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A table of contents for *Scripture* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_scripture-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_scripture-01.php)

# Scripture

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## THE HOLY EUCHARIST—II

(Translated from the French by the Editor)

Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist because he wished to remain with men until the end of the world, not only through the presence of his Spirit, but also of his body, and precisely of that body which was crucified and raised for them, that body from which their new life flows, as water from a spring. To reveal the theological riches of this mystery we intend to show that it brings about a *presence*: a presence *in time* first of all, namely that time between the past of the Cross and the future of our heavenly glory; a presence in space also, namely, a presence which *affects our bodily senses*; but more than that, a *physical and real* presence whereby we receive the Lord's body itself. And since this risen body is the nucleus of the new world, this mystery brings about a *collective* presence where we meet in Christ the whole of his body which is the Church. After considering these different aspects, we shall show in conclusion how this sacrament contains the *sacrifice* of Christ, his sacrifice which is also ours, and how this sacrifice is prolonged upon our altars by a *permanent* presence.

I *Present here and now.* At first sight this might seem surprising: does not the rite suggest rather a remembrance of the past? 'Do this in memory of me': we commemorate the death of Our Lord, an event which took place two thousand years ago; how can we speak of his being present except in our memories of him? It is true that Our Lord also spoke of the new wine which he would drink with his disciples in the Kingdom of the Father; but this leads us towards a future which only exists in expectation, that future when we shall be reunited with him after the *parousia*. Between Our Lord's departure and his return there is only his absence.

As a matter of fact this is the impression given by the way the Supper is celebrated in certain Protestant circles. They recall that Christ died for us and rejoice at the prospect of rejoining him some day; but in the meantime he is not there. The tension existing between the past and the future has even suggested a duality of sources to certain critics. According to them there were in the primitive Church

two different ways of celebrating the Lord's Supper; in Jerusalem it was a joyful meal, taken with the risen Christ, and a meal during which they prepared themselves for his imminent return. But among the communities founded by St Paul, such as that at Corinth, it was a funeral meal by which they commemorated the death of the Lord, and in which, according to a rite borrowed from the Hellenistic mysteries, they believed they were sharing in his sacrificed body. In the first case then, the Lord's Supper was a simple fraternal banquet with no sacramental value, which was orientated towards the future, and in which they ate with the Lord; in the other, it was a mystic rite of Greek origin, which was orientated towards the past and in which they ate the Lord. These two concepts were later joined and the result was already to be seen in the gospel accounts of the institution, where the perspective of the joyful eschatological future (Mark 14:25 par.) is found alongside the memorial of the past in the bread-body and the wine-blood (Mark 14:22-4 par.).

This ingenious hypothesis will not bear scrutiny, neither from the exegetical nor from the theological point of view. The exegesis of the texts runs contrary to such a dichotomy. The two aspects thus opposed are in fact already combined in each of the two sources. To the words 'proclaim the death of the Lord' Paul immediately adds 'until he come': in other words he does not think of the past without reference to the future; on the other hand, the 'breaking of bread' in the earliest Jerusalem community cannot be reduced simply to a feast of joyful expectation, for it is closely associated in the Acts with the apostolic *kerygma* in which the Cross and Resurrection form the central point; thus the future is not separated from the past.

In addition to these exegetical facts there is the theological truth of primary importance, that far from being in opposition, the past and the future of Christ, and in him of Christian salvation, meet in a present which inherits the combined riches of them both. The past of Christ is not terminated like that of a creature who only belongs to this world's time; it continues in a present here and now, which stems from the new time inaugurated by the Resurrection. Not only is God's action of granting pardon to mankind because of the Cross, as eternal as God Himself, and transcending all the centuries of human time; but also the action of Christ, though confined from one point of view within the progress of human history, surpasses it from another, because it brings the old era of this history to an end and inaugurates a new one. Through the Resurrection, the life and death of Our Lord overflows into a new world whose eternal present shares in a certain way the eternity of God. 'Christ once risen from the dead, dies no more; death no more wields power over him. His

death was death to sin, once for all; but his life is life to God' (Rom. 6:9-10). Risen from the dead Christ lives by a new life in which his past remains present. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows him entering the heavenly sanctuary through the veil of his flesh 'in order that he might now appear before the face of God on our behalf' (Heb. 9:24); for in virtue of his unchangeable priesthood and his sacrifice offered once for all, he is 'always living to intercede on behalf of sinners' (Heb. 7:25).

