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FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

The church of Rome rests the doctrines of transubstantiation upon these words of our Saviour, "This is my body." These words they understand literally; and they ask, what reason any person can have for understanding them in a figurative sense.

To this I answer, there may be various reasons why we would understand any particular words in a figurative rather than in a literal sense. If the figurative sense be more agreeable to the circumstances in which the words have been spoken; or more consonant to the common use of those words; or if the literal sense of them would be contrary to what reason teaches us concerning the character of God; or contrary to what the scriptures teach us concerning God, or his Son Jesus Christ, then, in either of these cases, we should be authorized to consider the words in question as metaphorical; and so every sound critic would understand them. This then, is the order which I shall observe: I shall prove that the figurative explanation of the words, "This is my body," is agreeable to the circumstances in which they were spoken, and to the common use of the words them-

selves; and that the literal sense is contrary to reason, and contrary to the scriptures. After stating these four arguments, I shall consider the reasons which are brought forward by the Bishop of Meaux in favor of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

We are then to consider, first, the circumstances in which these words were spoken. The meaning of any sentence, or any phrase, can never be properly learned by taking the words by themselves. We must take them in conjunction with what is said before, and with what follows after. We must consider the situation of the speaker, and of the hearer, and the intention of the whole discourse. The occasion of the words was this. Jesus Christ was eating the last meal which he was to partake of before his passion. This was his last meeting with his disciples. That very night he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, conducted before an unjust tribunal, and the next day he expired in anguish on the cross, in company with the most guilty malefactors. By this solemn transaction, he overthrew the empire of sin and death, and delivered his followers from the worst of slavery. Was it not then, naturally to be expected that he should institute some ordinance to perpetuate the memory of this wonderful