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By Members of the Church of England.



AN EXPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MATTERS OF CONTROVERSY. BY J. B. BOSSUET, BISHOP OF MEAUX.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

THE object of this Treatise is to offer to the public the real opinions of the Roman Church, and to distinguish them from those falsely so called.

This work was composed about the year 1668, for the instruction of Messrs. Dangeau, by whom it was shewn to Marshal Turenne, and was not a little useful in aiding his conversion; the Marshal caused several copies of it to be printed, and many Protestants were undeceived by it.

This Treatise, which at that time went by the title of "The Belief of the Catholic Church Explained," remained in manuscript for nearly four years; after which, Bossuet, then Bishop of Condom, agreed to publish it. He had twelve copies of it printed, which were sent by the Author to the Bishops, and other learned men, begging them to revise it, and send back their opinions both as regards the matter and the language. The book, thus revised, came out in the end of the year 1671, with the approval of many Bishops and learned Divines. In M. Bausset's "Life of Bossuet," first vol., we find many curious and very accurate details of the alterations Bossuet made in his work. The Protestants go so far as to say he was obliged to suppress his first edition of his "Exposition," before ever it had fairly appeared, because the Sorbonne condemned his doctrine.

M. Bausset has answered this charge with great skill; and to shew the exact similarity between the Edition of which only twelve copies were printed, and that offered to the public, he has placed the two texts, one facing the other, in his "Pièces Justificatives." Tome 1. We hope that Protestants of the present day will not repeat these unfounded assertions. In 1679 Bossuet brought out a new edition of the "Exposition," to which he attached a long preface, which was a masterpiece of reasoning and eloquence—wherein he refutes the works of several Protestant Ministers who had attacked the "Exposition;" and he proves that the real doctrine of the Catholic Church had never been fairly understood by Protestants—and that the promoters of the schism had purposely misrepresented it, to make it odious to their party. He demonstrates that the "Exposition" is quite conformable to the decisions of the Council of Trent. At the commencement of this new edition he added a brief of Pope Innocent XI., and several commendatory remarks of the most celebrated divines of Rome, who all agreed that the doctrine Bossuet had explained was that taught by the Catholic Church.

In 1686 the sixth Edition appeared; Bossuet again added here the approbation of the Assembly of the Clergy of France, held in 1682; and a second brief of Pope Innocent XI. And it is this sixth Edition which has been used as a model for all those printed since.

I. *The Object of this Treatise.*

AFTER more than a century of disputes with the so-called "Reformers," the subjects that gave rise to their separation from us ought to be pretty clearly understood, and their minds prepared to

understand what are the opinions of the Catholic Church. Thus it appears one cannot do better than just recite them, and distinguish them well from those which have been falsely attributed to her so long.

In fact, I have observed on different occasions that the dislike these "Reformers" shew for our opinions arises chiefly from the very false notions they have of them, or often from certain expressions in their wording, which they consider so offensive, that they lay them aside, and never venture to give them the due consideration they require.

I have thought, for this reason, that nothing could be more useful for them than to explain in simple terms what the Church decided at the Council of Trent, concerning those very subjects on which we are most at variance, without taking up with the arguments generally made use of by controversialists to oppose them, or without alluding to particular tenets which are neither necessarily nor universally received. For everybody, even M. Daillé himself, allows that it is not right to impute to the whole body the peculiar opinions of a few, and no one ought to think of separating, on any ground but that of some authorized point of doctrine which the Church teaches to be binding on all. I will bring no doctrines forward but those that were deemed essential at the Council of Trent, and have been ever distinctly taught by the Church Catholic. Now I expect two good results from this candid declaration of the Church's doctrines,—first, that many differences will vanish at once when it is proved that they originate in false constructions put upon the articles of faith; and secondly, that those that do remain will not, in accordance with the principles professed by Protestants, appear to separate us so widely from themselves, for I hope to convince them there is nothing in them to affect the Church's fundamental truths.

## II. *Protestants allow that the Catholic Church receives all the fundamental truths of Christianity.*

To commence with the principal articles of faith, no Protestant will dare to accuse the Catholic Church of not believing and professing these. The belief in One God the Father, One God the Son, and One God the Holy Ghost, the ever blessed and adorable Trinity—Whom we approach only through The Son incarnate, crucified, and risen again for us; this they know we hold in all its purity and truth, and so on with every other article in the Apostles' Creed. M. Daillé, in his work

of "Faith founded on Holy Scripture," after detailing all the articles of Protestant belief, says, "that though he does not hold all our opinions, yet beyond a doubt we hold everything which he looks upon as an article of Faith." This minister, therefore, cannot deny that we teach all the principal doctrines of Christianity without destroying his own fundamental principles of faith. But even if he had not conceded this, every one is aware that we believe strictly all the articles which the Calvinists call fundamental, so faithfully too, that good feeling would have prompted an immediate avowal that we in fact never have rejected any of these; but instead of this, seeing the advantage we should gain by such an acknowledgment, they wish to deprive us of it, by saying that we counteract these articles by establishing others which are opposed to them; yet this they can only shew by inferences drawn from our doctrines. M. Daillé teaches them how they can rely on such deductions, in a letter to Monsieur Monglat, on the subject of his apology, where he says, "Although the opinion of the Lutherans upon the Holy Eucharist appears to us, as well as that of the Romans, to involve the denial of the humanity of Jesus Christ, this accusation cannot well be brought home to them without calumny, since they formally deny it." Now we consider that there is nothing more vital to Christianity than the belief in the human nature of our Blessed Lord; and yet, though the Lutherans hold a doctrine which infers the denial of this most saving truth, as the Protestants themselves confess, they do not hesitate to offer them communion, because they say their opinions do not contain *any latent venom*; and at their national Synod, 1631, at Charenton, they admitted them to the Holy Eucharist on this ground, "that they conformed to the fundamental truths of Religion." They confess, therefore, that they do not care about the consequences which may be inferred from a doctrine, but look simply at the construction put upon it by the person inculcating it. Therefore, when they infer from the Church's doctrines that she does not teach that paramount sovereignty they conceive due to Almighty God, nor the mediatorial power and saving efficacy of the One Intercessor between God and man, Christ Jesus, nor the infinite value of the all-atoning Sacrifice, nor the plenary satisfaction of His divine merits, one might easily answer these accusations and say, in the words of Monsieur Daillé, they cannot be advanced against her without calumny, because the Catholic Church utterly disavows the idea. But I will go further, and prove to these Gentlemen that it requires only the simplest state-

ment of her doctrines to prove that far from overturning the fundamental principles of Religion, either directly or by inference, she establishes them in so conclusive and determined a manner, that on examination it is impossible for any candid mind to accuse her of doing otherwise.

### III. *God is the object of all Religious Worship.*

With respect to the homage due to Almighty God, the Church teaches that it consists in acknowledging Him to be the Creator and Lord of All, and as such we are to adore Him with all the powers of soul and body, as the Author of our being, the Promoter of our good, our Defender from all sin and evil, and in Him we can find true joy alone. The external worship of God in His Church, and primarily the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, is the exponent of this interior homage, of which He is alone the object; she further inculcates that all worship has God for its object, and that if the honor paid to the Blessed Virgin and to the Saints can be called devotion, or worship, it is entirely because it has its end in God. But before I proceed to explain the nature of this honor, it may be as well to observe that the Reformers themselves, constrained by the force of truth, begin to allow that the custom of invoking saints and honoring their relics, was established in the Church from the 4th century. Monsieur Daillé, in making this concession, does not hesitate to accuse St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and several other great luminaries of antiquity who rose in this age, and especially St. Gregory Nazianzen, of altering the doctrines of the three preceding centuries on this head; but not content with saying this, he brings forward passages which prove that in praying to the saints they were following the example of the early Christians, and surely they were better able to understand the meaning of the Church's doctrines, coming as they did so immediately after them, speaking as it were with their dying breath, than Monsieur Daillé and his co-religionists can, after a lapse of so many centuries; but rather than dispute further with him, I can only say how grateful I feel to him for the avowal he has made, and for the support of so many able men who taught these doctrines and themselves followed them in the 4th century; for although he has aspersed their memories by branding them with the name of "Relic worshippers," I trust his followers will do more justice to them in future than to perpetuate a word which really only brings down ridicule upon



those who use it. He does not go so far as to accuse them of idolatry, or of misplacing that trust which the Church teaches, is to rest in Jesus Christ alone; and let us hope they will now be more careful how they accuse us of such perversions, since they cannot bring them against us without attacking these great men of the like inconsistencies, whose holy lives they profess to admire and revere. But as I am now stating the Church's belief, rather than the characters of those who defend her cause, I will return to the next point at issue, and speak of the

#### IV. *Invocation of Saints.*

The Church, in teaching that the Invocation of Saints is beneficial, instructs us to pray to them in that spirit of charity and brotherly union which leads us to seek for the intercession of our brethren living among us. On this head the Council of Trent says, "If there is anything derogatory to the character of Mediator, which Holy Scripture gives to Our Lord Jesus Christ, in thus addressing the saints who dwell with God above, we are no less guilty of the fault, whatever it may be, in claiming the intercessory prayers of the faithful dwelling among us." The Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches the great difference made by the Church, between the manner in which we implore God's help, and that in which we ask the assistance of His saints: "For we pray to Almighty God, Himself to deliver us from some evil, or to grant us some good, whereas we address His saints as being more worthy of His favour than we, to take upon them our request, to present it as their own, and to entreat God's aid where we stand in need. And this is why we use two modes of prayer quite different, for in addressing God we say, "Have mercy on us"—"O Lord hear us." In asking for the intercession of the saints we use such expressions as these: "Pray for us;" and in whatever words our prayers may be couched to them, the Church, as well as her faithful children, intend only that such should be their meaning—which we find confirmed in the Catechism (Part iv. *Quis orandus sit*), from which we have quoted the first sentence.

But let us now consider how the Council obliges our Bishops to teach this doctrine. "The saints, who are ever dwelling in the presence of our Lord Jesus, are ready to offer the prayers of men to God, it is therefore most desirable for us to invoke them, and to have recourse to their help and succour, in obtaining from God His bless-

ings, or His answers to our requests, but always through His Son Jesus Christ, who alone is our Saviour and Redeemer,"—and still stronger, the Council condemns those who teach otherwise. To pray to the saints, then, according to the Council of Trent is, to ask for their prayers to God for man, and so obtain His grace through Jesus Christ; thus, when we receive anything by the intercession of the saints, we really do so only through Jesus Christ, and in His Name—for the saints themselves always pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and are only heard and answered through and by His blessed Name. Such is the belief of the Church, and the Council of Trent is very clear and concise in explaining it. How can it be objected to us that we depart from the faith which is in Christ Jesus, because we approach Him through His glorified members, who are also our members—His children, therefore our brethren—His saints who are the first fruits of our harvest—because we ask them to pray for us, and with us, to our common Master, through our mutual Mediator?

