

Transubstantiation

(The following text comprises Chapter 5, 'Transubstantiation', from the book, *The Enemy Within the Gate, The Catholic Church and Renascent Modernism* by Fr. John McKee R.I.P, a Scottish priest ordained in 1936 and a seminary lecturer and parish priest. *The Enemy Within the Gate* was published by Lumen Christi Press, Houston, Texas in May 1974 to which full acknowledgement is given for this excerpt.)

... that fictitious transubstantiation for which they fight more fiercely at the present day than for all the other articles of their faith.

JOHN CALVIN,
Institutes of the Christian Religion.

I ... do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation ...

Declaration which barred Catholics from Parliament before 1829.

Whosoever you be who assert new dogmas, I beg you to spare Roman ears, spare that faith which was praised by the mouth of the Apostle. Why after four hundred years do you try to teach us what we knew till now? Why do you produce doctrines which Peter and Paul did not think fit to proclaim? Up to this day the world has been Christian without your doctrine. I will hold to that faith in my old age in which I was regenerated as a boy.

ST. JEROME, Ep. 84.

Now, with a sense of relief, we climb back out of the dark vaults of history into our own century. We had to brave the dust and cobwebs and lift the lids and look upon Liberius and Honorius, Boniface, Galileo, Gregory and Pius, but we are glad that the task is done and we are back in the light of day. But not quite of today; it is 1908, the year of the Eucharistic Congress, and a tremendous spectacle greets our eyes. A great procession of the Blessed Sacrament is winding through the streets; it seems as if the whole Catholic Church is involved, priests and people. Every Catholic who can walk must surely be here in the procession, his heart on flame as the Bride of Christ bears witness to her love of the holy Eucharist! But no—the men who are absent are those who spoke most often of 'the People of God.' Von Hügel's *Letters* reveal the group of Modernists "watching critically and aloof from a housetop." Not for them the simple pieties of the multitude!

And one remembers that gloriously open man, David, bringing the ark of the Lord from the house of Obbedom into his own city and, almost like a clown in a circus parade, dancing "with all his might before the Lord", and Michol looking down from a window and curling her lip and despising him, and later telling him that he had made an exhibition of himself in front of the serving-maids. She received a wonderful answer from the unselfconscious fighting-man: "*I will both play and make myself meaner than I have done. And I will be little in my own eyes: and with the handmaids of whom thou speakest, I shall appear more glorious.*" "Therefore", the Scripture adds laconically, Michol remained barren to the day of her death—she had been barren first in mind; she was a pre-figure.

We remember her when Modernism comes swirling greyly like a fog round traditional belief in the Eucharist and therefore round traditional devotion to and joy in the Blessed Sacrament. For this is the God, the God in the tabernacle, who truly "gave joy to our youth," to us sleepy-eyed altar-boys who dragged ourselves out of our beds at half-past six or seven to serve Mass and, content perhaps with *Vidi aquam* instead of a real wash, hurried through the dark streets to Mass. Love for our Lord has fed on the Eucharist, grown round It, become articulate over It, and the great hunger for God has grown in the feeding. It is before the tabernacle that

*"The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration,"*

and the spiritual appetite of belief is infectious. I remember preaching about the Real Presence, and spiritual hunger for the Bread of life, and translating for the congregation St. Bonaventure's breathless, tumultuous prayer....

"O gentlest Lord Jesus, pierce the very marrow of my soul with the most sweet and health-giving wound of Thy love, with a true, serene, apostolic and most holy love, that my soul may languish and melt with love and desire for Thee, may long for Thee and faint in Thy court, may yearn to be dissolved and to be with Thee. Grant that my soul may hunger for Thee, the Bread of angels, the refreshment of holy souls, our daily super-substantial bread, having all delight and relish and all pleasant sweetness. Let my heart ever hunger for, and feed upon, Thee Whom the angels delight to gaze upon, and may the very core of my heart be filled with Thy delightful savour. May it ever thirst for the fountain of life, the fount of wisdom and knowledge, the spring of eternal light, the torrent of happiness, the abundance of the house of God...."

(I took the prayer from the *Veni Mecum* given to my uncle on his ordination in Rome in 1906, the year of 'last Mass' for both Loisy and Tyrrell.) As it happened, there was a non-Catholic farm-labourer, aged seventeen, in the church when St. Bonaventure's faith and love cried out again after seven centuries, and, a few days later, he sent me a message through a third party. In all his life, the good lad said, he had never heard anything so beautiful as that prayer. Could he please have a copy? Not long afterwards, a second message came: would I instruct him and receive him into the Church?

