

THE
MERCERSBURG QUARTERLY REVIEW.

APRIL, 1854.

ART. I.—WILBERFORCE ON THE EUCHARIST.*

It speaks well, on the whole, for the Christian mind of England, that this important work has met with so favorable a reception from it, as to have run already nearly, or by this time perhaps altogether, to the end of its second edition. The first seems to have been exhausted almost as soon as it came from the press. Considering the character of the book, this is something significant, and as we say furnishes just cause for satisfaction. Our satisfaction with it need not depend at all on the view we may take of the author's doctrine and argument. Whatever may be thought of this, all who care for theology and religion, which are still at last the greatest interests of the age, ought certainly to be pleased that the subject here discussed by Archdeacon Wilberforce, entering as it does into the inmost sanctuary of Christian science and life, should be found able to engage in this form so much prompt and active attention. There is a style of theology, we know, and a manner of religion, which would fain be done forever with all inquiry and discussion looking in any such direction; a theology and religion, for which the whole doctrine of the sacraments resolves itself into the simplest naturalism and every-day common sense, without any sort of mystery whatever, and in whose eyes accordingly every attempt to make more of them in any way is set down at once for solemn super-

* THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST. *By Robert Isaac Wilberforce, A. M., Archdeacon of the East Riding.* London: 1853. Republished in this country by H Hooker, Philadelphia.

stitution and nonsense. But this system of thinking carries its sentence of condemnation on its own forehead. Wherever it prevails, Christianity is found to part continually more and more with its proper character, both as life and doctrine. Whether men choose to know it, and lay it to heart, or not, the view that is taken of the Holy Sacraments, as conditioning the view that is taken of the Holy Catholic Church, and through this again the view that is taken of the whole mystery of the Incarnation, must ever be of radical and primary account in all true Christian theology. Especially must this be the case with the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which has been regarded from the beginning as the most solemn among all the services of the Church, the foundation of its entire worship, and the beating, living heart, we may say, of its universal life. Not to feel its central significance in such view, and not to take an active interest in the proper solution and settlement of the great questions which it involves as an article of piety and faith, is to stand convicted at once of being in a false position with regard to the grace of the Gospel generally. It is a position as different, as any that can well be imagined, from that of the ancient Church. It is completely at war also with the tone of thought which prevailed, on all sides, in the age of the Reformation. Its affinities are with heresy, rationalism, and unbelief. We have reason to welcome then any work, which, like this of Wilberforce, aims in a serious and earnest way, with powerful argument and comprehensive learning, to call the attention of the Protestant world to this momentous subject; and it is a gratification to know, that in the midst of the downward tendencies of the present time, a work on such subject and of such character should be received, as this has been at least in England, with so much interest and favor. We would be glad, if it could be brought to have still greater circulation in America. Not, as we have already intimated, for the sake of its own particular doctrine, so far as this may be considered peculiar in any view; but for the sake rather of its general object and purpose, the discussion namely of the true meaning of the Holy Eucharist, and the determination of what is to be

considered the proper faith of Protestantism with regard to it, as measured by the faith and practice of the early Church.

The author tells us in his Introduction, that the present work is the sequel of his Treatise on the Doctrine of the Incarnation, published a few years since. It was there asserted, that the "Sacraments are the extension of the Incarnation," and a chapter was devoted to the consideration of them in this view. But the thought was felt to require more full discussion. Another work followed, accordingly, on the Doctrine of Holy Baptism; and now we have, to complete the plan, this present volume on the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. The same general view of the nature of Christianity, of course, runs through all these three treatises. They go, in a certain respect, to make up a common whole, the view that is taken of the Sacraments being conditioned, as just stated, by the view that is taken of the mystery of the Incarnation. This is a relation, indeed, that must always hold in any theological system. As men think of the Sacraments, so will they be found in every case, on proper inquiry, to think also of the Incarnation. A Gnostic Eucharist or the contrary, implies a Gnostic Christ or the contrary. It must not be supposed, however, in the case before us, that the author's doctrine of the Incarnation and doctrine of the Eucharist are so bound together, as to make this last dependent absolutely on all the details which enter into the first. Some, we know, have taken exception to certain parts of the first work, as involving to their mind a questionable philosophy, which they have pretended to censure at times under the vague and convenient title of pantheism. We do not suppose it to be fairly open in truth to any such charge. But what we wish to say here is, that no philosophical difficulty which any may be pleased to attribute to it in this way, can be regarded as extending to the present work. So far as the author's view of the Eucharist is conditioned by his view of the Incarnation, it is not in any such way as to include the questionable conceptions which have been charged upon him by those of whom we now speak; on the contrary, these are carefully avoided, the consequences being so ordered

here as to refuse rather than to require any sense of that sort for the premises exhibited in the other case. It is simply with the mystery of the Incarnation as a fact, in the form in which it comes before us in the New Testament and in the universal faith of the ancient Christian Church, that the relation is supposed to hold which imparts to the mystery of the Holy Supper, as a parallel fact, its true character and meaning. In the book before us, accordingly, the whole subject is treated as a matter of fact and authority merely, rather than as a matter of theory and speculation. On all points involved in the discussion, the appeal is in the first place to the Scriptures, and then in the next place to the judgment and practice of the Church in the first ages. Not as if this ancient tradition were taken to be an independent and separate authority, co-ordinate with the written word. "Scripture is referred to as the paramount authority, but when its meaning is disputed, the judgment of the early ages has been taken," we are told, "as being a safer exponent of its real purpose than mere logical arguments."