Christ's present is enriched by the past; it is also enriched by the future. The new era which he inaugurated is the eschatological era, the era of the final times which will change no more, and in which mankind, reconciled with God, will enjoy for ever His love and company, in an eternal present. This era was begun by Christ and for Christ; Christ, 'the first-fruits of those that are asleep' (1 Cor. 15:20), the risen Christ, has already taken his place in this new and final state, to which all who share in his salvation are called, in order that they may join him there.

In actual fact, this eschatological present in which the past and the future meet, is not yet fully realised, except in the case of Christ (and his mother, by virtue of the Assumption). The rest of men, even the faithful, are still hemmed in by the changing circumstances of the old order. Nevertheless the faithful, by their union with Christ, already in a certain sense have a share in the new order and the new era which he has established. One part of them is already dead to sin and risen with Christ, whilst the other is still subject to sin and condemned to death (cf. Rom. 8:10-13; Eph. 2:5-6); this is a violent, paradoxical, 'amphibious' state, which is illustrated by the 'You are dead . . . put to death then . . .' of Col. 3:3,5. Now this contact with Christ, which already places them partly in the eschatological era, is established by faith and by the sacraments of faith, of which the Eucharist is the centre.

The Christ with whom we come into contact and whom we actually receive in the eucharistic banquet, is without doubt the Christ who died for us two thousand years ago, and he is the Christ who will raise us up and glorify us some day in the future, a day known to God alone; but he is the Christ who now lives with the Father, in possession of all the riches of his salvation and promises of glory. By the sacramental contact we enter in a mysterious fashion this present of salvation already realised, and we really share in it. We share in that sacrifice which Christ, after having offered it 'once for all,' offers at the present moment and always. We share in the Messianic feast already really begun, for the Kingdom of God where it is celebrated is itself already begun: it is the Church, grouped round the risen Master. Jesus had

already said : 'The Kingdom of God is among you' (Luke 17:21). This is particularly true after his Resurrection, and we may surmise that Luke is thinking of this Kingdom which is the Church when he tells us Our Lord said : 'I shall eat of this Pasch no more . . . I shall drink no more of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God be come' (Luke 22:16, 18), and then insists on the meals which the risen Master took with his disciples (Luke 24:30, 41-43 ; Acts 1:4). As in the case of the first disciples, it is Christ, dead and risen again, and alive at this very moment, whom we meet at the eucharistic Supper.

2 *Present to the bodily senses.* This is another trait which we must underline, for its necessity does not appear at first sight. Could not Our Lord have remained near us simply by the spiritual presence of faith? Could not his word, received into our minds, have assured us of his permanent presence? That, at least, is how it is viewed by those who, in practice, misunderstand the sacramental order, and allow of a contact with Christ and his salvation through faith alone. But this would not have been human. Man is a being endowed with bodily senses ; his soul lives in a body. To establish real contact it is necessary to reach the body as well as the soul. Words are themselves in some measure dependent for their effect upon the senses, for ideas are only presented to the mind by way of sounds which play upon the ear. And even this is not sufficient to satisfy our needs ; hence words are accompanied by expressive gestures or by symbols. God knows the ways of those He has created, and in His condescension He accommodates Himself to them. He revealed Himself by means of actions as much as words. A striking illustration of this is found in what we call the 'types' of the Old Testament. He did not simply tell Israel that He was their saviour : He saved them by rescuing them from Egypt 'with outstretched arm' ; and He did not simply rescue them from Egypt : He made this act of salvation perceptible to the senses by the blood of the pascal lamb smeared on the doors, by the tables of the Law written by His hand, by the bronze serpent set up in the desert.

Our Lord, the supreme expression of God's nearness as far as it can be perceived, did not act differently. In his speech he used images and parables. He touched the bodies of those he healed, even using such commonplace methods as saliva mixed with earth. It was by taking hold of the whip or by prostrating upon the ground that he taught his disciples the respect due to the divine Majesty. When, therefore, he takes bread and wine in order to attach to them the permanent presence of his sacrifice, he does so to make this presence perceptible, tangible, striking. The words which explain the signi-

ficance of his death will remain in the minds of his disciples, and of their disciples after them; but to sustain these words in a tangible way there will be this bread and this wine which are seen with the eyes, grasped by the hands, tasted on the palate; they will provide man with a more complete possession of the gift that has been made to him. Yet this is not all. There is more, much more, in this bread and wine.

