

The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

(From *Wiseman*.)

When ^{our} Saviour instituted this holiest of all observances He was at the most solemn hour of His entire intercourse with His disciples. Could He have wished to confuse His followers with a farewell like a riddle? It was during the discourse which accompanied this institution that they said to Him, "Behold now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb." And yet we are asked to believe in a most obscure interpretation of the words which promulgated this last and most beautiful mystery of love. So, too, must we twist St-Paul's plain words into figurative meaning (1 Cor. X. 16): "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" He is contrasting the heathenish sacrifices with the Christian rite, and he speaks of realities throughout, as much in regard to one as to the other.

And in the following chapter of the same epistle St. Paul enters at length into the institution of the Last Supper, and tells it exactly as Matthew, Mark, and Luke have done, using the same simple words. But he also goes on to draw practical conclusions from it, builds upon it solemn injunctions accompanied with awful threats. Here, at any rate, we may expect plain words, and expressions nowise likely to mislead. How, then, does he write? "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." Again: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Now if the body of Christ be not really there, how can the offence be directed against It? It may be a sin against His dignity or His goodness, but it surely is not against His body if that be not present. It is quite a different thing to say one offends against Christ, and that he offends against the body of Christ. St. Paul would tell us that in the same