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## For the Provincial Wesleyan.

### TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

The doctrine of Transubstantiation is one of the distinguishing tenets of the Romish Church. It is rejected by all Protestant bodies without exception, while every true Papist must believe in it as the peril of his soul's salvation. To so great an extent has the doctrine become identified with the Church, that the Test Act, passed in the reign of Charles II. and repealed little over forty years ago, effected the exclusion of Catholics from public offices by requiring them, among other things, to abjure belief in so Papistical a tenet. Like other errors of the Church of Rome, it grew during the darkness of the middle ages. A too literal interpretation of the words of our Saviour at the Last Supper—"This is my body,"—had, as an early error, caused a vague belief to spring up gradually in the Church that the sacred elements were connected in some mysterious manner with the body and blood of Christ. These, although it is impossible to speak with precision on the subject, seem to have been generally regarded as present at the administration of the Eucharist, though in what manner this presence was supposed to be realized cannot be determined, as the matter had never been publicly discussed in any Synod. Indeed, it is probable that the matter was largely left to individual judgment. In the year 831, however, Paschasius Radbertus, a Benedictine monk, and Abbot of Corbie in France, published a book in which he unequivocally maintained the doctrine of the real presence. It would appear to have been regarded with dislike by Charles the Bald, then King of France, who appointed Ratramn and John Scotus, two learned men, to reply to the obscuro publication. But the want of clear and decided views on the subject caused the discussion to be inefficiently conducted both by these champions and other theologians who voluntarily entered the lists. As the aversion, however, which Charles felt for the doctrine did not take the shape of a prohibition, the matter gradually sank to rest for two hundred years. A choice of beliefs being thus afforded, it may easily be imagined which one gained ground during the sombre period of intellectual gloom which followed. But the events which took place about the middle of the eleventh century removed all doubts on the subject, and decisively settled what was to be the orthodox faith on the subject. In 1043 Berenger, of Tours, publicly avowed his disbelief of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. For this he was condemned in no less than seven Councils. At four of these he was himself present and solemnly avowed his errors, only to relapse again. He lived to an advanced age, tortured by the recollection of his repeated perjuries, but protected from the extreme rigour of ecclesiastical law by the celebrated Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII, who besides being influenced by personal friendship, was probably himself inclined to the contrary opinion. The Council of Placentia, held during the pontificate of Urban II, sanctioned the doctrine of the real presence. Innocent III, in the fourth Lateran Council, finally determined the nature of the presence, precisely established the dogma, and affixed to it the name of Transubstantiation. The gradual and unnoticed growth of pernicious error was never more strikingly exemplified than in the history of this absurd and blasphemous tenet. Bad, too, as it would be as a mere belief, its practical consequence has been a wide deviation in the administration of the Eucharist, as practised by the Romish Church, from the primitive type afforded by the Last Supper. Fear lest the blood of our Lord might be spilt, caused the cup to be withdrawn from communicants and confined to the priests. The use of the wafer instead of broken bread sprang from scruples of a similar nature, about breaking the body of Christ. Thus the apprehension of committing an imaginary sacrilege has resulted in an actual neglect of scriptural usage.

The doctrine we are at present discussing, though unquestionably resting on a most patently ridiculous as is commonly supposed, is founded on one of the metaphysical subtleties so rife in the middle ages; but precisely because it is thus founded has been almost invariably misunderstood. Philosophers are unanimous in asserting that our knowledge of matter is purely relative; that is, that of matter, in itself, we can know nothing, but only as it has qualities which are in rapport with our senses. "When I see and touch a piece of gold," says Mill, "I am conscious of a sensation of yellow colour, and sensations of hardness and weight; and by varying the mode of handling, I may add to these sensations many others completely distinct from them; but the sensations are all of which I am directly conscious." Of what would be called the essence of anything,—that which makes it to be (res) what it is,—we know nothing. This is unknown and unknowable something, in which the various qualities of which we are conscious are supposed to inhere, is called *substantium* (sub and stans) or *matter*. This substance, then, being entirely inaccessible to human observation, might be annihilated or changed in toto without our knowledge, so long as the various properties clothing it continued to produce in us the appropriate sensations. Transubstantiation is the removing of the substance of the bread and wine, and the substituting in its place the substance of the flesh and blood of Christ, the qualities of the original elements remaining the same as before. Those, therefore, who developed the doctrine into its more refined form, did not commit the palpable absurdity vulgarly attributed to them, of supposing the change to be cognizable by our senses. This would not be transubstantiation, which means a change in the substance, something of which our senses, commonly applied to in refutation of the doctrine, can tell us nothing. But although the popular view of the nature of the presence be incorrect, there is, nevertheless, a genuine absurdity inherent in the tenet. Granting the existence of an external cause, to which we are compelled by a necessity of our nature to refer our sensations, if this unknown *substantium* be matter minus all its qualities and properties, in what possible respect can the substance of the body and blood of Christ differ from the substance of the

