

Transubstantiation

Being Part 2 of “The Catholic Doctrine of The Real Presence.”

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We have already seen that Christ gave us in the Blessed Eucharist His own body and blood — the same body that was delivered to be slain, and the same blood that was shed for the redemption of mankind. When the Eucharist was instituted at the Last Supper, Our Lord had not yet suffered death: the body and blood, which He gave to the Apostles under the appearances of bread and wine, were a living body and living blood. From the death of Christ on Good Friday till His resurrection on Easter Sunday His body was an inanimate corpse; and His blood shared the death of the body. If the Eucharist had been consecrated by the Apostles during that period, the words of consecration, if valid at all, would have made present upon the altar only the inanimate body and blood of the dead Christ. On Easter Sunday, Our Lord rose from the dead immortal and impassible: "Christ rising again from the dead dies now no more; death shall no more have dominion over Him" (Romans 6:9). Throughout the history of the Church, therefore, it has ever been the living body of Christ that Christians have received in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

CHRIST WHOLE AND ENTIRE IN THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

This consideration helps us to a better understanding of the gift we receive in the Blessed Sacrament. We receive, not a dead body, but the living body of Christ, animated like every living human body by its own principle of life, its human soul. Though the words of consecration pronounced by Christ at the Last Supper make express mention only of His body and blood, they clearly imply the presence of His soul also; for it is His soul that makes His body and blood to be a living body and a living blood, rather than a mere inanimate corpse. The Eucharist contains, therefore, the complete human nature of Christ, that is, body and blood united to soul. But the Eucharist contains something more. Where a person's body and blood are, there he himself is in person. We do not say, "my body went to town yesterday," but "I (that is, my person) went to town." Similarly, we do not say that a judge's tongue or hand or mind gave a certain decision in court, that the judge himself (that is, the person) gave such decision. In other words, all activity is attributed to the person; and the parts of the body and the faculties of the soul are but the instruments used by the person. The person owns, as it were, the actions, as he owns the organs and faculties by which they are performed. Hence we say "my body, my soul, my singing" and so on — the word "my" representing the person of the speaker.

These technicalities are mentioned here because they help to throw light on an important aspect of the Eucharist, which we have not yet considered, namely, the presence of Christ's divinity in the Blessed Sacrament. We have seen that Christ's complete human nature is present in the Eucharist. Now the person who owns that nature, and who is present by reason of its presence, is not a human person. He is a divine person. 'There is no human person in Christ; it would be heresy (Nestorianism) to hold that there is.' At the time of the Annunciation, the Second Person of the

Blessed Trinity took possession, so to speak, of the body conceived by the Blessed Virgin, and of the soul created to animate that body. 'To use technical language — we say that the Second Person of the Trinity assumed to Himself in hypostatic (personal) union the body and soul brought into existence in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.' Consequently, the person who is present in the Blessed Eucharist is a divine person, having two natures, divine and human, divinity and humanity. We can now form something like an adequate idea of the greatness of the gift bestowed on us in the Blessed Eucharist. This great Sacrament contains not merely as means of grace, but the very author of grace, Jesus Christ Himself, whole and entire, true God and true man. We can also appreciate more fully the meaning of a definition already quoted (see Part I of this series) from the Council of Trent: "If anyone shall deny that the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist contains truly, really and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently Christ whole and entire... let him be anathema."

CHRIST WHOLE AND ENTIRE IN EACH PART OF THE EUCHARIST.

From what has been said in the preceding paragraph, it is clear that, under the appearance of bread alone (that is, without the chalice), the Eucharist contains not merely Christ's body, but also His soul and divinity, since the two latter are united for ever with the body of Christ. Similarly, under the appearance of wine alone the Eucharist contains, not only Christ's blood, but also His soul and divinity. Is Christ's blood contained under the appearance of bread; and is Christ's body contained under the appearance of wine? From the contrast between the two statements made by Our Lord Himself — "This is My body... This is My blood" — we might be inclined to infer that His body is present only under the appearance of bread and His blood only under the appearance of wine.

But a glance at Saint Paul's comment on Our Lord's words will show that such an inference would be wrong: "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord " (1 Corinth 11:27). From these words, it is clear that the communicant receives both the body and blood of Christ, even though he communicates under one kind only. How are we to explain the apparent want of harmony between the words of Our Lord and the teaching of His Apostle? The explanation is very simple. The body of Christ is a living body. Now the blood is an essential part of the living human body: take away the blood, and the body dies. Hence we speak of a man "bleeding to death" from an accident; we say that a man is prepared to shed his blood for a cause, when we mean that he is prepared to lay down his life for that cause. The presence of Christ's living body implies, therefore, the presence of His living blood, and vice versa.

Christ is whole and entire under the appearance of bread: He is also whole and entire under the appearance of wine. Yet the contrast implied in the two clauses, "This is My body... This is My blood," was meant to convey an important lesson. In the Eucharist, Christ has given us a sacrament; and a sacrament is a sign. In the sacrament of the Eucharist, we have a double sign, and a double signification. There are two stages of signification, so to speak. In the first stage, the accidents of bread and wine (in conjunction with the words of consecration) signify the body and blood of Christ respectively. In the second stage, the latter in turn (under the appearance of bodily food) signify the spiritual food and life of the soul.