3 *Physically present.* The bread and wine here are not merely symbols. They are symbols, but they are something more. They are really, although in a mysterious manner, the body and blood of Jesus Christ. To establish this, it is not enough to stress the form of Christ's words: 'This is my body' or 'this is my blood,' for philology would not adequately support such an argument. In the first place we must remember that Our Lord said these words in Aramaic, and in this language the copula is not expressed; Joachim Jeremias<sup>1</sup> proposes for the original words: *den bisri* (this my flesh) and *den idhmi* (this my blood). Secondly, the copula which is understood need not necessarily signify a real identity. In such phrases as 'the one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man'; 'the field is the world'; 'the good grain are the members of the kingdom' (Matt. 13:37-8), the verb is clearly not intended to mean more than 'signifies,' 'represents.' It would therefore be possible to understand here, as some actually do, 'This represents my body; this represents my blood.' But there are other reasons which demand something more in this particular case.

First of all the value of bread and wine as a symbolic expression is not sufficient to explain their use here. In a parable, spoken or acted, an abstract idea, or something real but absent, is made clear by a concrete image or something real that is to hand: the sowing of seed, the field, the treasure, the leaven, the lamp, really help the mind, through their well-known role in daily life, to grasp those more mysterious realities which are the Kingdom of God and the teaching of Our Lord. But here, things are quite different. Our Lord speaks of his body which he is going to give for his brethren, of his blood which he is about to shed; there is nothing more concrete and more immediate; in what way would the bread on the table and the wine in the cup help to convey this? It is possible to point out after the event—we have already done so ourselves<sup>2</sup>—that the red wine flowing from the crushed grape, may evoke the blood flowing from the body; or again that the bread broken into pieces can repre-

<sup>1</sup> *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 140 f

<sup>2</sup> 'The Holy Eucharist—1,' *Scripture* VIII, 4 (Oct. 1956), p. 103

sent the body, broken and torn. The writers of the Church went further along these lines and found, for example, in the bread made from many ears of wheat and ground into flour, a beautiful symbol of the Christians whom Christ unites with himself through his passion into the one host which he offers to the Father. These more or less subtle allegories can be applied to the bread and wine used in the Eucharist, but they do not give it its deep significance. Jesus did not use these things as illustrations which made clear his coming sacrifice; far from helping of themselves to explain the death of the body and the shedding of the blood, it is precisely the bread and wine which need explaining by means of the former.

The eucharistic bread and wine, therefore, do not immediately strike the mind as symbols; their immediate appeal is to the body as food. It is as food that they first claim our interest. It is not an idea or instruction that they are to convey to those who partake of them, but a very concrete reality, the body and the blood of the Lord. This is precisely the concrete and realist plane on which Christian salvation is found, and it is important to insist on this, for this aspect is not always appreciated as much as it ought. The salvation of Christ is concerned with the body as much as the soul. This is an elementary truth which we think we know perfectly well; but it has not in practice the significance it ought to have, due to the Greek mode of thought we have to some extent inherited. In Greek thought, influenced by Plato, the body is for the soul nothing but a prison, something bad in itself; the soul's salvation depends on getting rid of it. The Greek idea of immortality only concerns the soul, freed at last of its miserable burden. Many Christians unconsciously think somewhat along these lines, not indeed that they deny the dogma of the resurrection of the body, but the latter seems very distant to them, and in the meantime they are none too clear on what place to give to this troublesome companion the body, in their striving after holiness. Often they regard it as incurably bad; they reconcile themselves to the inevitable and let it sin; or else they wish to master it and therefore have recourse to an excessive asceticism. In both cases the body is not given its due place, a wholesome and a holy place in the work of salvation; it appears by the side of the soul like a poor relation; we dare not think of it when it is a question of grace. We speak of 'saving our souls,' or of 'saving souls,' and seemingly forget that they dwell in bodies. Does not the formula used these days in the distribution of Holy Communion say '*custodiat animam tuam* : may the body of Our Lord guard thy soul'? It would be better to say, as in the Dominican rite : *custodiat te* : guard thee : i.e. the whole man, soul and body. This failure to understand the importance of the body is even to be detected

in the way in which some Christians understand the Resurrection of Christ: they see in this triumph of the flesh over death a personal compensation, a reward richly earned through torments generously borne; after such humiliations was it not fitting the body thus sacrificed should experience glory? These ideas are very narrow, and without being altogether false remain incomplete.