"And surely there is no point," our author goes on to say, "on which the judgment of primitive Christians is of more value than this. For it was a point on which their judgment was entirely unanimous. On many subjects the Church was early rent into parties; so that at times it was difficult to say what doctrine was predominant. But respecting the Holy Eucharist there existed no symptom of disagreement for eight centuries and a half. No doubt the received doctrine had been earlier disputed, but it was not by dissentients within the Church, but by external opponents. The Gnostics, who denied that the Holy Eucharist was the Flesh of our Lord, cut themselves off in the second century from the Church; and the Messalian heretics who denied that this sacred food was either beneficial or injurious, were cut off from it by its public sentence in the fourth. These external assaults throw greater light upon the unanimity which prevailed within. So that Paschasius is the first author who has ever been alleged to have introduced any doctrine, which did not meet with universal

approval; and the statements of earlier writers were admitted at the time to express the collective judgment of the whole community. Now those who look to the first Christians merely as witnesses, must allow that they were so far competent judges of the system which was delivered to them, that they could not all have been mistaken respecting its characteristic features. And those who take a higher view of the Church's judgment, and admit it to possess authority in controversies of faith, cannot dispute its decision upon a point on which there was no dissension. For the eight centuries and a half which precede Paschasius, are those also which precede Photius; they are the period when the East and the West were yet undivided, and when the Church could appeal with the fullest confidence to the promise of a supernatural guidance."

Pursuing this line of argument, the work devotes itself to the task of proving, "that Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist is a real presence; that the blessings of the new life are truly bestowed in it through communion with the New Adam; that consecration is a real act, whereby the inward part or thing signified is joined to the outward and visible sign; and that the Eucharistic oblation is a real sacrifice." These are considered to be practical points, on which it is possible to produce distinct evidence from Scripture and the primitive Church; whereas the mode or manner in which the general mystery is brought to pass, whether it be by transubstantiation or in some other way, is supposed not to have come under consideration during the first eight centuries; and for this reason it is not allowed to come here into any particular discussion.

The first point considered is the *consecration* of the elements. The words of institution are found plainly to imply, that the bread and wine used in the Eucharist are made to receive a new quality or character, by God's blessing, by which they become distinguished from all other bread and wine, and acquire a fitness for the use here made of them which they would not otherwise have. The separation is not merely nominal, something that is of force only in the minds of those who take part in the service; it exists objectively in the elements them-

selves. They are not what they were before. It is not bread and wine in general that can serve the purposes of this Sacrament, as any water may serve the purposes of Baptism; the case requires bread and wine set previously in supernatural connection with that which they are employed to signify and represent. They are set apart and made meet for this use by their consecration; which therefore is a real act, that joins in a real way the thing signified with the sign. So the words of institution most naturally and obviously teach; and such, accordingly, was the interpretation they received from the first in the Christian Church. With regard to this point, all know, who have given the least attention to ecclesiastical history, that in the first ages, as far back as to the very time of the Apostles, there was but one opinion. The elements consecrated, the Fathers tell us from Ignatius and Justin Martyr onwards, were held to be no longer common bread and wine, but "the Flesh and blood of the Incarnate Jesus." They must be consecrated, to become what the mystery of the Sacrament required; and when so consecrated they were made to possess in fact a new character that did not belong to them before, in virtue of which they might be considered and named the Body and Blood of Christ. Hence the vast importance which was always attached to the act of consecration; and along with this the belief also that it could not be effected, save by those to whom a specific commission had been transmitted, carrying along with it the power of a true priestly office. It is enough to refer here to the ancient Liturgies. They have but one voice on the subject; and every early writer utters himself, wherever he has occasion to do so, in the same general way.

From this view of the consecration of the elements, as being an essential characteristic of the Eucharist, the consequence is supposed necessarily to follow that the inward blessing which results from it is bestowed through its outward form. The connection between the sign and the thing signified, in other words, is so real and objective, that the first carries along with it really and truly the presence of the second. The elements are not only a pledge, but the very vehicle itself of the grace

or gift, to which, by previous consecration, they have become thus sacramentally bound. The relation of course is not physical, but moral; it holds not in the order of nature, but in the order of grace. Still it is none the less sure and certain on this account. In the economy of the Christian salvation, the Sacraments are made, by God's sovereign good pleasure and will, to be real, and not simply imaginary channels of the grace they represent; and in the case of the Holy Eucharist, the instrument of such consequence is not a sacramental act merely, as in the administration of Baptism, but the elements themselves solemnly prepared for the purpose beforehand by proper consecration. To prove the necessity of this view our author first takes up those modern systems by which it is denied, and tries to show that they necessarily run themselves into consequences that destroy faith altogether. These reduce themselves to the two theories of Zuinglius and Calvin. With Zuinglius, all is made to depend on the mind of the receiver. Consecration adds nothing to the elements. The Lord's Supper sinks into a mere outward commemoration. There is no mystery in it whatever. This is such rationalism as runs at once towards open infidelity. So it was regarded by Calvin, who labored accordingly to give the institution a higher character for the Reformed Church. He insists much on the idea of our actual communication with Christ's Body, and maintains, that this interior benefit goes along with the participation of the sacramental elements in the case of true believers; while yet, according to our author, the inward and outward here are not allowed to come, to any true and real conjunction. The connection is regarded as holding only in the mind and intention of God; just as the bow in the clouds is a token of safety for the world, not because it has in itself any tendency to prevent a deluge, but because it expresses the intention of the Almighty to this effect. The efficiency of the institution is made to fall back thus on the secret counsel, by which God wills some of the human family to bliss and others to misery. To the former only are the elements really the seal of an inward gift; to the latter they are but the empty eating of bread and

wine. The objection then against Calvin's theory of the Holy Eucharist, according to Archdeacon Wilberforce, is, "that it involves that dogma of reprobation, which is the opprobrium of his system;" from which it follows, that as the theory of Zuinglius is found to be inconsistent with the first principles of Christian piety, "so is Calvin's with any due respect for the declarations of Scripture and the character of God." These theories being shown to be thus defective and false, the only view which remains is that which supposes the peculiar grace of the Eucharist to be comprehended, not merely in the disposition of the receiver, and not merely in the merciful purpose of God, but actually and truly in the consecrated elements themselves.

