

## RESERVATION OF THE SACRAMENT.

THE hinge of the controversy in connection with the Revision of the Anglican Prayer Book is found in these two points: the reservation of the elements of bread and wine that have been consecrated to a sacramental use, and the wearing of certain garments by the officiating minister in administering the Sacrament. In the re-revised prayer book, this reservation is only officially sanctioned with reference to the administration of the Sacrament to the sick, and so the reservation for purposes of adoration and worship is, if not positively yet negatively forbidden. The rubric about the wearing of certain garments during the celebration of the Sacraments is only objected to on the grounds that the wearing of such garments is in the Romanist Communion connected with the ascription of miraculous power to the administrator, enabling him to change the substance of the elements into the body, blood and divinity of Christ. The great objection urged against both the proposed reservation and the injunction to wear such garments is that they open the way to views of the Sacrament that are away from the Protestant standpoint, and are really an approach to the views that prevail in the Romanist communions.

This leads to the question "What is the Protestant view of the Sacraments and especially of the Lord's Supper?" The Protestant view has this to commend it—that it lies between two extreme views.

It abjures the conception that there is nothing in the Sacraments but the objective presentation of divine truth by means of symbols and symbolic actions. Our Scotch Confession of 1560 vehemently repudiates those who advance such a view. "We utterlie damne (condemn) the vanitie of those that affirm sacraments to be nothing else but bare and naked signs.—Whosoever slanders us that we believe and affirm sacraments to be naked and bare signs do injury to us, and speak against the manifest truth." Robert Bruce, the Edinburgh minister, in his fine sermon on this subject says about the symbols: "I call them not signs because they represent only, but I call them signs because they have the body and blood conjoined with them.

. . . because God has made them potent instruments to deliver that same thing which they signify." This very same position has been taken up in the Westminster Confession of Faith. "There is," it is there affirmed, "a spiritual relation or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified, wherein it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other." The teaching of the thirty-nine Articles, which express the accepted creed of the Anglican Church is in perfect agreement with this view. It is there stated that the sacraments are "not only badges and tokens of Christian profession, but rather certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and of God's goodwill towards us, by which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." The meaning of those declarations is this, that there is more in the Sacraments than a picture expressing divine truth presented to the eye, and that the picture has a divine reality attached to it, that communicates itself to those who have the capacity to receive it. There are some paintings so lifelike that you would hardly be surprised if the person portrayed were to step out of the framework and address you. That is the wonderful thing that happens when faith gazes at the picture of the Saviour presented in the symbols used and the symbolic actions performed in the administration of the Lord's Supper. The Christian poet, gazing at the portrait of his saintly mother, who had been long dead, breathes the desire: "Oh, that those lips had language." This is a desire in relation to this picture of Christ that can be gratified. One has thus described an experience which came to him in connection with the observance of our Lord's Supper:

I stooped to see the wonder, and behold,  
 Within the cup a Countenance Divine,  
 Looked upwards at me through the trembling wine,  
 Suffused with tenderest love and grief untold,  
 The comfort of that sacramental token,  
 From memory's page time never will erase,  
 The glass of that rich window may be broken,  
 But not the mirrored image of His grace.  
 Through which my dying Lord to me hath spoken,  
 At His own holy table face to face.

Perhaps the one phrase in the description of his experience, to which exception might be taken is "my dying Lord." It should rather be "My Living Lord who died for me, who loved

me and gave Himself for me." Christ not only speaks to us across the centuries that have intervened since He spoke on earth, but He speaks to us in His word and in His Sacraments as the living and exalted Saviour. The Quaker American poet has beautifully expressed this thought :

No fable old, nor mythic lore,  
Nor dream of bards and seers,  
No dead fact stranded on the shore  
Of the oblivious years ;

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet  
A present help is He ;  
And faith has still its Olivet,  
And love its Galilee.