Biblical anthropology and the idea of salvation which it entails, are quite different. In it the body is not pictured as an accidental companion, still less as something intrinsically bad. It is an essential element of man, created at the same time as the soul and as good as it. It is sin which came to disrupt this harmony, affecting the soul as much as the body; it separated the one from the other by an interior disorder to be made complete by the total separation which is death. But this is a violent state, for which the soul is to be held responsible, not the material nature of the body, and which will have to come to an end if man is to recover his pristine integrity. In Biblical revelation, the only genuine 'salvation' is that of the soul *with its body*; the one cannot be saved without the other. It is even going too far when, under pressure of language, we speak of them as two distinct parts. Actually man is his soul, and man is his body, in Semitic and Biblical thought. They are two complementary and inseparable aspects of the one concrete being. This way of thinking, which is Semitic and not Greek, is essential if we are to understand the Incarnation and Redemption, and also the sacramental dispensation. The Word did not take a human body simply to communicate with men at a level determined by the bodily senses. It was also, and indeed primarily, to take in hand the whole man, body and soul, and completely refashion him, body and soul. By yielding up his soul upon the Cross, Our Lord put to death the 'flesh of sin' with which he was clothed (Rom. 8:3; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:22); by rising from the tomb he is the New Man whose soul and body are penetrated by the Spirit of the eschatological era (1 Cor. 15:44-5). In him who is the head of the new human race, the body is regenerated as much as the soul, and without it nothing would have been accomplished: 'If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins' (1 Cor. 15:17).

When then, he communicates his life to the faithful, it is their bodies as much as their souls which he unites with himself, in order to recreate them. It is his body as well as his soul which he puts in contact with theirs in order to make them share in his 'passage' from death to life. The 'grace' of Christ is his concrete life, that life which shines forth in his glorified body as well as in his glorified soul, and that life which he pours into the souls and bodies of those whom he unites to himself. From this it is understandable why Christ,



in order to establish such a contact and to exercise such an influence reaching man even in his body, uses these perceptible means, these physical means which we call sacraments. Salvation comes by faith and by the sacraments of faith; faith alone would have sufficed for disembodied souls, but the sacraments of faith are necessary if the body which supports the soul is to be reached at its own level. Notice that we are concerned here with something different; previously we spoke of ways of expressing things, of ways of enlightening the intelligence through the perception of the senses. Here it is precisely a question of transferring the new, recreated, pure life of the risen body of Christ to the contaminated flesh of the sinner. This demands a different contact from that of the Spirit; it demands a bodily contact, a physical contact which works in its own fashion. Such a contact by its very nature escapes the clear grasp of the intelligence; it is something experienced rather than capable of definition. But it is none the less real and indispensable. To bring it about Our Lord uses sacraments. Whether it be through the water of baptism or the oil of confirmation, whether it be through the tears of contrition and the gesture of absolution, in each of the sacraments his glorified and spiritual body comes into contact with our sinful body and heals it along with the soul which dwells in it. In the Eucharist, the central sacrament, it is not such or such an action of the body of Christ which has an effect upon us, but the body itself in its plenitude as the source of grace, which comes into us; it is not through a more or less superficial and ephemeral contact, but through the most intimate and lasting way there can be in this life: the assimilation of food. Our Lord does more than wash us with purifying water, or anoint us with strengthening oil; he nourishes us with his flesh. This demands that the bread and wine which we receive should be truly the flesh and blood of the Lord.