bread and wine? The expression may appear to border on irrelevance; but in reality the reflection will suffice to discover that it does not. For, deprive any portion of matter of merely the property of extension, and to what a chimaera do we reduce it! What is left as a residuum, and how could it manifest itself to the senses, or be even realized in imagination? And if it be replied that extension, or the property of occupying some portion of space, is itself all that substance really is, the answer is obvious that extension differs only in degree and not in kind, and must be the same for the divine body as for the eucharistic elements. But, in truth, when we talk of matter as something divested of all sensible qualities, we are talking of that of which we know nothing.

The presence, however, of the flesh and blood of Christ, in whatever manner it is supposed to be realized, involves other absurdities quite as gigantic as the above, and a great deal more blasphemous. When a person has achieved a faith sufficiently submitted to believe in the mystical transmutation effected by the blessing of the priest, he has still to credit the most stupendous miracle, or rather series of miracles, that the human mind can imagine,—the perpetual consumption and as perpetual renewal of the body of our Lord. And, passing over the horrid blasphemy involved in the idea of taking into the system the flesh of the Saviour, the digestive functions have to be suspended that the elements may not undergo assimilation. There are numerous minor absurdities connected with the tenet which cannot be discussed here, but which will suggest themselves to every one. To this fantastic Meloch of superstition, engendered by the frivolities of a vain philosophy on a misinterpretation of the words of our Lord, has been sacrificed a host of heroic souls for refusing to fall down and worship it. Surely out of the mists of error steaming up from the golden chalice of abominations held by the woman clad in purple and scarlet, and obscuring the Sun of Righteousness from the weary eyes of mankind, was never shaped a phantom "more dreadful and deformed." The meek and lowly Jesus, velling his Godhead in the Eucharistic elements, and calling on mankind to believe in the wondrous transmutation, or be consigned to the martyr's stake in this world and everlasting flames in the next! The conception is worthy the imagination of a fiend.

The Church must seek holiness, if it is successfully to draw near to God. There must be no hypocrisy, no robbery of God, no sham excitement, no "getting up" of carnal, but instead a direct, solemn, honest, earnest appeal for forgiveness and sanctification. Ministers and members must come in self-abasement, in deep repentance for all past sin, in perfect trust to the all-merciful God. He will forgive, bless, sanctify and revive. He will never turn us away when we thus come to him. "He is able to save to the utmost," and he will save. We may be sure that sinners will neither be convicted nor converted while the Church lives in a backslidden state. Such a Church is an incubus, and a disgrace; a great shame and a scandal in Zion. Such a Church is criticized, laughed at, sneered at by those who do not fear God. Its example is pernicious, deadly; and, mortifying to the last degree, to the devout and earnest minister. Coming to God in prayer, he laments that he is not a minister. We deprecate all attempts to get up an excitement in the Church. We do not need phrensy, but godliness; not zeal, so much as humility and power.