The work before us proceeds, accordingly, in the next place, to establish this construction of our Lord's words of institution by the testimony of the ancient Church. This divides itself into three parts. First, the evidence of the ancient Liturgies. These are numerous, reaching back to the first centuries, and representing, not the opinions of a few only, but the faith and worship of the Church in all parts of the world. They are, at the same time, with all their differences in secondary details, wonderfully harmonious in their general conception and sense, being all constructed on a common plan and embodying throughout one and the same reigning idea; a form of unity and universality, which can never be satisfactorily accounted for, except on the supposition of their being derived from a common usage, which extended back to the very earliest period of Christianity, and was regarded as carrying with it in some way the sanction of Apostolical authority. Here the evidence for the point in hand is not simply full, but absolutely overwhelming. The ancient Liturgies turn throughout upon three main points, Consecration, Oblation, Communion; and "all these acts make that which is *done* to and through the elements the prominent consideration, and contemplate them as the medium through which the blessing is communicated. This lies on the face of the service, in every case, from beginning to end. All goes on the assumption of a real transaction

in the consecration of the elements of the most awfully solemn kind, by which they are taken to be afterwards, by the transforming power of the Holy Ghost, the mystery of Christ's actually present Humanity, his broken Body and his shed Blood, exhibited on the altar for the purposes of the Christian salvation. To this one thought these old Liturgies owe all their solemnity and sense. Without it they can neither be understood nor respected. This gone, all becomes mummary indeed and sounding bombast of the poorest and most tasteless kind. But secondly, we have in addition to this form of evidence, distinct statements, numerous and full, on the part of the ancient ecclesiastical writers, directly affirming that in the view of the early Church the elements were considered to be so changed by consecration, as to be themselves afterwards the outward form strictly and truly of the gift they represented, and the very medium of its communication. To this must be added, in the third place, the evidence comprehended in the known usages of the ancient Church with regard to the consecrated elements, plainly implying that they were regarded universally in this light. Such were the practice of sending the elements from one congregation to another as a sign of intercommunion, the practice of carrying them to those who were debarred from attending public worship, the custom of reserving them for subsequent use, the view which assumed that Christ communicated himself as a whole in every portion of the elements, the habit of receiving them fasting, with all the other demonstrations of profound reverence and respect which had regard to them immediately in the solemnity of the Eucharist. Altogether for the particular point here in consideration, and so far as the argument from antiquity is allowed to be of any force, the proof is complete. The Church in the first ages undoubtedly understood our Lord's words of institution, as we have them in the New Testament, to mean that the elements used in the Holy Eucharist, in virtue of what they are made to be by consecration, really include and convey the supernatural gift they are employed to express.

So much for the *subject*, in the words of institution, that to

which in his own hands originally our Lord applied the term "This"—the bread and the wine, namely, not in their common and general character, but as made to be mystically, then and there, by his benediction, the outward, visible form of a higher invisible reality. And what now is it which is affirmed of this subject in the way of *predicate*? The answer is plain: "My Body—My Blood." Here we come, accordingly, to a new section of our author's argument, in which he endeavors to show that the gift bestowed in the Holy Eucharist is the presence of Christ through the medium of his humanity. So much would seem to be implied at once by the words of institution; for what can be signified by the Body and Blood of Christ, if they express not his proper living Manhood, what he became, and what he still continues to be, in virtue of his Incarnation. The presence spoken of cannot be taken, of course, to exclude his Godhead; where his Humanity is, there must his Divinity be also in full reality; but it is emphatically by means of his Manhood, as such, in this case, that the presence of his whole person is represented as taking effect. When Rationalists tell us, that this is a hard saying, and not to be believed, because they see not how or why the Body of Christ should be communicated to men in this way, they do but repeat in fact the infidelity of those who formerly at Capernaum, when our Lord insisted upon the necessity of eating his body and drinking his blood, "went back and walked no more with him." We have no right to say that the thing is impossible; for how little do we know of the nature of material substance, or of the qualities and properties it may be brought to assume in such an order of life as that to which it is advanced in the glorification of Christ? And just as little right have we to pretend that the thing is improbable; unless we choose to go the full length of such rationalistic scepticism, and call in question, for the same reason, the entire fact of the Incarnation. This mystery itself implies that the Humanity of Christ is the instrument and medium of our salvation. So too it is everywhere represented to be in the Scriptures. He is exhibited as the Second Adam—the Principle thus of a new human

creation, in which it is made possible for men to be redeemed and saved from the universal ruin which has come upon the race through its comprehension in the First Adam. He himself plainly teaches, that this redemption is effected by an actual incorporation, in some way, with his Flesh and Blood, answerable to the participation we all have naturally in that Adamic life which is under the curse. Why then should it be said, that the idea of a real communication of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist is incredible? It falls in exactly with the whole mystery of the Gospel. It carries out the purpose for which the Word became Flesh. And when the appeal is made here again to the judgment of the ancient Church, it is found to be unanimous, as before, in favor of just this construction of what the Scriptures teach on the subject, to the exclusion of every other.

