

Impossible. For History informs us that it was explicitly and emphatically taught in the church from the very beginning, and not only taught, but, what is much more worthy of observation, taught without a dissentient voice for many long and eventful ages. It was not until the eleventh century that it met with any serious opposition. The famous Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers, opposed it about the year 1050; but the church, spread throughout the world, arose as one man and condemned him; while council after council solemnly denounced his assertion as heretical. After much controversy he renounced his error, and returned once more to the faith of his baptism.

If, then, both Scripture and Tradition assert so unmistakably the truth of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, why do so many thousands of earnest Protestants deny it? They may assign various reasons, but if we analyse their statements and weigh their motives, I suspect that we shall find that the real secret of their repugnance to the doctrine lies precisely in its mysteriousness. They repudiate it because it is in itself so marvellous, so utterly unintelligible to the mind, and so brimming over with unfathomable difficulties. Men brought up on the principle of "private judgment" and "the open Bible" interpreted by each individual are startled and thrown back when they consider the literal meaning of Christ's words. They shudder and recoil when brought face to face with so tremendous a mystery. And though the utterances of Christ are plain and clear, and though He repeats His most solemn declaration again and again, and ever in a more emphatic form, they still exclaim: "It cannot be! He surely must have meant something else? He must have been speaking figuratively and symbolically." They will allow anything rather than mystery; and prefer any alternative rather than submit their intellects to the obedience of faith. Hence they refuse to accept the infallible words, even of God Himself, so long as they convey incomprehensible truths.

But why do men find it difficult to accept the wonderful? Why are the mysteries of faith so hard to endure?

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