, if any man would wrangle and take advantage of these, he might thereby maintain, as well that we are transubstantiated into CHRIST, and CHRIST'S Flesh into the Bread, as that the Bread and Wine are transubstantiated into His Body and Blood.

But Protestants who scorn to play the sophisters, interpret these and the like passages of the Fathers, with candour and ingenuity, (as it is most fitting they could.) For the expressions of Preachers, which often have something of a paradox, must not be taken according to that harsher sound wherewith they at first strike the auditor's ears. The Fathers spake not of any transubstantiated bread, but of the mystical and consecrated, when they used those sorts of expressions; 1.

That they might extol and amplify the dignity of this mystery, which all true Christians acknowledge to be very great and peerless. 2. That communicants might not rest in the outward Elements, but seriously consider the thing represented, whereof they are most certainly made partakers, if they be worthy receivers. 3. And lastly, that they might approach so great a mystery with the more zeal, reverence, and devotion. And that those hyperbolic expressions are thus to be understood, the Fathers themselves teach clearly enough, when they come to interpret them.

5. Lastly, being the same holy Fathers who, (as the manner is to discourse of Sacraments,) speak sometimes of the Bread and Wine in the LORD'S Supper, as if they were the very Body and Blood of CHRIST, do also very often call them types, elements, signs, the figure of the Body and Blood of CHRIST; from hence it appears most manifestly, that they were of the Protestants, and not of the Papists' opinion. For we can without prejudice to what we believe of the Sacrament, use those former expressions which the Papists believe, do most favour them, if they be understood, as they ought to be, sacramentally. But the latter none can use, but he must thereby overthrow the groundless doctrine of Transubstantiation; these two, the Bread is transubstantiated into the Body, and the Bread also is a type, the sign, the figure of the Body of CHRIST, being wholly inconsistent. For it is impossible that a thing that loseth its being should yet be the sign and representation of another; neither can any thing be the type and the sign of itself.

But if without admitting of a sacramental sense the words be used too rigorously, nothing but this will follow; that the Bread and Wine are really and properly the very Body and Blood of CHRIST, which they themselves disown, that hold Transubstantiation. Therefore in this change, it is not a newness of substance, but of use and virtue that is produced; which yet the Fathers acknowledged with us, to be wonderful, supernatural, and proper only to GOD'S Omnipotency; for that earthly and corruptible meat cannot become to us a spiritual and heavenly, the Communion of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, without GOD'S especial power and operation. And whereas it is far above philosophy and human reason, that CHRIST from Heaven, (where alone He is locally,) should reach down to us the divine virtue of His Flesh, so that we are made one body with Him; therefore it is as necessary as it is reasonable, that the Fathers should tell us, that we ought with singleness of heart to believe the SON of GOD, when He saith, This is My Body; and that we ought not to measure this high and holy mystery by our narrow conceptions, or by the course of nature. For it is more acceptable to GOD with an humble simplicity of faith to reverence and embrace the words of CHRIST, than to wrest them violently to a strange and improper sense, and with curiosity and presumption to determine what exceeds the capacity of men and Angels.

CHAPTER VII.

History of the rise of the Romish Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

WE have proved it before, that the leprosy of Transubstantiation did not begin to spread over the body of the Church in a thousand years after CHRIST. But at last the thousand years being expired, and Satan loosed out of his prison, to go and deceive the nations, and compass the camp of the Saints about, then, to the great damage of Christian peace and religion, they began here and there to dispute against the clear, constant, and universal consent of the Fathers, and to maintain the new-started opinion. It is known to them that understand History, what manner of times were then, and what were those Bishops who then governed the Church of Rome; Sylvester II. John XIX. and XX. Sergius IV. Benedictus VIII. John XXI. Benedict IX. Sylvester III. Gregory VI. Damasus II. Leo IX. Nicholas II. Gregory VII. or Hildebrand; who tore to pieces the Church of Rome with grievous schisms, cruel wars, and great slaughters. For the Roman Pontificate was come to that pass, that good men being put by, they whose life and doctrine was pious being oppressed, none could obtain that dignity, but they that could bribe best, and were most ambitious.

In that unhappy age the learned were at odds about the presence of the Body of CHRIST in the Sacrament; some defending the ancient doctrine of the of the Church, and some the new-sprung-up opinion.

Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres, (A.D. 1010.) was tutor to Berengarius, whom we shall soon have occasion to speak of, and his doctrine was altogether conformable to that of the Primitive Church, as appears clearly out of his Epistle to Adeodatus, wherein he teacheth, "That the mystery of faith in the Eucharist, is not to be looked on with our bodily eyes, but with the eyes of our mind. For what appears outwardly Bread and Wine, is made inwardly the Body and Blood of CHRIST; not that which is tasted with the mouth, but that which is relished by the heart's affection. "Therefore," saith he, "prepare the palate of thy faith, open the throat of thy hope, and enlarge the bowels of thy charity, and take that Bread of life which is the food of the inward man." Again, "The perception of a divine taste proceeds from the faith of the inward man, whilst by receiving the saving Sacrament, CHRIST is received into the soul." All this is against those who teach in too gross a manner, that CHRIST in this mystery enters carnally the mouth and stomach of the receivers.

Fulbert was followed by Berengarius, his scholar, Archdeacon of Angers in France, a man of great worth, by the holiness both of his life and doctrine.

Berengarius stood up valiantly in defence of that doctrine which 170 years before, was delivered out of GOD'S Word and the holy Fathers, in France, by Bertram, and John Erigena, and by others elsewhere, against those who taught that in the Eucharist neither Bread nor Wine remained after the Consecration. Yet he did not either believe or teach, (as many falsely and shamelessly have imputed to him,) that nothing more is received in the LORD'S Supper, but bare signs only, or mere Bread and Wine; but he believed and openly professed, as St.

Austin and other faithful Doctors of the Church had taught out of GOD'S Word, that in this mystery, the souls of the faithful are truly fed by the true Body and Blood of CHRIST to life eternal. nevertheless it was neither his mind nor his doctrine, that the substance of the Bread and Wine is reduced to nothing, or changed into the substance of the natural Body of CHRIST; or, (as some then would have had the Church believe,) that CHRIST Himself comes down carnally from heaven. Entire books he wrote upon this subject, but they have been wholly suppressed by his enemies, and now are not to be found.

Yet what we have of him in his greatest enemy Lanfrank, I here set down; "By the Consecration at the Altar the Bread and Wine are made a Sacrament of Religion; not to cease to be what they were, but to be changed into something else, and to become what they were not;" agreeable to what St. Ambrose had taught. Again, "There are two parts in the Sacrifice of the Church, (this is according to St.

Irenaeus,) the visible Sacrament, and the invisible thing of the Sacrament; that is, the Body of CHRIST." Item, "The Bread and Wine which are consecrated, remain in their substance, having a resemblance with that whereof they are a Sacrament, for else they could not be a Sacrament." Lastly, "Sacraments are visible signs of divine things, but in them the invisible things are honoured." All this agrees well with St. Austin, and other Fathers above cited.

He did not therefore by this his doctrine exclude the Body of CHRIST from the Sacrament, but in its right administration he joined together the thing signified with the sacred sign; and taught that the Body of CHRIST was not eaten with the mouth in a carnal way, but with the mind, and soul, and spirit.

Neither did Berengarius alone maintain this orthodox and ancient doctrine; for Sigibert, William of Malmesbury, Matthew Paris, and Matthew of Westminster, make it certain, that almost all the French, Italians, and English of those times were of the same opinion; and that many things were said, writ, and disputed in its defence by many men; amongst whom was Bruno, then Bishop of the same Church of Angers. Now this greatly displeaseth the Papal faction, who took great care that those men's writings should not be delivered to posterity, and now do write, that the doctrine of Berengarius, owned by the Fathers, and maintained by many famous nations, skulked only in some dark corner or other.

The first Pope who opposed himself to Berengarius was Leo the Ninth, a plain man indeed, but too much led by Humbert and Hildebrand. For as soon as he was desired, he pronounced sentence of excommunication against Berengarius absent and unheard; and not long after he called a council of Verceil, wherein John Erigena and Berengarius were condemned, upon this account, that they should say, that the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist are only bare signs; which was far from their thoughts, and further yet from their belief.