4 *Really present.* There is no doubt that the first Christians understood it in this way, and in particular the theologians Paul and John, whose teaching is part of divine revelation. After having quoted the account of the institution, Paul adds a realistic comment: 'That is why whoever eats the bread or drinks the Lord's cup unworthily, will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord . . . for he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks his own condemnation, if he does not recognise the body therein' (I Cor. 11:27, 29). The fourth gospel is even more categorical: 'If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. . . . For my flesh is truly food and my blood truly drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him' (John 6:53-

56). We must not pervert this realism into a gross materialism. The sacrament is nothing without faith, and the flesh of Christ would be nothing without the Spirit that dwells in it. Jesus himself adds: 'It is the Spirit that vivifies, the flesh counts for nothing' (John 6:63). It is the 'spiritual' or 'pneumatic' body of the risen Christ which is the channel of life; it is he whom we must put on (1 Cor. 15:49). But whilst it differs in some way from the 'earthly' or 'psychic' body received from Adam, which Christ made to perish upon the Cross, this spiritual body of the glorified Christ is none the less the same body, transformed from corruption to incorruption, from weakness to strength, from ignominy to glory (1 Cor. 15:42-4). It is a spiritualised body, but still real, which could be touched (Luke 24:39-40; John 20:27), and it is in this state that it is found in the bread in order to be given to us.

'How can this thing be?' we would ask with Nicodemus. How can bread and wine become the body and blood of the Lord? It is a mystery of faith; we believe it because we believe in the Word of the Lord. He tells us that this is his body, that this is his blood, and we have just seen that his intention and the nature of his salvation cannot be satisfied by a merely symbolic representation. If he wishes this bread to give us really his body, he has the power to bring this about. His Word is powerful and creative. His words at the Last Supper are not an announcement but a decision. He does not merely state that the bread is his body; he decrees that this must come to pass, and that it has come to pass. His speech does not come after the event, it brings the event to pass, by giving to the bread and wine a new value. We have pointed out that the president of the Jewish pasch commented upon the significance of the bitter herbs and the lamb, and thus gave these foods a real value they had not had before, so that when the guest ate them, he really shared in the deliverance of long ago, and enjoyed the benefits which flowed from it.<sup>1</sup> The efficacy of Our Lord's words yields nothing to the realism of this Biblical rite; it far surpasses it, for the object of the commemoration is of a completely new order. The elements which the new rite uses are no longer simply accidental details connected with a divine intervention, and called to mind in order to help revive it; they are the essentials of a new and definitive intervention, the very substance of the sacrifice which redeemed the world, and their presence must be renewed in a real way, in order to reach the guests, body as well as soul.

Is it possible to scrutinise this mystery further, and try to explain it to the rational mind? It was inevitable that this attempt should

<sup>1</sup> *loc. cit.* pp. 101, 105-6

be made, and the effort is legitimate. With the help of philosophy it has been said that the 'substance' of the bread and wine was changed into the substance of the body and the blood, whilst the appearance or 'accidents' remained the same. This formulation is valid and the Church has sanctioned it by speaking of 'transubstantiation.' Nevertheless we must not forget the fact that even these philosophical notions are not free from mystery in this context. What they mean in the end is that the bread and wine, consecrated by the words of Christ, in a certain sense remain as they were in the old order of things; but on the other hand they become something more, as a result of their being elevated to the new order. What they are now so transcends what they were before that this loses its significance. In their new situation within the eschatological era, to which the whole of the sacramental dispensation belongs, they become the very body of Christ that died and was raised to life. The traditional dogmatic formula is expressed in terms of a philosophy of natures, and it has its value; nevertheless it is lawful to rethink and deepen it in terms of Biblical thought, which is more clearly understood today. Biblical thought is concerned rather with existence and its transition from the old era of sin and death to the era of salvation and life. This transition which Our Lord made first in his own person, from the Cross to the morning of Easter, he brings to pass in the bread and wine, in order that through these he may bring it to pass in those who share them with faith.

5 *A collective presence.* When we receive Christ we do not receive him alone. In accordance with the design of God he carries in himself the whole of humanity of which he is the new head. By clothing himself in our 'body of flesh' he assumed all the descendants of the first Adam, led astray by sin, in order to punish them in his person upon the Cross and thus reconcile them with the Father (Col. 1:22); when he rose again on the morning of Easter as the second Adam, created anew by God, the whole of the new humanity came out with him from the tomb, as a regenerated stock, just and holy (Rom. 5:12-19; Cor. 15:45-9; Eph. 4:22-4). In him was reunited all that sin had divided; sinners were reconciled not only with God, but also with each other. Thus St Paul says, apropos of what he regarded as the two great divisions of mankind, namely Jews and Gentiles: 'Christ is our peace, he who of the two (Jewish and pagan worlds) has made one single people, destroying the barrier which separated them, in his flesh suppressing hate, this law of precepts with its ordinances, in order to make in himself the two into one single new man, to make peace and to reconcile them both with God, in one single body,

through the Cross ; in his person he has slain hate ' (Eph. 2:14-16). To understand this we must remember the very concrete realism of the Incarnation : the humanity of Christ, soul and body, is like a melting-pot in which God has recast His work ; it is like the clay from which He has remoulded His ' new creature.' In it all men who are saved find themselves, body and soul, closely united in the same new life.

