



TRANSUBSTANTIATION

A

TRACTARIAN DOCTRINE.

SUGGESTED BY

“ARCHDEACON WILBERFORCE

ON

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.”

BY

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TRANSUBSTANTIATION

A TRACTARIAN DOCTRINE.

THE Church of Rome professes to believe in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, or change of the substance of Bread and Wine into "the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, Bones and Sinews (*ossa et nervos*), of very Christ."—*Catechism of Trent*. The Church of England declares Transubstantiation to be "repugnant to the plain words of Scripture," &c.—(Art. xxviii.)

The Church of Rome professes that in "the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead."—*Creed of Pius IV*. The Church of England designates the Mass as a "blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit."—(Art. xxxi.)

The Doctrines of ROME and ENGLAND are thus essentially opposed the one to the other.

Certain persons, professing themselves members of the Church of England, maintain or approximate to, the *Romish* doctrines on these topics. These persons are commonly designated as TRACTARIANS. Are they TRUE CHURCHMEN? Let us see:—

Archdeacon Wilberforce is regarded by the Tractarian party as a leader and a high authority. From his work on the "Holy Eucharist" we shall judge both himself and his adherents. (Third edition, 1854.)

Does Tractarianism profess belief in Transubstantiation?

Archdeacon Wilberforce alleges (p. 146) that "our Lord is *substantially* present," and (p. 186) "our Lord bestows himself *substantially*, in the Holy Eucharist."

He proceeds (p. 147) to select from three respective theories the actual mode of Christ's presence, viz., "His presence is either *Symbolical*, *Virtual*, or *Real*." He determines that it is not *Symbolical*,—that it is not *Virtual*,—and that, therefore, it must be *Real*. The import of these words, especially

the last named, and his reason for preferring *it*, he illustrates as follows :—

“ Here we may *sum up* the result of our comparison between the three kinds of presence—Symbolical, Virtual, and Real. The Emperor Charlemagne might be said to be present *figuratively* or *symbolically*, throughout his vast empire, because justice was everywhere administered in his name: He was present throughout it *virtually*, for . . . his influence was everywhere felt: but *really* he was *only* present in his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle.”—P. 151-2.

We could desire no better illustration as applicable to the nature of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, but Mr. Wilberforce attempts to show the *non-applicability* of *his own* illustration to the case to be *thereby* illustrated!—

“ If our Blessed Lord’s Humanity had no other than that *natural* presence which belongs to common men, His *Real* Presence would in like manner be *confined* to that *one place* which He occupies in Heaven. But by reason of those attributes which His manhood possesses through its oneness with God, He has likewise a *supernatural* presence. . . . He is present *Himself*, and not merely by His influence, effects, and operation: by that *essence* and in that *substance*, which belongs to Him as the true Head of mankind. And, therefore, He is *really* present,” &c.

The above definition militates against the nature of a body which is and must be local and finite. Of such nature was and is the Body of Christ. While on earth He was bodily present in one place only at a time, and therefore bodily absent from all other places. But Mr. Wilberforce will not admit the Body of Christ to be thus local and finite, while yet (p. 137) he cannot claim for it ubiquity or omnipresence. He writes, (p. 135), “ Our Lord’s Human body was, in various respects, ‘*exempted*’ from those laws by which humanity is commonly restricted;” and again, (p. 137,) that it possesses “ a certain capacity of presence beyond that which other bodies possess.” Both of these propositions, however, are physically and scripturally untrue.

Mr. Wilberforce’s theory also militates against the final *Rubric* appended to the “ Communion Service,” which declares that “ the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven and *not here*; it being against the truth of Christ’s natural body to be at one time in more places than one.” ’Tis true, Mr. Wilberforce distinguishes between a *natural* and a *supernatural* presence, but is notwithstanding obliged to admit (p. 258) that the Rubric of our Church does not speak at all of any “ *supernatural* presence in the Eucharist,” and that as such it does not go far enough, and is not, to him, satisfactory!

Mr. Wilberforce further alleges, as an "undoubted truth," (p. 243,) "that the elements in the Holy Eucharist are *changed* by Consecration." So says the Church of Rome also!