Let us take the first stage of signification just referred to. The words "This is My body" fix the signification of one part of the double sacramental sign (namely, the accidents of bread), and show that this part of the sign signifies the body of Christ, and nothing else. The Words "This is My

blood" fix the signification of the other part of the sign (that is, the accidents of wine), and show that it signifies the blood of Christ and nothing else. If we considered only the force of the words of consecration as such, therefore, we should suppose that the Eucharist contains only the body and blood of Christ (not His soul and divinity as well); and we should also suppose that His body is contained only under the appearance of bread, and His blood only under the appearance of wine. The sacramental signification was so arranged by Christ that one part of the sign signifies only His body, and the other part of the sign signifies only His blood. It is for this reason that the double consecration represents so realistically the separation of Christ's body and blood on Calvary.

But the sacramental signification of the words of consecration is not the only force or factor that we have to take into account in dealing with the real presence. There is also the force of concomitance (which was already explained, that is, the necessary accompaniment, the inseparable unity of body and blood and soul in the risen Christ). Because all these parts of Christ were re-united at the Resurrection, never to be separated again, the body and blood and soul do not become present in the Eucharist apart from one another, but all are united as living parts of a living man. Hence, the comment of Saint Paul quoted earlier: "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinth 11:27). The reader will not misunderstand us, we hope, if we put the matter this way: it is not by force of the words of consecration as such that the blood and soul of Christ become present along with His body under the appearance of bread, but by the force of concomitance — by a sort of accident, as it were, the accident being the inseparable union effected between Christ's body and blood and soul at His Resurrection. At the Last Supper, body and blood and soul were similarly united because they had not yet been separated by death.

If Christ's body and blood are present together under the appearance of bread, and also under the appearance of wine, this question naturally suggests itself: why did Christ institute the Eucharist under two kinds at all? Could He not have accomplished His purpose equally well by consecrating either bread alone or wine alone? If Christ's only purpose in instituting the Eucharist were to provide us with a Sacrament containing His body and blood, He could have achieved that purpose by instituting a Eucharist under one kind.

But He had a second purpose in view. He wished to make the celebration of the Eucharist a memorial and representation of His death: "This do ye for commemoration of Me... For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until He come." (1 Corinth 11:25-26). It is for this purpose that a double consecration is necessary. The Eucharist represents Christ's death on Calvary, by representing His body and blood as separated on the altar under the appearances of bread and wine respectively. Christ's body and blood are not actually separated in the sacrament, but they are represented as separated by the twofold consecration; and this representative or symbolical separation on the altar is a very obvious symbol and reminder of their actual separation on Calvary.

Christ is present not only under the appearance of bread alone, and under the appearance of wine alone, but also in each separate portion, when we divide or break the sacrament. This is clear from the manner in which Christ Himself administered Holy Communion to the Apostles.

Jesus took bread and blessed and broke and gave to His disciples, saying: "Take ye and eat, this is My body" (Matthew 26:26). The obvious meaning of this passage is that He consecrated only one piece of bread; He then broke off a portion for each of the Apostles. We are expressly told that this

mode of procedure obtained in regard to the chalice: "This chalice is the New Testament in My blood" (1 Corinth 11:25). Here it is clear that only one chalice was consecrated; and after consecration, it was passed round for each Apostle to partake of it. Yet no one doubts that the Apostles received Christ's body and blood quite as fully as if Our Lord had consecrated a special portion for each Apostle. Many strange views have been expressed in regard to the Eucharist from time to time; yet no one (so far as the writer is aware) has ever been so foolish as to suppose that the body (or blood) of Christ was divided up among the Apostles, each receiving merely a bit of Christ.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

So far, we have been discussing the fact of the real presence, and certain questions of detail connected with it. We now come to consider a more subtle problem, namely, the manner in which the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is brought about. We have already mentioned (in our earlier pamphlet) Luther's error on this point. He taught that Christ becomes present in the Eucharist along with the bread and wine. The Catholic Church teaches that Christ becomes present instead of the bread and wine. Luther's theory is known as "consubstantiation"; the Catholic explanation is called "transubstantiation". As the Catholic doctrine on this point appears to be hopelessly misunderstood by many Protestants; and as Protestant misrepresentations of our teaching have received 'considerable publicity' in the newspapers recently, it may be well to devote a few paragraphs to the meaning of transubstantiation, as Catholics understand it.

Two ornaments may be very much alike in appearance, that is, in shape, size, colour, workmanship, and so on; yet one may be much more expensive than the other. Why? Because one is made of gold, while the other is made of some base metal, such as brass. In estimating the value of such objects, we distinguish (consciously or unconsciously) between the underlying stuff, which we call the "substance" of the object, and its outward appearances, which we call "accidents". If we try to analyse our concepts of substance and accident, we shall probably be surprised to find how many aspects of a thing must be regarded as accidental. In fact, we shall find that every aspect of a thing, by reason of which it is perceivable by the senses, must be classed as an accident. Hence size, shape, colour, smell, hardness, coldness, weight — to mention but a few — are all accidents.

What then is substance? It is the underlying reality supporting the accidents. It is not directly perceived by the senses at all, but only indirectly through its accidents. We can state the same truth another way by saying that the mind infers the existence of substance from the data supplied by the senses. The mind likewise infers that substances differ from one another in kind from the fact that they exhibit (through their accidents) different behaviour in a given set of circumstances. For instance, an expert, if doubtful about the composition of the ornaments already mentioned, might subject them to a chemical test. If they are made of gold, they will react to the test in one way; if they are made of some other substance, they will react differently. But the ordinary man seldom makes tests of this kind. He knows by experience that different substances have characteristics, accidents or groups of accidents, that can be readily perceived by the senses. He will recognise turpentine, for instance, by its smell, linen by its texture, and so on. As we grow up we become familiar with the characteristic appearances or accidents of various substances, such as bread, milk, wine, meat, et cetera; and consequently we recognise them readily when we meet them.