When we empty the Sacrament of this living, active presence of Christ communicating Himself in the benefits secured by His atoning death, we destroy its spiritual value. There may be mystery here—a mystery unintelligible to unenlightened human reason, but it is a mystery through which the light of divine grace shines brilliantly. The divine life, which is nourished by this self-communication of Christ, is also in this sense a mystery. The divine life in the human soul along the whole line of its development is in touch with mystery.

The Protestant views of the Sacrament puts far more into it than naked and bare signs. It regards the symbols and symbolic actions as having something more in them than one way in which God objectively presents the truth of the Gospel.

In advancing from this extremely low view of the sacrament, it stops short before an extreme view in the opposite direction is reached. This is the view that has obtained in the Latin and Greek Churches, and to a certain extent in the Lutheran Church. The essential thing in this view is that the symbols cease to be symbols, and become endued with a power to effect the ends contemplated in the sacrament, i.e., the communication of Christ. There are different conceptions in the different communions as to how the symbols become endued with this wondrous power. In every case the influence of the wonder-working, and life-giving Spirit is recognised, but His method of working and the effect produced is differently interpreted. In the Latin Church, the Romanist, the influence is exerted through a canonically ordained priest, i.e., one who can trace his

ecclesiastical descent from the Apostles, and through this Priest repeating in Latin the words used by Christ in instituting the Lord's Supper. The effect produced is a miraculous change in the substance of the symbols—the bread and wine—while what are called the accidents remain unchanged. It is not what we see or touch or handle that becomes changed, but something behind the appearance that is invisible and intangible. It is asserted that in place of that substance there is, after the words of consecration have been uttered, the body, blood and divinity of Christ. It is well that we should be careful in our definition of this change, for the Romanist Authorities lay great stress upon it. In the late Dr. Alexander Whyte's Hand-book on the Shorter Catechism, his comment on the words "not after a corporeal or carnal manner, but by faith made partakers of His body and blood" was in these terms: "This is directed against the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation. According to that doctrine the bread and wine are changed into the very flesh and blood of Christ, so that all communicants, literally and physically eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ." He sent a copy of this volume to Cardinal Newman, and it was pointed out to him in return that he had somewhat misconstrued the real position as Cardinal Newman understood it. The word "physically" was the word to which exception was taken. "Literally and *physically* eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ." So Dr. Whyte, to be quite accurate, changed his comment and made it read "According to this doctrine, the substance of the bread and wine is converted into the substance of the very flesh and blood of Christ—so that all communicants literally and substantially partake of His flesh and blood." The position of the Romanist Church is thus stated by Cardinal Newman "Not the most ignorant or stupid Catholic believes that he eats physically the body of our Lord. What we all believe is that we partake of the body and blood that hung upon the Cross, and in order that in the words of the Anglican Service 'Our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood,' but as to *how* he brings this to pass, it is a mystery."

With this mysterious and miraculous change wrought on the substance of the symbols, they have an inherent power of effecting sacramental ends, in bringing to those who receive them participation in the actual body and blood of the Saviour. They

effect these ends, to use the famous, but expressive phrase "Ex opere operato"—by the mere participation outwardly. In the Greek Church the matter is somewhat differently conceived. The body and blood of Christ is regarded as so implanted in the substance of the bread and wine that the substance disappears and gives place to the Divine reality. The term "Insubstantiation" has been used to describe the effect, but the word "Transubstantiation" is also used, as the effect in the end is the same. A Bishop of the Greek Church thus states his Church's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. "In the mystery of the Eucharist, and at the moment of the priest's invocation, God, the Holy Spirit, descends on the bread and wine, which have been set forth and sanctified and transubstantiates them into Christ's body and blood (not transforms them but transubstantiates them, for the substance gets changed, while the form of bread and wine remains to our eyes unchanged").

In the Lutheran Church the effect produced by the Divine Spirit through the consecration and invocation does not effect the substance or accidents of the bread and wine, but adds to them the bodily presence of the exalted Saviour that is communicated along with them to the recipients, although only with sanctifying effect in the case of those who receive in faith. What is effected is described as consubstantiation.