Mr. Wilberforce maintains (p. 95) that this Body into which the elements are "changed" is "that Human Body . . . which Christ took of the Virgin." Thus also says the Church of Rome. Now, mark herein the accurate and even verbal resemblance between the Archdeacon and the *Roman* Catechism:—

Mr. Wilberforce quotes with approbation (p. 107):—

"The Holy Communion is not simple bread, but that very Body and Blood of Christ, which was incarnate, and *born of the Virgin Mary.*"

The Trent Catechism enjoins, P. II. c. iv. q. 26:—

"The true Body of Christ, *that same which was born of the Virgin,* is contained in this Sacrament!"

Thus Mr. Wilberforce and Rome literally agree!!

Mr. Wilberforce states (p. 96) that the word "is" may express either "*representation or identity,*" and argues, "When it is said, 'This is my Body,' the word 'is' expresses *identity.*" So says the Church of Rome also! Not so, however, the Church of England: she says that Christ is bodily "in heaven and *not here.*" Thus, Mr. Wilberforce, an Archdeacon of the Church of England, denies *her* doctrines, and embraces those of England's great enemy—ROME! Is this Truth? Is it honourable consistency?

From this supposed Real (*i.e.* "Substantial," "Identical") Bodily Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the Dignitary proceeds, consistently with his Romish theory—but inconsistently with his Protestant 'Dignity'—(p. 256, &c.)—to demand worship and adoration for the consecrated elements—"to render Him Divine honour" *in* the elements. He glaringly misinterprets (p. 257) the devout "posture of kneeling for the reception of the elements" in the Church of England service. Here again is Mr. Wilberforce at issue with the final Rubric of the Communion office, which unequivocally anticipates and refutes such a charge, whether resulting from "ignorance and infirmity, or out of *malice and obstinacy*"! Accordingly the Archdeacon falls out with the Rubric, and (strange for a Rubrical Dignitary!) designates it as "the somewhat ambiguous Rubric"! Yet, notwithstanding the plain teaching of the Church of England, one of her Archdeacons broaches the broad Romish dogma, (p. 259), that "the

presence of Christ's Body and Blood is witnessed [*i.e.* proved] *by the adoration to which they are entitled*!! This is Tractarianism! In what does it differ from Romanism?

The Archdeacon, in page 109, acts as the apologist of the Church of Rome, and this at the expense of the express teaching of the Church of England. He attempts to explain away the Romish dogma of Transubstantiation, and says that, upon his theory, "the contradiction" between Rome and England "would be *verbal* rather than *real*; in language and not in thought." He, moreover, strangely enough, observes, that the words of the XXVIIIth Article "really censure the people of *Capernaum*" and not the Church of Rome! Rome, however, needs not the defence of the Protestant (?) Archdeacon: she has expressly declared herself *in favour* of unqualified Transubstantiation, and the Church of England has expressed her unqualified verdict *against* the same. If the Archdeacon's *protest* against Rome is to be "*verbal* rather than *real*," he had better cross the Rubicon at once, but let him not meddle with or explain away the unqualified protest of the Church of England, which she still maintains *against* the Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Mr. Wilberforce quotes with approbation (p. 72) the Romish custom of receiving the Eucharist *fasting*, and regrets (p. 73) "the comparative disuse of this primitive usage among ourselves." Now, whatever may be the Romish and Tractarian usage, this much we know, the Church of England recognizes no such custom; nor yet did Christ or his Apostles, for they communicated of the bread "*as they were eating*." Matt. xxvi. 26; and likewise partook of the Cup "*after supper*." Luke xxii. 20.

A further agreement between Mr. Wilberforce and the Romish doctrine may appear from the following parallel:—

The Archdeacon writes (p. 70):—

"Christ was asserted to communicate Himself as a *whole*, in every *portion* of the consecrated elements."

"The gift which was supposed to be imparted perfectly *through every portion of either element*."

The Catechism of Trent declares—P. II. c. iv. q. 34:

"Whole Christ is contained not only in *either* element, but in *every portion of either element*."

q. 64. "The *heresy* of those was to be rooted up, who denied that *whole Christ is in either element*."

Consistently enough with this theory, but very inconsistently with his Protestant profession, the Archdeacon argues (p. 70-2,) in favour of the Romish practice of Half

Communion!—and this, again, contrary to the express teaching of the Church of England, which declares (Article XXX.) that “the Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay People.” This, however, is Tractarianism,—a system which runs directly counter to the most express declarations of the Church of England.