But however perfect and final it may be, this work of redemption could not be accomplished in Our Lord except as in its principle, in its germ. Precisely because it is concrete, it still needs to be applied to all individual men, to successive generations through time and space. The risen Christ must touch every man who comes into this world, as formerly he touched the sick and the sinners of Palestine ; his most holy soul and his divinity must touch the bodies and souls of those he saves through the intermediary of his glorified body. We saw that he does this through faith and the sacraments of faith. By physical contact he unites the faithful to himself, even their bodies, and ' incorporates ' them into himself. He makes of them the ' members ' of his body. This famous expression of St Paul (I Cor. 6:15 ; 12:27 ; Eph. 5:30) is not simply a metaphor borrowed from the classical comparison of the ' social body ' ; on the contrary it must be taken in a most realistic sense, and its real source lies in the doctrine we have been recalling<sup>1</sup> : Christians are the members of Christ because their union with him joins their bodies to his body in the same risen life, still hidden as far as they are concerned, but already completely real (Col. 3:1-4).

Consequently the body of Christ, his personal body, crucified and raised up again, bears within itself the bodies of the brethren whom he forms to his image (Rom. 8:29). The implications of this for the Eucharist are clear. Since this sacrament gives us the body of Christ, it unites us by that very fact to all our brethren whom it bears within itself. Already St Paul taught this : ' The bread which we break, is it not participation in the body of Christ ? Since there is but one bread, we, all of us, form one single body, for we all share in this one bread ' (I Cor. 10:16-17). It is this eucharistic body of the Lord which was first called the ' mystical body,' and it is because it consummates the union of Christians with Christ and with one another that the expression was afterwards applied to the Church.<sup>2</sup> In this eucharistic body we meet our brethren, united by the love of Christ, and that is why the Eucharist is the sacrament of Charity, its source

<sup>1</sup> cf. P. Benoit : ' Corps, tête et plérôme dans les Épitres de la captivité,' *Revue Biblique*, 1956, pp. 5-44

<sup>2</sup> cf. *loc. cit.* p. 10, with the reference to the writings of P. de Lubac there quoted

and its nourishment. In this physical, penetrating, intimate contact which it brings about, we assimilate both the strength and knowledge to love Christ wholly, him and his Father, and also the strength and knowledge to love the rest of mankind as he loves them, with his own heart. Through this sacrament the bonds of union are forged between all those who are united with him. And since this union rests upon the physical basis of our bodies it covers those mysterious exchanges where the suffering and death of one can satisfy in place of his brother.

6 *The sacrifice of the Church and an abiding presence.* These two final characteristics follow from all that we have just said. We realise that the Eucharist contains the sacrifice of Christ, since it contains the body and blood of Christ in the very act of his immolation. That it contains Christ's sacrifice here and now we have concluded from the eschatological time into which Christ has entered. We are thus justified in saying that the Mass is a sacrifice which renews the sacrifice of the Cross upon our altars : Christ is there, 'always living to intercede on (our) behalf' (Heb. 7:25). Can we go further and say that the Mass adds something to the Cross ? Protestants reproach Catholics for doing this, but their reproach is not justified ; it is, however, important to see why.

In one sense it is certain that the Mass adds nothing to the Cross. It is the same sacrifice which was already perfect in its historical realisation. In contrast to the priests of the old covenant, who had to renew continually their insufficient sacrifices, Christ suffered 'once for all, at the end of time . . . to abolish sin by his sacrifice' (Heb. 9:26). The Church, therefore, does not renew her liturgical sacrifice in the manner of the Jews. And yet she renews it, by the very order of her Master ; there must be a reason for this. From this angle, which must be accurately understood, it becomes lawful to say that the Mass adds something to the Cross, and it does this in two ways.

