

# The Catholic.

Quod semper; quod ubique; quod ab omnibus.

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## SELECTED.

### AMICABLE DISCUSSION.

Continued.

#### LETTER X.

##### A RECAPITULATION UPON THE EUCHARIST.

Saint Ambrose. \* "And now, if the mere benediction of a man (Moses) was powerful enough to change nature, what must we not say of the divine consecration, when the very words of our Lord operate! . . . . You have read concerning the creation of the world: He spoke, and it was made; he commanded, and it was formed. If then the word of Christ could draw out of nothing what till then had no existence, shall it not be able to change the things that exist, into what they were not before? Why look you for the order of nature in the production of the body of Jesus Christ in this sacrament, seeing that the order of nature is equally disregarded in the same Lord being born of a Virgin?" Saint Chrysostom upon the words: *How can he give us his flesh to eat:*

"When a person asks how a thing can be done, he begins to doubt whether it can be done. . . . . If you inquisitively search into this wonderful work, why do you not also ask, after the miracle of the five loaves: How did he effect so prodigious a multiplication?—But you will say the thing spoke for itself, it was plain to the eye.— And I tell you that for that very reason they should have believed it to be as easy for him to perform this last miracle. For he first multiplied the loaves, that the Jews might no longer remain incredulous as to what he had afterwards to announce to them.—" And elsewhere:— "The words that I have spoken are spirit and life, that is, are divine and spiritual, have *nothing carnal about them*, depend not on the ordinary laws of nature."

And again in another homily: "He that was present at the last supper, is the same that is now present and consecrates our feast: for it is not man who makes the things lying on the altar become the body and blood of Christ; but that Christ who was crucified for us. The words indeed are pronounced by the priest; but it is the power and grace of God that consecrates them. He said, *This is my body*: these words make the change. And as the words of God, *increase and multiply and replenish the whole earth*, though spoken but once at the creation of the world, still produce their effect, by imparting to human nature the power and virtue of gene-

\* Discourse to those who were to be initiated,

rating children through the course of ages: in like manner, although the adorable words of Christ,— *This is my body*, were but once uttered, they have not failed to secure to this sacrifice all their virtue and efficacy to the present day on the altars of the Church, and will not fail to secure the same until the last coming of our Lord." I could fill twenty pages with quotations from the great Archbishop, and from many others; Hesychius, Cesarius, Eusebius of Emessa, for example. But what have just been produced should be sufficient; for assuredly, neither Zuinglius, nor any of his followers will ever be able to enlarge upon such mysterious and wonderful operations in the Eucharist of their conception.

Again, Sir, you must here candidly acknowledge that, had the belief and persuasion of the primitive fathers been exactly that of the Sacramentarians, who in latter ages have informed us that the bread and wine remain exactly the same before and after the consecration, the faithful and neophytes could have had no difficulty in conceiving and no hesitation in believing such doctrine, neither would the fathers have had to labour in removing doubts and difficulties from their minds. And yet we find St. Gregory Nazianzen telling them:—

"Approach with firm faith to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ, and entertain not the remotest doubt respecting them." St. Hilary: Let us hold to what is written. Jesus Christ leaves no room to doubt of the reality of his flesh and blood, since the declaration of our Lord and of our faith asserts it to be his flesh indeed and his blood indeed." St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "With all confidence, let us receive the body and blood of Christ, for under the appearance of bread, his body is given to us; and under the appearance of wine, his blood is given. For, as Christ, speaking of the bread, declared and said, *this is body*, who shall dare to doubt it?" St. Ephrem: "Participate in the immaculate body and blood of the Lord, with a firm faith, resting assured that you receive the lamb, whole and entire." St. Ambrose and the author of the book on the sacraments: "The Lord assures us that we receive his body and blood: ought we to doubt the truth of his words, or the correctness of his testimony? You will perhaps object: how can it be his true and real flesh, if the bread bears no appearance of real flesh? How can it be his blood, since I behold indeed the resemblance, but in no wise the reality of blood? I have already told you that the word of Christ can change the ordinary nature of things." Reflect but for a moment on this doubt: and you will feel that it infallibly proves the real presence as taught by St. Ambrose. Such a doubt, in fact, is most natural, when

the body is asserted to be present, although the flesh appears not to human sight. But it is extravagant, if the body be supposed absent in heaven; for in that case, there would be no need for the flesh to appear, but on the contrary, it should not appear at all, since it is not there at all.

Had they believed and taught at that time, what all protestants have since pretended, that the bread and wine remained after consecration the same as they were before, neither the faithful would have had any reason to mistrust their senses, nor the fathers to admonish them to disregard their testimony. And yet we find that St. Cyril of Jerusalem says to his neophytes: "Do not consider them as common bread and wine, for they are the body and blood of Jesus Christ, according to his words; and although your senses might suggest that to you, let faith confirm you. Judge not of the thing by your taste, but by faith assure yourself, without the least doubt that you are honoured with the body and blood of Christ. This knowing, and of this being assured, that what appears to you bread, is not bread, but the body of Christ, although the taste judges it to be bread: and that the wine, which you see and which has the taste of wine, is not wine, but the blood of Christ." St. Chrysostom; "Let us believe God in every thing, and not gainsay him, although what is said may seem contrary to our reason and our sight. Let his word overpower both. Thus let us do in mysteries: not looking only on the things that lie before us, but holding fast his words; for his word cannot deceive; but our senses are very easily deceived. The former never failed, the latter often. Since then his word says:—*This is my body*; let us assent, and believe, and view it with an intellectual eye." Hesychius: "The spirit of God which is in us, and the word that he has left us regulate the use of our senses, and prevent not only our sense of taste, but the senses also of hearing, seeing, touching, and smelling, from an undue interference in mysteries, so that they lead us not to any low ideas, or weak and presumptuous reasonings, unworthy the grandeur and sublimity of the mysteries. We must attribute the sanctification of the mystic sacrifice, and the change or transformation of the sensible into spiritual things, to him who is the true priest, Jesus Christ, that is, we must consider him as the sole worker of this miracle, because the power of the word, which he has pronounced, sanctify these visible things to such a degree that they are raised far beyond the reach of our senses." And St. Cesarius: "We must judge by faith, and not by our senses, of this undivided and perfect victim, which cannot be seen by corporeal and outward eyes, but only by those that are