Silence becomes us often while we bow before God; deep stillness, awe, reverence and tears. Down very low before God let the poor backslidden Church go, broken-hearted for her sins, sighing, weeping, penitent and prayerful. We do not need noise at such a time, nearly as much as sob, and heart-yearning petitions for mercy. We must not dissemble before God in the slightest degree, but turn our very soul in him in solemn trust. After the Church is thus to God, sinners will become serious and penitent. A most successful preacher once said to us: "Preaching holiness is the only way I ever could succeed in bringing the Church to the point of having faith in God sufficient for a revival." Go steadily on coming near to God, and the work of revival will soon begin. One of the points to be specially guarded in the work is the peril of demoralization for lack of discipline. Revivals will not injure us, we need not fear that, but we may so break up our regular means of grace that when we stop our meeting we will have a mob instead of a church. We suggest a plan for keeping our forces intact in time of revival. Let the minister begin his work for a revival at once, before in his own closet, and when he has conquered there he is ready for an assault upon the enemy's outworks. Let him the next Sunday evening preach a very short sermon straight to the mark, and hold a short prayer meeting after sermon; urging the church to come up to the help of the Lord. If there be no special move, let him urge attendance at the class and prayer meetings of the week, and spend all the time he can in visiting from house to house and urging the people to seek Christ. If his meetings grow more spiritual, earnest and tender, it is a good sign. Keep up all the regular means of grace. The next Sunday let him go into his pulpit, with a consuming desire to save his people and preach under the white-sheet at a full baptism of divine love. Make an effort to save a pagan, keep one who has a chance to be saved. Make the Sabbath-school as serious and as spiritual and practical as possible. Hold a special prayer-meeting for youth and children. At night try again. If God bless the people, and sinners begin to turn to him, appoint an extra meeting, one day at a time; and try on Monday evening again, if the occasion become serious enough have a short meeting in the day time. Hold meetings every night, but when your prayer-meeting night comes do not dispense with it, but honor it and hold it. Let no class meeting be suspended; do not stop your Sabbath-school work; let all your usual machinery and add more as occasion requires. As you gather souls into the fold, place them where they will have work to do and keep all your material well in hand. Let no excitement lead you to neglect your work of systematic organization and drill. If God so bless you that you can hold meeting six nights in the week do so, but do not fear that your revival will die if you rest on Saturday night. And now may God bless you with a gracious outpouring of his spirit! Our harvest is now. Gather it for Jesus' sake.—Central Advocate.

THE INVITATION SOCIETY.

Some years ago a gentleman residing in one of our cities was deeply impressed and grieved by seeing multitudes who neglected public worship; and he determined to make the effort to induce some of the Sabbath-breakers to frequent the House of God. It required some little effort at first, but he overcame his timidity. The Lord's day evening he went forth with his holy purpose, and meeting a young man who did not appear to be on his way to a place of worship, he respectfully addressed him, got into conversation with him, and he persuaded the stranger to accompany him to worship and, as an inducement, offered him a seat in his own pew. Succeeding in this, he was emboldened and encouraged to proceed in the line of Christian activity and usefulness. And now, mark with what a blessed result. He was the means of leading one hundred young men to become steady attendants at the sanctuary, many of whom have been truly converted to God.

A minister of the Gospel mentioned that on one of his prayer-meetings, when the idea was caught up by some persons present, who at once said, "How admirable a plan this is for doing." A little association was immediately formed, called "The Invitation Society." In sixteen months two hundred persons were persuaded by eight or ten of its agents no longer to forsake the assembling of themselves together in the house of prayer. One of these agents, an earnest Christian in humble life, devoted himself to this work, and was the means of bringing forty to hear the Word of Life.—Rev. J. A. Adams.

AT JESUS' FEET.

At the pool of Bethesda a multitude were waiting, and only one could be healed. There was no eye of sympathy to look upon the afflicted, no voice to speak to them; each man, forgetful perhaps of the greater words of others, absorbed only in his own, rushed forward if possible, to be the first into the troubled waters, and so reap the solitary blessing which the pool contained. Here, on this mountain side, sits Jesus. There is no troubling here; there need not be. What ever troubling there is, is always on man's side. With him all is calm. We see in our mind's eye the multitude toiling up the mountain side; the eagerness, the anxiety, the casting down at Jesus' feet, and beautifully simple is all that we have told us of what he did; "be healed them all."

