

of Rome and the Reformed churches. They were not carried on with so much eagerness, nor were the general body of christians engaged in this controversy.

But if we attend to the real state of the Catholic church during those ages, we shall find that there were good and sufficient reasons for this difference. We shall perceive that the little noise that was made about this subject, may be satisfactorily explained without supposing the church to have been unanimously of the same sentiments with Paschasius.

For, first of all, the opposers of the doctrine of the real presence were not pronounced heretics till the year 1215. In this year, in the pontificate of Innocent the Third, the doctrine of Transubstantiation was in the council of the Lateran, declared to be a doctrine of the church. Yet even the authority of this council was denied by many. One great cause then, of the bitterness of the disputes which have been urged in later times, was then wanting. The one party did not consider the other as heretical; nor did they esteem the sentiments of one another as excluding those who held them from the bosom of the church.

Secondly, in the earlier ages of christianity, no adoration was paid to the consecrated bread or wafer. The adoration of the host was first required by Honorius the Fourth, and Gregory the Ninth in the thirteenth century. Before that period then the abettors of transubstantiation could not accuse their adversaries of impiety in refusing to worship God; nor could the latter charge the former with idolatry in worshipping a piece of bread. There was no room for either the one accusation or the other. Another source, therefore, and perhaps, the principal source of all the bitterness that has been shown in controverting this subject in modern times, was still wanting in the ages of which we are treating.

Thirdly, the annual festival of the body of Christ has tended more than any other circumstance to widen the breach between the Roman and Reformed churches, especially in the view of the ignorant and most numerous class of men, and has consequently been the source of much bitterness and animosity. For it appears peculiarly offensive to pious Protestants, and exceedingly conducive at the same time to heighten the zeal of the Roman Catholics. But this festival was not introduced till the thirteenth century; nor was it fully established before the council of Vienne in 1311.

Fourthly, all the other ceremonies by which the

abettors of the real presence are distinguished from others, were invented and added to the ritual in later times. Of this kind are, the elevation of the host, the splendid receptacles prepared for the body of Christ, and others of a similar nature.

Upon the whole, it appears evident that before the eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth century, there was nothing of an external nature to distinguish the abettors of these two opinions from each other. Neither party could regard the other as heretical. There was no charge of idolatry on the one side, nor of impiety on the other. There was no external ceremony to render the difference conspicuous. They worshipped together, and were perfectly of the same communion. They celebrated the Eucharist in the same manner, and used the same language, the language of the institution. All the difference lay in some nice explanation of these words, which few persons understood, and still fewer considered as of any importance.

It is therefore possible that the doctrine of the real presence, may have been introduced into the church, though it had not been received from the beginning. It might for a time be only a speculative explanation of the words of scripture. So long as it produced no change in the practice, in the worship, or doctrine of the church, it would make little noise, and excite no attention among the multitude. How many speculative points are there, on which christians of the same communion differ from one another, without being productive of any noise or disturbance? How many passages of scripture are there, which learned men explain differently, and yet live together in the utmost harmony? And if this frequently happens now, why may we not suppose that it might also take place in the tenth century? There was nothing to render it impossible then, any more than at the present day.

It is indeed difficult for a person to divest himself of the impressions which arise from the view of things in their present state. It is difficult to conceive that a subject which now creates so much difference among christians, and gives rise to so much altercation, would not produce the same effects in former ages. But this difference in the effect which the discussion of this subject now produces from what it produced in the ninth and tenth centuries, arises plainly from the different circumstances of the church which have just been explained. The explanations of our Saviour's word; given by the two parties, were speculations of a nice nature which had no influence on practice, and consequently were regarded by the bulk of christians with little or no attention. It is no