And now the Modernists have come back to explain away the Real Presence with transignification 'signifying nothing.' If Belloc 'rose' when the remote and ineffectual Don dared attack his Chesterton, what is the horror of a Catholic when the Don attacks the real presence?

Not very long ago, a young priest wrote to me, after I had published an article on *The Real Presence*: "*How on earth can Christ be physically present in the Holy Eucharist? Surely his physical presence refers to the Body in Heaven... The physical stuff of bread certainly remains ... even after the words of consecration.... I may not be in agreement with Pope Paul, but I feel sure I am with Charles Davis. Finally, I consider that the Dutch theologians' 'transignification' is a much better term than 'transubstantiation'—because the vast majority of Catholics have only one concept of 'substance'—the vulgar sense ('stuff') ."*

I could have replied that the faith of the vast majority of Catholics is not to be lightly dismissed, that I had avoided saying that our Lord was physically present in the Eucharist (for reasons which will appear later), though I had been emphatic about His being present in His physical reality, and I might well have answered his opening question, after rephrasing it, with the words of two cardinals. First, from the *Apologia*: "*It is difficult, impossible, to imagine, I grant;—but how is it difficult to believe? . . .*

What do I know of substance or matter? just as much as the greatest philosophers, and that is nothing at all." And, from Cardinal Gibbons' *The Faith of our Fathers*: "You tell me it is a mystery above your comprehension. A mystery, indeed. A religion that rejects a revealed truth because it is incomprehensible, contains in itself the seeds of dissolution, and will end in rationalism." They, of course, were addressing non-Catholics, whereas I was dealing with a Catholic priest. . . . I recommended Francis Clark's excellent pamphlet *A 'New Theology' of the Real Presence?*

But what has happened that a priest can write in such an unhappy vein and that, when the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* was mentioned to a young Belgian priest by the assistant in a British bookshop, this judgment was returned: "Oh, that? It's a lot of rubbish. We heard about it in Belgium before it appeared, and we didn't bother reading it"? What has happened is that neo-modernism is switching the content of doctrine, partly under the influence of scientific views and modern philosophy and partly spurred by an ecumenical desire to bridge the gulf of conflicting Eucharistic doctrines. The movement takes its origin in northern Europe as history would lead us to expect.

Here, at the risk of sounding John Bullish, I suggest that, when we have to wrestle with some of the theology which is churned out in northern Europe, it does well to remember Beachcomber's Dr. Strabismus of Utrecht (whom God preserve!). Strabismus was a joke, but the joke had a point and too many have forgotten the point. The English-speaking peoples can be as stupid as the next man, but we are prosaically stupid and it is only when we are beguiled by the lorelei of the Rhine that we tend to spout nonsense. As a concrete example of what an American can do under foreign influence, here is a passage from *Eucharistic Theology* by Fr. Joseph Powers, S.J.: "A colleague has remarked that it takes a greater act of faith to believe that what is present on the altar before the consecration is bread than to believe it is Christ after the consecration. This is probably true...." If we are going to keep our balance, it is imperative that we remember the ephemeral scholarship of the early years of this century. Professor Butterfield wrote (*op. cit.*, p. 9) : "It was often noted in the earlier decades of the present century how greatly it had become the habit of Protestants to hold some German scholar up their sleeves—a different one every few years but always preferably the latest one . . . the German scholar having decided in a final manner whatever point might have been at issue ... Acton was warned not to play this game of waving German professors at his fellow Catholics ... he not only failed to take the advice, but added the weight of his influence to a tendency that was making historical scholarship perhaps over arrogant and certainly too pontifical." His voice is echoed by the bitter cry of the Jesuit theologian, Fr. Kleutgen, directed at his Fatherland: "I want to have nothing more to do with that country or with its confused, yet so inflated, minds." (Cf. Fr. R. M. Wiltgen, S.V.D., *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber.*)

There is a saying of Voltaire which must also be taken into consideration: "In France every man is either an anvil or a hammer; he either beats or is beaten." It ties in with the dictum that every eve in France is St. Bartholomew's Eve, and they hint that another northern race may be short of calm common-sense, and warn us to be critical of theology imported from the Common Market. Fr. Schoof writes in *Breakthrough*: "... there are only two countries ... where the Catholic revival seems to be able to take root ... France and Germany. . . . After the Second World War, Dutch theology also became internationally known on the fringe of the French and German linguistic zones." It triggers unhappy memories of 'revivals' inspired by Luther and Calvin, especially when Fr. Schoof speaks of Dr. Schillebeeckx's 'striking' idea of "development through demolition." (Cf. pp. 17 and 220.)