Next comes the question concerning the sense which is to be attached to the copula, by which subject and predicate are joined together in the words of institution, "This *is* my Body," and again, "This *is* my Blood." What is the relation, in other words, which is here affirmed to hold between the gift bestowed in the Eucharist and the elements, between the outward and inward sides of this august and mysterious Sacrament? Our author declares it to be that of sacramental identity, as distinguished from all mere representation. The outward and inward, the *sacramentum* and the *res sacramenti*, as they are distinguished by St. Augustine, are by the act of consecration, united into a compound whole. This union is not physical. It has no parallel under any other form; and hence, as altogether peculiar in its kind, it requires a peculiar name. Still it is not on this account any the less real. "The two things are so united, that they must needs go together; and whoso receives the one, receives the other. So long as we remain in the region of the senses, and take account only of that which is visible to the outward world, the *sacramentum* is all which we know of; but judge of the matter by faith and revelation, and we are sure that the *res sacramenti* is present also." Such being the principle then, of the Holy Eucharist, it fol-

lows "that the complete idea of this sacrament implies, not only the maintenance of the two portions of which this whole is composed, but the law of their combination" also; and hence there is room for four errors with regard to it, which it is necessary to watch against and avoid. The true nature of the sacrament may be overthrown, by omitting either the outward or the inward part of it altogether, or by so confusing or so dividing them as to destroy the necessary form of their union. To suppose the Body of Christ present in the Eucharist under the same natural conditions which attached to it when it was upon earth, would be to set aside virtually the outward side of the mystery, and thus to fall in fact into the notion of the Capernaïtes, that he intended his Flesh to be distributed to men as natural food. Just the contrary of this is the Zuinglian error, by which the *res sacramenti* or inward reality is made to be nothing, and the ordinance turned into a purely outward formality. The other two forms of error, the undue confusion of the two parts of the sacrament on the one side, and their undue separation on the other, are represented respectively, as Archdeacon Wilberforce supposes, by Luther and Calvin. Luther's principle of justification by sheer faith stood in the way of his acknowledging any real efficacy in the means of grace; and hence, while he persisted in asserting the old idea of the real presence of Christ's Body in the Lord's Supper, it became in his system something which carried with it no such force at all of its own for the purposes of man's sanctification, as had been ascribed to it before. This was to divest the reality of its true significance, and to deal with it as though it had been still an emblem only, confusing thus the functions of the outward sign and the inward grace. The theory of Calvin, on the other hand, is charged with so distinguishing the two, in accommodation to his doctrine of election, as to destroy their sacramental coherence, overthrowing in this way the purpose of the ordinance. In distinction from these four errors, the true relation in the case is, according to our author, such a sacramental identity as implies that the *sacramentum*, or outward sign, is the medium through which the *res sacramen-*

ti, or inward reality, is communicated ; which is the same thing as to affirm that the Real Presence of Christ is bestowed through the consecrated elements. Such a Presence the Lutheran scheme allows, as does also that Capernaïtic view which invests it with a carnal or physical character ; while the false and distorted forms in which they set the doctrine, are of themselves sufficient to set aside the systems without any farther refutation. The notion of Luther is so partial and self-contradictory, that it has found, Wilberforce thinks, few genuine supporters. It is over against the other two conceptions, then, of a merely *Symbolical* Presence, as taught by Zuinglius, and of a simply *Virtual* Presence, as here supposed to be taught by Calvin, that the work before us proceeds to establish the doctrine of a *Real* Presence as this has now been defined ; proper pains being taken still farther to guard against mistake, by urging beforehand these two necessary qualifications : first, that the Presence in question is supernatural altogether, and not natural ; and secondly, that it is sacramental only and in no respect sensible. It holds in an order of things above nature, and is not subject to the conditions of space and form. It cannot be reached by the senses, but only by the mind through the exercise of faith.

Is full justice done here, however, it may be asked, to the system of Calvin ? It is admitted by our author himself, “ that he did not suppose the Holy Eucharist to be merely an occasion on which God bestowed the general succors of grace, but that he asserted it to carry along with it a specific and peculiar blessing, namely, that relation to Christ which results from oneness with his glorified Humanity.” Again : “ It might be supposed that he entered into the relation between this sacrament and the reconstruction of mankind through Christ ; and that he accepted St. Cyril’s statements, that the Humanity of our Lord is the appointed medium through which spiritual blessings are conferred upon his brethren. A far deeper man than Zuinglius, he saw that the re-creation of mankind must be based upon that supernatural system of events which had its commencement in the Incarnation of the Second Adam ;

