

## The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

(From Wiseman.)

For the witness of the early Christian Church on this subject we can only refer the reader to more extensive treatises, for no serious denial is possible of the unanimous belief in this doctrine by the heroic and pioneer ages of our Saviour's religion. To this department of proof must be assigned the liturgies of the ancient Church, every one of which speaks of the body and blood of Christ as really present. The same may be said of the many forms of Christianity which separated from the Church in early days, some of them over thirteen hundred years ago, whose uniform belief in the Catholic doctrine is a striking evidence in its favor, as some of their churches were founded by the Apostles themselves — to say nothing of the respectable and powerful minority among Protestants of our day, especially Episcopalians and Lutherans. These will not all allow of the term Transubstantiation, yet hold the doctrine, or something very like it, and celebrate the sacred mysteries of the Lord's Supper in the same spirit as Catholics. When we find this column of faith standing alone amidst the ruins and fragments of Christianity wherever we meet them, always of the same materials and proportions, and bearing the same inscription, must we not conclude that it formed a part of the magnificent temple of truth which the Apostles erected?

The Sacrament of the Eucharist forms the very soul and essence of all practical religion among Catholics. It brings us into the closest union with God of which we are capable in this life — that union towards which every reasonable being unceasingly yearns. It gives to our souls a consciousness of the presence of Christ within us — sweet beyond power of words to explain. As a means of personal sanctification, every devout Catholic will bear out as a fact of experience the validity of our Saviour's promise, "He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." All through life it is our great solace in affliction, our conse-

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