We are also familiar with changes of various kinds. The sculptor, who fashions a life-like statue from a rough block of marble, produces an obvious change in the marble. But the change is only superficial; it is a change in outward shape; hence we call it an accidental change. If a kettle of

water be left long enough on the fire, the water will be converted into steam. This change too is only accidental; the substance of the water perseveres in the steam, though it is now divided up into very minute quantities. Suppose, however, that the water, instead of being boiled, is disrupted by an electric current. We now observe a more fundamental change. The substance of water no longer maintains as such; it is replaced by two other substances, oxygen and hydrogen, which are distinct both from water and from each other. We call such a change a substantial change, to distinguish it from the accidental changes discussed above.

There is one kind of substantial change that is taking place daily in our own bodies. The process of digestion and nutrition. Suppose I eat a piece of bread. A few hours will suffice, if my digestion is good, to convert the substance of that bread into flesh and blood, bone or sinew, as the case may be. The Substance of the bread disappears, and in its place, there appears a slight addition to one or more of the Principal substances that go to make up my body, that is, flesh, bone, blood, et cetera. The bread-substance as such no longer exists; but it is represented by new flesh-substance or new blood-substance, as the case may be.

Let us try to analyse a little more closely this process of Substantial change, as exemplified by the conversion of bread into human flesh.

(a) A certain quantity of bread-substance disappears. It is not annihilated (that is, reduced to nothingness) it is "changed" or "converted" into new flesh-substance, which did not exist as such before.

(b) A certain amount of new flesh-substance appears. It has not been immediately created out of nothing, but has been formed out of the bread-substance converted into it.

(c) As nothing is annihilated and nothing created during the change; and as nevertheless a certain amount of bread-substance disappears, and a proportionate amount of flesh-substance appears in its place, we can infer that something of the substance of bread must have survived the change. Some fundamental basis on which was built up the substance of bread must have remained through the change, to become the basis on which is built up the new Substance, human flesh. Consequently even a substantial change is only a partial conversion; a certain element of the original substance perseveres, and appears again (in another form) in the new substance.

(d) As accidents are not self-supporting, but are supported by the substance in which they adhere, the characteristic accidents of bread disappear with the substance of bread; they are replaced by the accidents of the new substance, human flesh.

We have now prepared the way for the consideration of what takes place when the Eucharist is consecrated. We shall first state the Catholic doctrine, and afterwards give the reasons for it. Catholics believe that the bread and wine disappear at the consecration; that the substance of Christ's body and blood replaces them; that the relation between these two events is such that it can be best described by saying that the whole substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. As it was convenient to have a special name for this unique change, Catholic theologians, coined the word "transubstantiation" for the purpose, and the Church has officially approved of the name.

A certain superficial resemblance between the change, known as transubstantiation, and the change from bread to human flesh, that takes place during the natural process of digestion and nutrition, suggests a detailed comparison between the two. Indeed, it is by such a comparison that the reader

is most likely to get a really good grasp of the meaning of transubstantiation. The following are the most important points of difference between the two processes.

The change that takes place during the natural process of digestion and nutrition is slowly and gradually effected; transubstantiation is instantaneous. In the natural process, the change, though substantial, is only partial; a "something" of the substance of the bread perseveres through the change, as already explained: in transubstantiation, the change of substance is total; the accidents of bread remain, but no vestige of its substance; no "something" of the substance of the bread remains to enter into the composition of the substance (that is, Christ's body) that replaces it. In the natural process, the bread is changed into a small portion of the body, namely, into that new piece of flesh, which is added to the man's substance; in transubstantiation, the substance of bread is converted into the whole substance of Christ's body.

In the natural process, the bread is changed into new flesh, which did not exist before; in transubstantiation, the bread is changed into the already existing substance of Christ's body. The natural process gives a real addition of substance to the human body; transubstantiation gives no addition of substance to Christ's body, however much bread is consecrated. In the natural process, the change of substances carries with it a corresponding change of accidents; in transubstantiation, the accidents remain unchanged.

To sum up: in transubstantiation the whole substance of the bread and wine totally disappears; its place is taken by the substance of Christ's body and blood; these two events, the disappearance of bread and wine, and the coming of Christ's body and blood, are too intimately connected to be regarded as wholly independent events merely happening one after the other. The substance of bread disappears to make room, so to speak, for the substance of Christ's body; and this connection or relation is best expressed by saying that the whole substance of the bread is converted into the substance of Christ's body. Our worldly experience furnishes no exact parallel for transubstantiation. It is a unique change, involving a special exercise of divine power. But if Christ vouchsafed to give us a sacrament containing His very self, it is hardly a matter for surprise if He is also willing to exercise His power in an unusual fashion to accomplish His purpose.

Let us now pause for a moment to take stock of our position. We have the most solemn assurance of Our Divine Lord that the Eucharist contains His real body and blood; and from the presence of His body and blood, we can infer the presence of His soul and divinity. Now the presence of His soul and divinity presents no special difficulty to our understanding; because a spirit, not having three dimensions like a body, can be present anywhere, whether the space be great or small. But the presence of His body and blood does suggest some obvious difficulties: a human body ought to be perceptible by our senses; it should require more room than is available within the narrow limits of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and so on.

