

do not look upon the Church as a divine institution, founded by an infallible and omniscient God, and perfect in all its principles and truths, even as it issued from the hand of Christ. No human power can add to or take from it one iota of its dogmas. Although Christ did not formally mention—in so many words—that such and such would be the doctrines to be accepted, still He gave them all for He gave the whole truth to His Church. No more did St. Peter and his immediate successors deem it necessary to promulgate each particular dogma; but they existed all the same, and only awaited the time and circumstances when it would be deemed expedient to pronounce upon them.

We have no space to enter into the numerous and incontestable evidences of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin; but we will simply place our non-Catholic friends between the horns of a simple dilemma. Either Mary was stainless from her very Conception, or she was not: if she was not then she was unfit to be the Mother of Eternal Perfection and Divine Purity. To say that Christ could take human life from a being tainted with even original sin, is to assert that Christ is not God; or else, that being God, He gave up one of God's attributes in becoming man. This blasphemy we do not think would be even dreamed of by any Christian. If then Christ is God—the all pure—He must have taken life from a being "Conceived without sin." If then Mary were "Conceived without sin," her Immaculate Conception was a fact, a truth; and whether defined or not by the Church, it existed as a dogma from the very beginning, and was first promulgated by Christ Himself, when He declared Himself to be the Son of God, and acknowledged Mary as His Mother.

THE MASS.

"About the beginning of the fourth century, the Discipline of the Secret had been, on some important points, considerably relaxed; and though the Eucharist still continued to be guarded with some strictness, the doctrine of the Trinity was, by degrees, suffered to escape from behind the veil. The edict of Toleration which was, at that period, issued by Constantine, gave to the Christians full security in the promulgation of their opinions; while the schism of Arius, calling into question the divinity of our Saviour, not only rendered a declaration of the Church's doctrine on the subject necessary, but led naturally, from the shifting controversies to which it gave rise, to a more definite marking out of the frontiers of Trinitarian orthodoxy than had yet been attempted. Still it was but by slow and cautious degrees that the entire dogma, in its perfect form as acknowledged at present was developed." We have before quoted a passage from a Father of this age where he says, "Of the mysteries concerning the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, we do not speak plainly before the Catechumens;" and according to the learned Huet (himself a Catholic), "it is certain that the Catholics durst not plainly own the divinity of the Holy Spirit so late as the days of Basil."

In the meantime, the doctrine of the Real Presence,—following, for once, a fate different from that of its fellow mystery, the Trinity, continued, as usual, to be whispered in the inner shrines, to the neophyte, while, as Gregory of Nyssa informs us the eternal Sonship was become a topic of dispute among the lowest mechanics. Had any schism respecting the Eucharist taken place within the Church, the necessity

of defending the doctrine would have led doubtless, as in the case of the Trinity, to the divulging of it. But no such schism had occurred. Those among the Gnostic sect who adopted the Eucharist, though they denied the real humanity of Christ's body, did not question its presence in the sacrament, while some of them even believed with the orthodox, in a change of the elements, by the power of the Spirit. "The things," says the heretic, Theodotus, "are not what they appear to be, or what they are apprehended to be, but by the power (of the Spirit) are changed into a spiritual power."

"One of these sects, indeed proceeded so far, in rivalry of the Catholic Eucharist, as to contrive by some mechanical process to produce the appearance of blood flowing into the chalice, after the words of consecration, thereby outdoing, as they thought, the orthodox in, at least, the outward show of the miracle. In thus counterfeiting, by means of real liquid, that blood of which they, at the same time, denied the reality, these heretics were, of course, as absurd as knavish, but the testimony which their trick bears to the antiquity of the Catholic doctrine is not the less valuable. Were any additional proofs, indeed, wanting of the prevalence, in those times, of a belief in the transubstantiation of the wine into blood, this effort of the Maronite heretics to outbid, if we may so say, the orthodox altar in its marvels would abundantly furnish it." The above is from a famous French work entitled, "*Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire des Egarements de l'Esprit Humain*."

