

own language rather than in that in which they were originally expressed. If we would understand them aright we must look below the words to the thoughts. We must put ourselves in the position in which they stood, and endeavor to realize the presuppositions in their minds. This, of course, cuts away the ground from underneath the central dogma of Romanism—the dogma of transubstantiation, which is based wholly upon the rigidly literal force of some of the words reported as used in the institution of the rite. It is a monstrous, gigantic superstition resting upon the turn of a phrase, which after all may have been only freely reproduced by the disciples like others in the same connection.

But if the variations forbid us attaching too much value to the mere verbiage of any of the reports, they on the other hand confirm our confidence in the substantial accuracy of the narratives. We may be all the surer that behind these various reports there does lie some genuine word of Christ of the same meaning, whatever its exact form may have been, which explains them all. The writers were not inventing or simply antedating their own reflections; they were only remembering what they had actually heard, and their very variations show their real independence of each other in their reminiscences. It is no cunningly devised fable, but genuine history—under the necessary limitations of all history, but furnishing the best possible guarantee of its substantial truth. We cannot now look upon the face of Christ in the flesh nor hear His audible voice but with these narratives in our hand we can put our finger upon His pulse and feel the real throbbings of His heart.

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