It was inevitable that intelligent Christians, especially Christian teachers, should be led to devote thought and study to elucidating the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, with a view to making the dogma of the real presence more intelligible to the faithful, and more defensible against the objections of unbelievers. It was equally inevitable that the infallible Church should sift the wheat from the chaff in the matter of speculation; as scholars examined the dogma in all its bearings, and tried to follow its implications in various directions. The doctrine of Transubstantiation is the logical development of the revealed dogma of the real presence; it is not a

new doctrine, but the bringing into clear light, and the expressing in explicit terms of a truth implicitly contained (as we shall presently see) in the words of Christ Himself.

If we hold with the Catholic Church that the substance of Christ's body and blood replaces the substance of bread and wine in the manner already explained (that is, by transubstantiation), we can make the dogma of the real presence intelligible to the average man, and we can answer all the objections brought forward by reason; though we cannot get rid of the element of mystery associated with the real presence. If we reject transubstantiation, can we make the revealed dogma more intelligible? If we say with Luther, that Christ does not become present instead of the bread and wine, but along with the bread and wine, we are not a whit nearer to explaining the mystery of His real presence. If we suppose with certain other heretics that Christ becomes present by assuming the bread and wine into hypostatic union with Himself, we are no better off. This theory (usually called impanation) offers an explanation of how Christ's divinity might be conceived to be present; but we need no explanation on that point, since the presence of His divinity creates no difficulty in any theory. As an explanation of how Christ's body and blood might be conceived to be present, impanation is worse than useless. It necessitates a series of hypostatic unions, for which there is not the slightest evidence; and, in spite of this gratuitous postulate, it is only a high-sounding way of saying that Christ's body and blood are not really present in the Eucharist at all. It is not transubstantiation as such that involves the mysterious element in Eucharistic doctrine, therefore; it is the very fact of the real presence.

The Jews, mentioned in the sixth chapter of Saint John's Gospel, knew nothing about transubstantiation; yet "they strove among themselves," and said, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" The mysterious element, inseparable from any Eucharistic doctrine that honestly accepts the fact of the real presence, is emphasised here, so that the reader may be able to appreciate at their proper value certain utterances of Anglican bishops and ministers that have been reported recently in the Press. Several of these speakers would seem to imply that the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is perfectly comprehensible by human reason, provided it be not associated with transubstantiation. The fact is, of course, that the element of mystery is involved in the very fact of the presence of Christ's body and blood, however we explain the manner of His coming. The man who explains away the mystery also explains away the real presence of Christ's body and blood — however pious the formula of words he employs to do so. On the other hand, if a man has faith enough to accept the authority of Christ for the fact of the real presence, he is not likely to find transubstantiation a serious stumbling block.

PROOF OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

The doctrine of transubstantiation can be expressed in three propositions: (a) The Eucharist contains the body and blood of Christ; (b) it does not contain bread or wine; (c) 'the substance of the bread and wine' is converted into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. The first two propositions are proved from the words of institution; the third can be inferred from the first and second taken together. As we have already proved the first proposition, (in our first pamphlet of this series, *The Catholic Doctrine of The Real Presence*) it is not necessary to repeat the arguments. We may, therefore, pass on to the Second proposition.

There are two small words that we often use to point out 'something', about which a statement is made or a question is asked. The words are "this" and "that"; and they point out a thing in an

indefinite kind of way. The following imaginary dialogue will illustrate their use: you ask a friend "What is that?" He says "What?"

You reply "That little round white thing." He answers "Oh! That is a golf ball." In your original question the word "that" stood for the indefinite 'something' underlying the accidents "little, round, white,," to which you drew his attention. The word "this" is used in the same way as the word "that," the former drawing attention to something near the speaker, the latter to something farther away. Both stand for the subject or substance underlying the accidents or appearances to which attention is directed. It may happen that, under the accidents in question, there are two subjects, one the subject to which the accidents belong, the other a subject, which, in the circumstances is not perceivable at all. Suppose, for instance, that you carefully inserted a sovereign in an apple, so that no trace of the coin remains, and then showing the apple, you say, "This is a sovereign." What would people say? Your statement would be regarded by any sensible man as false; he would say, "No, that is an apple." When, two substances exist under the same set of outward appearances or accidents, one the connatural subject of these accidents, the other unperceivable, then the demonstrative pronoun stands for the substance, which is the connatural subject of the accidents, and for that alone; otherwise the statement introduced by the demonstrative pronoun is regarded as false, according to the ordinary usage of language. Such is the general principle, illustrated by the example of this apple and the sovereign above.

There are two exceptions to this rule. The first is in the case of a convention or agreement between the speaker and his audience. Take the example of the apple again. Suppose the speaker had previously said "I have here two apples; in one I have placed a sovereign, in the other a shilling." He now holds up the former and says, "This is the sovereign." None of his hearers is likely to reply, "No, that is an apple." Why? Because, in view of the convention between speaker and audience, the statement is true. By agreement with his audience, he is employing the figure of metonymy (where otherwise it would not be permissible): his real meaning is "This is the apple containing the sovereign." The other exception to the rule is in the case where the figure of metonymy may be used without any convention. This will happen whenever there is question of two subjects, which in the common estimation of men are regarded as bearing to each other the relation of container to thing contained. Suppose, for instance, that a wine-merchant is arranging his stock, and that he hands his assistant two bottles, saying "This (one) is port; that (one) is claret." The pronouns "this" and "that," if taken literally, stand for the two bottles; but, by a figure of speech universally recognised, the speaker really means to speak of what is contained in the bottles. With these two exceptions, the rule laid down in the earlier paragraph applies to the use of the words "this" and "that" whether the sentence be speculative (that is, merely assertive), or practical (that is, effective of what it states).