There was also some other sects, besides the Gnostics, that adopted peculiar notions of their own respecting this sacrament. The Artoturites, for instance, a branch of the Montanists, offered bread and cheese in their religious rites. The Hydroparastates from a regard to sobriety, used only water in the Eucharistic sacrifice. Among the Ophites, who worshipped the serpent that tempted Eve, the sacrament consisted of a loaf, round which a serpent they kept always sacredly in a cage, had been suffered to crawl and twine himself; and there was a sect of Manichæans, who, holding bread to be one of the productions of the Evil Principle kneaded up the paste of which they composed their Eucharist in a way too abominable to be mentioned.

These heresies, however, though on so vital a point of doctrine, yet, having been engendered out of the pale of the Church, and being, all of them, with the exception of the Phantastics, limited and obscure, were not thought important enough to break the silence of the Church respecting this mystery.

St. Cyprian, on being consulted respecting the nature of Novatian's errors, answered: "There is no need of a strict enquiry what errors he teaches, while he teaches out of the Church."

The doctrine of the Real Presence, therefore, undisturbed by dissent and sacred from controversy, was left, partly through policy and partly through habit, enshrined in all its forms of mystery during the whole of the fourth century; and how well the secret was guarded from the Catechumens as late as the time of St. Augustin may be seen from the following remarkable passage: "Christ does not commit Himself to Catechumens. Ask a Catechumen, Dost thou believe? He answers I do, and signs himself with the cross of Christ. He is not ashamed of the cross of Christ, but carries it on his forehead. If we ask him, however, Dost thou eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man? He knows not what we mean; for Christ

bath not committed Himself to him. Catechumens do not know what Christians receive."

Alger, who defended the doctrine of transubstantiation against Berenger, refuted him chiefly, if not entirely, by passages out of St. Augustin.

St. Augustin, himself, from the peculiar circumstances of his position, was induced occasionally on this subject, to adopt a reserve and ambiguity of language which are not to be found, in the same degree, in any of the writers of his period. Living as he had, in Africa, where the population was still, for the greater part, Pagan, he deemed it most prudent, evidently, to follow the ancient practice of the Church, and in the presence of all but the faithful, to speak of the Mystery with caution. Hence it is that, though in none of the other Fathers are there to be found passages more strongly confirmatory of the Ancient and Catholic Faith on this point, he has, in some instances, employed language of whose vagueness and ambiguity the Sacramentarians have, as usual taken advantage to bolster up their desperate cause.

Even by Zuingli, however, it is not asserted that St. Augustin was against transubstantiation, but merely that he would have been so, could he have ventured to express his opinion freely. This he was forced, says Zuingli, in some measure to conceal, on account of the very general prevalence which the belief in a real fleshly Presence had, at that time, obtained. (*De ver. et fals. Religione*.) And here, we may be allowed to ask, how is this admission of Zuingli with respect to the prevalence of such a belief in the time of St. Augustin, to be reconciled with that other favorite theory of the Protestants, which supposes the doctrine of Transubstantiation to have been first introduced by the monk Paschasius, in the ninth century? But it is useless to ask such questions, there being, in fact, no end to the inconsistencies and contrarieties of Protestants on this subject.

How barefaced must be the assurance that would claim St. Augustin as a Protestant authority on this head, will appear by the following extracts from his writings:—"When committing to us his body, he said, *This is my body*. Christ was held in his own hands. He bore that body in his hands." (*Enarrat. 1, in Psalm 33*.) Again, in another sermon on the same Psalm, he thus, in the mystic language of the Secret, expresses himself:—"How was he borne in his hands? Because, when he gave his own body and blood, he took into his hands what the Faithful know; and he bore Himself in a certain manner, when he said, *This is my body*."

