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## THE CATHOLIC.

Hamilton, G. D.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1843.

The great Novelty of Romanism, according to the Vicar of Leeds; or Transubstantiation and the corporeal presence.

"He," (the Papist) says the Vicar, "agrees with us in believing our Lord's real presence at the Eucharist; [observe how slyly he substitutes the particle AT for IN:] but adds, continues he, his corporeal presence by transubstantiation."

Now, if this article of the Catholic's faith be a Novelty, we shall shew from the testimony of the earliest Fathers, that it is a very ancient Novelty. What surprises us is, that this man, had he ever read the works of the Fathers, should appeal to them; as witnessing against what, (like all his co-protestant dissentients,) he so politely calls Romanism, or Popery; unless, from the conviction that those, whom he was addressing, had not the means of consulting the Fathers; and that they would never question the supposed honest, and undoubtedly learned assertions of so high titled a dignitary and doctor of the national church.

In the first century Saint Ignatius, speaking of the Gnostic Hereticks, says: "They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not acknowledge the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins; and which the Father by his goodness resuscitated." Epist ad Smyrn. page 36. Tom. 2. p. p. Apost. Amstelodami 1722.

Saint Ireneus, who was trained in the doctrine of the Redeemer by Saint Polycarp, the disciple of Saint John the Evangelist, uses the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist as an argument against certain hereticks of his time who denied the resurrection of the flesh. He compares it with the manner in which the Vine and the Wheat are propagated to furnish the matter of the Eucharist before the consecration. "As, says he, a section of the Vine laid in the earth produces fruit in due season; and in like manner the grain of Corn is multiplied by the blessing of God, which afterwards is used for the benefit of man; and, receiving on it 'the word of God,' becomes the Eucharist, 'which is the Body and Blood of Christ.' So our bodies, nourished by the Eucharist, and then laid in earth, and dissolved in it, shall in due time rise again." Iren. adversus Horet. L. 5. C. 11. p. 395, 397, 399.

Tertullian: "Our flesh, says he, is fed with the Body and Blood of Christ, that the soul may be nourished with God."—De Resur. Carnis. cap. 8 p. 569.

Origen. "In former times Baptism was obscurely represented in the cloud and in the sea; but now regeneration is in kind, in water and the Holy Ghost. Then obscurely Manna was the Food: but now in kind the flesh of the word of God is

the true food; even as he said, my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Rom. 7. in Num. Tom. 2. p. 290.

In the fourth Century, among a Host of others, take St. Cyril of Jerusalem.—"The Bread and Wine, says he, which before the Invocation of the adorable Trinity, were nothing but Bread and Wine; become after this Invocation, the Body and Blood of Christ. (Catech. Mysag. L. N. 4. p. 281.) See the Rev. J. Hughes' Letters to Beckenridge.

"When it behoved them, who had known by miracles the Divine virtue and power of the Saviour, to receive his word willingly, and to ask the explanation of any thing that appeared difficult, they do quite the reverse; How can this Man give us his flesh to eat? They, not without great impiety, cry aloud of God; nor does it occur to their mind that nothing is impossible with God. For since they were sensual, they could not (as Paul says) understand spiritual things: but so great a mystery seems to them an absurdity.—Let us, however, take occasion of great profit from the sins of others; and putting firm faith in the mysteries, let us never, in matters so sublime, either think or utter that: How? For this is a Jewish word, and the cause of great punishment. Therefore, even Nicodemus, when he said: How can these things be done? justly heard in reply: Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things? Instructed then, as we have said, by the fault of others, when God operates, let us not ask, how? but let us leave to Him alone the way and the knowledge of his own work. For as, though no one knows what the nature of God is, man is justified by faith, believing that God is the rewarder of them who seek him; so though he be ignorant of the manner of the divine works; yet since he holds by faith that God can do all things, he will obtain no inconsiderable rewards of his virtue.—Thus indeed the Lord himself, by the Prophet Isaiah, exhorts us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts." Shall not he who excels in wisdom and power from God, operate marvellously that the manner of his works surpass our conception? Do you not see what mechanics often perform? The things which they relate seem sometimes incredible; yet we easily believe that such things may be done by them, after we have seen similar things which they have done. How then shall they be deemed unworthy of the greatest punishments, who so despise the Author of all things, as to ask how he can effect his works, whilst they know him to be the giver of all wisdom, and the Scripture has taught us that he can do all things? If, indeed, you, O Jew, even now cry out, how? I also, in imitation of your folly, will willingly ask, how you went forth from Egypt? how was the rod of Moses turned into a Serpent? how was his hand, covered with leprosy, in a moment restored to its former state? how did the waters become

blood? how did your fathers escape through the midst of the sea, as on dry land? how was the bitterness of the waters changed to sweetness by means of the wood? how did the fountains of water flow from the rock? how did the Jordan stand still? how did the impregnable Jerico fall on a mere shout? There are numberless instances, wherein if you ask, how? it will be necessary for you to overthrow all Scripture, and to reject with scorn the doctrine of the Prophets, and the writings of Moses himself. Wherefore it behoved you rather to believe Christ, and if any thing appeared difficult, to seek for him humbly, than to shout like drunken men: How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Do you not see that in saying this, great arrogance is manifested by the expression?—St. Cyril Alex, in Ev Joan. 1. 4. c. 13.