Both Mr. Wilberforce and the Catechism of Trent express, in somewhat similar terms, the *philosophy* of this supposed change of substance. In fact, they both meet in the dark and are equally obscure and unintelligible in their attempt to enlighten us therein. We place them side by side, as follows :—

Mr. Wilberforce quotes, as an illustration, a foreign writer :—

“Recent discoveries . . . tell us of powers, like that of magnetism, about which it is uncertain whether they have any *material ground-work*—any substratum by which they are supported.”—p. 81.

The Catechism of Trent enjoins, Pars II., c. iv., q. 43 :—

“The species of bread and wine in this Sacrament, remain *without any ground-work* . . . because those accidents cannot attach to the Body and Blood of Christ, it remains . . . that they uphold themselves *without any other thing to support them.*”

Pursuing the Dignitary still further, we find him again borrowing his manner of speech from the Catechism of Trent—(not a very Protestant act however!) Both alike speak of the supernatural nature of Christ’s bodily presence. Parallel columns shall again present them side by side :—

Mr. Wilberforce writes, (p. 99)—

“. . . Christ’s presence is specific and supernatural. Wherein, then, does the identity consist? It is plainly a peculiar principle—*sui generis*; [which being *without parallel* in the world around, is entitled to a specific appellation. . . that mysterious law of consecration, of which we have *no other example.*”

The Catechism of Trent enjoins—

“The faithful are to be admonished that they inquire not too curiously by what means this change is wrought; for neither can it be perceived by us, *nor have we any example* of this matter in natural changes, or in the creation of things.”—Pars II., c. iv., q. 41.

We should not, perhaps, have offered any remark on the above, not even on the striking resemblance of phraseology, but for the purpose of exhibiting Mr. Wilberforce in conjunction with a noted Roman Catholic controversialist—Dr.

Cahill. In both these cases, we shall expose the inconsistency into which these individuals have respectively fallen, and shew the resemblance of their argument, whereby one (Dr. Cahill) is inconsistent with his Church and the other (Mr. Wilberforce) is inconsistent with *himself*! They both illustrate, by parallels and examples, that very principle to which they have both alleged there is *no* parallel and of which, they say, there is *no* example!—

Dr. Cahill, writing in the *Tablet*, Dec. 17th, 1853, proves himself inconsistent with the teaching of the Trent Catechism, as quoted above:—

“The food which you may have eaten is changed into flesh and blood in your person, The crop of wood and grasses, &c., is an annual evidence of Transubstantiation. The hat on your head, the silk in your cravat, the coals in your grates, the gas in your lamps, the bread, the butter, the cream, . . . the wine, the brandy, the ale, in short, *almost every object* the eye beholds on earth, is one vast aggregate of evidence of Transubstantiation”!

Mr. Wilberforce quotes, *con amore*, a passage from a foreign writer, which proves him inconsistent with himself as quoted above:—

“Recent discoveries in physics exhibit to us changes and conditions of bodies, such as the chemical combinations of water, air, and fire, of acids and alkalis, which furnish ground for conjecturing that our ordinary conceptions of matter are defective; and they tell us of powers, like that of magnetism, about which it is uncertain whether they have any material groundwork.”—p. 81.

Here, then, according to Archdeacon Wilberforce and Dr. Cahill, there are daily, hourly, universal, constant evidences and examples of that to which there exists *no* parallel. But, one word with these gentlemen: If “wood and grasses,” “acids and alkalis,” “coals and gases,” “wine and ale,” “fire and water,” and a thousand such like things, exhibit changes and alterations, these changes and alterations are visible to the outward eye—tangible to the outward touch—evidenced by all the senses which we possess. Pray, then, where is the parallel in Transubstantiation? *There* the Senses have no office and Reason is denied the due exercise of her prerogative. If “chemical combinations, acids and alkalis,” according to Mr. Wilberforce, be examples of Transubstantiation, then the Chemist can transubstantiate as well as the Priest—nay, better, *infinitely* better, for he can *shew* the results of his manipulation, which the Priest cannot do. Or, if the “hat and silk manufacturer,” and such like artizans, as Dr. Cahill more popularly expresses it, can transubstantiate,

what marvel, then, if the Priest can do the same? Nay, more, the Artizan can transubstantiate with far greater success than can the most assiduous Priest in Christendom! Test this matter by plain matter of fact; set the Priest at his altar and the Peasant at his loom, to pursue for one half hour their respective craft, and believe me, the result will be placed beyond the shadow of a shade of doubt within that brief space of time.