more clear-sighted than Luther, he discriminated accurately between the inward gift and the outward sign." As Eve and her posterity proceeded from Adam's side, he tells us after St. Augustine, so the Church and her children are derived from the side of the Man Christ; whose Flesh, accordingly, is the reservoir of all life for his people, of which all must participate in order that they may have part in the benefits of his redemption. The Lord's Supper involves thus a real communion with Christ's Body. This is not at hand in any carnal or local way. It is exhibited in its virtue or essential power. By this he did not mean a virtual exhibition, certainly, as distinguished from an actual, but one rather that comprehended in it the full force and living substance of Christ's proper Humanity, as it now reigns gloriously exalted at the right hand of God. Only the mode of the exhibition or presentation must be considered to transcend all the conditions of nature. It holds, not in the sphere of nature, but in the sphere of the Spirit. But it is not right to say then, as Wilberforce does, that "Calvin substituted the intervention of the Spirit, instead of the efficacy of our Lord's Body, as the true *res sacramenti*, by which a relation is brought about between God and man." The Spirit with him is but the supernatural element as distinguished from the world of sense, in which the mystery of the sacramental participation takes place. Lifted into this reign of grace and power, the process is supposed to be at once beyond the objection drawn from distance. In the sphere of the Spirit, things at a distance from each other may be made to come really together—incomprehensibly, of course, for the natural understanding, but not therefore incredibly for faith. Whether this be said to be by the lifting up of the soul to Christ, or by the coming down of his virtue to the soul, comes in the theory just to the same thing; for both forms of speech are figurative only, borrowed by necessity from the relations of nature to express a fact which is supernatural, and in regard to which no such local relations are considered to have place. Outward and inward meet here, in a way above all sense or understanding, by the wonder-work-

ing agency of the Holy Ghost. But this agency, as just said, is not itself the life-giving virtue of the sacrament. Calvin made the *res sacramenti* to be really and truly the Body of Christ, acting by its own objective force where the necessary conditions were at hand, and not simply through the mind of the worshipper. To say that the action is not truly that of Christ's Body because it is represented as taking effect by the intervention of the Spirit, is but to say, that it is not so because it is represented as having place in an order of things which is supernatural—the very thing which our author himself finds it necessary continually to assert. True, the inward part of the mystery, with Calvin, is not allowed to be inherent in any way in the elements, and so it cannot be said to be received along with them by the ungodly; but it was none the less certainly joined, for this reason, with the transaction. The *sacramentum* and the *res sacramenti*, in his system, come together truly in the service as a whole; so that while the believer takes part in the outward side of this, the inward side of it is considered as actually exhibited also for His use, by the power of the Holy Ghost—although out of that immediate transaction the symbols include in themselves no such supernatural relation. That the inward or visible reality, the virtue of Christ's Body, takes effect only on believers, according to the theory, cannot be said to contradict the idea of its objective presence in this mystical and supernatural view; for in any case, as our author himself admits, it is necessary to distinguish between the *res sacramenti* and the *virtus sacramenti*, “the effect which follows from Christ's Presence where there is a living relation between him and the soul;” and this distinction being made, Calvin would have had no difficulty, if we understand him rightly, in granting the actual exhibition of the *res sacramenti* in the Eucharist, as he took it, in the case even of those who are without faith. He compares this very case in fact with the falling of rain upon stones and rocks, which does not cease to be rain because it is followed there with no such effect as when it descends upon genial soil; and in another place says expressly, that however the want of faith

may shut out the benefit for unworthy communicants, nothing still fails from the nature of the sacrament, because "the bread is always the true pledge of Christ's flesh and the wine of his blood and there remains always a true exhibition of each on the part of God, (*vera utriusque exhibitio semper constat ex parte Dei.*") The virtue of the sacrament, that by which it takes effect on the worshipper, his system confines to the elect, and to these in a state of grace. But this is not just to "put the intention of Almighty God," as Archdeacon Wilberforce tells us, "in place of the *res sacramenti*, or actual gift." It merely comes to this, that those who by their faith make room for its efficacious action in themselves do so by an ability, which they owe to God's election. The immediate condition of the benefit, subjectively considered, is still the same that Wilberforce himself makes it, namely, a right state of mind on the part of the communicant, whatever cause may be assigned for this back of the thing itself; and it is not easy to see certainly why this limitation should be taken to destroy the reality of the gift, objectively considered, in the one case, any more than it may be supposed to destroy it under the same view in the other.

We readily grant, however, at the same time, that Calvin's theory of election and reprobation does not fall in logically with the idea of sacramental grace, and that the two forms of thinking, therefore, cannot stand permanently in friendly connection. The Calvinistic theology carried in itself in this way a serious dualism, which could not fail to be followed in the course of time by the depression of one of these interests in favor of the other. In most sections of the Reformed Church, accordingly, the scheme of divinity which rests on the dogma of an Absolute decree as its principle, has gradually thrust aside Calvin's view of the Sacraments as being what Dr. Hodge calls "an uncongenial foreign element," that did not cohere with the true life of the system. The course of things, however, in the Reformed Church of Germany shows, that the elimination might be also the other way; since the doctrine of the Sacraments has so far prevailed with what passes for Calvin-

ism there as to hold at bay continually the dogma of the Decrees. We do not see that Calvin's theory of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist, has any necessary dependence on his theory of Predestination. It ought not, therefore, to be so joined with this, that both must be considered to stand or fall together.

Whether, under any circumstances, the theory can sustain itself, is another question. All we demur to here, is the judgment by which it is set down as affirming a simply Virtual Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, in the sense of this book of Archdeacon Wilberforce—such a Presence as resolves itself at last into a mere Divine intention. As related to the *transaction*, the inward reality which Calvin maintained was, we think, much more than this; it comprehended Christ's very Body itself under an objective form. This our author will be ready to say, is such a view as cannot stand without the conception of such a relation of the *res sacramenti* to the elements, and not simply to the transaction, as must involve what he himself takes to be the necessary form of a Real Presence, in the sense of the ancient Church, as distinguished from such a Presence as is either Symbolical only or at least Virtual; and as Calvin, we know, did not allow any such relation, his theory must be considered as falling short of this distinction at last, and so sinking to the character which is here assigned to it, there being no middle ground in truth on which it is possible for any theory to stand. Here, however, the inquiry comes up, on the other side, whether there be any real middle ground between this view of Calvin and the doctrine in full of the Council of Trent. Can the essential points of what was the original faith of the Christian world in regard to the mystery of the Holy Eucharist be so carried out in any other point, (if this may not be considered satisfactory,) that it shall not be found necessary to yield here in the end all that forms any fair matter of dispute with the Catholic Church? We fear not.

