

From Collier's Ecclesiastical History.

### HENRY VIII. and the Ambassadors of the Protestant Princes, on Communion in one kind.

In May, the next year, the Protestant princes sent Francis Burgrat, and two other learned men, with a public character into England. The business was to argue with the divines, and press the king to a farther reformation. They had archbishop Cranmer's interest in this affair: at their going off, they drew up their arguments against communion in one kind, private masses, and the celibacy of the clergy. I shall translate what they offer upon the two first heads, and for the last, refer the reader to my former part.

After some introductory ceremony, these ambassadors acquaint the king, "they had spent near two months in conferences with the English bishops and others of the eminent clergy: that they had brought the matter to a very promising issue; and that they hoped his majesty, and the princes of Germany, would come to a perfect understanding in points of religion." From hence they proceed to treat the pope very coarsely. I shall endeavour to give the reader their reasoning, and omit most of their hard language.

Their argument against communion in one kind, stands thus: they "take it for granted, his highness will not deny that the doctrine and commands of our Saviour are to be preferred to all human constitutions, traditions, and ceremonies whatsoever. For our Saviour is the life and the truth; he is infallible in whatever he pronounces. But all human decisions, especially in matters of faith and religious worship, are liable to mistake. Now it is certain that our Saviour instituted the holy eucharist under both kinds. This is evident, from his saying, 'Drink ye all of this.' And for this we have a farther proof from St. Paul: Let a man examine himself," says the Apostle, "and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." (Cor. xi. 28). Now both these places direct the practice of the whole Church, not the clergy only. For to assert, that our Saviour spoke these words only to the apostles, and therefore the communicating under both kinds can bind no farther than the hierarchy; to assert this, is an inconsequent way of arguing; for from hence it will follow, that the laity are not to receive so much as under one kind: for neither do we read in any other places, our Saviour commanded that only his body should be given to the laity; or that both the bread and the cup should be reserved as a privilege to the sacerdotal order. From hence we must necessarily infer, that our Saviour's command for receiving the holy eucharist, equally concerns the laity and clergy without any abatement; or else that the laity are altogether to be refused the sacrament of our Lord's body, since we do not find any institution of the sacrament for the laity in any part of the gospels, excepting at our Saviour's last supper. To affirm, that half communion was settled by the Church upon several weighty considerations, is not to talk much to the point; for the question is here concerning our Saviour's institution, which every Christian must grant, ought to overrule all ecclesiastical authority. For the Church does not presume upon the liberty of making an indifferent thing of our saviour's command; and as for the plea of difference in degree, dignity of priesthood, fear of spilling the cup and such like; these pretences can never have force enough to overbear or set aside a divine institution. For it is confessed even in the canon law, that no custom can prescribe against the laws of God. Besides, the advantage of custom lies on the other side: for the receiving under both kinds, has not only the warrant of our Saviour's precept, but the authority of the ancients, and the practice of the primitive

Church to support it. Thus St. Jerome tells us, the priests administer the holy eucharist, and distribute Christ's blood to the people: thus pope Gelasius declares against giving the body and blood of our Lord, that is, keeping back part of it, and calls it a great sacrilege.

"From hence they go on to allege the practice of the Greek Church: that this part of Christendom, as they have maintained the liberties against the encroachments of the court of Rome, so they have always communicated the laity under both kinds.

[It is signed by Francis Burgrat and George Boyneburg, ambassadors, and Myconius, a parish priest.]

The king gave the ambassadors an answer as they desired; it was drawn by bishop Tunstall. After some length of commendation & return of ceremony, the king enters upon the controversy. He begins with communion in one kind.

"That this sacrament," says the king, "was commanded under both kinds, and never under one, is an assertion we are surprised at; neither can we imagine your excellencies are in earnest, but that you have only a mind to sound our opinion, and try our strength upon the argument. And, therefore, notwithstanding what you have advanced, we cannot help thinking your persuasion the same with ours, and that you believe under the form of bread; the natural and living body of Christ is really and substantially contained, together with the true and real blood; otherwise we must confess that the body is disfigured of blood, which would be an impious affirmation, since this flesh of our Saviour is not only alive, but productive of life in others. And thus, under the form of wine, there is, not only the natural and real blood of our Saviour, but likewise, together with his blood, the real and natural flesh and body is contained. The article of orthodox belief standing thus, the consequence is, that those who communicate in either kind communicate in both, as to affect and benefit, because our Saviour's body and blood is entirely in each. And to support this doctrine of concomitancy, we are not unprovided with authority and instances from the new Testament. Thus our blessed Saviour administered the sacrament in one kind to the disciples going to Emmaus. For it is written, 'As he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them; and their eyes were opened, and they knew him, by the breaking of bread.' (Luke xxiv. 30.) This place, the ancients, St. Chrysostom, St. Austin, and Theophylact, interpret as referring to the holy eucharist, and yet here is not the least mention of giving the wine. Thus our Saviour, by administering in one kind, seems to have left the same liberty to his spouse the Church. For Christ, who gave instructions at his last supper for communion in both kinds, has left us no precedent for communicating under one; but no man was ever so bold as to charge our Saviour with inconsistency between precept and example.

"Thus, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the conversion of three thousand people, at St. Peter's sermon, it is said, 'They continued stedfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.' (Acts ii. 42.) This text the ancients likewise understand of administering the holy sacrament; but neither is here any thing said of the cup. Now if communion under one kind is warranted both by our Saviour's and the Apostles' example, we are not to charge this usage with contradiction to the Gospel; for the Apostles, who were led into all truth by the Holy Spirit, would never have communicated the people only in the bread if our Saviour's command had obliged them to administer under both kinds; for such a latitude would have looked like forgetfulness of

their Master's command, and changing his institution.