But to proceed. Mr. Wilberforce devotes his seventh chapter to a discussion regarding the sixth of St. John's Gospel. This he interprets in the strongest literal sense. So does the Roman Catholic. We would beg to direct both the Archdeacon and our Roman Catholic readers to two other passages which seem to present a parallel to this conversation with the Jews.

In John iii. 1—13, we are introduced to the conversation between our blessed Lord and Nicodemus. Our Lord observes, (v. 3), "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus imagines that he must understand the expression literally, and under this impression inquires accordingly, whereupon he is informed as to the spiritual import of the words, "The wind bloweth where it listeth," &c.

In the following chapter, (John iv. 1—26,) we find another conversation of a similar kind. Our Lord, at Jacob's well, deriving the subject matter of His Discourse, as was His custom, from present circumstances, tells the woman of Samaria of the "living water," which it is in His power to give. The woman understands his meaning as did Nicodemus, and supposing him to speak *literally*, observes, in amazement, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep," &c. She is then partially informed as to the *spiritual* meaning of our Lord's language. (v. 13—24.)

So likewise in John vi. 41—63, our Lord, deriving the subject of His conversation from the preceding miracle of feeding the multitude, speaks of flesh and blood, eating and drinking, &c. The Jews, like Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, are amazed, and understanding His words in their literal sense, murmur among themselves; but ere long our blessed Lord supplies the *spiritual* key, as on the former occasions, and explains His spiritual meaning, "It is the *spirit* that quickeneth, *the flesh profiteth nothing*: the words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are life," John vi. 63.

Archdeacon Wilberforce desires to see a "Daily Sacrifice"

offered in every Church. If that Sacrifice be the Daily "Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving," we could not object to the proposal. But the Sacrifice which Mr. Wilberforce advocates is not such. It involves not a Eucharistic or Commemorative character, but the character of a real, actual, literal, propitiatory offering. In fact, the Archdeacon designates it (p. 302) as "*that very Sacrifice*" which was offered on the Cross. So says the Church of Rome also. He maintains, as above proved, the real *substantial* presence of Christ's Body and Blood. To this he requires worship and adoration to be given, and in almost every particular regards it as the Roman Catholic regards the Sacrifice of the Mass. Hence we find the Church of England (?) Dignitary insisting on the revival of the Romish rite—(p. 369)—"Not only was the Holy Eucharist daily ministered in the Primitive Church, but its staple *worship* was the Eucharistic *Sacrifice*." He rebukes the inertness of the age in which he lives, and thus gives utterance to the repinings of his soul—(p. 376):—

"There have been men of thought among us, and men of activity, men endowed with ample means, and raised to those positions which qualify them to take the lead and give a tone to the opinion of their fellows. How comes it, then, that with a professed intention of respecting antiquity, there should be so fundamental a difference between ancient and modern times, and that to return to the scriptural (?) and primitive model should never have been thought of, notwithstanding all the learning, leisure, and zeal, which has existed in the Church of England?"

We tell Archdeacon Wilberforce, in reply to his question thus proposed, that the men who "*have* taken the lead and have given a tone to the opinion of their fellows," after the *beau ideal* suggested by the Archdeacon,—these men are now where all that tread in their footsteps must eventually be—in the bosom of ROME. They sought a "Daily Sacrifice," founded upon the dogma of Transubstantiation; they sought it where, thank God, it is not—in the Church of England. And failing to find it there, they then made attempts to *Romanise*, and thus traduce her Protestant character. Rubrics, charged to the full with Protestant doctrine, intercepted their design. For a time they continued a contest against these outspoken authorities; designated them as "somewhat ambiguous Rubrics," and so forth. At length, however, a strong necessity demanded another and yet another step, until the sad catastrophe has been precipitated, and Rome wraps her mantle round her victims.