THE SIMPLE, NAKED TRUTH

Fr. P. O'Neil, in his *St. Thomas in the Blessed Sacrament and Mass* (1935), wrote well: "No one can equal St. Thomas in clearness and simplicity, because he thoroughly understood what he was writing about; and above all because he believed." This deserves meditation. First, one can write clearly of profound matters; fog does not arise from the subject matter. Secondly, disbelief will result in obscurity often,

though the latter can spring from mental sluggishness. The man who has lost his faith may try to lose, not deny, doctrine, if he wishes to stay in his niche. Speaking to the cardinals on April 17, 1907, St. Pius X took Modernist writing to task: "... *there is charity without faith, which is tender towards unbelievers, and throws open the way to eternal ruin,*" and he spoke of the cagey Modernists and their errors: "*they wrap them up in ambiguous terms and cloudy forms which always allow them a way of escape in order to avoid open condemnation, yet ensnare the imprudent.*" The reader should go back now to page 11 and take a second look at the quotation from *The Experience of Priesthood*. The moral is that, while we can pity the man who has lost his faith, and is afraid to show his true colours, and that, while we can understand open disbelief in the Eucharist, since the intellect is out of its depth, we must not be conned into giving any respect to a pretence that a denial of transubstantiation is an allowable interpretation of it, that a reversal of Trent's teaching is consonant with it. Christians have to become like little children, and it was a child, in Hans Andersen's parable, who rejected the new interpretation of clothes and sang out that the emperor was naked. Heresy hates to have attention drawn to its nakedness, but it is the naked truth that some new interpretations fall under Trent's anathema (Dz. 884) :

"If anyone shall say that, in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny that wonderful and unique conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood—the species alone of the bread and wine remaining—which conversion indeed the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation: let him be anathema."

THE DOCTRINE OF THE COUNCILS

We set out the teaching of the Church before embarking on a discussion of what is being written today. Modern views must be assayed in the light of this teaching, and particular attention should be paid to the use of the terms *substance* and *transubstantiation*. The continuity of thought, language and meaning through the centuries will be unmistakable. To be a Catholic, we must (a) hold this doctrine, and (b) hold it in the sense in which the Councils taught it.

First, we have the retractation imposed on Berengarius by the **Council of Rome** in 1079:

"I, Berengarius, believe in my heart and profess with my mouth, that the bread and wine placed on the altar are, by the mystery of the sacred prayer and words of our Redeemer, substantially changed into the true, proper and life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord; that after the consecration there is the true body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin and which, offered up for the world's salvation, hung upon the cross, and which sits at the right hand of the Father, and the true blood of Christ, which flowed from his side, and this not only through the sign and virtue of the sacrament but in their natural reality and true substance...." (Denzinger 355.)

Next comes the **Fourth Lateran Council** of 1215:

"There is indeed one universal Church of the faithful, outside which no one at all can be saved, in which the sacrifice is the priest himself, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, the bread having been transubstantiated into his body and the wine into his blood by the power of God...." (Denzinger 430.)

Remembering the anathema of Trent which we quoted above, we read now errors of Wyclif which were condemned by the **Council of Constance** in 1415:

"I. The material substance of the bread and in like manner the material substance of the wine

remain in the sacrament of the altar.

"3. Christ is not in this sacrament identically and really by a genuine bodily presence (propria praesentia corproali)." (Denzinger 581, 583.)

The same doctrine appears again in the Decree for the Armenians drawn up by the **Council of Florence** in 1439:

"The form of this sacrament is the words of the Saviour ... For by the power of those words the substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the substance of wine into blood: in such a way, however, that the whole Christ is contained under the species of bread and the whole Christ under the species of wine." (Denzinger 698.)