"Further. From our Saviour's instruction for this solemnity, recited by St. Paul, we find the two kinds separately and independently mentioned. The Apostle's words which he received from our Saviour are these: 'The Lord Jesus, in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.' Here we see our blessed Saviour, in the words 'do this,' speaks separately, and by itself, of his body under the appearance of bread, before he proceeds to any mention of the cup. Afterwards, the Apostles inform us, that after the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me.' Here we are to observe the absoluteness of the command is altered; for it is not said without limitation, as it was in the breaking of the bread, 'This do in remembrance of me;' but there is a clause of latitude added, that is, 'Do this as oft as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me.' By which we are to understand, that we are under no necessity of always receiving the cup; but that as often as we are communicated with the blood of our Saviour in the form of wine; we are bound to 'do this in remembrance of him.'

"Farther. Our blessed Saviour when supper was over, at which he had given them his body under the form of bread, and after this he gave his blood separately under the appearance of wine, saying, 'Do this as oft as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me;' letting us know that sometimes the administration might be performed under one kind, and yet, notwithstanding, the force and significance of both received by the people; for otherwise there had been no necessity of pronouncing the words 'Do this' more than once, neither would they have been repeated distinctly upon the bread and cup. We have reason to conclude, therefore, that our Saviour, at the giving of the cup, would not have added, 'Do this as oft as ye shall drink it,' having said the same before of the bread unless he had allowed the receiving of either of these without the other.

"Neither can it be denied that the disciples received the body of our Lord upon his giving them the bread, saying, 'This is my body;' for though the cup was not given till after some interval, when supper was ended, no person, we conceive, is so stupid as to think the body of Christ was not received by the disciples under the form of bread till after supper, when the cup was given them; to suppose this would be extremely absurd, because it makes the former words of our Saviour (This is my body,' pronounced over the bread,) signify nothing; and that the giving the bread to the disciples had no supernatural efficacy till they had all drank of the cup after supper. Now this would be a wicked sentiment, because it throws both what our Saviour said and did out of all force and signification. Lastly, St. Paul himself, after he had made a joint mention of both kinds, concludes with a disjunctive inference upon the whole, saying, 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, &c., or shall drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, &c.: which text is thus translated by Erasmus, 'Itaque quisquis ediderit panem hunc, aut de calice biberit indigne, reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini.'

"From these words of the Apostle it appears plainly, that whosoever receives this bread unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of our Lord; or whosoever shall drink this cup unworthily, is likewise guilty of the body and blood of our Lord; which crime could never be charged upon the communicant unless the

body and blood of Christ were separately contained under the form of bread, and likewise in the same integrity and extent of nature under the form of wine; neither would the Apostles have spoken disjunctively of the species of bread if it was never to have been received but in conjunction with the cup: neither, on the other side, would he have spoken of the cup in terms of separation if it had never been lawful to receive it without the bread. For why should he disjoin those things which were never to be parted? Now the least portion of inspiration has its weight, and every word ought to be regarded. For thus we are commanded by the prophet, 'Incline your ear to the words of my mouth.' And in Deuteronomy it is said, 'These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart;' and elsewhere in the same book we read, 'Thou shalt not add thereto or diminish therefrom.'

"We grant no command of our Saviour can be overruled by any human constitution: for men can have no authority to reverse a Divine establishment. We are likewise persuaded that no custom ought to prevail against the Word of God, or be pleaded in derogation of our Saviour's institution.

"But then we affirm our Saviour has left us at liberty to receive him three ways in a corporal, and the fourth in a spiritual manner; that is, first, in both kinds; secondly, under the form of bread only; thirdly, under that of wine; and fourthly, in affection and desire only when, by the disadvantage of circumstances, we can receive no otherwise.

"As to the first way it is our opinion, that if any of the faithful, out of ardency of devotion, shall earnestly desire to receive in both kinds provided there is no impediment of weakness or distemper, the communion may be given him under both kinds; provided, farther, that neither the person receiving nor the priest does this in contempt of the discipline of the Church and the custom of the country.

"As to the second and third manner of receiving, our opinion is this: that in case a man lies under disadvantage of nature or accident—for instance, if he has the palsy, or an impediment against eating bread or drinking wine, so that he cannot conveniently receive under both kinds,—in this case, if he desires the communion, it ought to be given under one.

"As to the fourth: if a man's stomach is disturbed with nauseating to that degree that he can keep nothing, under such a distemper the showing the sacrament upon his desire is a virtual communion. This will help him to recollect the death of his Redeemer, bring him to compunction, and convey the benefits of actually receiving.

"We cannot but wonder, therefore, that those who appear so zealous in maintaining their Christian liberty should restrain it in so valuable an instance; that they should not go under an unnecessary incapacity, and deny the inestimable privilege of our Saviour's body and blood under several emergencies. What pious Christian would not rather die, than be thrown out of so great a privilege?

Besides, upon these principles of restraint, what must become of the northern nations and those of Africa within the tropic? What must become of them, I say, where wine is not imported, nor the growth of their country. Are these people to be barred the sacrament, and receive under both? Or can we suppose the integrity of our Saviour's body, or the entire sacrament, is not conveyed under one kind?

"When the people began to leave off the primitive usage, and communicate in the bread only, is to us uncertain; but it is probable our ancestors went upon the authority of Scripture, in the change of this custom, which was the authority of Scripture, I say, which authorizes the communion sometimes given under one kind by our Saviour and his Apostles. Being supported by such infallible precedents it is our opinion Christians of former times declined the receiving the cup."