The reader is now invited to recall the rule printed in italics (above), and in the light of that rule to consider Christ's statement, "This is My body." If the substance of bread were still present when Christ uttered these words, His statement would be false, according to the rule laid down, unless it could be brought under one of the two exceptions to the rule. Now it cannot be brought under either of these exceptions, that is, a well-recognised use of metonymy, or a convention between speaker and audience.

There was no well-known figure of speech, in virtue of which the Apostles would naturally look on a loaf as a container for Christ's body.

There is no necessity to argue the point, for the simple reason that such a situation could never have arisen; no man's body had ever been contained in a loaf. What about the other exception, a convention between speaker and audience?

Had Christ just said to the Apostles something to this effect: "I am now going to put My body within this loaf, so that the bread will contain My body?" Of course He had said nothing of the kind, as is obvious from the four records of the institution of the Eucharist, and from the tradition of the Church. Having disposed of the two exceptions to the rule, we conclude that, when Christ said, "This is My body," He was using the word "this" in accordance with the ordinary rule governing the use of the demonstrative pronoun (that is, the rule italicised above). We know also that Christ's statement "This is My body" must be true. It follows that the substance of bread cannot have been present in His hands when He finished the statement. In case the reader may have had any difficulty in following the argument just explained, we shall summarise it in a slightly different form in the next paragraph.

We use the word "this" when we wish to indicate in an indefinite way the something (or substance) underlying certain accidents to which attention is directed. When Christ said, "This is My body," the word "This" stood for the something He held in His hands, that is, the something underlying the accidents of bread. Now, He declares that this something indicated by the word "this" is His own body; and as His words must be true, it is His own body and nothing else. Someone may object to the italicized words, and say: perhaps the word "this" stood for two things, namely: bread and the body of Christ, present simultaneously? We reply that such cannot have been the case; for then Christ's statement "This is My body" would be false, It would be exactly parallel to the statement, "This is a sovereign," uttered by a person who presents an apple in which he has hidden the coin without anyone's knowledge. The latter statement would be false, as we saw above. So Christ's statement would be false, if the substance of bread remained after He had finished speaking. If Christ were present in and with the bread, as Luther taught, then He should have said, "This is bread containing My body" or some such words: in view of the accepted usage of language, He could not truthfully say, "This is My body" simply. From the words of institution, therefore, it follows that the substance of bread is no longer present after the consecration.

The argument just expounded, by showing that the bread and wine disappear at the consecration, rules out all the Protestant explanations of the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. For, however Protestants may disagree among themselves as to the fact of the real presence of Christ, they are at one in holding that the Eucharist still contains bread and wine after the consecration.

(Theologians have discussed at great length all the conceivable ways in which the body of Christ might be supposed to replace the substance of bread and wine. Our greatest theologian, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and with him, many other great thinkers are satisfied that the very fact of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist necessarily involves transubstantiation. In other words, the real presence can be made intelligible only on the basis of transubstantiation. The argument used by Saint Thomas is rather metaphysical, and would probably be above the heads of most of our readers. Anyone interested in studying it can consult any standard theological exposition of the Eucharist. One is tempted to ask: have we here the explanation of why the whole Protestant world has rejected the dogma of the real presence, though the leader of the Reformation himself taught consubstantiation?)

As there is only one other explanation in the field, namely, transubstantiation, it follows that transubstantiation is the correct explanation. Otherwise, we have to hold that, in spite of the assistance of Christ and the Holy Ghost — both of whom are to be with the Church always, to guide it, and teach it all truth (John 14:26. Matthew 28:20) — the Church has never rightly interpreted the nature of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Consider now the sequence of events at the Last Supper. Christ took bread, and blessed it, and said, "This is My body." When He had finished speaking, the substance of bread was no longer present; it had made way for the substance of Christ's body. What is the obvious explanation of this sequence of events? Transubstantiation: Christ had changed the bread into His body. If there is any more obvious, or more intelligible explanation, no one has so far put it forward.

Many Protestants appear to think that the doctrine of transubstantiation began as a theological speculation in the Catholic schools about the eleventh century. They confound the word, "transubstantiation," with the doctrine, which it expresses. The word was coined about that time for the convenience of discussion in the schools of theology; but the doctrine is the traditional doctrine of the Church. The evidence for the doctrine is quite abundant in the works of the Fathers, back as far as the fourth century. When we consider the circumstances, under which the Church existed prior to the peace of Constantine (A.D. 313), we can hardly expect much discussion of a problem so speculative before that time. The implicit references to it, however, reach back to apostolic times.

Here is an example: Saint Ignatius Martyr writing to the Church of Smyrna about A.D. 110, warns the faithful against certain heretics, who "withhold themselves from (the) Eucharist, because they confess not that the Eucharist is the flesh of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins." When a man tells us so emphatically that the Eucharist is the flesh of Jesus Christ, it is not difficult to guess what effect, in his opinion, consecration produces in the bread consecrated.

There is another kind of evidence, which shows the mind of the primitive Church even more clearly than the references found in the works of the Fathers: we refer to the ancient liturgies. In all the ancient liturgies of the East, and in some of those of the West, the priest and people, assembled for Mass, pray that the bread and wine may be "made" the body and blood of Christ. The priest says the prayer aloud, and the faithful answer "Amen." Not having the technical word, "transubstantiation," nor a verb derived from it, they have to use the expression "made," "made into," "consecrated into," or some similar expression; but the doctrine is no less clearly implied on that account.