The words "What the Faithful Know" occur constantly in the Fathers. Thus St. Crysostom, for instance, in whose writings Casaubon remarked the recurrence of this phrase at least fifty times, in speaking of the tongue (Comment in Psalm 143) says: "Reflect that this is the member with which we receive the tremendous sacrifice, the faithful know what I speak of."

In the exposition of the 98th Psalm St. Augustin says: "Christ took upon him earth from the earth, because flesh is from the earth, and his flesh he took from the flesh of Mary; and because he here walked in the flesh, even this same flesh he gave us to eat for our salvation; but no one eateth this flesh without having first adored it, and not only do we not sin by adoring, but we even sin by not adoring it."

We have already said that most of the writers contemporary with or just preceding St. Augustin, have, as compared with him, spoken more frankly on the

subject of the Eucharist. It was not possible, indeed, that such development, as about this period took place, of a doctrine hitherto so inscribed in obscurity, as was the Trinity, should not encourage by degrees a boldness of language and thought which would show itself in the assertion of the other great mysteries. Accordingly we find, a far more explicit testimony to the doctrine of the Real Presence and of the change of substance than had been ventured on since the days of St. Justin and St. Irenæus. It is worthy of remark, too,—as adding another illustration to the many we have already noticed of the similar fate that has, in some instances, attended these twin mysteries. Transubstantiation and the Trinity,—that the same eminent men, who, in the fourth century, carried the latter dogma to that high region of orthodoxy where it stands fixed at present, where also those who asserted most boldly the entire Catholic doctrine respecting the Eucharist—the same Gregory of Nyssa, who held that "the bread sanctified by the Word of God was transmuted into the body of the Word of God," having been also the strenuous maintainer of the doctrine, "that there was a whole Son in a whole Father, and a whole Father in a whole Son," and Gregory of Nazianzum who desired his hearers "not to stagger in their souls, but, without shame or doubting, to eat the body and drink the blood," having likewise told them that "whoever maintains that any of the Three Persons is inferior to the others overturns the whole Trinity."

In the next number we shall treat of the Ancient Liturgies compared with the present rites of our altars.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The Report of the Hon. Mr. Oulmet—Educational Statistics.

The annual report of Hon. Gideon Oulmet, Superintendent of Public Instruction, has been issued.

He states that in the year 1892-3 there were in the province 3961 Catholic elementary schools and 906, Protestant, under the control of commissioners or trustees; 88 Catholic and 8 Protestant independent schools. Altogether there is an average attendance of 133 183 pupils at elementary schools and 73 304 at superior schools. There are 121 459 boys and 118 784 girls on the rolls of Catholic schools and colleges of all grades; 17 936 boys and 16 743 girls at Protestant institutions. There are 33 866 French-speaking pupils learning English, and 9445 English-speaking pupils learning French. In Catholic schools there are 154 654 French pupils, 5637 English; in Protestant schools 1840 French and 25 330 English.

In speaking of the school exhibits at the Colombian exhibition the report states: "The results obtained by our school exhibit at Chicago prove better than any arguments I could advance that our school system is far from being as faulty as some people are pleased to say; and I am glad to acknowledge that the flattering praises of important organs of both the Canadian and foreign press are largely due the intelligent initiative of Canon Bruchesi, to whom the Government entrusted the organization of this important department."

C. M. B. A.

St. Francis de Sales Branch, No. 81.

The following is a list of the officers elected of Branch 81, for the year 1894. Spiritual Adviser, M. J. Stanton; president, Daniel Halpin; 1st vice president, Jno. Mallay; 2nd vice president, Ed. Hallaman; recording secretary, P. Delaney; financial secretary, Thos. Cushing; treasurer, Jas. Rielly; marshal, Pat. McNulty; guard, Gervais Pennett. Board of Trustees: M. Ryan, P. Donegan, M. Healy, Wm. Sutherland, and Wm. Edgeworth elected for two years. Grand Council Representative, D. P. Wood, alternate, P. Donegan.

P. DELANEY,
Rec. Sec. Br. 81.