And there lay before Jesus, if we might be bold enough to say so, no alternative but to heal them all. The only alternative was to get up and go away; or tell the people who brought their loved sick ones to take them back again unhealed; but what an alternative would that have been to him. He could never have done this. So, then, when we cast down our sorrows, or ourselves, or our friends' sorrows, or ourselves, right at the feet of Christ, let us think, "He cannot go away from them." This is no presumption, no lowering of Jesus, no deduction from his power; but it is a holy faith and courage to have such a thought, and it is greatly honoring to him. What would have become of us, if it had been once recorded that Jesus was too busy to attend to such and such a person, or that he refused any one or sent him away unhealed? No doubt Satan would say, "Ah, that case is just like yours;" or our own mistaking hearts would be sure to find upon it, and to feel, "So and so was sent away;" or, "My experience may be the same." But Jesus, owing to the blessed pliancy of his nature, cannot go on—no, not a single step, if a helpless, suffering being, willing to be healed, is cast in faith at his feet. He is rooted and bound by misery. Such is his blessed human nature, that if he were obliged to spurn the miserable from his feet, or to go away from them, he would be miserable himself.

I think of the helpless misery of that crowd cast down at Jesus' feet. Lying there, they suggest the thought that conscious helplessness has in itself power with Jesus. Coming so closely in the sacred narrative upon the impassioned entreaty of the Syro-Phoenician woman at the feet of Jesus (which has a lesson of its own), it seems to have a special teaching. For many might say, "We cannot plead as she did." Diffident of their own earnestness and energy, and seeing how much was won by the Syro-Phoenician woman by the exercise of these qualities, they might say, "If Christ has to be so hardy entreated, then what can we hope to get—who are feeble, who seem as though we are not wise enough to use arguments which can reach his head, or strong enough to utter cries which can pierce his heart?" We need only read on a little further; and behold the multitudes lying at his feet.

These sick people thus lying at Jesus' feet, have a voice to us—his helplessness speaks to ours; it says, "Perhaps you cannot address arguments like the Syro-Phoenician woman to the head of Christ, or it may be, are dull in pleading with the affections of his heart; then do not consider that all is over—that there is nothing for you. Do not depress yourself with what you cannot do; think rather of what you can do. You can be before Jesus, where he can see you; you are very close to him when you are at his feet. In common, every day life men are frequently losing gain which they might have had, while aiming at something higher which they cannot have; so it is in the spiritual life too. While aiming at what is much higher than we at present have capacity for, we miss what is within our reach. We must not fret ourselves that we have not attained to this or that energy of spiritual life, and shut out the comfort of knowing that we have "something"—that we are at the Saviour's feet. Satan would hide from us that we are there; for he knows that none tarry long there in humble waiting, without being lifted up and given strength. If the reader feels very helpless, let him not flee from this thought, but use it; and the way he is to use it is this. He is to stay still where he is—not to move at all—not to be restless; Jesus sees him, that is enough.

Now I think how beautifully simple every-thing is here; the few and unadorned words in which this great transaction is recorded lead us to thoughts of simplicity. There is simple trust on the part of the afflicted people, and those who brought them; and simple pity on the part of Jesus.

As little children we must receive the Kingdom of heaven, and simple food suits the infancy of the soul—ay, and its ripe old age. For when many things have been learned about types and prophecies, and many speculations have been made, and systems of theology constructed, what does the soul fall back upon when in view of eternity, but just the simple truth of "Jesus dead, and alive again for us?" That was what made a prelate eminent in learning and controversy say, in extreme old age, and in his dying hours, "Don't talk to me of the cross, but of the One that hung 'upon the cross."

Let us say to ourselves and to others, what is needed for healing is not many thoughts, or high thoughts, about Jesus, or any intellectual knowledge about him at all, but the plainest simplicity of trust; and it will be very helpful if we see that the like simplicity is in him. Simply pity that is what we are to look for from Jesus. We need not connect it with any theological thoughts; it is a pure unaccompanied feeling; and where shall we see it exercised as in those who are cast at his feet?

We are now in the right place before Christ—in the right position—that of expectancy, with the right feelings—those of self-helplessness, and yet hope. Who knows how soon you will say, "We cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them."—Eng. Paper.

RESULT OF A POOR SERMON.