One or two examples of such liturgical prayers may interest the reader. In the Liturgy of Saint James (representing the ancient missal used in Palestine), we find the following prayer: "Your all-holy Spirit send down, O Lord, upon us, and upon these offered holy gifts; that coming, by His holy and good and glorious appearing, He may sanctify this bread, and make it the holy body of Your Christ — Amen — and this cup the precious blood of Your Christ."

In the Liturgy of Saint Mark (representing the ancient missal of Alexandria in Egypt) the formula is slightly different: "Send down upon us also, and upon this bread and these cups, Your Holy Spirit, that by His all-powerful and divine influence He may sanctify and consecrate them, and make this bread the body — Amen — and this cup the blood of the new testament, of the very Lord and God and Saviour and universal King, Jesus Christ." We leave the reader to judge for himself whether there can be any reasonable doubt, that the men who prayed in these terms, believed that the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ. A similar prayer was offered up in the

churches of Syria, Asia Minor, Constantinople, Armenia, and in part of France, since we have ancient copies of these prayers from all these places.

The liturgies coming down from these centres, especially in the East, are very old. It is true that we have not received them exactly as they were read in the second or third century; they were often revised and enlarged, each province or diocese fixing the details of the service to suit its own special taste or circumstances. But in spite of these differences of detail there is a common plan, a common outline, running through all of them; and in that plan the prayer quoted above is a very prominent feature. This in itself is an indication of great antiquity; but there are some other facts that are worth considering.

The liturgies that have come down from the Monophysite heretics (condemned in A.D. 451) and from the Nestorians (condemned in A.D. 432) differ only in detail from those handed down by their Catholic neighbours. All alike have the prayer quoted above. It is clear that that prayer must have been sanctioned by immemorial usage in the year 432. Consider again the close resemblance between the liturgical books that have come down from such old-established centres as Antioch and Alexandria. In theology and scriptural interpretation these two centres were already rivals, with opposite tendencies, as early as the third century; and as they were moreover for a long time the two chief centres of theological speculation in the Church, we may be sure that each was attached to its own tradition, and was not likely to borrow from outside sources an important liturgical innovation, carrying a clearly dogmatic implication. Taking all these considerations into account, we shall probably not be far from the truth, if we trace back to apostolic or sub-apostolic times the prayer already quoted. In any case, it ought to be clear, from the evidence just summarised, that the primitive Church believed that bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ, even though the technical word "transubstantiation" was not coined till the Middle Ages.

THE DOGMA OF THE REAL PRESENCE IN RELATION TO REASON.

The dogma of the real presence is known and knowable only by faith. Left to the light of reason alone, we could only hazard a guess as to the possibility of the Eucharist; of its actual institution, we could know nothing. We accept the dogma wholly on authority — the authority of Jesus Christ, Who can neither deceive us nor be Himself deceived. Like all beliefs, based on the authority of Christ, belief in the real presence is a reasonable faith, or "reasonable service," to use Saint Paul's expression.

It is reasonable because we have first established to the entire satisfaction of reason the fact that Christ taught the doctrine, and that His authority is above suspicion. The nature of our assent might be illustrated by reference to any of the truths, which we accept in the scientific or the historical order on the authority of others. I believe that a man called Columbus discovered America, though I have no proof, except the word (authority) of historians. Similarly, I accept the authority of astronomers for many statements about the solar system, though I have not verified these statements for myself. A little consideration will convince the average man, that by far the greater part of his information is acquired from others, accepted on the authority of others, and never verified by independent proof on his own part. Faith comes as natural to man as the taking of food or drink. The child appeals to parents for food and for information with the same confidence; the parents themselves can succeed, only if they have faith in each other. A certain section of the modern world will accept the word of scientist or historian or archaeologist — the word of anyone, except Jesus Christ. Yet there never was an expert in any line, whose authority can compare with the authority of

Christ. The historian or scientist may be biased; he may be deceived; he may deceive us. Christ can neither deceive, nor be deceived. When we accept His word, we are but rendering to God "reasonable service" of our highest faculty.

The authority of another, while it may furnish a sufficient motive for belief, never compels the assent of the mind, like a mathematical proof. Unbelief may be ridiculously unreasonable; it may be fatal to our own interests; but it remains possible for us, however reliable the authority in question. Many a mother spoils a son because she simply refuses to believe anything bad about her boy, even when it has become perfectly evident to everyone else that he is a young scamp. Men and women can be willfully blind to the truths of religion in the same way; though we do not mean to assert that all unbelievers are wilfully blind to the light of faith. While God has left us physically free to reject His word, He has not left us morally free to do so. He has placed on us an obligation to accept His teaching — an obligation calculated to promote our own happiness well as His honour. Faith is the means whereby we are brought into touch with the redemption wrought by Christ; and if we reject faith, we reject the means of salvation. On the other hand, by rejecting God's Word, we refuse Him the service of our highest faculty, the intellect and we insult Him, as we would insult an upright, truthful man, were we to call him a liar. The man who rejects God's word, does so at his peril — "He who believes not shall be condemned!"