The same council declares very clearly and briefly what the spirit of the Church is, when she offers the Eucharist as a commemorative feast in honour of the saints and to their memory. This honour consists in making mention of them to God, in the prayers we address Him, blessing Him for the victories they have achieved, and humbly begging Him to give ear to their pleadings for us.

St. Augustin taught, twelve hundred years before, that people were not to think the Sacrifice was offered to the Holy Martyrs, because it was the usual practice, even before those times, in the whole Church, to offer the Sacrifice over their hallowed remains, and to their memory, that is over the spot where their precious relics were deposited. The same Father adds, it was the custom to make mention of the martyrs at the Holy Table in celebrating the Sacrifice, "not so much to pray for them, as we do for other dead, but rather that they may pray for us." I bring these words of the holy Bishop forward principally because the Council of Trent uses the same expressions. "The Church does not offer the Sacrifice to the Saints, but to God who has accepted their persons and crowned their labours. So that the priest does not address himself to St. Peter and St. Paul, and say, 'I offer this sacrifice to thee,' but offering God thanks for the victories they have accomplished, he asks their prayers, so that we making mention of them here, they will remember us before the throne of God, where they dwell." We honour the saints then for this end, that we may interest

hem in our behalf before God, for His graces, the chief of which is that of imitating them. I think if any doubts remained, after such a clear review of the doctrine as we have laid down, our adversaries must confess that we do not derogate from the Divine perfections of our Lord, or give to His creatures any of those attributes by which He is so eminently distinguished, neither do we invest any, even the most perfect of His creation with a power which belongs to God alone. How after this, they can still accuse us of idolatry is to me quite incomprehensible, for the principle we maintain as the basis of all true religion, is subversive of the very idea. And further, when it is argued that in addressing prayers to the saints, we must suppose them to be every where present throughout the earth at the same time, and attribute to them a limited ubiquity and a knowledge of the secrets of all hearts, which in so many passages Holy Scripture asserts to be reserved to God alone, I answer, they do not sufficiently consider our doctrine on this head; for without going into the grounds we may have for supposing that the saints have a knowledge of things that concern us, and are passing within us, may we not very reasonably conclude, that it can be revealed to them in that ineffable light by which they are surrounded and which God himself communicates to them. Will not the example of the prophets justify us in believing this, when we reflect that God did not disdain to give them the knowledge of such future things, which appear most especially fit to be reserved for Himself alone. And no catholic ever believed that the saints know of themselves alone and intuitively as it were, what are our wants, nor the desires of our hearts which we open in prayer.

The Church, from the earliest ages, has always taught that such prayers as we have described are very profitable to all who use them; and we do not pretend to determine whether the saints are made cognizant of our needs, by the ministry of angels who have been constituted in a wonderful order to minister to God's creatures here, or whether God in His wisdom makes known our wants to them by an especial revelation, or whether they discover them in His infinite essence in which all truth centres; nor has Holy Church herself thought fit to decide: but whichever be the means He has sanctified to this purpose, we never for a moment attributed to the greatest saints any degree of power, perfection, or excellence which was not derived from God, nor did we imagine they possessed any efficacy with Him, but through the grace they won of Him, and all the knowledge they

have of human affairs, the Church declares they receive entirely through Him. Nor do we believe they enjoy any happiness but what they derive from their entire submission and perfect conformity to the Divine will. Does it appear from this statement of our inward regard for the saints that we seek to elevate them above the condition of creatures, or does our external homage denote any different emotion? Outward reverence is nothing more than the exponent of inward feelings. The honour which the Church gives to the saints is mostly offered before their images and relics : we will therefore next explain what she teaches on this head.

#### V. *Images and Relics.*

As regards Images the Council of Trent expressly “forbids us to believe that they possess any inherent quality in virtue of which they should be worshipped, or to ask any thing of them, or to place any confidence in them, and distinctly teaches that what honour we show them has reference entirely to the objects they serve to represent.” These words of the Council are so many characteristics which distinguish us from idolaters, for instead of believing, as they do, that images possess any indwelling divinity, we attribute no virtue to them, beyond that of exciting in us the remembrance of their originals. This is the whole meaning of the Church’s doctrine of honouring images. Who will deny, for instance, that the image of Jesus crucified whenever we turn to it, recalls the most lively remembrance of Him “Who so loved us as to die upon the Cross for us.” And while the image is before us, and the remembrance so vividly impressed upon the mind, our gratitude is awakened, and we must make some external act of reverence in token of our submission to the Divine original. To speak accurately and to use ecclesiastical language, when we do homage to the image of an Apostle or Martyr, our intention is not to honour the image, but “the Apostle or Martyr whose image we behold.”

Thus, at least, I quote from the Roman Pontifical, and the Council of Trent expresses the same idea, in saying, “That the reverence we pay to images relates so entirely to the sacred originals themselves, when we kiss them, or incline before them, we are virtually adoring Jesus Christ, and honouring the saints whose resemblance they merely are.” Lastly, we can understand how the Church honours images, by observing it is the same kind of respect she offers to the Cross and to the Book of the Gospels ; every one feels in kneeling to the former we



are adoring "Him who in His own body bore our sins upon the tree;" and that when her children bow the head before the Holy Book, or rise as it is carried before them, or if they kiss it, it is out of reverence for the sacred and eternal words it contains. It is very unfair for our adversaries to call that reverential movement of the body to which we are prompted at the sight of the Crucifix, idolatry, when we do so only in memory of Him who was crucified for love of us. And it is only wilful blindness in them, not to see the very great difference there is between those who put their trust in idols, by reason of their belief that they possess some inherent holiness, so to speak, and those who declare as we do, they only use them to draw their minds to heaven, to realize more readily the honour they pay to Jesus Christ, or His saints, and in the saints God Himself who is the Author of all saintliness and grace.

We wish it to be understood, we pay no other regard to relics, than did the Early Church. And if our adversaries would remember, that we look upon the bodies of the saints as victims consecrated to God by martyrdom or penitence, they could never imagine, that honouring them with this view, we are in the slightest degree interfering with that honour which we offer to God. To speak in a general way, if they would understand how our affection for a friend extends itself, without diminishing aught of our love for him, to his children, his friends, and indeed to all that concerns him, and to all that recalls him; and that honour is capable of the same gradations and shades, for honour is really only love mixed with fear and respect; and lastly, if they would reflect that the whole external as well as internal worship inculcated by the Catholic Church has its beginning and end in God alone, they could not be so mistaken as to suppose that what He Himself inspires and takes delight in can for an instant excite His jealousy. They would see on the contrary, jealous though He be of our love, that if our regard for His creatures springs from an overflow of love for Him, and the honour we pay them is only a means of greater honour being offered to Him, whom He Himself delights to honour, He cannot be offended at it.

To prove even more fully that the Church's teaching on this head has nothing in view but the glory of God, she only allows these external aids to be used to excite and enliven devotion, for these outward marks of reverence have never been made by her of absolute necessity, nor are her children bound to any servile obedience to visible things, but they may vary these practices according to circumstances,

disposition and feeling, always bearing in mind the end in view, which is to offer that reasonable service to God which His faithful creatures desire daily and hourly to do in spirit and in truth. We may learn from the teaching of the Church, on this one doctrine alone, how much for want of clearness of statement and openness of confession, is misconstrued of the tenets of the Catholic Church. And on other subjects of which we have been treating, if I may claim a fair hearing, I cannot imagine that we can any longer be accused of violating the doctrine of the Mediation of Jesus Christ, or of destroying the fundamental truth of offering homage to God alone, by the invocation of saints, or by the veneration we express for images and relics. I grant that it is very easy by an improper application of the terms, Mediation, Invocation, and Adoration, to certain points at issue, in the Church's Articles, to render our teaching so odious, that it will not be possible all at once to disarm men of their prejudices ; but if a fair statement such as is here made will be attentively weighed, it must in the end prevail, to dispel the darkness which calumny and ignorance have so long shed upon all her practices. How repeatedly do we hear men boldly asserting that she conceives piety to consist in "this devotion to the saints," than which, I will not hesitate to say, there is not a more unjust or untrue aspersion ; for does she not, in the Council of Trent, expressly declare, that it is a "a good and wholesome practice," and nothing more. And though she naturally condemns those who refuse to conform to it, out of carelessness or irreverence, she does so because she cannot allow what she sets forth as wholesome, to be slighted by individuals. Nor is it likely she can allow reformers of so recent an age to condemn what primitive antiquity has fully sanctioned.

#### VI. *Of Justification.*

The subject of justification will shew still more clearly how easily objections may be dispelled by a simple statement of our opinions.

This one article, it is pretty generally understood, was proposed by the Protestant Reformers, to be the basis of all others, and that on which they have sought to raise their feeble structure ; and this being the case, it is very desirable for us to express our real belief on the subject.

The Church teaches that "our sins are freely pardoned by Divine mercy through Jesus Christ," and adds, "we mean freely because nothing of ours, as faith or works, can obtain this grace if they precede justification."

The forgiveness of sins is explained in Holy Scripture as the work of God by the grace of the Holy Spirit, at one time, as covering them, at another as taking them away, and blotting them out, making us new creatures, and we infer from these expressions conjointly what justification really is. Therefore we teach that the blood of Jesus Christ, not only covers our sins, but takes them away, and blots them entirely out by the grace with which He regenerates us, and far from forming a low estimate of the efficacy and power of His blood, we rather enhance its value to the sinner. For the righteousness given by Jesus Christ is thus not only imputed, but is actually communicated to His faithful by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and not only are they reputed justified, but are made holy by His grace working in them.

If the righteousness which is in us was only righteousness to the eye of man, it would not be the working of the Holy Spirit, but it is righteousness before God, since it is God Himself working in us by the regeneration He sheds in our hearts. Nevertheless, as long as we are in the world, the flesh will war against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, "and in many things we do all offend." Thus, though our righteousness is real by the grace given us in Him, it is not perfect by reason of the lusts of the flesh; therefore the penitent cannot but be in this perpetual struggle, indeed it is one most necessary condition of our justification; wherefore we confess in St. Augustin's words, "That our righteousness in this life consists rather in the remission of sins, than in actual holiness."