Be all this as it may, however, it cannot be said to affect the force of our author's argument, as he goes on in the work before us, to assert points which, according to his view, entered into the original faith of the Church on the subject in question,

and endeavors to establish both from Scripture and from Christian Antiquity, the doctrine of a Real Presence of Christ's Body in the Holy Eucharist, as a mystery made to have place by priestly consecration in the elements themselves, in such sense that it may be said actually to exist and abide in these objectively as its proper outward form.

In the prosecution of this argument, special stress is laid upon the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, which is held to be of classical authority for the proper explanation of other passages in the New Testament referring to this sacrament. Then, agreeably to the plan of discussion originally proposed in the work, an appeal is made to the testimony of the early Church, for the purpose of showing how the sense thus attributed to the Scriptures is confirmed by the judgment of the whole Christian world, in those first ages when the heritage of doctrine was still fresh and this judgment entitled to the greatest respect.

And here, on the field of historical inquiry, the argument must be allowed, we think, to be unanswerably full and triumphant. Make of the matter what we may, it is shown most conclusively that the view taken of the Eucharist by the ancient Church was such, as clearly to exclude, in the first place, the conception of a merely Symbolical or merely Virtual Presence, and then just as clearly to involve and positively affirm, in the second place, the fact of a Real Presence. The difficulty in such an argument, as Wilberforce remarks, is not to find testimonies, but to set them in any order that may be fairly answerable to the richness of the field from which they are taken. "The Holy Eucharist was so constantly present to the thoughts of the early Christians, that the references to it in their writings are almost innumerable." These are often direct, but far more frequently indirect, and in the form of general and passing allusion. Much of the evidence can be fully felt only in its connections. In this way it comes up from different sides, and under different modifications, the variety adding force to the unity, and showing the subject to be woven into the very life of the religious system to which it belonged. To

bring out this consent of antiquity, made luminous and strong by the very diversities under which it appears, the theology of the first seven centuries is exhibited as passing through five different forms or schools, in each of which a different relation to the mystery of the Eucharist prevailed, producing as many various ways of referring to it, while yet it is plain that through all these distinctions the fundamental idea with regard to it remained always the same. The Ante Nicene Period is distinguished for its unreasoning acquiescence simply in the fact of the Real Presence, as something about which all Christians are supposed as a matter of course to be agreed. Next, in the Period following the Council of Nice, we have the Eastern Scheme directing reflection, more than had been done before, to the change effected in the elements by consecration. Then the Anti Nestorian and Anti Eutychian Schools, guarding against wrong to either the outward part of the sacrament on one side, or to its inward part on the other. Finally, the Western School is found uniting the views of the other form, and giving to the doctrine thus a more scientific and comprehensive form. All these schools agree in holding the fact of a real communication of Christ's Body and Blood, through the consecrated elements of the Eucharist. It comes up as a first principle in their theological reasoning. It entered into all their public worship. Every Liturgy involves it from beginning to end. It lies in the view that was taken of consecration. Two general criteria especially may be taken as perfectly conclusive on the subject. Religious reverence and worship were held to be due to the Presence in the elements; and the Body and Blood of Christ were supposed to be orally received through them, even by unworthy communicants. Where these ideas prevail, there can be no question but that the mystery of a Real Presence in the elements, and not merely in the transaction, is regarded as being the essential character of the sacrament. The reservation of the elements for subsequent use implies also the same thing.

But now along with this idea of Christ's Real Presence, as it prevailed in the mind of the ancient Church, goes by a sort

of logical necessity another thought, namely, that the Holy Eucharist is to be considered a *sacrifice* as well as a sacrament; and one of the most important parts of the work before us, accordingly, (whatever we may think of the matter itself,) is that in which the doctrine and belief of the first ages, in regard to this subject, are brought into view. We will not pretend here to follow the evidence. We only say that as to the *fact* there can be no doubt. The Church in the first ages held universally that the Christian ministry was a real priesthood; that the so-called altar at which it served was an altar in truth and not simply in name; that a real offering was made upon it in the solemnity of the Eucharist; that this offering was nothing less than the body of Christ there present in the consecrated elements; that in this form the One Sacrifice of the Cross ("once for all" or of perennial force,) was exhibited continually before God for the sins of men; that the shadows of the Jewish Temple had thus their corresponding reality in the "pure offering" of the Christian Church (Mal. 1: 11;) and that the making of this sacrifice formed in truth the main work and carried with it the main worth and power of the sacred ministry, as it was emphatically the *λεειτουργία* also, the true liturgy or service of the Church in all its solemn assemblies. Such is the simple historical fact. In what light it is to be regarded, or what use is to be made of it theologically, is of course another matter altogether.