And here a question naturally suggests itself: are we to reject a truth for which we have God's authority, because with our limited knowledge and limited intelligence we are unable fully to comprehend it? We know, of course, that truth cannot contradict truth; consequently, what is clearly a contradiction of reason, an absolute impossibility, can never have been taught by God. But an incomprehensible mystery is not necessarily either a contradiction of reason or an absolute impossibility. Many things possible in themselves may seem impossible to our limited knowledge and equipment for the time being; and many apparent contradictions are not contradictions in themselves, but only in our mistaken mode of conceiving them. Which of our ancestors would not have thought it "impossible" for a man in London to hold a conversation with a friend in New York, and recognise the voice and accent and intonation as if the parties were but a few yards asunder? Yet wireless telephony has made possible, the apparently impossible. Is it too much to suppose that, when we shuffle off this mortal coil, our eyes may be opened yet a little wider. Our knowledge of material substance is not so complete, even in the twentieth century, that we can afford hastily to define the limits of divine omnipotence.

We deem things impossible for either of two reasons. The thing suggested may involve an absurdity, that is, a contradiction in terms, for instance, a square circle. An impossibility of this kind is absolute, and must remain impossible in all circumstances. Secondly, a thing may be deemed impossible because it involves a conflict with the ordinary laws of nature; for instance, it is impossible for man to walk on water as he walks on solid earth, because the "law of gravitation" causes him to sink. Very few of our opponents — at least among those who take the trouble to ascertain our doctrine — will venture to charge us with teaching what is a manifest contradiction in terms. Indeed, it must be obvious to all but the most self-opinionated critics, that what has been believed by the most brilliant intellects in Europe cannot be manifestly absurd.

When unbelievers argue that Christ's presence in the Eucharist is impossible, they usually have in mind the second kind of impossibility described above: they have a notion that our doctrine involves a violation of the unchangeable laws of nature, and consequently must be wrong. Now what are those "laws of nature," about which we hear so much?

A law is a rule of conduct laid down for us by someone in authority over us; Obviously the "law of gravitation" is not a law in that sense. No, the expression "laws of nature" is only a metaphor, employed to express the constant undeviating course of action, that we observe taking place in nature in various sets of circumstances. Observation shows that nature world in a regular, orderly fashion, producing like results in like circumstances. We observe her workings in various lines; we compare, check and tabulate the results of our observations; and we call these results "the laws of nature." These laws are nothing more, therefore, than the expression of nature's normal course of action. They might be compared to the time table and list of trains, posted up at a railway station. They give us nature's normal programme. A railway company sometimes runs a special train that is not provided for in the ordinary time-table. Does the Author of nature ever run a special; or, to drop the metaphor, does God ever allow an exception to the laws of nature? It cannot be too strongly emphasised that this question cannot be answered a priori; but only by observation. Just as we learn by observation (carried out by ourselves or others) what is nature's normal course of action; so we must learn by observation (our own or that of others) whether, as a matter of fact, there have occurred from time to time certain abnormal events (special trains, so to speak), that will not fit in with our tabulated scheme of "laws of nature." If a man refuses to discuss the possibility of miracles, on the ground that they cannot possibly happen, since they conflict with the findings of science — that man is simply rejecting the foundation principle on which science itself rests. That principle is the principle of observation, the principle that we must learn the facts by observing what they are — not by arguing what they ought to be.

The observations of Pasteur, Darwin, or any other scientist whose name is associated with this or that "law of nature," are not one whit better authenticated than the observations of certain men, who lived about 1900 years ago, and who have handed to us a detailed account of their observations in regard to certain abnormal events, that are clearly exceptions to the normal laws of nature. Had we lived at that time, we might have seen a man walking on the water, in spite of the law of gravitation; a withered limb suddenly grow whole and healthy, contrary to the laws of medical science; and so on. The elements (as represented by wind and wave on the lake of Galilee), inanimate matter (wine and water at Cana), plant life (the fig tree), human life (raising of Lazarus) — in a word, matter and spirit alike all departed from time to time from their normal course (prescribed by the laws of nature) at the bidding of Him Who walked on the water, passed through closed doors, and even rose from the dead. It is idle to say these events are impossible and cannot have happened. Their actual happening is founded on observation as surely as the laws, to which they are exceptions, are founded on observation. We have precisely the same authority, human observation, for the law and for the exception to the law.

Among the strange events that happened at that time, there is one that calls for special notice; for though it was abnormal in itself, its exceptional character was not capable of being verified by direct experiment. We refer to the event that took place at the Last Supper, when the Wonder-worker, Who had shown His power in so many ways, changed bread and wine into His own body and blood. No one would have known that the change took place, had He not revealed it Himself; and no one would have accepted His word for the fact, had not His authority been already proved supremely reliable. And then He gave His disciples power to do the same wonderful thing themselves, implicitly assuring them thereby that, though they observed not with the eyes of the body the change that took place, yet they might accept His word that it would take place. And now 1900 years later we are told that such a change is impossible, because it violates the laws of nature.

There are, to be sure, certain rather obvious difficulties, that call for comment. It is strange that we cannot see or feel or otherwise perceive Christ's body, if it is really present in the Eucharist. We cannot perceive it because the senses perceive only accidents; and the accidents in the Eucharist are the accidents of bread, not the accidents of Christ's body. Now the accidents of bread normally (by the "laws of nature") inhere in the substance of bread. Hence, if I go into a baker's shop, and perceive the characteristic accidents of a loaf, I infer that the substance of bread is present under them. Why do I not make the same inference in the case of the Eucharist? Because I have the authority of Christ for saying that the inference would be wrong in case of the Eucharist. He has told us that the thing present in the Eucharist under the accidents of bread is not bread but His body.