#### VII. *Of the Merit of Works.*

On this subject, the Catholic Church teaches, "that eternal life is offered to the children of God by means of the promise made to us through Jesus Christ, and as a reward for our works done in virtue of that promise."

This is the definition of the Council of Trent; but lest pride should lead us to form any presumptuous opinion of our own merits, it further teaches, that all value attached to our works arises from the sanctifying grace which is freely given to each in the name of the Son of God, and any good effect perceived in us is the effect of His influence as the Divine Head directing its members. The precepts, commands, threats, and promises, of Holy Scripture, shew very clearly that we are to work out our salvation in union with and by means of the grace of God. And it is equally evident that we cannot of our own free will, unaided by the Holy Spirit, produce any works which can be said to further our salvation.

Thus the Church, knowing that all our good works are the operation of the Holy Spirit, fears not to teach us that these works are of necessity pleasing to God, and of no little value in His loving sight, and therefore she uses the term "meritorious," as did the primitive Christians, to shew how works done under God's grace are valued and prized. St. Augustine says, "God crowns His own gifts when He accepts the works of His servants," and this is the opinion of the Catholic Church given by the Council of Trent; teaching that what holiness there is in them proceeds from God's grace in us "working both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

And I must claim a little patience while I detail, a little at length, what the Council of Trent says on good works, in order to dispel the false ideas that are imputed to the Catholic Church on this doctrine.

"Behold," say the Fathers of this Council, "what value Holy Scripture puts upon good works; Jesus promises that a cup of cold water given in His name shall not go unrewarded. The Holy Apostle tells us that our lesser sufferings here, shall work for us an eternal weight of glory hereafter; still we would that no man should boast, or trust in anything but in his Lord, whose mercy is so great that He wills that His own gifts to the soul should be imputed to her." In another place it also says, "We who can do nothing of ourselves, may yet do all things through Him that strengthens us, so that we have no ground for boasting, but we may glory in Him, in Whom we live, through Whom we work, and by Whom we are justified, in Whose merits our deeds of penitence are accounted worthy and by Whom they are presented to God the Father, and finally accepted by Him; wherefore, whatever we do or ask for, or when we give thanks, we do so in the Name of the Lord Jesus. We acknowledge we are only agreeable to God through and in Him, and we can hardly understand how such false notions can be attributed to us, since we daily use these words in the Sacrifice of the Mass, "Grant to us, Lord, Thy sinful creatures, Thy servants, who trust, through Thy manifold mercies, to enjoy hereafter some part and fellowship with the Blessed Apostles and Martyrs, into the number of whom we pray Thee to receive us, not weighing our merits, but pardoning us by the grace and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Will the Church never be able to persuade her children, now become her adversaries, either by the explanation of her faith, or by the decisions of her councils, or the prayers of her Sacrifice, that she believes she has no life in her of herself, and that her trust is in Jesus Christ



alone? This confidence is so strong that it impresses upon the children of God, who walk faithfully in His ways, "that peace which passeth all understanding," as the Apostle predicts; but though this confidence is stronger than all the promises and threats of the world, and is able to quiet our consciences, be they ever so troubled, God does not permit it to extinguish all fear, because if we were assured that He could not abandon us, we are never certain that we shall not forfeit it by our own fault in rejecting His inspirations. It has pleased Him thus to temper by this wholesome fear, the confidence with which He inspires His children; because, as says St. Augustine, "such is our infirmity in this world of temptations and perils, that a full security would produce pride and laxity," instead of which, according to the Apostle, it is this fear which makes us "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," it makes us watchful and draws us in humble submission towards Him "Who worketh in us by His grace, to will and to do of His good pleasure." Here, then, is all that is necessary in the doctrine of justification; and our adversaries are most unreasonable, if they do not confess that this teaching is sufficient to convince Christians that they are to give God the glory of their salvation through Jesus Christ.

If after this they still choose to enter into arguments and subtle questions on the subject, they ought to recollect that they have no right to treat us with such rigour, when they give so much latitude to the Lutherans and their own sect on predestination and grace: at least they should first enquire whether we really teach what is necessary for the salvation of the soul. If they would only limit themselves to this enquiry, they could easily be satisfied and answered. Moreover we should soon bring them to see how false is the notion, that by advocating and teaching the absolute necessity of good works, we thereby destroy the grace of God, when really we are most careful to inculcate that we owe all to Him.

The Council of Trent has expressed this in the clearest manner, "First, that our sins are only remitted by God's mercy and for the sake of Christ Jesus. Secondly, that it is to the gift of the Holy Spirit we attribute the righteousness that is in us entirely; and Thirdly, that all our good works are but gifts of God's grace to us." However, I believe the better informed and more enlightened Protestants now understand us on this head, and even agree that they do not see a cause of division here.

And if this essential difficulty as to their view of justification by faith

has no longer the importance their early advocates attributed to it, and is not regarded by them now as a vital doctrine, we leave them to think how their separation ought to be looked upon by us, and what should be expected of them for the sake of peace, could they but rise above prejudice and abandon the spirit of controversy.

### VIII. *Satisfaction, Purgatory, and Indulgences.*

We believe we can make satisfaction to God, through His grace, and I purpose to explain this so as to leave no doubt on the minds of our adversaries on this subject.

The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus Christ, being God and Man, was worthy by His own Infinite dignity to offer to Almighty God a full and sufficient satisfaction for our sins, but having more than satisfied Divine justice, it was competent to Him to apply this infinite satisfaction in two ways, either by granting us an entire remission, and abolishing without exception every kind of suffering, or by changing greater into lesser, *i. e.*, eternal for temporal punishments.

As the first of these means is the most in accordance with His goodness and love, He vouchsafes it to us in Baptism; but we believe that He applies the second, in the remission He holds out to us for post-baptismal sin; and since He seems forced to it, so to speak, by our ingratitude, who have abused His first gifts, is it for us to complain if He has given us temporal trials in lieu of eternal pains? Far from believing that Jesus Christ has not fully satisfied God's justice for us, we hold, on the contrary, that having paid an Infinite price for our salvation, He has gained an absolute right over us, and He grants us pardon, on what terms, and under what conditions, and with what limitations, He sees best for us.

We could not dispute the all-sufficiency of our Saviour's merits without gross ingratitude, because in obtaining pardon for Adam's sin, He does not exonerate us from all its consequences, leaving us still liable to death and so many bodily and spiritual infirmities which this sin brought upon us. It is enough that He has paid, once for all, the ransom which will free us fully, one day, from all the ills with which we are beset. We should receive, humbly and thankfully, every part of this blessing, considering the means by which He works out our pardon according to the rules His wisdom has framed, for our improvement, and the clearer perception on our part of His mercy and justice.

Neither should we be surprised if He, who so freely bestowed the

grace of regeneration on us at Baptism, should be more strict with us after we have violated our baptismal promises. For it is not only just but very beneficial for us, that God in remitting to us original sin and eternal punishment does yet exact some temporal punishment, which reminds us of our duty and prevents us from abusing His mercy by presuming too much on the security He offers. It was, then, to satisfy this obligation that certain works of suffering and trial were appointed for us to undergo in a spirit of humility and penitence, and it was the necessity of performing these works which urged the early Church to impose on her penitents those punishments we term Canonical.

When, then, she directs sinners to undertake some painful or difficult task, and they submit to it humbly,—this she calls Satisfaction; and when on account of the fervour of penitents or the performance of certain good works she had imposed, she relaxes in something of what was prescribed,—this she calls Indulgence. The Council of Trent does not deem any thing else necessary to be believed concerning indulgences, except that “the power to grant them has been given to the Church by Jesus Christ, and that the custom is most beneficial;” to which it adds, “it ought to be retained, with moderation, lest ecclesiastical discipline should become weakened by too great a facility;” which proves that granting indulgences was a matter of discipline.

Those who depart out of this life full of grace and love, but still indebted for the sufferings which Divine justice has reserved to them, suffer for them in the next. And this is the reason why from the earliest ages the Church has offered prayers, alms, and sacrifices for the faithful departed who were in communion with her, believing that they receive comfort and aid thereby. The Council of Trent bids us believe this much on the subject of souls in purgatory, not defining in what their sufferings consist, or in any way diving into such matters, but rather demanding great circumspection, where so little is revealed, and blaming those who pronounce as certain, what must at present be vague and undetermined. Such is the holy and innocent doctrine the Catholic Church teaches, of Satisfaction—which is imputed to us as a great offence. If after this explanation Protestants still accuse us of not doing justice to the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, we will once more repeat, that our Blessed Lord has paid for us the full and entire ransom for our redemption, and that we believe nothing to be wanting to it, because it is an infinite ransom; and that these pains and sufferings which we speak of as reserved to us, do not in the least proceed from

any want of perfection in His Infinite Satisfaction, but from a certain law of discipline He has framed for us, restraining us by a wholesome fear. If they again accuse us of teaching that we can of ourselves produce works which shall satisfy divine justice in part even, for our sins, we deny with confidence the assertion, and refer them simply to what we have stated. The summary of which is, that our salvation is God's own work of mercy and love: what we do by His grace is not less His work than what He does alone for us, and what we give Him back is not less His than what He gives us. To which I add, that what we call Satisfaction is, according to the ancient Church, only the application of the satisfaction made for us by Jesus Christ. This consideration ought to have its weight with those who are displeased, when we say that God so delights in Christian unity and the communion of His faithful, that He often receives the satisfaction we offer one for the other. It seems as if these persons do not realize how closely united we are to God, and how we take part with Him in all that concerns us; nor do they see how He proves His love for His blessed Son, in the consideration He shows for His faithful ones; but those surely who have read and observed how frequently God Himself has inspired His children with the desire of self-mortification, not on account of their own sins, but those of a whole nation, will not be surprised to hear me say that He is pleased to allow this humble sacrifice to have some weight in the scale of Justice, where punishments were already prepared for His people—which shows us that, satisfied by some, He permits Himself to be appeased towards others,\* and thus He honors His Son in His Members, that blessed company who form His mystical Body.

#### IX. *Of the Sacraments.*

In the order in which we are discussing the Church's doctrines, we shall here speak of the Sacraments, by which Christ's merits are applied to us; and as the objections with which we are met are not so serious on this point as on many others which we have been combating, except perhaps on the Holy Eucharist, we will briefly explain the chief difficulties that are raised against the other sacraments, reserving for the last those of which the Holy Eucharist is the subject, though it is by far the most important.