A little more than thirty years ago, then a young minister, I went one evening into the lecture-room of the Presbyterian Church in Newburgh, New York, expecting to hear my venerable father, Dr. John Johnston. I was, at the time, settled on the other side of the Hudson River. The services had commenced when I entered, and they were singing the first hymn. Father Johnston saw me, and coming down, urged me to preach for him. This I refused decidedly, as I had no preparation. As length he persuaded me to go into the desk to take some part in the exercises. He made the prayer after the singing, and, in the midst of it, asked the divine blessing upon the young brother who was provisionally present and was about to preach the Word! I thought this exceedingly cool, as I had positively declined; but when he concluded his prayer, he said to me in an undertone of voice, "Now it is my preaching to be done you are to do it."

I was frightened. But he was an old man I was a boy; there was no time for remonstrance or parley; he gave out a hymn, and I took the desk. He said to me, "I have searched the more I was unable to find a passage that I could venture to expound or apply under such sudden circumstances. If I thought of a familiar text, I could not remember where it was; and if I thought on a verse full of suggestive meaning, I could make nothing of it, in my confusion. At last the hymn was sung, the moment to begin the discourse had come, and I had made no progress in finding the text. Something must be done, and that instantly.

I seized upon the words, "Who is on the Lord's side?" and with a brief introduction, giving from recollection the circumstances under which the words were uttered, and without saying where they were to be found for I did not know, I proceeded to urge the importance of the decision and to persuade my hearers to take the side of the Lord. The services had commenced by a very rapid reading, and I look back upon it as a fine plan in mind and no time to linger for I had no plan in mind and no time to linger on. But what I lacked in design was made up in earnestness of purpose, and perhaps I had some feeling of dependence on help from on high, in my deep consciousness of inability to do anything myself, that night.

As it was only a week-day evening lecture, and nothing more than a familiar talk was expected, I never heard or thought anything more of it. Years passed away. Ten, twenty, thirty years have gone by. Father Johnston is long since in heaven. My son, then unborn, is now pastor in the same church building and the same lecture-room where I made the discourse on such sudden invitation. Probably the most of them who were then present are now among the dead. But the point is to be presented now.

Last week I met a number of Christian laymen and clergymen in one of our churches in this city of New York, to consult in regard to religious work. One of the gentlemen, who has long been an efficient and valued member of one of the most prominent churches of the city, came up to me and, putting his arms about me said:

"I never see you without wanting to embrace you. It was your discourse in that lecture-room at Newburgh, that led me, then a thoughtless young man, to determine to be on the Lord's side, and I have never wavered in my choice."

We then spoke of the circumstances, and he said he remembered well my saying at the beginning that I had no thought of speaking when I came in, and of the earnestness with which I brought sinners to come out from the world and take their stand with the people of God.

Was not this finding bread after many days? And was not this an exceeding great reward? I never knew or supposed that the words so incoherently and unexpectedly uttered that evening had been attended with any good whatever. But the seed sown did not lie buried long. It bore fruit immediately, and in the useful life of a good man, has been multiplied a hundred fold, through successive years, perhaps in successive harvests of immortal souls. The joy of one who hears that by his words, through the grace of God, a sinner is turned from the error of his ways and brought to Christ, is beyond all expression and price; and yet, that joy is the very least item in the account. It is a matter of so moment that I should hear of this fact, or be made happy by hearing of it. But it is of infinite moment that a soul should be arrested in a course of worldliness and suddenly, by a message from God, be turned heavenward; that

this but the proclamation, in a slightly different form, of the "our man" notion of ministerial independence?

When Square Giles, the distiller, got up in the middle of service, and slamming his pew door behind him, marched all the way down the aisle, because the minister denounced the liquor traffic, every squeak of his heavy boots was an indignant protest against the insubordination of "our man," who dared preach against the sins of his own parishioners.

"For my part," says Mrs. Hardcap, "I don't see what the minister's wife wants of two servants. I get along very well without any; and I think it downright extravagance to dress so. "I am positively ashamed of our minister's wife," said Mrs. Whetton, "she dresses so shabbily; and if she can't get time to make more calls, why doesn't she keep more servants?" Mrs. Hardcap and Mrs. Whetton, agreed in nothing else, are clearly agreed on this, that "our man's" wife is not her own mistress, but is bound to dress according to the behests of her husband's employers, and to hold her household subject to their supervision.