Justin, in his Apology to Antoninus, 150 years after the birth of Christ, says: "This food we call the Eucharist; of which they alone are allowed to partake, who believe the Doctrines taught by us; and have been regenerated by Water for the remission of Sin; and who live as Christ ordained. For we do not take these gifts as common Bread and common Drink; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour, made Man by the word of God, took flesh and blood for our Salvation: in like manner we have been taught that the food, which has been blessed by the prayer of the words which he spoke, and by which our flesh and blood in the Change are nourished, becomes the flesh and blood of that Jesus incarnate.

Saint Ambrose, in his book of Mysteries, after explaining the Types of the Eucharist, as the Sacrifice of Melchisedech; the Manna, and the Water out of the rock; adds as follows: You will say, perhaps, I see something else: how can I be sure that I receive the body of Christ? Prove that it is not what hath been formed by nature, but what the benediction hath consecrated; and that the benediction is more powerful than nature, because it changes even nature itself. He then urges the example of the rod of Moses changed into a serpent, and several other miracles; and lastly, the Incarnation, which mystery he compares to that of the Eucharist. A Virgin, says he brought forth. This is contrary to the order of nature.—The body which we consecrate came forth of a Virgin. Why do you seek for the order of nature in the Body of Jesus Christ; since Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin against the order of nature? Jesus Christ had real flesh, which was fastened to the Cross and laid in the Sepulchre. So the Eucharist is the true sacrament of his flesh. Christ himself assures us of it. This is, says he, my Body. Before the benediction of these heavenly words, it is of another nature: after the consecration, it is the Body. If Man's benediction has been capable of changing the nature of things; what shall we say of the Divine Consecration, wherein the very words of our Saviour himself operate? The word of Jesus Christ could make that out of nothing, which was not: Can it not

change that which is, into what it was not?—Is this Protestant Doctrine? the Saint then recommends to the now believers to keep the Mysteries secret.

In the fifth Century, St. Chrysostom, shewing how much the Christian Priesthood and Sacrifice of the new law surpassed in tremendous dignity the Jewish Priesthood and Sacrifice of the old law, a mere shadow of ours; speaks as follows; when you behold the Lord himself lying the victim on the Altar, and offered; and the priest attending and praying over the Sacrifice purpled with his precious Blood; do you seem to remain among men; or not rather to be translated to Heaven? O wonderful prodigy! O excess of divine Mercy! He, who is seated above at the right hand of the Father, is in that hour held by all in their hands, and given himself to be touched and received! Figure to yourself Elias before the Altar praying alone; the multitude standing around him in silence and trembling; and the fire falling from Heaven, and consuming the Sacrifice. What is now done is far more extraordinary, more awful and more astonishing. The priest is here standing and calls down from Heaven, not fire, but the Holy Ghost. He prays a long time, not that a flame may be kindled; but that Grace may touch the Sacrifice; and that the hearts of all who partake of it, may be purged by the same. (De Sacred. 1. 3. c. 5. p. 335.)

Again: "What graces, says he, is it not in our power to receive by touching and receiving his whole body! What if you hear not his voice? You see him laid. He has given us himself to eat; and has set himself in the state of a victim sacrificed for us." (Hom. 50. p. 517.) And Hom. 82. p. 787. he writes thus:—"How many now say they wish to see his shape; his garments! You desire to see his garments; but he gives you himself not only to be seen, but to be touched; to be eaten; to be received within you.—Than what beam of the Sun ought not that hand to be more pure which divides this flesh? That mouth which is filled with this spiritual fire? That tongue, which is purpled with this adorable Blood. The Angels beholding it tremble, and dare not look thereon through awe and fear; and on account of the rays which dart from that wherewith we are nourished; with which we are mingled, being made one body, and flesh with Christ. What Shepherd ever fed his Sheep with his own Limbs? Nay, many Mothers gave their children to other Nurses: whereas he feeds us with his own Blood," &c. (Hom. 82. p. 787.)

"Let us," says the same holy Father, "believe God in all things; and gainsay him not; although what he says appears to be contrary to the testimony of our eyes and our reason. Let the authority of his word supersede the testimony of our eyes and our reason. Since therefore his word said: this is my Body; let us rest satisfied and believe. Let us behold it with the eyes of Faith. (Hom. 4. in Joan.)

The testimonies from the early Fathers to the real or corporeal presence of our Saviour in the Eucharist, are so many and interesting, that we shall continue to produce a few more in our next.