This roaring therefore of the lion frightened not Berengarius; nay, the Gallican Churches did also oppose the Pope, and his Synod of Verceil, and defend with Berengarius the oppressed truth. To Leo succeeded Pope Victor the Second, who seeing Berengarius could not be cast down and crushed by the fulminations of his predecessor, sent his legate Hildebrand into France, and called another Council at Tours, where Berengarius being cited, did freely appear, and whence he was freely dismissed, after he had given it under his hand, that the Bread and Wine in the Sacrifice of the Church, are not shadows and empty figures; and that he held none other but the common doctrine of the Church concerning the Sacrament.

For he did not alter his judgment, (as modern Papists give out,) but he persisted to teach and maintain the same doctrine as before, as Lanfrank complains of him. Yet his enemies would not rest satisfied with this, but they urged Pope Nicholas the Second, who, (within a few months that Stephen the Tenth sate,) succeeded Victor without the Emperor's consent, to call a new Council at Rome against Berengarius. For, that sensual manner of presence, by them devised, to the great dishonour of CHRIST, being rejected by Berengarius, and he teaching as he did before, that the Body of CHRIST was not present in such a sort, as that it might be at pleasure brought in and out, taken into the stomach, cast on the ground, trod under foot, and bit or devoured by any beasts, they falsely charged him as if he had denied that it is present at all.

An hundred and thirteen Bishops came to the Council, to obey the Pope's mandate; Berengarius came also. "And, (as Sigonius and Leo Ostensius say,) when non present could withstand him, they sent for one Albericus, a Monk of Mount Cassin, made Cardinal by Pope Stephen:" who having asked seven days' time to answer in writing, brought at last his scroll against Berengarius. The reasons and arguments used therein to convince his antagonist are not now extant, but whatever they were, Berengarius was commanded presently without any delay to recant, in that form prescribed and appointed by Cardinal Humbert, which was thus: "I Berengarius, &c. assent to the Holy Roman and Apostolic See, and with my heart and mouth do profess, that I hold that faith concerning the Sacrament of the LORD'S Table which our Lord and venerable Pope Nicholas, and this sacred Council, have determined and imposed upon me by their evangelic and apostolic authority; to wit, that the Bread and Wine which are set on the Altar, are not after the consecration only a sacrament, sign, and figure, but also the very Body and Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; (thus far it is well enough, but what follows is too horrid, and is disowned by the Papists themselves;) and that they (the Body and Blood) are touched and broken with the hands of the Priests, and ground with the teeth of the faithful, not sacramentally only, but in truth and sensibly."

This is the prescript of the Recantation imposed on Berengarius, and by him at first rejected, but by imprisonment, and threats, and fear of being put to death, at last extorted from him. The form of Recantation is to be found entire in Lanfrank, Algerus, and Gratian; yet the Glosser on Gratian, John Semeca marks it with this note; "Except you understand well the words of Berengarius," (he should rather have said of Pope Nicholas, and Cardinal Humbertus,) "you shall fall into a greater heresy than his was, for he exceeded the truth, and spake hyperbolically."

And so Richard de Mediavilla; "Berengarius being accused, overshot himself in his justification:" but the excess of his words should be ascribed to those who prescribed and forced them upon him. Yet in all this we hear nothing of Transubstantiation.

Berengarius at last escaped out of this danger, and conscious to himself of having denied the truth, took heart again, and refuted in writing his own impious and absurd Recantation, and said, "That by force it was extorted from him by the Church of Malignants, the Council of Vanity." Lanfrank of Caen, at that time head

of a Monastery in France, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and Guitmundus Aversanus answered him. And though it is not to be doubted but that Berengarius, and those of his party, writ and replied again and again, yet so well did their adversaries look to it, that nothing of theirs remains, save some citations in Lanfrank. But is were to be wished that we had now the entire works of Berengarius, who was a learned man, and a constant follower of Antiquity; for out of them we might know with more certainty how things went, than we can out of what his profest enemies have said.