The common feature of all these views, is that the symbols cease to be merely symbols and become changed through the bodily presence of Christ in them or under them with a potency in themselves to accomplish sacramental ends. This has issued especially in the Latin Church in developments in doctrine and practice that have led the Church far away from the simplicity that is in Christ.

1. There is the exaltation of the Priesthood. The members of it, through the supposed Apostolic succession, have conferred on them the power of effecting this miracle—the changing of the substance of the bread and wine into the very substance of Christ himself. The Divine Spirit and the exalted Saviour are, so to speak, at their command. With their words of consecration and invocation, the Spirit must descend upon the bread and wine transubstantiating them, and the Divine Saviour must come and take the place of that substance. In this the Anti-Christian character of the system is manifested. "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called 'God.'" It is in

connection with this exaltation that the wearing of certain garments in the administration of the Lord's Supper has its place. These commanded garments are the insignia of the exalted position to which he has been raised and so of the powers with which he has been endowed. Hence the wearing of them is regarded as contributing to the efficacy of what is done by him. Whatever becomingness may be found in wearing the insignia of any official position in Church or State, the moment that any powers to effect any worthy ends is ascribed to these insignia, we are away from the region of reality. Especially in this the case with spiritual functions that are performed, with a view to the effecting of spiritual ends. To suppose that the wearing of a garment of a certain colour and shape is necessary to the efficacy of any spiritual function is not only to be away from the region of reality, but to touch the region of absurdity and superstition.

2. There is with the exaltation of the Priesthood and with the working of this supposed miracle of transubstantiation the ascription to the Priest of a function that entirely transforms the simple beautiful rite instituted by Christ. Not only does the Priest bring the Saviour in His bodily presence into the place that had been occupied by the substance of the bread and wine, but he presumes to say, and to make the people believe, that he offers the sacrifice of Calvary afresh, and thus secures the remission of sins to the living and to the dead. It is a Christ, as sacrificed afresh by priestly hands that is appropriated by participation in the Sacrament, and that avails for the remission of sins. The invitation to the people is: "Behold, in this wine and in this bread the Lamb of God laid afresh by me as a sacrifice on God's altar, who takes away your sin." It is no longer a memorial feast, exalting Calvary's Cross on which Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, but a repetition of what took place at Calvary, or rather a travesty of it.

This aspect of the Mass, and it enters into the very essence of the Romanist service, needs only to be brought into view, to make plain how far removed it is from the Supper as instituted by Christ in the Upper Room at Jerusalem, and as observed by His disciples in the early stages of the Christian era, of which glimpses are given to us in the New Testament.

3. A third development is found in the reservation of the Sacrament. With Christ thus sacrificed afresh in the place of the substance of the bread and wine, a very sacred character is

acquired by them. They must be carefully preserved from any secular use, and must be exalted into objects of adoration and worship. When they are elevated in the priestly hands that have effected the wonderful transformation, the people must bend the knee in worship before them. They are afterwards with great pomp and ceremony carried to a place prepared for their reception inside the building, and as deposited there they are regarded as objects of worship. Lighted candles are placed before them and worship is demanded of all who come near or pass by them. They are taken from this receptacle to the bedside of those who are dying that they may be given to them ere passing away to "fortify them"—to use the phrase which they employ—against their entrance into the unseen world. It is not usual in the Romanist Communion to administer the sacrament in the homes of the people, except to those in "articulo mortis" about to pass away from this present life.

This is an outline of the view of the Sacraments that is found at the other extreme from the elements being regarded as naked and bare signs.

The Protestant view of them abjures the foundation on which the whole superstructure rests. This is found in the doctrine of transubstantiation—asserting that the substance of the bread and wine somehow departs and its place is taken by the body, blood and divinity of Christ. It is as emphatically renounced in the Thirty-nine Articles which form the Creed of the Anglican Church as it is in the Creed of any reformed Church. Here are the terms in which it is renounced :

"Transubstantiation cannot be proved by Holy Writ, is repugnant to it, and has given occasion to many superstitions. Christ's risen body cannot be present at one time in many and divers places. A believer ought not to believe or confess the real and bodily presence of Christ's flesh and blood in the Sacrament. The offering of the Cross was once for all."