With Archdeacon Wilberforce, however, the voice of antiquity is allowed to be conclusive in favor of the doctrine; and one object which he proposes to himself in his book, is the restoration of this aspect of the sacrament, and the revival of it as a daily service, in the Church of England. In following out this design, it is assumed that the English Episcopal Church is fairly and truly the continuation of the Catholic Church of the first ages, and that it carries in itself still all the provisions which are needed for giving effect to the sacramental theory here brought into view; whilst at the same time it is admitted that there has been a vast departure from it practically since the time of the Reformation. This departure, it is contended,

however, is against the true genius of the Church, and must not be so laid to its charge as to be considered a part of its normal form and order. In this respect it is taken to be in a different condition from the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of the continent; which by casting off Episcopacy are supposed to have broken radically with the constitution of the Church as it stood before, and so to have lost altogether the power of correcting and restoring subsequently their own aberrations from the faith and practice of the first Christian ages. We have here, in other words, the well known Anglican or Tractarian theory of ecclesiastical legitimacy, of which so much was heard a few years since in connection with the University of Oxford, and on which much stress has been laid by some in this country also as a sufficient warrant for the pretensions of the Episcopal Church, over against all other Christian bodies both Catholic and Protestant.

We do not propose, in the present article, to enter at all into the merits of the main subject, considered as a question of actual theology for Protestantism as it now stands. That would be a task too large altogether for the limits to which we are here confined, even if we had the ability and the heart to undertake it; which we confess that we have not. We feel the difficulties of the subject, without having courage to attempt their solution. Let others, more competent for the service, put their hand to this work. We offer here no theory, we have no scheme to explain or defend. All we aim at, is to urge attention to the subject, to press facts, to set home the problem which calls for an answer, and to make clear the necessary conditions of its solution. Let no one say, that this can be of no use. The interest which is here at stake is so very important, that it is not possible to go too far in urging attention to it, independently of every particular theory or scheme that may be exhibited for its explanation. The facts of the case challenge our most solemn regard, in whatever light they may be viewed; and a properly awakened interest in them for their own sake, may be considered indeed the first necessary requisition for doing any sort of justice to the claims of the great

theological question to which they belong. Indifferentism and obscurantism are the two things which need most of all to be overcome, in order that there may be any chance of having these claims rightly met. What is most worthy of sorrowful lamentation, is the habit of mind, (exemplified on all sides,) by which the subject is either held to be of no serious practical account, or else is passively taken to have its full and sufficient exposition in some vague hypothesis, at war both with history and logic, the unreality of which is not seen only because there is not honesty enough nor energy enough to subject it to any truly earnest examination. How much would be gained for our theology, and for our religious life too, if only this dream, this spell of the inward senses, could be effectually dissolved, and things were made to appear in their own true and proper light !

In such general view it is, as we have said before, that we consider it a privilege to call attention to this "*Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*" by Archdeacon Wilberforce, without pretending either to endorse its conclusions, (that we could not do fully indeed without bowing in form to the claims of the Episcopal Church,) or to set up in the way of criticism any opposing or divergent view of our own. We have read the work with more than usual interest. It is eminently worthy of attention. The author occupies the highest rank as an English theologian. No one can dispute the learning of the treatise, nor its general ability. It breathes throughout also the most excellent spirit. The facts it presents are of universal significance and concern. Its theme is one, the importance of which it is not easy to exaggerate, as related especially to the circumstances and wants of the Christian world at the present time.

It is written indeed immediately for Anglicans or Episcopalians. But so far as the main subject is concerned, it has to do with what should be considered a vital and fundamental interest for all Protestant denominations. For Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and others, whether it be felt or not, there is no more momentous inquiry at this

time than that which regards the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, looked at in the historical and theological relations which are here brought into view. We hazard nothing in saying, that the other subjects of discussion and debate with which these bodies are exercised, so far as there is any care for theology still left, are of far less consequence than this, involving as it does undoubtedly at last all the issues of the Church Question, back to its very source in the mystery of the Incarnation. Not to be alive and awake to the claims of theology in this view, is to be asleep with regard to them in every direction besides, mistaking dreams for realities and abstractions for living concrete facts. New England itself must yet come to see this, if Christianity be not doomed to run itself out there into a barren heath. If her theology is to be saved from starvation and inanition, it must pass beyond the questions which have heretofore engrossed its metaphysical digestion, the *loci communes* of Andover and New-Haven, and grapple earnestly with the questions which enter into what it is now too prone magisterially to waive aside under the title of the Church system, as something at war with evangelical religion and fit only for Puseyites and Catholics. We do not say that it must become either Catholic or Anglican. But it must learn to have some idea of the Church, some faith in the mystery of the Holy Sacraments, some sympathy with the mind of the universal Church with regard to them in the first ages, some sense of the necessity there is for a true historical reconciliation, in some way, between the Christianity of those first ages in this view and what is known as Protestant Christianity at the present time. The day for ignoring and despising these points, is fast coming to an end. The best men in New England are beginning to see and feel it. God grant that they may see and feel it more and more.

Whatever theory any may see fit to adopt in regard to the subject for themselves, there is a common obligation on all to understand and acknowledge at least, as a single fact of history, the view that was actually taken of the Eucharist by the ancient Church. It can never be right to mix up what is pure-

ly historical here with what is theological, in such a way as to confound the one with the other. In this work of Wilberforce, for instance, we have two general things, which, however closely they are joined in this argument, need notwithstanding to be kept continually distinct in the mind of the reader ; his own scheme, namely, of Anglican divinity, and the historical premises from which he reasons in what he supposes to have been the faith and practice of the Church in the first ages. These premises are one consideration ; the conclusions drawn from them are entirely another. To quarrel with the first, merely because we may happen to dislike the first, must be considered eminently absurd. Now it is of these historical premises or data, in the present case, we make the declaration, that they seem to us to be, as to all material points, faithfully represented in the book before us, and that this being so, they give it an interest and importance which all should feel to reach far beyond the range of its own immediate argument. This we may explode, if we please, as theological Puseyism or Popery ; but there still are the facts of history, or what at least claim to be such, which refuse to be exploded in any like summary style. Calling nick-names and starting bugbears here, can answer no purpose. The facts remain just what they were before. No theory can set them aside. The universal Church in the first ages saw in the Holy Eucharist the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood ; they were supposed to be made present in the elements by priestly consecration ; the service became in this way a sacrifice of thanksgiving and propitiation embodying in itself continually the full value of the offering made on Calvary for the sins of men ; all was held to be an awful and sublime mystery, in which was comprehended day after day the objective force of the whole Christian worship, as the full counterpart or antitype in substance of all that had place as type and shadow in the sacrifices of the ancient law. What shall we say to this ? To deny it successfully, as mere matter of history, is out of the question. To say that it does not concern us, is both stupid and profane. It does concern us deeply and seriously. We are bound to see and own the