First of all it adds to it a concrete application, in time and space, the necessity of which we have already explained. The sacrifice of Christ merited to an infinite degree the benefits of pardon and life, needed for the salvation of mankind from the beginning to the end of the world ; yet it is necessary for these benefits to be communicated to each and everyone, in the time and place of his own particular life. The Mass distributes these treasures, it releases this life-giving stream, for the small community grouped around the altar. Nothing is added to what flows from the spring, but a canal is made which enables the life-giving waters to reach to the very end of human time and space. Nothing is added to the action and words of Christ, except

the action and words of one of his ministers, which only avail because Christ makes use of them ; through them it is still he who acts.

Something else is added, which we must not be afraid to recognise, for it is admirable and detracts in no way from the absolute sovereignty of the one Priest. This is the offering of the Church. It is the active contribution to the sacrifice by the priest who offers it, and the faithful who communicate or assist at it. Their prayers and their own sacrifices, sinners as they are, add nothing to the efficacy of the Cross ; this much is clear. And yet they join to Christ's work a human participation which he desires. If he offered his love and acts of expiation in place of theirs, which sin made valueless, it was not to suppress them but to give them value. Now that he has accomplished his work he does not wish to apply its benefits to them without their co-operation. That is why he gives to his Church not only his body and blood, but with them the whole of his sacrifice : in order that she may dispose of it and by its renewal associate with it all the sacrifices of her children. These sacrifices will add nothing, of course, to the one sacrifice of Our Lord ; on the contrary they will receive from it everything of value they can have ; but thus enriched, they will help in the sacramental application by allowing this saving contact which cannot be established without the active response of the redeemed to their Redeemer. This is the significance of the offering made at Mass ; when she presents to God the elements for the sacrifice, the Church offers to God through the hands of the priest, the faithful who have provided them ; by accepting these humble gifts and making of them his Body and blood, Christ incorporates into his sacrifice the sacrifices which these gifts symbolise. And he makes them share in this total sacrifice, with which he deigns to associate his Church, when he gives back to them the gifts they offered, but now transformed in his hands. The divine condescension which characterises the whole plan of redemption, and which associates man in the working out of his own salvation, is seen here in a particularly striking way. Why must a misguided anxiety concerning the respect due to the divine autonomy and transcendence, lead some to misunderstand the riches of this theological truth ?

The gift of his body and blood which Christ has made to his followers brings with it a final consequence : their abiding presence among us. Certainly they are given us in the act of their being sacrificed : and that is why Protestants only admit their presence (more or less symbolically) in the bread and wine at the very moment of the action by which they are given. The sacramental realism of the Catholic Faith does not allow such a way of thinking. Christ does not take bread and wine as ephemeral modes of expression ; he gives

them a new being, which derives from the eschatological era and has its permanence. Doubtless it is to commemorate his sacrificial act, but this act has become in him a reality which ceases no more : his body and blood have become an offering constantly offered, constantly accepted and constantly radiating life. The share in the old order of things which it still has, prevents the sacrament from taking on fully this character of eschatological perpetuity. If the frail support of the bread and wine disappears, either by communion or by corruption, the presence of the body and blood by that very fact ceases. But as long as this support continues, the presence is maintained. Christ has donated this presence to the Church with a liberality such as is found in all his gifts. Not only can the Church renew the Supper as often as she wishes, but she can also make use of it as she desires. Thus it is that, whilst scrupulously respecting the essential words and actions which are its central point, she has been able in the course of centuries to order the words and actions which surround this central point as she pleases, and adapt it to the changing circumstances of time and place, of country, language and customs. Thus in the Mass as we have it now, she has introduced a certain interval of prayer and preparation between the words of consecration and the communion. It is thus, finally, that even after the communion she ventures to preserve the consecrated species. Her primary reason for this is to be able to feed her children apart from the time of Mass, if there be need ; but it is also that she may offer to this presence, as she has done for centuries, a cult which prolongs that of the Mass. This custom of reservation is as ancient as it is universal in the Church. It is fully justified by our faith in a permanent presence. It satisfies Our Lord's desire to remain always among us ; and gives to innumerable Christians a source of spiritual strength which is ever to hand. But we must not allow an unenlightened piety to dissociate the host reserved for adoration from the sacrifice it represents. The host in the tabernacle, in the monstrance, or carried in triumphal procession, is at all times the host of the Mass which is the host of the Supper, and this in turn is the host of the Cross. Above all it is a food, this bread and wine in which Christ placed at his last meal the power of his sacrifice, and it is this food we must eat if we would have life.

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