Here this doctrine of Transubstantiation is rejected *first* as having no basis in the teaching of Scripture, and beyond that as being repugnant to that teaching. It has been pointed out that the whole conception is "a pure accretion of a non-Hebraic, and sub-personal order. It came in originally to satisfy the Hellenistic mentality (essentially pagan) in its craving after a quasi physical 'food of immortality' for the corruptible human body, but it strongly influenced both the language and sacramental

thought of the Patristic and Mediæval Church, long after its original bodily, rather than doctrinal, interest, was forgotten. Evangelical grounds of objection to any realistic theory of Christ's bodily presence, however attenuated its corporeal nature may be, are not only its exegetical impossibility (Christ could not thus give Himself to the Disciples at the first Supper), but the physical impossibility of bodily ubiquity. They include also its irrelevance to the communion of persons, and the fact that in claiming a superiority *in kind* for the sacramental species of grace it lowers in idea the level of normal abiding spiritual communion of Christians with Christ, and so creates a dualism in the life of grace as a whole. In neither of these two latter regards—the personal communion with Christ and the exaltation of so-called sacramental grace above grace imparted in other ways, can this doctrine be brought into harmony with the genius of the Gospel of Christ and of His Apostles and of the nature of Grace and Faith in the New Testament sense. Yet such harmony is the final test of all properly Christian Sacramental Theory."

This doctrine of Transubstantiation is rejected in the Thirty-nine Articles not only as unscriptural and anti-scriptural, but as "having given occasion to many superstitions." The superstition specified is the supposed repetition of the sacrifice for sin made on Calvary. So it is said "The offering of the Cross was once for all." Behind this supposed repetition of the atoning sacrifice of Christ there lies this reservation of the Sacrament as it is called. There is really no meaning in the practice of Reservation unless a sacred character has been imparted to the elements, unless they have undergone some change by which they no longer remain bread and wine. In the Protestant view it is only in the use of them according to the divine appointment that they become vehicles through which is communicated as well as represented and sealed Christ and the benefits secured by His atoning death. After this use they revert back to their common use as merely bread and wine. So in the consecrating act there is set apart so much of the elements of bread and wine as may be used from a common to a holy and sacramental use. When the sacramental service is past what remains of the elements is removed from this sphere of "sacramentalism" and come back to the ordinary sphere. If the sacrament is to be administered in the homes of those who have been unable, on account of weakness or old age, to come to the sacrament—and there is

nothing really against such a practice, but some things to commend it, then the elements must be freshly set apart—so much of them as shall be used—and afterwards solemnly administered to the person receiving it. The custom quite in harmony with the Protestant view that obtains in many quarters is for the minister, with at least two elders, to visit the home where the weak or the aged are and reverently repeat the simple sacramental service that has been engaged in in the Sanctuary on the same day.

The objection to any reservation for any purpose whatever is that it is not necessary, and has behind it the idea that the elements of bread and wine have ceased to be what they naturally are, and have become something else. To justify it it requires something like the doctrine of Transubstantiation to be behind it.

There are some, however, who seek to defend the practice without admitting this doctrine of Transubstantiation. Two lines of defence are stated in a recent able book on the Sacraments by Canon Oliver Chase Quick—the one criticised by him and rejected—and the other accepted and supported. The one that is criticised and rejected by him has as its basis the value of symbolism in religion. “By consecration in the Eucharist,” they say the elements “are charged with new meaning” and as they continue to symbolise that meaning outside the rite itself, they may, at all times, be justifiably used as an external aid to the spiritual worship of the Lord’s person. Canon Quick’s objections to this ground for reservation are two-fold. The *one* is the endowment of the elements with the new meaning outside the Eucharistic rite. They are viewed as retaining the meaning, with which they have been charged by the act of consecration, after the administration of the Sacramental service. So they are regarded simply as symbols and nothing more, and they help simply as an external aid to worship. The second objection is that their concealment from view as reserved is hardly consistent with the service which they are supposed to render. “The reserved Sacrament is never perceptible to the bodily senses of the worshipper.” It is indeed surrounded by a possibly expressive symbolism of altar, tabernacle, lights, and the like, but its own presence is never outwardly apprehended at all. Now, if a Sacrament is in its essence an outward and visible sign of a spiritual reality, it is strange, to say the least, that in a sacramental worship the sacrament itself should be carefully guarded from

view. This concealment with the Romanist doctrine of Transubstantiation behind it is intelligible—that concealment may be an appropriate expression of reverence—but it is not very intelligible on any other supposition.