We pass on to the teaching of the **Council of Trent**, our most eloquent witness to Catholic belief, even if the Council is looked upon with some disapproval by some today. "It is equally true," wrote Fr. Nicholas Lash in *His Presence in the World*, "that the definitions of Trent cannot, even implicitly, be regarded as a satisfactory starting-point for a eucharistic theology ..." and Dom Philip Holdsworth echoed (in *The Tablet*, October 30, 1965) : "I am not persuaded that Trent's canon is enough to make it (transubstantiation) *de fide*. Trent cannot be held to be an adequate representation of the Catholic Church." The infallible teaching of Trent is, however, what we must make do with, and, having already looked at its second Canon, we print, before giving Canon I, what the Council taught directly about transubstantiation. . . .

"Because Christ our redeemer said that what He offered under the appearance of bread was truly His body, the Church has always held and this holy Synod now teaches afresh: that through the consecration ... there comes about the change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood. This change is aptly and rightly called transubstantiation. . . ." (Denzinger 877.)

Canon I runs:

"If anyone should deny that the body and blood ... the whole Christ, are truly, really and substantially contained ... but affirm they are present in it only in sign or symbol, or in power, let him be anathema." (Denzinger 883.)

Again, and this is important although it is not a matter of a General Council, when the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia (1786) directed that it was enough to teach: (1) that Christ is, after the consecration, really and substantially under the appearances, and that (2) the whole substance of bread and wine has ceased to exist; but that there was no need to mention transubstantiation, implying that this was a mere scholastic issue, Pius VI condemned the error involved. He referred to transubstantiation "*which the Council of Trent defined as an article of faith.*" He castigated the Synod's omission as "*pernicious, derogatory to the teaching of Catholic truth regarding the dogma of transubstantiation, and leaning towards heresy.*" (Dz. 1529.) Finally, in Denzinger, 1843 to 1846, we find the Holy Office dealing, in 1875, with a tortuous attempt to evade the clear meaning of the traditional term.

SUBSTANCE & TRANSUBSTANTIATION

But is the meaning of transubstantiation clear? It will help if we study the origins of the term. It first made its appearance in the twelfth century and appeared, in verb form, as we have seen, in the decree of the 4th Lateran Council, though 'substantially changed' cropped up in the recantation of

Berengarius. The term *transubstantiation* was minted to fit one physical change and one only, just as *Homoousios* was coined to pin-point the truth about Christ's relationship to the Father. There is no other transubstantiation in the true sense of the term, even though many substances are changed into others—bread and meat, for instance, into our flesh and blood by digestion—since transubstantiation involves more than the word-structure indicates. To do justice to the full doctrine, one would have to compound a German-style construction, a verbal Dachshund, bringing in not only the change of substance but also the retention of appearances. It is used "aptly and rightly" to denote the conversion of bread and wine in the Eucharist, but it is not exhaustive of the full content of the doctrine; only a polysyllabic horror could be that, and our present term does what it can with six syllables. In practice, it serves perfectly to distinguish Catholic belief from heterodox and, as Calvin and Luther knew exactly what it meant, there is no excuse for ignorance today.

Though the term transubstantiation was not framed until the Middle Ages, it must not be thought that the term 'substance' was not adopted until then. Some have written as if it became current only when scholastics revived Aristotelian philosophy, but it was employed in the fifth-century homily *Magnitudo*, which had a strong influence on the shaping of doctrine. Nor must it be thought that the philosophy and terms of Aristotle were *terra incognita* before the age of Gothic. Boethius, who was canonised (and often passes incognito) as St. Severinus, translated and commented on the works of Aristotle in the early sixth century, and the fame of Boethius was so great in the Dark Ages that Alfred translated his *De Consolatione Philosophiae* into Anglo-Saxon.

What was, what is, meant by 'substance', and what by 'transubstantiation'? Here it is that some northern theologians have made such heavy weather, but there is no difficulty in establishing what the terms meant in the past for the good reason that a traditional Catholic uses them in the same sense today. The Church has not at any time since Berengarius changed our doctrine, but has held determinedly to it, dealing firmly with innovators. What we were taught in church, in school and at home is what our parents were taught, and so back ... the 'unchanging truth.' Pope Paul has rejected the right of anyone to give Eucharistic doctrine "*an interpretation that whittles away the natural meaning of the words or the accepted sense of the concepts.*" There is, then, a natural meaning, an accepted sense, and Fr. Henry St. John was wrong when he wrote: "*There may be more than one explanation of the meaning of substantial change in this context: none is de fide ... To treat the de fide definition as the only explanation of transubstantiation ... would be to put an end to all theological development.*" To hold to the truth is to block not doctrinal development so much as doctrinal divergence, otherwise we could accuse our Lord of blocking doctrinal development when He imparted revelation. To possess truth is to be in a position to start on fruitful doctrinal development. We recall here the teaching of Vatican I: "*That sense of the sacred dogmas is to be retained forever which Holy Mother Church has once taught,*" and the terms of the anti-modernist oath.