The Sacraments of the New Covenant are not only sacred signs

\* Gen. xviii. 26., Dan. ix. 20., Matt. xxiv. 22.



which represent the grace promised to us, neither are they mere pledges by which it is secured to us; but they are the very instruments by which the Holy Spirit conveys actual grace to the faithful, in virtue of the words which are repeated, and the outward actions which accompany them.

When God works by external signs, which of themselves bear no proportion to the effects they produce, He shows clearly that besides what is effected by our good dispositions, there must be an operation of His Holy Spirit coincident with the outward sign of the Sacrament, through which it is the merits of our Saviour are applied to us in that sacrament; so that no one can reject this doctrine without depreciating our Lord's meritorious sacrifice, and the work of divine power by which we are regenerated.

We acknowledge seven signs, or sacred ceremonies, ordained by Jesus Christ as the ordinary means of sanctifying and perfecting His children, which we prove to be such, either by the account Holy Scripture gives of their institution, or by the express words of Jesus Christ who established them, or by the grace which by the same Scripture we find is attached to them, and which prove them to be of Divine origin.

**HOLY BAPTISM.**—As infants cannot supply the want of Baptism by acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, nor by a promise to receive this sacrament, we believe that unless they are actually baptised they have no part in the great work of redemption, and that thus dying in Adam, they are not made partakers in Jesus Christ. It would be as well to observe here that the Lutherans, as well as the Catholics, believe in this absolute necessity of infants being baptised, and are equally surprised that any Christians should deny a truth which, till Calvin, no one dared even to dispute; this shows how this truth was generally esteemed, and what a firm hold it had upon the minds of people, nevertheless Protestants do not fear to let their infants die like little heathens, without any symbol of Christianity, and without letting them receive any grace if they happen to die before the day of their next meeting for public worship.

**CONFIRMATION.**—The Imposition of Hands was practised by the Holy Apostles to confirm the Christians in the faith, in times of persecution. Its principal effect was the descent of the Holy Spirit into their hearts, and the infusion of His gifts, so that our opponents make but a sorry excuse in rejecting it, because they say the Holy Spirit now no longer

descends visibly among us,—though all the Christian Churches, from the time of the Apostles, have religiously retained the practice, using at the same time the Holy Chrism, to show more clearly, by virtue of this Sacrament, the real though unseen anointing of the Holy Ghost.

**PENANCE AND SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION.**—We believe that it has pleased Jesus Christ to permit those who have submitted to the authority of the Church by being baptised, and who have fallen into sin afterwards, to return and submit themselves to the judgment of the same Church in the tribunal of penance, where she exercises the authority given to her of retaining and remitting those sins. The commission granted to the Ministers of the Church to absolve sins is conveyed in such unlimited terms, that they cannot confine it to the case of those guilty of open and notorious sin, without great rashness. And as when they pronounce absolution in the name of Jesus Christ, they are following the exact words of the commission, the judgment is understood to be given by Jesus Christ Himself, for Whom they are instituted judges. It is The invisible Judge who inwardly absolves the penitent; while the Priest exercises the visible functions. This judgment being so beneficial a restraint on all our thoughts, actions, and passions, a foundation also of wise counsels and advice, and a source of great comfort to souls really penitent, when not only absolution is granted to them in the general terms in which Protestant Ministers practise it, but they are really and effectively absolved by the authority of Jesus Christ, after a particular knowledge of each case, we cannot imagine but that our adversaries, seeing so many salutary results arise from it, must indeed regret its disuse, and must feel some shame while advocating a Reformation which abolished such a wise and holy practice.

**EXTREME UNCTION.**—The Holy Spirit having invested Extreme Unction, by the testimony of St. James, with the express promise of forgiveness of sins, and comfort to the sick man, we find nothing wanting to this Holy ceremony to constitute it a Sacrament. We have only to remark, that the Council of Trent observes, The sick man's soul is to be more considered than his body, and that as spiritual benefits are the peculiar promises of the new Covenant, it is this we more especially look for from this holy anointing; whereas comfort to the body is granted, or not, according to the inscrutable decrees of Divine Providence, and as God deems expedient for it.

**MARRIAGE.**—When we consider that Jesus Christ gave a new form

to Marriage in limiting this holy bond to two persons to be unchangeably and indissolubly united, and made it a symbol of the Eternal union of Himself with His Church, we shall not find it so difficult to comprehend that Marriage is a means of conveying the Holy Spirit to the Christian, and we praise His infinite goodness who has been pleased to consecrate in this manner the origin of our birth.

HOLY ORDERS.—Laying on of hands in Ordination is accompanied with such wondrous gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit, and so complete an out-pouring of His fullest graces, that it most certainly ought to be received as one of the Sacraments; so much so, that our opponents do not themselves deny Consecration of Ministers altogether, but they simply exclude it from the Sacraments common to the whole Church.

X. *Of the Doctrine of the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist; the way the Church interprets the words "THIS IS MY BODY."*

At last we have arrived at the question of the Eucharist, and though we shall have here to enlarge a little more fully than we have done on other points, we will not overstep the prescribed limits.

The doctrine of the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of our Lord in this sacrament, we believe to be fully established by the words of institution, which we interpret literally, and we find no more difficulty in taking them thus, than a traveller in following the main road that lies before him; it is for those who look for a figurative meaning, and diverge into bye-paths to give their reasons for so doing. For us who see nothing in the words which Jesus Christ used in the institution of this Mystery, which should make us take them in a figurative sense, we are satisfied with their plain and obvious meaning; but we have a still stronger reason, when we consider the intention of our blessed Lord in this Mystery, which I will explain as simply as possible, and on such grounds that our adversaries even cannot deny.

As the Jews not only assisted at the sacrifices which were offered for them, but eat also of the victim (or sacrificed lamb), which eating was to signify to them the participation they had in this oblation, so our Lord, having made Himself our Victim, willed that we should eat of His sacrificed Flesh, so that the very participation of His adorable Body should be a perpetual testimony to each of us, that He took upon Him our flesh, and that it was for us He sacrificed it; therefore He plainly

and distinctly commands us, to "Take and eat; this is My Body which is given for you."

God gave express commands that the Jews should not eat of the sin-offering, to shew that the real expiation of sin could not be made under the law, or by the blood of animals. The people were thus, as it were, under an interdict, not being able, on account of the prohibition, to participate in the remission of sins.

Inversely it was absolutely necessary for Christians to eat of the real Sacrifice offered for sin, which is the Body of our Lord, to shew by this manducation, that remission of sins was accomplished under the New Testament.

God forbid, also, the Jewish people to drink the blood by reason that the blood was given to make an atonement for their souls; while on the other hand, our Lord bids us "drink *His* Blood," because it was shed for the remission of sins.

Thus the manducation of the Flesh and Blood of the Son of God is as *real* at the Holy Table, as grace, remission of sins, and participation in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is absolute and real under the New Covenant.

However, desiring to exercise our faith in this mystery and at the same time to divest it of any horror we might feel at the idea of eating His Flesh and Blood in its own form, it was expedient He should disguise it under a different aspect. Therefore if this consideration determined Him to give us the Flesh of our Victim in manner differing from that He gave the Jews, He has not for all that taken away any thing from its reality or substance. Does it not appear most evident that to accomplish the ancient types, and to give us in truth the Victim offered for our sin, Jesus Christ intended to give us His real Body and Blood? This is so evident that our opponents wish us to believe such is their opinion, and constantly affirm that they do not deny that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly partaken of in the Lord's Supper. We will examine into this presently, when we enter into the explanation of their doctrine, after detailing the Church's views. But in the meantime, we must say, that if the simplicity of the words our Lord uses, forces them to acknowledge that His intention was to give us His very Flesh, when He said, "This is My Body," they ought not to be surprised if we cannot take them in a figurative sense. In fact, our Lord having so carefully explained to His disciples whatever He taught them, either by parables or metaphors, here makes no such explanation;



is it not natural to conclude He applies them in their literal signification? I know that these so-called "Reformers," pretend that the explanation is self-evident, because they see He presents merely bread and wine; but this argument fails when we consider that He who addresses them is possessed of authority which transcends all the senses, and of power to which all nature yields obedience.

Whether is easier to the Son of God to say, "This is My body," and in very deed to make it so, or to say to the woman in the Gospel, "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity," and she was so; or to the father of the young man, "Thy son liveth," and he was "alive again;" or to forgive the sins of the paralytic by saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee?" Thus not being at a loss to discover how He will accomplish what He says, we cling to the words implicitly. He who does what He wills, works what He promises while He speaks; and it was easier for the Son of God to break through the law of nature to accomplish His words, than for us to reconcile our minds to such forced interpretations which subvert all rules of language. These rules, indeed, teach us that the sign which represents an object often receives the name of the object, for the mind will very naturally and readily recal an object by its representation. And this would apply, in some measure, to the Signs employed at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, when once they had been promulged, and had become familiar through use. But it would be a thing unheard of, not only in Holy Scripture, but in any language in the world to call one object by the name of another which has no connection with it, *e. g.*, to call bread, flesh, without in any way explaining it, or agreeing upon it beforehand as a sign or watchword; and yet this is what Protestants would make out that our Blessed Lord did in instituting the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. However, they do not confine themselves at all strictly to the figurative meaning they wish to put upon our Lord's words, but they allow that He intended, in uttering them, to give us in reality His Body and Blood.

#### XI. *Explanation of the words, "Do this in remembrance of Me."*

Having given the mind of the Church on these words, "This is My Body," we proceed to consider what she teaches on those which our Lord added, "Do this in remembrance of Me." We see, evidently, that He here intended us to remember the death He submitted to for our salvation; and St. Paul draws the same conclusion from them when he says "Ye do shew His death" in this Mystery. We are not to

suppose that this remembrance of our Lord's death need exclude the necessity of His Real Presence, for if we consider what we have just said we shall see that the commemoration is based upon the real presence. For in the same way that the Jews by eating the peace-offerings were reminded that they were slain for *them*, so likewise we in eating the flesh of Jesus, our Peace-Offering, are thereby reminded that He was slain for *us*, in particular; and far from imagining that this solemn commemoration which Jesus Christ commands us to make, excludes the presence of His Body, we are on the contrary convinced that to enable us to realize that vivid recollection of His Sacrifice, at His Holy Table, as He would have us, we must feel that what we eat there is really and truly His Flesh. For by the very act of giving us His Body daily for our food He facilitates our belief in His having given it once for us as our ransom.