truth ; to bring it home distinctly to our mind ; to come to some right understanding with it, if possible, in our thinking and in our faith.

Shall we set the whole fact down for a delusion, an open falling away from the true sense and purpose of Christianity as we have this presented to us in the pages of the New Testament ? See then how much this must involve. It is no mere circumstance that is here at stake. We have to do with something which goes to the very heart and core of the ancient faith. The whole theology of the early Church is conditioned by this view of the Eucharist. It forms the soul of its worship, the animating principle of its entire religious life. The doctrine is woven inseparably into the texture of its universal practice and belief. To pronounce it then absolutely false, is at once to turn all the Christianity of these first ages into a lie ; for their error here, if it were such, is so vast and deep, as to leave no room for the least confidence in their system of thinking under any other view. It is only mockery and hypocrisy to talk of respecting and following the Church of these first days in anything else, if we make it radically wrong in that which formed, as the mystery of the Holy Eucharist did, the grand burden of its creed and worship. To be consistent, we must consign that whole Christianity to Satan, and disown in full the fellowship of the fathers, martyrs, and saints, who dreamed of being carried by it in their day to heaven. Are we prepared for that ? Not surely, if we have not lost our spiritual senses. Faith, Hope, Charity, all cry out against such an act of ecclesiastical *felo-de-se*. Infidelity and heresy only have a right to be thus desperately mad.

Can it be pretended then, that we have anywhere among our Protestant denominations, at the present time, this old theory and practice in regard to the Eucharist, still existing and in full force ? For the most part, the answer is very easy. The fact of a very considerable difference between the ancient view and that which these denominations now generally hold, is too plain and palpable to allow a moment's mistake. They avow very distinctly themselves quite another way of looking at

the subject, and have no wish to identify their doctrine with this Patristic scheme. Anglicanism, however, as represented in the able work which has called forth the present article, affects to occupy a different position, and to be truly one still, not in substance merely, but in actual form, with the Church of antiquity, in its doctrine of the Sacraments as well as at other points. Is the pretension properly sustained? We think not. This construction of Archdeacon Wilberforce, however well it may be put together, is not in reality the doctrine or practice of the Episcopal Church either in England or in this country. It will not be so accepted on either side of the Atlantic; for the satisfaction which a certain class may find in it as a merely private entertainment, is something very different from the mind and meaning of the denomination as such. The points of a real bodily presence above nature in the elements, of this as something abiding and not restricted to the immediate service of the communion itself, and of the power of a real sacrifice in the transaction for the sins of men, however they may find some slender hold to hang upon in the confused beginnings of the English system, and the shelter of some slight authority from the views of a few of its bishops and divines since, (views generally in the *wilderness*,) are yet too alien from the reigning make and genius of the Church altogether, to allow the supposition that they can ever be practically ingrafted into its life. In this country, just now especially, the Episcopal communion is in such a state of general self-compromise with regard to all such points, that the grand Apostolic word, "We believe and therefore speak," is about the last thing concerning them that one expects to hear fall from its lips. If there is to be a real lineal connection here between Protestantism and the faith of the ancient Church, this fond dream of Anglicanism will not answer. It must be shown to hold in some wider view and under some different form.

In these circumstances it is, that the theory of Calvin, if it can be maintained, would seem to be after all most truly conformed to the wants and conditions of the problem which requires to be solved, aiming as it does to mediate between the

difficulties of the case as it actually stands on both sides. On the one hand it seeks to avoid Zuinglianism, which by stultifying all antiquity stultifies and kills itself; while on the other it pretends to no such identification with the past, as leaves no room for Protestantism to stand upon in its distinction from the Roman Catholic Church. It asserts, accordingly, a real participation of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist as a transaction; but denies their presence in the elements, and owns in the mystery no sacrifice. In these points it differs from the doctrine of the ancient Church. But must it not so differ, in order to be Protestant? The only question is, whether the difference be essential or simply accidental—the destruction of oneness and sameness absolutely, or such an outward diversity only as may resolve itself fairly into the laws of historical development and growth. And this is the question then for Protestantism as a whole interest; for as we have said before, there is no true middle position anywhere, as it seems to us, between the view of Calvin and the full dogma of the Catholic Church. If this Calvinistic doctrine, as we have it for instance in the Heidelberg Catechism, be not able to stand, it is not easy to see certainly how Protestantism itself can stand, as such, and keeping strictly to its own lines, unless as at open war with the whole faith that lives enshrined in the Liturgies of the Ancient Church.

Mercersburg, Pa.

J. W. N.

ART. II.—LITURGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

NO. 1.

BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

A. INFANT BAPTISM.

[Baptism shall be performed in the *church*, before or after the regular service, except in cases of urgent necessity. The water being provided and put into the Font, or some other clean vessel, fit and decent for the sacred ordinance, the minister shall begin thus :]