

Men must, I think, have slided inadvertently into the vague notion of the real presence, without perceiving any change of doctrine. At the period that just preceded the second Council of Nice, there was no determinate belief with regard to the presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament. By long use, and familiarity, people were wont to celebrate the mysteries without any advertence to their intrinsic nature. No dispute had yet been raised on that subject; no difference of opinion had determined the mind in its belief. When there is no opposition, or contradiction of opinions, men naturally settle into inadvertency, and imperceptibly lose all determinate sense of things. For some time then before the second Council of Nice, there could have been no positive, or decided sentiment on the manner in which Christ was present in the Sacrament. In such a state of things any impression, any bias of thought circumstances may give, is yielded to. By the voice of authority, by the influence of Rome, and Constantinople the public mind received an impulse in a direction that must infallibly carry it to the doctrine of the real presence; the tide of public opinion has now taken a marked course; by the workings of the mind it acquired strength as it advanced; and rolled on till it carried the new impressed principle to the height of its perfection.

Henceforth, in opposition to the reprobated, and exploded doctrine of the Iconomachi, allusions to symbol, figure, or sign were carefully excluded from all discourses on the Eucharist; and people frequently warned; that, it is not the image, but the body of Christ. For the sake of distinction, whatever words could prompt an idea of symbolical representation, were industriously avoided; and such only made use of, as could suggest ideas that were more agreeable to the prevailing doctrine. We may then date, I think, from this epoch, the first rise of the doctrine of the real presence. The principle that the Sacrament was no