How can Christians go away with the idea that in order to celebrate this commemoration aright they must divest it of all its life and beauty; they seem to lose sight of half our Lord said as well as nearly all He meant, for He does not simply bid us remember Him, but to remember Him by eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood. Let us look to the intention and force of His words. He does not say simply (as these Reformers seem to think) that the Bread and the Wine are to be a "Memorial" of His Body and His Blood, but He admonishes us that in doing what He prescribes, *i. e.*, in eating His Flesh and His Blood, we are remembering Him. Can any other means act so forcibly on us as this whereby we might remember Him? If children are quickened in their love for an earthly parent as they approach the tomb where his body lies, will not our love and tenderness be excited when we touch these sacred Grave-clothes, and receive in this Mystic Tomb the very Flesh of our dear Lord who was sacrificed for us, that Living bread and Life-giving Flesh, and that Blood still warm with love, imparting grace and health to all around? If yet our adversaries persist in objecting to us that He who bids us remember Him, did not give us His real Body, we must beg them at least to agree among themselves. They protest that they do not deny a real Communion of the very Substance of the Son of God in the Holy Eucharist. Thus, if they are really in earnest, if they attach any meaning to the words they use, they must allow with us, that this remembrance of our Lord does not preclude His being present there in any way, but only in such a way as would be perceptible to the senses.

Their answer must coincide with our own. For where we say Jesus Christ is present, we acknowledge at the same time that it is in a way that can be discerned by Faith only. And if they here ask us, how we, believing as we do that the senses have no part in these Holy Mysteries, yet do not allow it to be sufficient to believe that Jesus Christ is present by faith? we easily answer and silence this mere quibble, and reply, It is one thing to say that the Son of God is present to us by faith; and another that by faith we know Him to be present.

The first mode of expression implies only a *virtual* Presence, but the second signifies to us a very *actual* Presence, because whatever is of faith is truth. And this actual Presence known and realized by faith, works in the "just who live by faith," all the effects we have noted above.

## XII. *A Statement of the Calvinist's Belief in the Doctrine of the Real Presence.*

To remove, once for all, the ambiguities of expression which the Calvinists employ on this subject, and at the same time to shew how nearly they have approached to our view, though I only undertook to explain the doctrines of the Church, it may be as well to add here a statement of their opinions.

They are divided into two parties on the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. The first party says that it comprises the figure only of the Body and Blood; the second, the Real Presence of our Lord's Body and Blood: we will consider each separately.

First they say that this great miracle which we believe of the real presence, is of no avail, since it is enough for our salvation that Jesus Christ died for us, that this sacrifice is fully communicated to us by faith; and of this we are assured by the Word of God: they further add that if it was intended to clothe this Word in outward and visible signs, it was enough to have given us simple symbols, such as water in Baptism, without its being necessary to draw down from heaven the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

This seems a very easy way of explaining the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and yet it is not sufficiently explicit to satisfy our adversaries. They are aware that it was just such reasonings that brought the Socinians to deny the miracle of the Incarnation. Could not God, ask these heretics, save us without so many circuitous circumstances? He had but to pardon us, and could He not have taught us as well, both as

to doctrine and obedience, by the life and example of a man gifted with His Holy Spirit, without ever intending He should be God?" The Calvinists, however, see the weakness of this argument,—for first, is it for us to deny or to affirm the mysteries of religion, according to our finite view of their utility or practicability? God alone knows His secret workings; for us we have only to make them beneficial and useful to ourselves, by believing all He reveals to us, and by applying His grace in any way He thinks it expedient to appoint. And secondly, without entering into the question of the possibility of our salvation being wrought for us without the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God, (a useless dispute which the Reformers have made so much of in their lectures) it is enough to read in the Gospel that the Son of God voluntarily chose to shew His love for man by such unspeakable proofs. Love was the sole cause of that real union by which He became Man. Love drove Him to sacrifice that same Body which He really took. Love prompted Him to plan all His designs, and supported Him throughout with unremitting force. Thus when He decrees to manifest to one of His children individually, that love He has testified to all generally, He finds means wherewith He can effect His purpose, as readily as those He used to accomplish our salvation. Why then should we marvel if He gives to each of us the very substance of His Flesh and Blood? He does so to engraft within us the conviction that He took that flesh and blood upon Him for us, and that He likewise gave it in sacrifice for us. What has been done by Him already, renders the sequel quite within our belief. The whole order of His dispensations prepares us for this end, and His Word is the pledge that does not suffer us to doubt.

Our adversaries were aware that Christians would not be content with simple figures and symbols of the Body and Blood in the Eucharist, especially after being accustomed so long to receive no less a gift than Himself; therefore they do not like to be accused of denying that there is a real and substantial participation of Jesus Christ in their Supper. They maintain, as we do, that He therein makes us partakers of the very substance of His Body. Thus they say in their Catechism, "We are strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ," and deeming it would not be sufficient that He shewed us by a figure that we should partake in His sacrifice, they affirm incontestibly, "That the Body of our Lord which is given to us in His Supper is a pledge to assure us thereof," really very remarkable words, and which we shall have to return



to immediately examine. Here then, by the confession of the Calvinists is established, that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is present in our Mysteries, for what is partaken in *its very substance* must be *really present*. It is true they explain this participation by saying, it is spiritual, and by faith, and yet they will have it to be real. And because it is not possible to understand how a body, which is communicated to us only after a spiritual manner, should also be partaken of really and in its very substance, they have fallen into a difficulty which prevents their reconciling these two parts of their doctrine so opposed to each other, and therefore they have been compelled to confess two things, which cannot be true unless they believe what the Church teaches.

The first is, That Jesus Christ is given to us in the Eucharist after a manner entirely proper to that Mystery, and differing from that in which He is received at Baptism, or by "hearing the Word." We will trace out the consequences of this principle; but first let us see how the Reformers grant it to us.

I will not cite the testimony of any particular author, but only the words of their Catechism, where it speaks of the Lord's Supper. It says in express terms that Jesus Christ is not only given us in very truth, and in very substance, but yet, though He is communicated to us verily, both in Baptism and by the preaching of the Word, it is only *in part* and not *fully*. Whence it follows, He is partaken of "fully" in the Lord's Supper, and not in part.

There is a vast difference between receiving "in part" and receiving "fully." If then Jesus Christ is received elsewhere "in part," it follows He can only be received fully in the Lord's Supper. We conclude then from their own confession, that we are to look for a participation in the Lord's Supper, proper to that Mystery, and different from that we may expect from Baptism or hearing the Word of God; and still, this fulness does not depend upon our Faith, since Faith is an absolute requisite in every action of the Christian, and is as necessary in hearing the Word, and in Baptism, as in the Lord's Supper.

It is truly astonishing that much as the Reformers wish to place on a par, Baptism, Preaching, and the Lord's Supper, by reason that Jesus Christ is conveyed to us in them, they have never dared to say in their Catechism, That Jesus Christ is given to us in His very substance in Baptism, or in Preaching, as they themselves affirm He is in the Eucharist. They have not been able to get over this, that we partake

of Jesus Christ in this Sacrament in a way quite peculiar to itself, and also that Faith, which is common to every action of a Christian, is not this peculiar manner. Again, this peculiar manner of receiving Jesus Christ in the Eucharist must be "real," since it secures, to the faithful, the very substance of His Body and Blood. So clear is this, from their own statements, that we must conclude, that there is in the Eucharist, a "real" manner of taking and receiving the Body and Blood of our Saviour, which is not merely by faith. And this is the very doctrine of the Church Catholic.

The second thing the Reformers grant, is taken from the article which follows the one already quoted from their Catechism, and is to this effect, "That the Body of the Lord Jesus, inasmuch as it has been once offered in sacrifice for our reconciliation with God, is now given us, to assure us of our participation in this reconciliation." If these words have any meaning, and are not mere idle expressions of vain ideas, they ought to prove that Jesus Christ does not give us a figure only, but His very Body, to guarantee the actual participation we have in His Sacrifice, and reconciliation of the whole human race. Now, if the reception of the Body of our Lord assures us of the participation in the fruits of His death, we must necessarily distinguish between the reception of His Body, and the participation in His death, because one is the pledge that we possess the other. Whence, going on a step farther, we say, if our adversaries are obliged to distinguish in the Lord's Supper, between the reception of our Lord's Body, and the participation in the fruits and grace of His Sacrifice, they must also distinguish between reception of this Divine Body, and that participation which is made spiritually and by faith. For this last participation is not capable of being divided into two distinct actions, by one of which they shall receive the Body of our Lord, and by the other the fruit of His Sacrifice; for who can possibly distinguish between a spiritual participation of our Lord's Body, and a spiritual participation in the fruits of His death. They are compelled, then, to acknowledge that besides the Communion, in which we partake spiritually of the Body of our Lord, and of His Spirit likewise, in receiving the fruits of His Death, there is still another actual and substantial Communion of the Body of the same Lord, which is the pledge that assures the former to us, provided we present no obstacle ourselves to this grace, by any evil disposition of our own.

This is in fact involved in their own teaching, and they must, to

explain this truth in any way satisfactorily to themselves, agree with the Church on this head. Who is not here struck by the force of truth? All that results from the principles which our adversaries are compelled to avow is perfectly agreeable to the feeling of the Church. The most uninformed Catholic conceives without difficulty that there is a communion with Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist which he can find no where else,—we perfectly understand “that His Body is given us, as a pledge that we have part in His Sacrifice and Death.” We readily perceive that there are necessarily two means by which we are united to Jesus Christ; one, by receiving His very Flesh; and the other by receiving His Spirit; the former being the pledge for obtaining the latter. But much as our adversaries are obliged to confess these things in principle, their feeling is so much at variance with it they will never be able to reconcile the evident contradictions into which they have been led. It has often surprised me why they did not explain their doctrine in a less complicated way. Why should they not say boldly, without so much ceremony, that Jesus Christ having shed His Blood for us, left us in token of it, two distinct Signs of His Body and Blood? That He gave to these signs the name of the things signified? That these sacred signs were pledges to assure to us our part in the fruits of His death; and moreover, that we are spiritually nourished by the efficacy of His Body and Blood? After so many attempts to prove that as the signs received the name of the objects, the sign of the Body might be called the Body itself, it is incumbent on them to admit all the consequences of such a doctrine, and to abide by them. To render these signs efficacious it was enough, that grace was promised *through* them, or rather, in accordance with their principles, that it was assured *by* them.