I think the ministers themselves are sometimes to blame in this matter. It is not long since I heard a sermon against the Papacy, in which the minister propounded the doctrine that the clergy were not to be treated as the servants of the Church, but as the maintainers with so much energy, and with so much amplitude of detail, that it seemed to me he retained very little of ministerial independence.

No! As I read my Bible, the minister is not the servant of the Church, but the servant of Christ; he is not "our man," but the man of God. And gentlemen of the clergy, one would to God to see them, after all the American public like so well as genuine independence. Let no man own up, have your own opinion, and having, dare maintain. Let Mrs. Potiphar, and Squire Giles, and Deacon M. grumble. For one dead and withered pew-holder your manly conduct shakes off, there will be a dozen to take his place. Be "our man" to no church. Own yourselves.—Lucius in Christian Union.

## METHODISM IN ALSACE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE METHODIST RECORDER.

Sir,—At this time when the "Provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, owing to the war, have suddenly become topics of almost household interest, and the question whether they should remain French or become incorporated with a united Germany is so universally discussed, it may not be uninteresting to your readers to know something about Methodism in those parts.—The fact of the German language being spoken, apart from any political considerations, was sufficient reason for the German Methodist Episcopal Church in occupying wherever they had its means, any field of labor which presented itself, and, therefore, when some few years ago the preacher, labouring in Rhenish Bavaria received an invitation to cross the border into Alsace and preach the Word there, he was not long before he made use of the opportunity offered. His labours in these parts met with encouraging success. Other Methodist preachers also visited the district, and two colporteurs were further employed in distributing Bibles and tracts. Suddenly, however, the good work was checked by the severity of the French Law, by which not more than twenty persons were permitted to assemble together at once. Persecution soon followed, and the preacher, after holding a meeting one evening, was arrested next morning by gendarmes and conducted with hands chained, like a common criminal, to Weissenburg, where he lay in prison for six weeks. In 1868, however, another effort was made, and the preacher in one of the Baden circles visited the district, regularly preaching at great risk, owing to the meetings exceeding the legal number. In Strasburg, where it was necessary to have special leave to hold public meetings, an appeal to the prefect for such permission was refused. A petition, then, signed by several citizens, and supported by the American Ambassador in Paris, was, after much trouble, brought before the Ministry; but up to the time of the outbreak of the war had been unnoticed. No wonder, then if the oppressed Methodists and Protestants generally of Alsace should view in the victories of Prussia the advent to them of that under Prussia they would fully enjoy. Since the commencement of hostilities the country has been visited by more than one of the Methodist preachers in order to distribute Bibles and tracts to the soldiers. I submit a translation of the greater part of a letter which appeared in a late number of the German Methodist Evangelist. It is from the young preacher in whose district Alsace was included before the war. His account of his visit to the old scenes of his labours under new circumstances will be read with interest, as many of the places have become familiar by the early incidents of the campaign.

Yours, &c.,  
EDWARD POPPE.

How, Nov. 5.

Having received a stock of books and tracts from Bremen, as well as from the British and Foreign Bible Society in Frankfurt, for distribution amongst the sick and wounded soldiers, I directed my steps to dear old Alsace, which had been closed to me since July 16. I left Lahr on September 6, with the intention of crossing the Rhine at New Prussia so as to reach Bischwiller. As far as the railway was well, but patience had to be exercised. Being disappointed at the opportunity which I had expected to transport my books to I was able by means of various waggons to reach the river with my package. It him to do so, however, and an opportunity of being conveyed by wagon to Bischwiller presented itself. Already in the first French village (Catholic), I realized the fact that I was no longer in Germany. The people, obviously, which I had passed, etc., with me, whispered one to the other. "He has got despatches." It was soon noised abroad. "The gentleman has despatches, and has distributed them amongst the Prussians." I testified their curiosity by offering them some of these "despatches," which were seized with great eagerness.





The Family MY NEIGHBOR. "I like him not," said his wife, as she looked at the man who had just come in from the street. "He looks like a devil, and his eyes are so full of mischief."

With the "Amen" to burst into a laugh with those that laugh around. It is not at all wonderful that he grows to consider the whole affair as very useless and unmeaning.

Let parents talk much and talk well at home. A father who is habitually silent in his own house may be in many respects a wise man; but he is not wise in his silence.

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