The situation now is that some theologians would have it that we do not know the one sense when a well-instructed and intelligent school-child can tell them. It is to be found in a handbook like *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (1948) as in any other handbook printed before Vatican II, though it will not be traced in the Dutch catechism. It was well known to those who rejected it, before Trent, and Calvin, for instance, proved that he knew perfectly well what the schoolmen taught. He argues against them: "*When they say that the substance of bread is converted into Christ, do they not attach to him the white colour, which is all they leave of it? ... the sum of all is, that that which was formerly bread, by consecration becomes Christ; so that Christ thereafter lies hid under the colour of bread.*" He will not have this change of physical reality and insists that "*no other conversion takes place than in respect of men,*" which is, as we shall see, the view which is being proposed now as a meaning of transubstantiation. The term, writes Dr. Schillebeeckx, "*has lost its significance in our times—even Protestant theologians have discovered and accepted the suggested force of the word*

'transubstantiation'. It has lost its function as a banner because it can now be used to fly over ships with different cargoes."¹ He is wrong. The term has not lost its one significance, nor has the attempt to fly the flag over different cargoes been successful, as we see from the words of Fr. Smits publicised in Time: "With transubstantiation we can't go forward." How have Protestant theologians accepted its 'suggestive force' if they do not subscribe to its meaning?

It was an eminent scientist who said that we must kneel down like children before reality. It is good science and makes also for good philosophy, and in places theology rests on sound philosophy, Pius X having warned us that he who threw over the metaphysics of St. Thomas could hardly avoid falling into grievous error. We kneel down before reality, then, and this is what we see: that there is a difference between what is permanent in a material thing and what is fleeting, between underlying physical reality and changing physical appearance. A child takes a handful of moist clay. He changes its shape by moulding it into a horse, and he now proudly calls it his horse, though he knows well that it is not a horse except in shape, but still clay. He puts it into the oven and bakes it. In the process, the clay suffers some colour change and emerges rougher and harder to the touch ... but it remains stubbornly clay. The underlying physical reality, *whatever that may be*, stays unchanged. At the same time, the appearances have fluctuated. This underlying physical reality is what we mean by substance, and the term itself means only "that which stands under," which is a statement of what it does, rather than of what it is, a confession that it is mysterious. The appearances which vary are called accidents or species, the words being interchangeable; at Trent, an equal number of bishops voted for the use of each.

In addition to such change of appearances, there can, of course, be substantial change as when food is transmuted by process of digestion into flesh, or Moses' rod into a live, wriggling snake. Then the thing itself changes, not the surface appearances only; it is changed into something else. The lump of clay and the clay horse are both clay; but the hissing snake rearing and weaving is not a rod. Yet, in the realm of sensible experience, every substantial change is accompanied by a parallel change of accidents. That is why transubstantiation is unique, requiring the minting of a term, and why it is a flag which can never be made to fly over ships with different cargoes. Here the substance, the underlying reality, changes into something else, while the appearances linger on, a veil for the physical reality of our Lord's body and blood. It requires faith to accept this and it is well termed *Mysterium fidei*.

We have echoed Pius X's warning against drifting away from Thomist metaphysics. Can it be said that our doctrine is tied to Aristotelian philosophy, whose terms it has borrowed, and whose fall, if it falls, it must share? "These formulas" of the Eucharist, the pope explained in *Mysterium Fidei*, "express concepts which are not restricted to any specific cultural system. They are not restricted to any fixed development of the sciences nor to one or other of the theological schools. They present the perception which the human mind acquires from its universal, essential experience of reality... They are, therefore, within the reach of everyone at all times and in all places." This, as we have seen from our example of the clay horse, is common-sense, a view supported by Tangeot in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*:

"The Church has no intention of getting mixed up in purely philosophical questions. Whatever terms she employs are to be understood only in the light of the ... very simple philosophy which one can no more dispense with in expounding dogmas than in any other rational discourse, a philosophy which can be understood without any study and ... must underlie all systems, since without it the systems would fly in the face of common sense."