They need not have taken so much pains to prove that we receive the very Body of our Lord, to shew our participation in His sacrifice, since they are quite content that the water in Baptism should be a sign of the Blood that cleanses from sin; and they never endeavoured to prove that in it we receive the very Blood of our Lord, to shew our participation in His grace there given. Had they only reasoned in this way on the subject of the Holy Eucharist their doctrine would not have been so complicated. But those who invent and innovate can never say as much as they would desire; they find certain undoubted facts, and established principles, which are very unyielding, and they are forced to give in. The Arians endeavoured to deprive our Lord of the

name of God, and Only Begotten. The Nestorians only half admitted that Unity of Person they were obliged to give in their writings to our Lord. The Pelagians, who denied original sin, would gladly have denied also the necessity of Infant Baptism for the remission of sins, and by that means they thought to abolish the argument which Catholics drew, from this practice, in favour of original sin. But as I just said, those who find principles long established have not the courage to overturn them entirely.

If the Calvinists would really speak the truth (I have no doubt in saying) they would gladly have to acknowledge nothing more in the Eucharist than the figure of the Body of our Lord, and in reality only a participation of His spiritual benefits, laying aside those important words, "participation in His actual Body," and many others which prove His Real Presence, which in fact they find too embarrassing. It would be more convenient for them to believe that that communion in the Lord's Supper was none other than that received in Holy Baptism, and by the Ministry of the Word; without explaining as they have thought it needful to do that in the Lord's Supper we receive "fully," and at other times only "in part." Though, doubtless, such was their inclination, the words of our Lord prevent them from acknowledging it openly. Our Lord having so precisely said at the institution, "This is My Body—This is My Blood," words which He applied solely to this subject, what grounds have we for supposing that He intended this to be extended to all the actions of the Christian life, when evidently He is alluding to one particular instance? And besides, the whole course of His Divine teaching, the inferences to be drawn from His mysteries and His doctrine, the design of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, the very simple words He used, the natural impression they make upon Christians, all combine to make clear the notion of a Real Presence. And thus it is that our adversaries are obliged to use words whose sounds at least should give some confused idea of this Reality. If we keep to the principles of faith implicitly, as the Catholic does, or make human reason our rule, as the Infidel does, it is far more easy to make out some fixed plan of doctrine, and abide by the consequences,—but when we attempt to make a combined system out of both, we are led to say more than we wish, and to adopt opinions whose manifest inconsistencies prove the fallacy of our arguments.

This is just what has happened to these Reformers; and God has thus permitted them so far to wander from the Church, and no



farther, as if to facilitate their return to Catholic Unity. For since experience has shewn them that to speak the language of truth, they are obliged to use the same expressions we do, must they not think as we do, to understand rightly what they say? If they find in their Creeds passages whose full meaning must be borrowed from ours, does it not follow that the entire pure faith is among us? And these detached sentences of Catholic faith which we find scattered here and there in their Catechism, although they require to be annexed to their context, so to speak, ought to send them to the communion of the Church, to seek there the full explanation of the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist? They would doubtless come to her if human reason did not darken their Creed, too dependent, as it is, upon their bodily senses.

And now having shown what are the fruits of their doctrine, I will turn to conclude what I have to say further on our own.

### XIII. *Transubstantiation, Adoration, and in what sense the Eucharist is a Sign.*

• Since it was expedient, as has been shewn, that our senses should perceive nothing in this mystery of faith, it follows that there should be no visible change in the bread and wine of the Eucharist; hence, as we discern the same species, and experience the same effects as before, in this Sacrament, we must not be surprised if sometimes and in a certain sense we give it the same name. But faith, attentive to the Word of Him who does whatsoever pleaseth Him in heaven and earth, recognizes here no other substance than that which is designated by that same Word, the very Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, into which the bread and wine are changed; and this is called Transubstantiation. The truth which we know to be contained in the mystery of the Eucharist, does not imply any denial that it is outwardly a sign, only it is of such a nature as not to exclude the reality of the thing signified, since, in truth, these words, "This is My Body," pronounced over the elements which Jesus Christ has appointed to be used, are a sure token of His being present. And though these accidents remain to the senses Bread and Wine still, we do not regard them as such, because a superior authority intervenes to work a change. Notwithstanding the objects themselves, and the effects of certain natural impressions, which would lead us to consider the elements as Bread and Wine, the authority of Him in Whom we believe, is sufficient to make those very accidents themselves declare the presence of another substance; for we listen to

Him who says, that what we "take and eat" is "His Body,"—and such is the power of His Word, that it prevents us from looking upon these accidents as merely Bread and Wine, and makes us ascribe to them the Real Presence of Jesus Christ ; so that His adorable Presence being assured to us by these signs, we feel no hesitation in offering adoration.

I will not enlarge upon the subject of "adoration" because the most sensible and intelligent men among our adversaries have granted some time ago that the Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, must oblige all who believe in it to adore it. And, once convinced that the powerful words of the Son of God effect all they express, we believe, on good grounds, that immediately they are pronounced at the Eucharist, the effect is produced,—and by a necessary consequence we acknowledge the Real Presence of the Body before manducation.

#### XIV. *Of the Sacrifice of the Mass.*

These things being granted, the sacrifice we acknowledge in the Eucharist presents no particular difficulty. We have said there are two actions in this Mystery, which though they are distinct in themselves, bear a kind of relation to one another. The first is the Consecration by which the Bread and Wine are changed into the Body and Blood ; the second is the manducation, by which it is partaken. In the Consecration, the Body and Blood are mystically separated, because Jesus Christ said separately, "This is My Body,"—"This is My Blood ;" and this seems to convey a more lively and effective representation of the violence of the death He underwent. Thus the Son of God descends upon the Holy Table in virtue of these words, clothed in the signs which represent His death ; and this is the operation of Consecration. This act is a confession of the sovereign power of God inasmuch as Jesus Christ being present therein renews and perpetuates in some degree the memorial of His obedience even unto the death upon the Cross, so truly that nothing is wanting to make it a real Sacrifice. This act independently of the manducation, cannot but be of itself highly agreeable to God, and doubtless, inclines Him favourably towards us, because it brings before His sight the voluntary Death His dearly Beloved Son suffered for sinners, or rather it recalls to His view His very Son under the symbols of that Death, by which He was pacified.

All Christians will allow that the Presence alone of Jesus Christ is a most powerful means of intercession for the whole human race with

God, according to the Apostle, "Christ is entered into Heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Thus we believe that Jesus Christ being present upon the Holy Table in this figure of His Death, intercedes for us, and represents continually before His Father the Death He suffered for His Church. It is in this sense we say that Jesus Christ offers Himself for us to God in the Eucharist: it is in this way we believe this Sacrifice renders God more propitious, and therefore we called it a propitiatory Sacrifice.

When we take into consideration what it is that Jesus Christ effects in this Mystery, and that we actually behold Him by faith, verily present upon the Holy Table with these signs of His Death, we unite ourselves to Him in this condition; we present Him to God as our sole Victim, and our only Propitiation through His own Blood, at the same time protesting that we have nothing to offer to God but Jesus and the merits of His Death. We consecrate all our prayers to Him in this Divine oblation, and in presenting Jesus Christ to God we are enabled to offer ourselves as living victims to God in Him and through Him.

Such is the "Sacrifice" of Christians; for many reasons totally different from that which was offered under the Law—a Divine Sacrifice and fitted for the New Covenant, where the Victim, though present, is only perceived through Faith, where the knife is the Word which severs mystically the Body from the Blood; where that Blood consequently is only shed in Mystery, and where Death is represented in figure. Yet a real Sacrifice in that Jesus is therein verily contained, and presented to God under this representation of Death. Still, a Commemorative Sacrifice, which far from weaning us, as is objected to it, from the Sacrifice of the Cross, unites us to It by all these circumstances, since not only it attributes everything entirely to It, but really it is, and it subsists only by its relation to It, and from It alone it derives all its efficacy. This is the teaching of the Catholic Church, set forth in the Council of Trent, which declares that this sacrifice was only instituted, that "by representing that sacrifice which was once consummated on the Cross, it might serve to keep it alive in our memories to the end of ages; and in virtue of it we might apply its healing properties for the remission of those sins which are of daily incursion." And the Church, far from believing there to be anything lacking to the Sacrifice of the Cross, esteems it so fully sufficient and so perfect, that all she does concerning it, is to celebrate the memorial, and apply the efficacy.

Moreover, the Church fully recognises that all the merit of the Redemption of the human race is to be attributed to the Death of the Son of God; and after all we have said it must be understood, that, when we say to God, at the time of the Celebration of the Divine Mysteries, "We present Thee this Holy Victim," we do not intend by this oblation, to offer or to make any fresh addition to the price of our Ransom, but to plead the merits of Jesus Christ really present with us, and the Infinite price He paid once for us upon the Cross. The Reformers do not imagine that they offend our Lord Jesus Christ in offering Him to Almighty God as present by faith, and if they knew Him to be present in very Substance, what difficulty could they feel in offering Him, as being really present? Thus, in common candour, the whole dispute should be confined to the Real Presence. After this, all the false notions the Reformers have thought fit to form respecting the sacrifices we offer up, ought to be expunged. They should frankly acknowledge that the Catholics do not pretend to make a further propitiation to appease the Justice of God, as though the Sacrifice of the Son of God upon the Cross was not alone sufficient for us, or by way of adding some supplementary price to our redemption, as though it was not perfected for us. All these things are quite foreign to our doctrine; and all we do here is simply by means of intercession and application of the one great atoning Sacrifice, as we have just now fully explained.

