

# The Catholic.

Quod semper; quod ubique; quod ab omnibus.

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## SELECTED.

### AMICABLE DISCUSSION.

Continued.

#### LETTER IX.

##### SECOND GENERAL PROOF, DRAWN FROM THE LITURGIES.

"With hearts full of respect and fear, let us all approach the mystery of the precious body and blood of our Saviour:—and now, O Lord that thou hast called me to thy holy and pure altar to offer unto thee this *living and holy sacrifice*, make me worthy to receive this gift with purity and holiness" At the communion the priest says again: "O Lord my God, I am not worthy, neither is it becoming that I should partake of thy body and the blood of propitiation, or even so much as touch them. But may thy word sanctify my soul and heal my body." And in the thanksgiving after communion, the priest says: "Strengthen my hands which are stretched out to receive the Holy One.—Repair by a new life the bodies, which have just been feeding upon *thy living body*.—God has loaded us with blessings by his living Son, who for our Salvation descended from the highest heavens, clothed himself with our flesh, has given us his own flesh and mixed his venerable blood with our blood, a mystery of propitiation."

After the words of institution, the deacon says aloud: "Silence and trembling!" Then comes the invocation, which the priest, bowing down, begins as follows: "May the grace of the Holy Spirit come upon us and upon this oblation: may it descend and repose upon this bread and upon this chalice, and may it bless and sanctify them.—May this bread by the virtue of thy name, become the holy body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this chalice the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The invocation runs thus: "O God, may the grace of the Holy Spirit come, dwell and repose upon this oblation, which we present before thee; may it sanctify and make it, i. e. this bread and chalice, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou thyself transforming them, *transmutante ea te*, and sanctifying them by the operation of the holy Spirit."

The liturgy of Nestorius and the preceding one of Theodorus resemble the first, called the liturgy of the apostles.

At the offertory of the mass for the dead are found these words: "Holy Father, lover of mankind, receive this *sacrifice* in memory of the dead: place their souls among the saints in thy heavenly kingdom; may this *sacrifice* that we offer with faith, appease thy divinity and procure repose to their

souls." At the canon, the priest speaking of our Saviour says: "Taking the bread into his divine, immortal and spotless hands, which have the power to create, he blessed it, gave thanks, broke it, &c., O God, send upon us and upon these gifts, thy holy Spirit, coeternal and consubstantial with thyself (the deacon bows to the corner of the altar,) that thou mayest make this blessed bread the body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And, holding the host over the chalice, he continues: "That thou mayest make this blessed bread and wine the true and real body and the true blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, changing them by thy Spirit." The priest adores three times, kisses the altar, and from that time raises his hands no more over the gifts: but now, with his eyes fixed upon them,—he reveres them as God, and with tears exposes his wants.—Towards the communion the priest adores, kisses the altar, and taking the sacred body, dips it all into the precious blood, saying: "O Lord, our God,—make us worthy, we beseech thee to receive this sacrament for the remission of our sins." The priest, with humble reverence elevating the sacred body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ from the holy table, turns round and shows it to the people, saying: "Let us with holiness taste this holy, sacred and precious body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, descending from the heavens, is distributed among us."—He then says: "I confess and believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God who didst take upon thee the sins of the world—O Jesus Christ my God! I taste with faith thy holy & life-giving body for the remission of my sins. O my God Jesus Christ I taste with firm faith thy purifying and sanctifying blood, for the remission of my sins." Then, making the sign of the cross upon his mouth he pronounces these words of St. Thomas the apostle: "May thy incorruptible body be my life, and thy sacred blood the propitiation and remission of my sins." Then, turning towards the people with the chalice: "Approach with fear and with faith and communicate in holiness." During the communion of the people a canticle is sung, in which are these words: "This bread is the body of Jesus Christ: this chalice is the blood of the New Testament; the hidden sacrament is made manifest, and by it God shows himself to us. Here is Jesus Christ, the word of God, he who sits at the right hand of the Father: he is sacrificed in the midst of us, &c."

I cannot sufficiently exhort you, Sir, to read the whole of these different liturgies: you will find them in the admirable work of pere le Brun,\* who

\* Explication litterale, historique et dogmatique des prieres et des ceremonies de la messe, suivant

has been my guide. I have followed him through his learned expositions, feeling convinced that I might safely rely on his authority. And now my only remaining wish is, that the few short extracts I have made from him, may create in you a laudable curiosity to read the whole of his work.\*

les anciens auteurs, et les monumens de toutes les Eglises du monde chretien. 4 vol. in 8o.—The English reader may profitably peruse the collection of liturgies to be found in an Appendix to that excellent work of the late Dr. Poynter, entitled, "Christianity," &c. Tr.

"The oriental liturgies were not much known in Europe before the seventeenth century. Had they been brought to light about a century sooner, there is every reason to believe that they would have deadened the rage of the reformers against the apostolic dogmas of the Eucharist. Certain it is, that, since their discovery, they have brought back to the primitive faith and catholic unity men of the first talents and of great learning, who had imbibed from their fancy the principles of the reformation. Certain it is, that they have produced much trouble and disquietude in the heart of many more, who notwithstanding, could not be torn from their error, but who were compelled to publish their anxious wish to see these liturgies again established in protestant communions. "I find, says Grotius (*Votum pro pace*) in all the greek, latin, arabic, syriac and other liturgies, prayers to God that he would consecrate by his Holy Spirit the gifts offered to him, and that he would make them the body and blood of his son. I had therefore good reason for saying that a custom so ancient and so universal, that it must be considered as coming from the first ages, ought not to be changed." Whiston, Stephens and Grabe, distinguished divines of your church, being dissatisfied with the English liturgy have composed some of their own, more in conformity with the oriental liturgies. "The reverend and pious Ed. Stephens (says Whiston in the preface to his liturgy) not only zealously declared himself to be of the same opinion, but had himself drawn up an excellent liturgy very conformable to the original liturgies.—And more than this, he made use of it most openly in London for many years, to his own great satisfaction as well as to that of his whole congregation. Even the learned and pious Dr. Grabe had so great a relish and admiration for this eucharistic formulary, that, not presuming to communicate in public, because the actual Anglican form differs in some respects from the primitive liturgies, he repaired to the private congregation of Dr. Stephens, and there communicated in the joy and consolation of his heart." Now the liturgy of Dr. Stephens, after the words of institution ran thus: "We offer thee through Jesus Christ this pure and spotless offering, in the most humble adoration.—In all humility we beseech thee O Almighty God; to accept this *unbloody, reasonable and spiritual sacrifice*—Send also thy Holy Spirit upon these elements here spread out; that he may bless and sanctify them. and that to those who receive them, this bread may become the precious