¹ *The Eucharist*, p. 41.

This is why O. Schellhout concluded "*that the core of the Thomistic teaching does not belong to the area of free questioning, and that ... its substance belongs to the authoritative teaching of the Church.*"²

We may add that Mr. Anthony Kenny drew the reddest of herrings across the student's path in his contribution to *Theology and the University*, maintaining that "*It was not Trent, but Locke who defined substances as some thing ... which supports the sensible qualities we find united in things*"—true enough in so far as Trent did not define substance—and then pinning on the extraordinary suggestion that the scholastics' outlook on substance was that of Aristotle which he described as quite different from Locke's. The scholastics' 'substance' was Aristotle's 'first substance', he said, which is what is designated by a proper name (John Smith or Lassie). If one put one's mind to it, one could not get farther from the facts than this, and such extravagance, together with his travels in the twilight lands of modern philosophy, lead to his conclusion: "*Thus the doctrine of transubstantiation appears in the end to fail to secure that for which alone it was originally introduced, namely the real presence.... I do not know of any satisfactory answer to this problem.*" One is left with the impression that everyone except a modern Catholic writer knows what Catholics held and hold. Almost a century and a half ago, Newman wrote in *The Via Media* that the Anglican Article which rejected transubstantiation opposed itself to '*a certain plain and unambiguous statement, not of this or that Council, but one generally received or taught both in the schools and in the multitude, that the material elements are changed into an earthly, fleshly and organized body....*'"

Mr. Kenny ended with "I do not know of any satisfactory answer to this problem." The most satisfactory answer is to listen with "religious submission of will and of mind" to the teaching of *Mysterium Fidei*; the mystery of faith will remain, but the artificial confusion will disappear. Because the Pope repeated our doctrine in its one meaning, and that meaning involves the idea of substance which Mr. Kenny thought that the scholastics did not envisage, he has been accused of betraying a Lockean philosophy. In fact, he reflected the experience of every man, and there is a salutary warning to be found in the fact that Charles Davis wrote early in 1964 (*Sophia*, April, 1964) that a strong point in favour of those theologians who demanded, in Eucharistic doctrine, a Thomist theology was "*the failure of every other attempted theology so far,*" said openly that he could no longer hold the Thomist formulation, and left the Church in 1966, admitting that he did not accept her teaching on the Eucharist.³

It must be firmly stated that the Church defined not only the Real Presence but also the way in which it is brought about, that is, transubstantiation (Cf. Denzinger 884). We listen now to Pope Paul, raising his voice, as he said, "*to give on behalf of all the People of God, a firm witness to the divine Truth entrusted to the Church to be announced to all nations,*" in his *Credo of the People of God*: "*Christ cannot be thus present in this Sacrament except by the change into His Body of the reality itself of the bread leaving unchanged only the properties which our senses perceive. This change is very appropriately called by the Church transubstantiation.*" Thus he made his own, and the Church's, St. Thomas's conclusion that there cannot be the Real Presence without transubstantiation. (Cf. *Summa Theologica*, Parts Tertia, Q. LXXV, Art. III.)

THE DRIVE TO RE-EXPRESS

Herder Correspondence (July, 1968) reflected: "*That there was need for re-thinking the theory of the Eucharist not even a papal encyclical could deny, or would presumably want to deny.*" The present

² Cf. Joseph M Powers, S.J., *Eucharistic Theology*, pp. 125-126.

³ *A Question of Conscience*, p. 234.

writer suspects that "theory" has been used when "doctrine" was in fact intended, and holds that the Pope would readily deny, as countless Catholics would, that there was any need to re-think the doctrine. True, the Pope approved the desire "to investigate this great mystery, and to elucidate its riches, which are not yet exhausted, and to unfold its meaning to the men of our day," but he emphasised: "It would be intolerable if the dogmatic formulae, which Ecumenical Councils have employed in dealing with the mysteries of the most holy Trinity, were to be accused of being badly attuned to the men of our day... It is equally intolerable that anyone on his own initiative should want to modify the formulas with which the Council of Trent has proposed the eucharistic mystery for belief" (*Mysterium Fidei*). It looks as if a papal encyclical had wanted to deny the need for re-thinking and had gone ahead with the denial.