The whole question of the place of symbolism in New Testament worship is one that needs careful consideration. Under the plea that symbolism may be an external aid to worship things may be introduced into our places of worship and into the service that tend to destroy the simplicity that ought to characterise this New Testament worship. Whenever a symbol has any spiritual value attached to it, in itself, then it becomes a hindrance and not an aid to true spiritual worship. The brazen serpent was useful as a symbol of God's healing power, and as a memorial of the wonderful working of God's healing power, but when it itself became an object of devotion it was time to destroy it.

We come now to examine the ground on which Canon Quick justifies this practice of the reservation of the Sacrament. It lies in the character that he ascribes to the sacramental rite. "The action of every Eucharist begins in the inward and eternal sphere where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Christ's action then reaches its first stage of externalisation in the body, the Church, which at a given place and time, in the person of its priest, offers the bread and wine in memorial of His Passion. The action is then further externalised and extended into the consecrated bread and wine themselves as representing the offered body of Christ's manhood. From this furthest and lowest point of externalisation the action of the living Christ returns back as they receive Him in communion. In them it brings forth the spiritual fruits of their own self-offering which raises them towards Heaven in Christ's power. So the Eucharistic action returns in the end to Heaven, which was its source." The result of this action of Christ is that He externalises Himself in such a way that He, in His complete personality, is identified with the bread and wine. He is offered anew to God in them—they are given to communicants as representing this offered body of Christ's manhood. So we are told that the effect of consecration is such that there seems to be no reason why we should not willingly accept the statement "that the bread and wine are so charged as to become the body and blood of Christ, if it be understood that the terms body and blood denote, not material

things as such, but outward things as they are in relation to a spiritual activity which operates and expresses itself through them."

With this change Canon Quick maintains that it is a laudable and an ancient custom that there should be reservation for the communion of those who are unavoidably prevented from attending the Eucharist in Church.

This whole position differs from the Romanist position more in appearance than in reality. The action of Christ in the sacramental rite is rightly emphasised, but is wrongly interpreted. There is the conception of Christ *externalising* Himself. What ground is there in the Scripture teaching for this conception? He manifests Himself in making His presence felt, but this is a different conception altogether from externalisation. Indeed the method of his manifestation as described in the New Testament seems to exclude this conception of externalisation. The question was asked "How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world" indicating that His manifestation of Himself was spiritual and could only be spiritually discerned.

Then the conception of Christ as Christ being offered to God as a memorial of His Passion, in the consecration of the bread and wine, is alien from the teaching of the New Testament. Christ indeed, is pictured in the New Testament as presenting Himself to God as having offered a perfect atonement for Sin in His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross. He appears in the presence of God for us as the advocate with the Father, and as having made propitiation for the sin of the world. But that He so identifies Himself with the bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper—externalises Himself in them so that they become mysteriously changed into His body and blood—that He may be offered anew as a sacrifice—that conception has no basis whatever in New Testament teaching. "Once for all in the end of the age He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Further there is the conception of a sacrificing priest. "The Church, which at a given place and time in the presence of its priest offers the bread and wine as a memorial of His Passion." The only conception of the sacrificing human priest that is in harmony with New Testament teaching is that connected with the universal priesthood of believers. The sacrifices which they present are themselves in the offerings of different kinds, which

under the constraining power of the love of Christ in His great and perfect self-sacrifice for them they present to God.

The conclusion is plain that the idea of reservation is inexplicably linked to the idea of some miraculous change effected upon the Sacramental elements investing them with a divine character and power.

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