#### XV. *The Epistle to the Hebrews.*

After this explanation, the weighty objections drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and made to turn against us, will appear very unreasonable; it is useless for our opponents to try to prove that we destroy the Sacrifice of the Cross, by quotations from this Epistle. But as the best proof that two doctrines are not at variance with each other, is to discover in exposing them, if any propositions of the one are contrary to those of the other, I think I am bound here to explain summarily the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Apostle's intention, in this Epistle, is to teach us that the sinner could only escape death by substituting some one to die for him; that as long as man could only appoint in his stead the slaughtered animal, their sacrifices were nothing more than public acknowledgments that they deserved to die; and divine justice not being satisfied by such an unequal exchange, they were obliged to sacrifice these victims daily, which was



a sure evidence of the insufficiency of the substitute ; but since Jesus Christ had died for sinners, God being satisfied by the substitution of so worthy a Ransom, had nothing further to exact as the price of our redemption. Whence the Apostle concludes, that not only it was no longer necessary to offer any other victim since Jesus Christ became our Sacrifice, but that Jesus Christ Himself should only be offered *Once* in Death. Now, I beg the reader, who values his salvation, and is a friend to truth, to pass over in his mind what we have said of the manner in which Jesus Christ offers Himself to God for us in the Eucharist. I flatter myself he will find no propositions contained in it which are contrary to those I have quoted from the Apostle, or weaken his cause. So that in fact all that can be brought against us here is his silence. But those who would look well into the wise distribution which God has made of His secret counsels in the various books of His Scripture, would not wish to confine us to receive all our instruction from the single Epistle to the Hebrews, especially on a matter which was not necessarily connected with the subject of that Epistle ; for the Apostle proposes only to explain the perfection of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and does not enter upon the different means God has provided for our applying it to ourselves. And to take away all ambiguity, if we use the word “offer,” as it is used in this Epistle, to signify the actual death of the victim, we agree that Jesus Christ is no more offered, neither in the Eucharist nor elsewhere. But as this word has a wider signification in other passages of Holy Writ, where, for instance, it is said that we offer to God what we merely present to Him, the Church, who frames her language and her doctrine, not only on the Epistle to the Hebrews, but on the whole Code of Scripture, fears not to say that Jesus Christ offers Himself to God wherever He appears before God for us ; consequently He offers Himself in the Eucharist, as the Holy Fathers themselves express it. To think, therefore, that this mode of Jesus Christ’s offering Himself to God does injury to the Sacrifice of the Cross, we answer that it cannot by any means, unless we overthrow the whole Scripture, and more particularly this Epistle ; for by the same reasoning we must conclude that, when Jesus Christ offered Himself to God, “on coming into the World”\* in lieu of the victims, “in which He had no pleasure,”† He derogates from His Sacrifice on the Cross : and that “now appearing before God for us”‡ He thereby weakens that “oblation of Himself by which He puts away

\* Heb. x. 5.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid, ix. 24.

sin;”\* and because “He *ever* maketh intercession for us,”† He must derogate from the superabundant intercession He once made by His Death “with strong crying and tears,”‡ which is evidently ridiculous as well as false. Therefore we must remember that Jesus Christ, who once offered Himself the humble Victim of Divine justice, does not cease to offer Himself for us; that the Infinite perfection of the Sacrifice of the Cross consists both in what went before and in what followed after it; as the former was the preparation, so the latter is the consummation and application of it. And in truth, the real price of our Ransom is not reiterated, since it is fully paid once for all; still, the application of this Redemption to ourselves cannot cease. And lastly, we must learn to distinguish things which are repeated as imperfect, from those which are continuous as they are perfect and complete.

#### XVI. *Reflections on this Doctrine.*

We would beg Protestants to reflect a little on what has been said on the Holy Eucharist. We have shewn that the doctrine of the Real Presence is the indispensable foundation of it. This groundwork is denied us by the Calvinists. There is nothing, however, in all our controversies of such deep importance, since the Presence of Jesus Christ is the question at issue; there is nothing our adversaries find more difficult to believe; and there is nothing in which we are so radically opposed. In most other disputes, when these opponents allow us a fair audience, they find difficulties vanish, and very often the words in which a doctrine is clothed grate more upon their ears than the truth we wish to inculcate does upon their feelings. Here, on the contrary, we agree far better on terms, because we find here and there in their arguments such expressions as the “real partaking,” and others; but the deeper we probe the more obstacles we find, because our adversaries will not allow all the consequences, even of the truths which they admit; they seem, as it were, startled, and kept back by the opposition their senses and reason meet with.

It is here, then, that in fact we are most at variance, for it is at once the most difficult and most vital difference. And yet it has pleased God to permit the Lutherans to retain their belief in the Real Presence, as well as we; He has also given the Calvinists light to see that in

\* Heb. ix. 26.

† Ibid, vii. 25.

‡ Ibid, v. 7.

this doctrine there is no "latent venom;" that it does not overturn the fundamental doctrines of salvation and Faith; and that it ought not to sever the communion of brethren. Oh, that those who profess the doctrines of the so-called Protestant religion would only reflect seriously on their souls' health, they could but see in this, the course that Divine Providence lays open to them, to induce them by it, to enter insensibly into the full teaching of the Truth.

Other matters, though subject to some objections, might easily be explained to them, if not entirely set at rest. In this, though we cannot hope to smooth the difficulties we have alluded to so summarily, they have themselves done much towards a unity, by declaring that we teach nothing in it at all contrary to Salvation, or subversive of the fundamentals of Religion.

It is true, the Lutherans, though in the main they agree with us, yet do not admit all the consequences. They believe the Body of Jesus Christ exists *with* the Bread; some of them object to the adoration. It would seem they only acknowledge the Presence in the act of receiving; but no subtlety on the part of their ministers ought to prevail with men of sound sense, who hold the reality of the Presence, by far the most difficult and important part to believe, not to follow out the whole doctrine. Further: this same Providence, Who ever works in secret for our reunion, and who plants branches of peace and reconciliation in the midst of mazes of differences and disputes, has again permitted the Calvinists to confess that if He intended the words, "This is My Body," to be taken in their literal sense, then the Catholics reason with more probability than the Lutherans.

I will not adduce any of the well known passages on this subject, since all those who deal fairly, will grant, that when the Real Presence is established, our doctrine follows out the results most rationally. It is then an established truth that our doctrine on this point consists in the Real Presence being well understood; but we must not rest there, and we will beg these Reformers to consider, we bring forward no arguments to explain the Sacrifice of the Eucharist but such as are necessarily involved in the Real Presence. If we are asked, after this, how it is the Lutherans, who do admit the Real Presence, reject, nevertheless, this Sacrifice, which according to us is only a consequence of it; we solve the question in one word, and we put the doctrine among the other results of a belief in the Real Presence which these same Lutherans have not understood, and say that we have fathomed it

better than they, according to the confession of the Calvinists themselves. If our explanation persuades these latter that our doctrine of the sacrifice is involved in that of the Real Presence, then they ought to see clearly that this violent dispute on the Sacrifice of the Mass, which has filled so many books, and given rise to so many invectives, ought for the future to be expunged from their controversies. And since, on this head, there remains no further difficulty, and what is more to the purpose, this sacrifice, to which they have shewn so much repugnance, is only a natural consequence of a doctrine which they allow has "*no latent venom*" in it, let them only examine themselves and see after that, before God, whether they have as good cause as they imagine to retire from our altars, whereon their fathers have fed upon the Bread of Life.

#### XVII. *The Communion of Two kinds.*

There remains still another consequence of this doctrine, into which we will now examine, which is that Jesus Christ being really present in this sacrament we do not attach either grace or blessing to the visible elements, but to the very substance of His Flesh, which is living and life-giving, by reason of the Divine essence which is united to Him. Therefore all those who believe in the Real Presence ought not to have any difficulty about receiving in one kind only; since they take in it all that is essential to this sacrament with an entireness the more certain, that the separation of the Body and Blood not being really so, as has been said, they thus receive wholly and without division Him who alone is able to satisfy them. The Church, interpreting on this solid foundation the Institution of the Eucharist, has declared that we may receive all sanctification from it under one kind only; and if she has confined Christians to this one kind, it has not been from any slight, or neglect of the other, since it was as much from reverence as any other feeling, to avoid a recurrence of the confusion and negligence which some were guilty of, in later times, keeping to herself the power of re-establishing it under two kinds, whenever she may deem it expedient for peace and unity so to do.

Catholic theologians have brought forward many interpretations similar to this from Protestant Writers on this very subject of administering this sacrament, but most especially one drawn from the xii. chapter of their rules, entitled "Of the Lord's Supper," art. 7., where these words are found: "The Bread is to be administered to those



who are not able to drink Wine, mentioning that it is not out of any slight or neglect, and making semblance merely, presenting the Cup as nearly as possible to the lips to avoid scandal." They have shewn by this article, that the two kinds are not essential to the Communion according to the institution of Jesus Christ. Otherwise they should have refused the Sacrament entirely to those who were able to receive it in one kind only, and not have given it in a manner differing from that in which Jesus Christ intended it; in this case their inability would have been a valid excuse. But our adversaries thought it too severe to deny both kinds to those who could only receive in one; and as this kind of indulgence has no warrant in Scripture, they must acknowledge with us, that the words in which Jesus Christ proposes the two kinds to us are subject to an interpretation, and that this interpretation is best made by the authority of the Church. Besides, it would seem likely that this article of their faith, which dates from the Synod of Poitiers in 1560, would have been amended if necessary at the next held at Vertueil in 1567, where we find the following: "That the Society are of opinion that they should not deliver the bread to those who *would not* receive the cup." These two synods are, however, no how opposed. That of Vertueil speaks of those who "*would not* receive the cup," that of Poitiers of those who "*could not.*" And, in fact, notwithstanding the synod of Vertueil, the article continues in their code of rules, and has even been approved of by a later synod than that of Vertueil, by the synod of La Rochelle in 1571, where this article was revised and put into the words in which we now quote it. But even had these Reformers changed their sentiments on this article, it would only prove that the subject on which it treats is not a matter of faith, and, as such, the Church, according to them even, has full power to dispose of it.

#### XVIII. *Of Tradition.*

It only remains now to decide what the Catholics believe concerning the Word of God, and the Authority of the Church. Jesus Christ having established His Church by the preaching of the unwritten word, it became the first rule of Christianity; and when the writings of the New Testament were added to it, this word lost none of its authority on that account: therefore we feel bound to receive with the same reverence all that the Apostles taught, whether by writing, or by precept, as St. Paul himself has expressly declared, 2 Thess. ii. 15.

And it is a certain proof, that when no origin of a doctrine can be traced, and yet it is embraced by the whole Church, it must have come down from the Apostles themselves ; and we cannot resolve ourselves to treat any doctrine thus established otherwise than with the greatest submission, due only to Divine authority. And I verily believe that these Reformers would, if not over prejudiced, agree with us here from their very hearts ; for they could not but suppose that a doctrine received from the commencement of the Church must have come from the Apostles themselves ; therefore our adversaries must not express a surprise if we are anxious to receive all the traditions our Fathers held, or if so receiving them, we preserve them as sedulously as we do the Scriptures themselves.

#### XIX. *The Authority of the Church.*

The Church being designed by God to be the deposit of the Scriptures and of Tradition, we receive from *her* hand the canonical writings. And whatever our adversaries may maintain to the contrary, it is chiefly on her authority that they receive the "Song of Songs" among their canonical books, which has so little outward appearance of prophetic inspiration ; the Epistle of St. James, which Luther positively rejected, and that of St. Jude, which appears doubtful, on account of the Apocryphal books alluded to in it. Indeed it is only by her authority that they receive the whole body of Holy Scripture, which Christians declare to be Divine before even they have read enough of them to feel any internal conviction that the Spirit of God is in them.