Even Private Communion, so strictly forbidden by the

Church of England, is advocated by the Archdeacon after a fashion "ever faithfully" resembling the secret Masses of the Romish Church. An extract is quoted with hearty approbation, and which, in very legible *italics*, proceeds:—

"Indeed, better were it to endure *the absence of the people* than for the minister to neglect the usual and Daily Sacrifice of the Church, by which all people, *whether they be there or no*, reap so much benefit"!—p. 381.

With such unmistakable teaching, it would be perhaps stopping short of inevitable consequences, if the Archdeacon did not commit his theory to some definite purpose. Accordingly we find the Dignitary proposing, with some degree of boldness, the following among his "Practical Conclusions":—

"Any Priest, who could induce his people to give its due prominence to the Eucharistic office, might *at once* resume the ancient usage: or if it were thought presumptuous in a Priest to take such a step on his own authority, it might plainly be done *by any Bishop*. For each Diocese is an integral portion of the Universal Church; and every Bishop, therefore, would possess full authority to reform an abuse, which does not depend upon law, but upon custom."! p. 383.

To the above, the following very significant note is appended:—

"*Four places* in different Dioceses may already be mentioned, where the Christian Sacrifice is daily offered, according to *Apostolic* (?) custom, by Priests of the Church of England. But it would be dangerous to invite persons to communicate daily or to be present daily at the offering of the Sacrament, unless they have such assured faith in the Real Presence, as to come 'discerning the Lord's body.'"—*Ibid.*

Four places, and thereby four different Dioceses, and, we presume, four individual Diocesans, already committed to the practical result of Archdeacon Wilberforce's theory! This is a fact worthy of attention. The process suggested for the extension of this form throughout England seems to be—to impress the minds of the people with the notion of a Real (that is nothing more nor less than a Corporeal) Presence, and then to carry out fully the consequences of such belief—namely, the full Romish consecration—elevation—*worship*. But can they then "discern the Lord's *Body*" any better than now? Not surely, even then, by the eye of sense, for these things must be "*spiritually* discerned," which, at once, involves and proves—not a *carnal* but a *spiritual* presence, to be discerned *by faith*. As saith the Church of England:—

"The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, *only* after an *heavenly* and *spiritual* manner. And the *mean* whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is *Faith*."—Art. xxviii.

We have here presented a melancholy but self-drawn picture of Tractarianism as represented by one of its foremost leaders, one who still retains his "Dignity" in the Church of England. We await a decisive voice to avenge the injured cause of our Beloved Church, for, in truth, she sanctions no such theology—else, her Martyrs had not died—her Confessors had not protested—her Reformation had never marched onward through the blood of her slain to triumph and to victory. "How long, O Lord, how long?"

Meanwhile, our enemies begin to extend the right hand of fellowship to their Anglican *friend*. One cannot but blush with rising shame to hear already the panegyric of a professedly Protestant Dignitary sounding forth in the camp of the enemy. Let the shame, however, rest on him who evokes their praise and merits their laudation. The *Rambler*, (January, 1854), a Roman Catholic organ, thus faithfully tells the whole truth:—

"We may briefly sum up the teaching of Mr. Wilberforce in this work, by saying that, with the exception of an occasional and manifestly unintentional inaccuracy of expression, he teaches the doctrine of the [Roman] Catholic Church."!

And again:—

"We now proceed from the Sacramental to the Sacrificial part of the Holy Eucharist; and we rejoice to be able to state that here, too, Archdeacon Wilberforce's teaching is *distinct*; it sets forth clearly the sacred doctrine of *the Mass*."!

The Archdeacon, however, has his reward. He wrote in favour of Rome, and Rome has gracefully acknowledged the benefit. Meanwhile, may not the question worthily occupy the minds of Englishmen, if it has no place in the mind of a Wilberforce,—Shall a Dignitary of the Church of England be allowed to write down the Mother that advanced him to his Dignity—to cherish and advocate a system antagonistic thereto in every particular—to launch us, all at once, into Popery proper—and thus play falsely into the hands of the foe and act treacherously to the friend of his youth, and thereby attest and clearly prove that a man's worst foes are "they of his own household"?

Brethren!—"Consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds." Judg. xix. 30.

