

alone, then the spiritual element is separated from the material, and the sacramental union is destroyed. And then there is no distinct blessing in the sacramental communion that cannot be enjoyed by faith entirely apart from it.

There is no *ex opere operato*, however; no magical effect from the simple oral partaking. But faith makes the received Christ a blessed spiritual food, while unbelief receives to judgment and condemnation. Luther's favorite illustration here was drawn from the woman who touched the Saviour's garment. There was inherent healing virtue in Christ. Those who touched him without faith received no benefit. The woman having faith was healed the moment she touched the hem of the garment. Her faith, however, did not make the healing power. That was inherent in Christ, quite independent of her act. So faith does not of itself make the sacramental presence. It can only appropriate it by using the Divinely appointed means. The Romish view substitutes the means for the Divine gift, thus confusing earthly and heavenly. The figurative view separates them entirely, so that one can be had quite apart from the other. The Real Presence neither confuses nor separates, but combines both in an inseparable sacramental union, so that one is the means of the other. Sacramental grace is thus, as in accordance with Scripture appointment, bound up with the use and observance of the Holy Sacrament; and this great fundamental ordinance of Christianity cannot be lightly displaced from its pivotal situation.

Yet, though the Presence is one to be had by an oral reception, it is *not a carnal, local, or physical presence*. The mouth is the medium, but the appropriation is spiritual; and while the substance of the body and blood of Christ is present in the Holy Supper, it is only after a mystical, supernatural, and incomprehensible manner. That neither transubstantiation nor a symbolical presence, but that this Real, true, sacramental Presence, was the view held by the primitive Church is attested by HAGENBACH, the Reformed historian, thus: "Corresponding to the mysterious union between the two natures of Christ in one and the same person, was the idea of a mystical connection subsisting between the body of Christ and the bread in the Lord's Supper, and between His blood and the wine." *

The *objections* to the Real Presence are subjective and philosophical. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" urges the reason. The answer is that faith has not to do with the *how*? but only with the *what*? It accepts the plainly revealed fact, but does not assume to penetrate the secret laboratory of the Divine working. Mysteries encounter us everywhere in the processes of nature; why should we not expect them in the deeper processes of grace? The remark of the great critic, Lessing, is here in place: "What sort of a revelation would that be which would reveal nothing?" Christianity is full of

* History of Doctrines, i. 362.