This sacramental debate ceased awhile because of the tumults of war raised in Apulia and elsewhere by Pope Nicholas the Second; but began again as soon as Hildebrand, called Gregory the Seventh, came to the Papal chair. For Berengarius was cited again to a new Council at Rome, "where some being of one opinion and some another," (as it is in the acts of that Council, writ by those of the Pope's faction,) his cause could not be so entirely oppressed but that some Bishop were still found to uphold it. Nay, the ringleader himself, Hildebrand, is said to have doubted, "whether what we receive at the LORD'S Table be indeed the Body of CHRIST by a substantial conversion." but three months space having been granted to Berengarius, and a fast appointed to the Cardinals, "that GOD would shew by some sign from heaven, (which yet He did not,) who was in the right, the Pope or Berengarius, concerning the Body of the LORD;" at last the business was decided without any oracle from above, and a new form of retraction imposed on Berengarius, whereby he was henceforth forward to confess, under pain of the Pope's high displeasure, "that the mystic Bread," (first made magical and enchanting by Hildebrand,) "is substantially turned into the true and proper Flesh of CHRIST;" which whether he ever did is not yet certain. For though Malmesbury tells us, "that he died in that Roman faith," yet there are ancients than he, who say, "that he never was converted from his first opinion." And some relate, "that after this last condemnation having given over his studies, and given to the poor all he had, he wrought with his own hands for his living." Other things related of him by some slaves of the Roman See, deserves no credit. These things happened, in the year 1079; and soon after Berengarius died.

Berengarius being dead the orthodox and ancient doctrine of the LORD'S Supper which he maintained did not die with him; (as the Chronicus Cassinensis would have it;) for it was still constantly retained by St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, who lived about the beginning of the twelfth century. In his discourse on the LORD'S Supper, he joined together the outward form of the Sacrament, and the spiritual efficacy of it, as the shell and the kernel, the sacred sign, and the thing signified; the one he takes out of the words of the Institution, and the other, out of CHRIST'S Sermon in the sixth of St. John. And in the same place explaining, that Sacraments are not things absolute in themselves without any relation, but mysteries, wherein by the gift of a visible sign, an invisible and divine grace with the Body and Blood of CHRIST is given, he saith, "That the visible sign is as a ring, which is given not for itself or absolutely, but to invest and give possession of an estate made over to one." Now, as no man can fancy that the ring is substantially changed into the inheritance, whether lands or houses, none also can say with truth, or without absurdity, that the Bread and Wine are substantially changed into the Body and Blood of CHRIST. But in his Sermon on the Purification, which none doubts to be his, he speaks yet more plainly; "The Body of CHRIST in the Sacrament is the food of the soul, not of the belly, therefore we eat him not corporally: but in the manner that CHRIST is meat, in the same manner we understand that he is eaten." Also in his Sermon on St. Martin, which undoubtedly is his also; "To this day," saith he, "the same flesh is given to us, but spiritually, therefore not corporally." For the truth of things spiritually present is certain also.

The thirteenth century now follows; wherein the world growing both older and worse, a great deal of trouble and confusion there was about religion.....So that now there remained nothing but to confirm the

new tenet of Transubstantiation, and impose it so peremptorily on the Christian world, that none might dare so much as to hiss against it. This Pope Innocent the Third bravely performed. He succeeding Celestin the Third at thirty years of age, and marching stoutly in the footsteps of Hildebrand, called a Council at Rome in St. John Lateran, and was the first that ever presumed to make the new-devised Doctrine of Transubstantiation an Article of Faith necessary to salvation, and that by his own mere authority.

In the fifteenth century the Council of Constance, (which by a sacrilegious attempt took away the sacramental cup from the people, and from the Priests when they do not officiate,) did wrongfully condemn Wiclif, who was already dead, because amongst other things he had taught with the Ancients, "That the substance of the Bread and Wine remains materially in the Sacrament of the Altar; and that in the same Sacrament, no accidents of Bread and Wine remain without a substance." Which two assertions are most true.

By these any considering person may easily see, that Transubstantiation is a mere novelty; nor warranted either by scripture or antiquity; invented about the middle of the twelfth century, out of some misunderstood sayings of some of the Fathers; confirmed by no ecclesiastical or Papal Decree before the year 1215, afterwards received only here and there in the Roman Church; debated in the schools by many disputes; liable to many very bad consequences; rejected, (for there was never those wanting that opposed it,) by many great and pious men, until it was maintained in the sacrilegious Council of Constance; and at last in the year 1551, confirmed in the Council of Trent, by a few Latin Bishops, slaves to the Roman See; imposed upon all, under pain of an anathema to be feared by none; and so spread too far, by the tyrannical and most unjust command of the Pope. So that we have no reason to embrace it, until it shall be demonstrated, that except the substance of the Bread be changed into the very Body of CHRIST, His words cannot possibly be true; nor His Body present. Which will never be done.

OXFORD.

The Feast of the Annunciation.

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