It is scarcely necessary to point out how childishly futile is the objection attributed to an Anglican bishop in the Press recently. His lordship is alleged to have stated that he could prove by experiment that Christ is not present in the Eucharist. Of course, he can do nothing of the kind. He can prove that the accidents are the accidents of bread — and we grant him that without the trouble of experiment. In regard to the substance present under those accidents, he gets no direct knowledge whatever by experiment; experiment merely provides the data, from which the mind is entitled to infer the presence of bread-substance in normal conditions. But consecration takes the Eucharistic bread out of the pale of the "normal," and introduces a circumstance to which the "law of nature," perfectly valid for normal circumstances, does not apply. In this new circumstance, we know the nature of the substance present, not by making the usual inference from accident to connatural substance, but by referring to the words of Christ. The bishop referred to might as well try to prove by experiment that there is no God, as to try to prove that there is no Christ in the Eucharist. The experiment will give negative results in each case; but then, experiment is not our only source of information. We suppose his lordship believes that Alfred the Great reigned in Britain. Can he prove it by experiment? Or does he accept it on authority?

Again we are told that a man's body is too big to fit in the space of a piece of bread; that Christ cannot be dragged down from heaven every hour of the day; that Christ cannot be in several places at the same time; and so on. Many of these difficulties arise from a misunderstanding of our doctrine; the rest can be reduced to one head, namely, that our doctrine involves a contradiction of the laws of nature. We shall conclude with a few words on each of these subjects. We do not suppose that Christ is present in the Eucharist in the same normal way in which He is present in heaven, that is, with His normal height, weight, et cetera. In the first place, we say that His substance is present; secondly, in so far as the presence of His substance may perhaps involve the presence (in a modified form) of certain accidents, these too are present in so far as may be necessary, though in the same intangible way as the substance itself. There has been quite an amount of speculation on this latter point in the Catholic schools; but as the Church has defined nothing about it, and as the data necessary for any reliable conclusion is wanting we need not waste time and space discussing it.

Again, we do not say that Christ is dragged down from heaven every time Mass is celebrated — though preachers, in emphasising the reality of Christ's presence, sometimes use language that might seem to imply it. In so far as the glorified body retains the ordinary manner of bodily presence, with which we are acquainted on earth, Christ's body is present after that fashion in heaven. He retains that presence in heaven; is never dragged away and never gets a similar presence in more than one place at the same time. His presence in the Eucharist is of a different kind. When the Eucharist is consecrated, Christ suffers no change either in Himself or in His presence in

heaven; yet the substance of His body becomes present in the Eucharist. As this Eucharistic manner of presence is unique, a kind of presence for which we have no parallel in our worldly experience, it would be idle to hope that we can ever fully elucidate it. It is the really mysterious element in the Eucharist. We may perhaps satisfy our imagination to some extent by comparing the Eucharistic presence of Christ with the presence of the soul in the body. The soul is not scattered through the body, a bit here and a bit there: the soul being a simple indivisible thing must be wholly present where it is present at all. The whole soul is present in the head; yet it is also wholly present in the feet, the hands, and all the other organs. The manner of presence of the soul in the body must not be taken, however, as an exact parallel for the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The latter is quite unique.

The unbeliever can never disprove the possibility of miracles in general, or of the wonderful change called transubstantiation in particular, by arguing that they are contrary to the laws of nature. He means by that expression that the miracles in question do not fit in with his particular observation and experience, or the particular observation and experience of the students of nature, whose works he has read. We concede all that; we accept his word. We concede that his observation is sound so far as it goes; but, it is incomplete. He has observed the usual, the normal, the general rule; he has not observed the unusual, the abnormal, the exception to the rule. Others whose authority we consider as reliable as his, have observed both the rule and the exception; we have their records, and we accept them as reliable records of facts observed.

The conclusion is obvious — where miracles are proved by observation to have occurred, we accept the facts, like all true scientists. Where the power to work miracles is associated with supreme veracity, as in Christ, we also accept the word of the wonder-worker, when He tells us that He works a change (transubstantiation) which we have no means of observing for ourselves. The unbeliever can never hope to refute our doctrine of the Eucharist, till he is able to show that it involves a concept of matter that is self-contradictory. If he can do that, he has achieved his purpose; for even God cannot accomplish what is intrinsically impossible. All other arguments must fail; for, while transubstantiation remains intrinsically possible, divine omnipotence is capable of accomplishing it whether it be in accord with the normal laws of nature or not. Now man's knowledge of material substance has not reached the stage when he can define what are the possibilities of matter in the hands of the Author of nature. In fact, we know very little about the nature of matter at all. Science can take a piece of matter asunder, in the sense of breaking it into small parts, atoms (or electrons and protons). But are we much nearer understanding what matter is, when we have broken it up in that way? Are we much nearer to understanding what God can do with it, and what He cannot do with it?

A man learns something when he discovers that a wood is made of trees; but until he knows something about the nature of the timber in those trees, he cannot give me a reliable opinion as to whether it is capable of being converted into a respectable suite of drawing-room furniture. The scientist is in a somewhat similar position. The man, who would prove that the substance of bread could not possibly be transubstantiated into the substance of Christ's body, must first acquire a knowledge of the nature of material substance incomparably more profound than is possessed by any scientist of the present day. We have the calm confidence of faith that, if such profound knowledge is ever acquired by mortal man, it will serve, not to refute but to elucidate the doctrine of the real presence.