Being then so bound by means of these very Scriptures, to the Church from whose hand we receive them, she bids us, by the authority of which we therein find her invested, listen to her teaching upon Tradition ; for by means of Tradition we interpret the true sense of Scripture. Wherefore the Church declares that she expresses no opinion of her own, and that she adds nothing new to the doctrines she teaches. She follows and proclaims what is divinely revealed to her by the internal direction of the Holy Spirit, Who is her guide.

That the Holy Spirit does transmit His Divine revelations by her, we learn very clearly from the dispute which arose on the subject of the Ceremonies of the Law, in the times of the Apostles, and from their "Acts" we learn, and ages after us will learn also, how this first dispute was decided, and by what authority all others ought to be determined. And whenever Christians find difficulties of this

nature to solve, the Church interposes her authority, and her Bishops in Council will say, as then the Apostles said, "It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us."\* And when once she has spoken, her children should understand that they ought not to enquire further into the articles upon which she has pronounced judgment, but should humbly receive her decisions. In this they are to follow the example of St. Paul and St. Silas, who carried to the Christians the result of this first decision of the Apostles, and who far from encouraging any fresh enquiries into what had been agreed upon, "went through the cities and delivered the decrees for to keep which were ordained of the Apostles and Elders."† It is thus that the children of God acquiesce in the decisions of the Church, believing to have heard by her mouth the oracles of the Holy Spirit; and it is on account of this, that we add immediately after saying "I believe in the Holy Ghost," "The Holy Catholic Church," by which we bind ourselves to acknowledge that infallible and perpetual truth must ever reside in the Universal Church, for this Church which we believe to have existed from all ages would cease to be the Church, if she no longer taught the revealed truth from God.

Therefore, all those who imagine she can abuse her power so far as to establish any false doctrine, really prove their want of faith in Him by whom she is maintained. And even if our adversaries look upon these things in a worldly light, they must confess that the Catholic Church, far from wishing to make herself Arbitress of the Faith, as they accuse her, binds herself down, and has neither the means nor the intention of innovating in the least, since she not only submits herself to Holy Scripture, but the better to silence at once all private interpretations of it, which are too apt to be regarded in the same light as Scripture, she has determined to listen to no other interpretations but those of the Fathers as regards matters of faith and discipline, and to these she pledges herself to remain ever faithful, declaring by all her Councils and in all her edicts, that she never receives any dogma which does not conform to the Tradition of the preceding ages.

Besides, if our adversaries would ask their consciences, they would find that the name of the Church has more authority with them than they allow in controversy. And I can scarcely think there is any man among them of sound sense, who, judging himself singular in some one opinion, never mind how evident it appeared to him, would not

\* Acts xv. 28.

† Acts xvi. 4.

shrink from his peculiarity with horror; so true is it that we all require in sacred subjects, to be upheld in our opinions by the authority of some society whose feelings go along with our own.

Thence it is that God, who has formed us, and who knows what is necessary for us, intended for our individual happiness, that we should each be subject to His Church, which of all Authorities is no doubt the best constituted, not only by reason of the Witness God Himself gives to it in Holy Scripture, but as well by the marks of His Divine protection which we see exhibited in the inviolable and perpetual existence of His Church, no less than in its miraculous institution.

## XX. *Opinions of the Reformers upon the Church's Authority.*

This Supreme Authority of the Church, which is quite indispensable to settle differences that are ever liable to arise, in matters of faith, and upon the various readings of the Scriptures, that our adversaries themselves, after having denounced it, by the name of "insufferable Tyranny," have been obliged to admit it among themselves.

When those among them they call Independents, declared openly that each member was to follow the guiding of his own conscience, without submitting his opinion to the Authority of any Ecclesiastical assembly or body, and on these grounds refused to be subjected to any synods; their own synod held at Charenton, in 1644, condemned this doctrine, for the very reasons and from the same fears which we anticipated.

This synod says, first, that the errors of the Independents consist in their teaching that "each Church ought to govern itself by its own laws without any *submission* to individuals in spiritual affairs, and without being obliged to recognise the authority of conferences and synods, in matters of discipline and government." Afterwards, the same synod decides that this sect is, "as prejudicial to the State as to the Church; for by these views it paves the way for all kinds of irregularities and extravagancies, and it takes care to put aside all means of repressing them, by rejecting proper authority, and only give it an opportunity, and it will form itself into as many religions as there are parishes or special meetings." These last words shew that this synod had principally in view the necessity of forcing these Independents to *submission* in matters of faith. It says, further, that one of the worst



results arising from such independence "would be their constituting as many religions as there are parishes." It follows, then, according to this synod, that each Church, and more than this, each individual shall submit, in matters of faith, to a superior Authority, residing in some assembly or body, and to this Authority all the faithful must yield their opinion. For the Independents tell you, they do not object to submit themselves to the Word of God, as long as they may be allowed to form their own interpretation thereon, or even to the decisions of a synod, provided they may examine them and find them reasonable; but what they refuse to do is, to submit their judgment to any body of men, because our adversaries have taught them that all assemblies, even that of the Universal Church, are composed merely of fallible men, to which consequently the Christian ought not to bind himself, because he owes this submission to God alone. From this perversion of the Independents we trace all the consequences the synod of Charenton so well defined. For never mind what profession soever is made of submission to the Word of God, if each individual has the right of interpreting it according to his views, and against the opinion of the Church declared by a final judgment, this assumption opens a road to "all kinds of extravagancies, and abolishes all lawful means of repressing the abuse," since the decisions of the Church are no rule to those who are not bound to submit to them. In fact, it gives them power to constitute as many religions "not only as there are parishes, but as there are heads."

To avoid these results and inconveniences, whence would originate a downfall of Christianity, the synod of Charenton is forced to "establish an absolute dependence in all ecclesiastical affairs," and also in matters of faith. But never will this dependence arrest the evil results it is intended to prevent, unless they hold, with us, this maxim:—that each particular Church, and more than this, each individual in particular, must believe that he is bound to submit his own judgment to the Church's Authority.

We see again, at chap. v. of "the Discipline" of these Reformers under the head "Consistories," art. 31, they attempt to silence "debates that might arise upon some point of Discipline or of doctrine;" and they desire that the Consistory shall try "to settle the whole without much noise, and with all the loving mildness of the Word of God." And after having agreed to establish a Consistory, a Conference, and a Provincial Synod, as so many grades of jurisdiction, ending at last in a national

Synod, above which they allow of no higher appeal, they speak in these terms: "There shall be received the final and entire decision of the Word of God; and if any shall refuse to submit to it precisely, or be unwilling to recant their errors, they shall be cut off from further communion" with the Church.

It is evident, then, that these so-called Reformers do not attribute the authority of this last judgment to the Word of God alone and independently of the interpretation of the Church, since this Word of God was their guide in the first judgments they had recourse to, and nevertheless they allow of this appeal to what they call higher authority.

It is, then, the Word of God as interpreted by the sovereign tribunal of the Church which makes, in truth, "this decision final and conclusive, and to which, if any refuse precise submission," though he profess to be authorised by the Word of God, he is to be looked upon as abusing and perverting it, and is to submit to the rigour of the law. But the form of the letters of advice which were drawn up at the synod of Vitré in 1617, to serve as a model to the provinces when they sent a deputation to the national synod is even stronger than this, it is couched in these terms, "We promise before God to submit to all that shall be concluded and resolved upon in the holy assembly, to obey it, and to carry out to the best of our ability all therein required, being convinced that God will preside over it, and will guide you with His Holy Spirit in all wisdom and truth by the power of His word." The question here is not whether they shall receive a resolution agreed to at a synod after they have found it to coincide with Scripture, but that they should submit before the assembly even meets; and they do submit, because they are persuaded that the "Holy Spirit will preside." If this conviction is the mere result of human presumption, can they in conscience "promise before God to submit to all that shall be concluded or resolved upon, to obey it, and to do all in their power to execute what they may be required to do?" But if the conviction be the consequence of a certain belief in the assistance that the Holy Spirit gives to His Church in her final judgments, the Catholics themselves require no other.

Now does not the conduct of our adversaries shew that they own as much as we do the necessity of this supreme authority without which they feel all the impossibility of settling any doubt or dispute in religious matters. And if at the time when they shook off their yoke

they denied that Christians had any need to submit their opinions to that of the Church, the necessity of establishing order among themselves has driven them in the end to recognize what their first principles refused to agree to.

They have gone much farther at the national synod held at St. Foi, 1578. There it was proposed to draw up a "formulary of the general articles of faith, that were held in common by all the Churches," by means of which an overture of reconciliation was made to the Lutherans. Those of this kingdom were invited to send, to an assembly held on purpose for this, "honest men, well approved of and authorized by all the forenamed Churches, with ample power to *treat, agree, and decide*, upon all points of doctrine, or other things relating to unity." To this proposition, the following are the terms in which was couched the resolution of the synod of St. Foi,—“The national synod of this kingdom, after giving thanks to God for such an opening, and praising the care, diligence, and good advice of the above named, and approving the remedies which they have advanced,” *i. e.*, principally that of drawing up a new confession of faith, and giving power to certain persons to assist at it, “has decreed that if the copy of the above named confession of faith be sent in time, it shall be examined in each provincial synod, or otherwise, according to the convenience of each province; and, moreover, has deputed four of the best informed and most able ministers, with express injunctions to be punctual at the day and hour there appointed, with letters, and full instructions from all the ministers and former deputies of the provinces of this realm, together with the Viscount de Turenne, to accomplish all that is mentioned above. *Even though they had not the means to examine throughout the provinces this above mentioned confession*, it is left to their prudence, and sound judgment to agree or *conclude* all the points under deliberation, *whether for doctrine* or other matters touching the well-being, unity, and peace of all the Churches.” This after all, is the point which the false scruples of the followers of this Reformed religion comes to. They who so often reproached as a weakness, this obedience *we* give to the decisions of the Church, which they say is only a society of men, subject to human frailties; *they*, assembled in a body, in a national synod, representing all the Churches of the “Reformers” of France, were not afraid to deliver their faith into the hands of four men, with such a complete surrender of their own right of judgment, that they gave free permission to them even to change this same

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[*Editorial Note.*—The above treatise, together with the Advertisement to the reader prefixed, is a free translation of the first copy of Bossuet's work which came to hand; viz. : an edition printed at Avignon in 1830. It is intended simply to express the full meaning of the original in corresponding English phrases, without aiming at any literary elegance. And it is purposely published without note or comment, as standing on its own merits, both in point of argument, and for accuracy of statement, for which the author alone is responsible.]

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