Bishop Butler has written: "*In principle, then, the modern attempts to restate the truth which 'the Church aptly calls' transubstantiation, in concepts and language which will not distort the Church's meaning, are entirely justified. Certainly, the word 'transubstantiation' seems to create unnecessary difficulties for many modern minds. What ultimately matters is less the form of words than the meaning which the words were chosen to enshrine....*"⁴ One must not overlook 'in principle', but, even with that caution, the words seem remote from the arena of reality. Experience with a long line of converts has taught me that the hallowed terms cause little difficulty, and the hard fact is that the attempts to recarve the cradle are killing the baby. Why should 'transubstantiation' cause unnecessary difficulties for modern minds? The doctrine was as hard to believe in the 16th century, and the term is as easily understood in the 20th. An article in *L'Osservatore Romano* (April 3, 1969) commented: "Some have feared that it might not be able to be understood by a modern mind. This does little honour to the modern mind. The idea of substance is one of the primordial notions possessed by every man and of which he constantly makes use. I cannot say that I feel cold without perceiving myself as a permanent subject, a substance, affected by this unpleasant condition I may add that I have found Professor Marcuse using this very term transubstantiation in its true sense, and I think that this should be sufficient guarantee of its modernity (*The One-Dimensional Man*, 1968)." In reference to Christ's consubstantiality with the Father, that issue of *The Sower* says in glorious confusion: "We have long ago abandoned the ancient idea of substance as that which underlies the varying appearance of things. We are inclined to think of substance as 'stuff,' " and then there is talk of two loaves made from the same materials and so being composed of the same substance. One is left with the impression that, in an attempt to undermine the divinity of Christ, the writer has been betrayed into a statement that could be used to accuse him of believing in transubstantiation! God save the unwary Modernist from himself!

Anyone who can distinguish between a noun and its adjective knows the meaning of our terms. Converts may, on first hearing, have no, or a wrong, notion, but an explanation clears up the difficulties. We need not be alarmed if a scientist normally means something else by 'substance', for, though an American means something else by 'gas', we understand each other. Terms are soon shelled for their core. "*What ultimately matters is less the form of words than the meaning*" can be a false antithesis in practice. *This baby is strapped tightly to that cradle; as Dr. Schillebeeckx observed, "the mot juste is important for faith." "This rule of speech has been introduced by the Church in the long work of the centuries," Pope Paul teaches, "with the protection of the Holy Spirit. She has confirmed it with the authority of the Councils. It has become more than once the mark and standard of orthodox faith. It must be observed religiously. No one may presume to alter it at will, or on the pretext of new knowledge"* (*Mysterium Fidei*). Some, however, felt that there was need of re-expression on one, or all, of three scores.

⁴ *The Tablet*, November 25, 1967.

ECUMENISM THE SPUR

First, there was the drive of ecumenism which became, in spite of the Holy Father's warning of January 20, 1965, not merely an "apostolic programme" but a "temptation." Some years ago, Mr. Peter de Rosa wrote that, if the cause of ecumenism was to advance, there must be some blurring of the Church's outlines,⁵ and it was soon apparent that unity with past Catholic belief was to be sacrificed at the altar of unity with present Christians. *Herder Correspondence* (November, 1967) grumbled that "*Curial conservatism has of course no interest at all in ecumenical theology, which it suspects (rightly) of being tied up with . . . doctrinal reinterpretation.*" "Rightly" is an honest admission, and the same lid was lifted by the *Catholic Herald's* editorial on *Mysterium Fidei* which mentioned the general opinion that "*the Pope had no alternative but to 'shoot down' some of the avant garde theorists ... who were dismissing the Church's formulations in an effort to produce a formula more acceptable to other Christian Churches.*" This gives away more than the words suggest at a first hearing, since it is not directly the formulation but the *content* which is unacceptable to other Churches; to satisfy them, the truth wrapped in the formula would have to be disowned.

Some ecumenists had satisfied themselves that our doctrine was deficient. The *Catholic Herald* (August 30, 1968) reported a lecture in which "*Fr. Donal Flanagan, Professor of Dogmatic Theology at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, said that there was a primary ecumenical obligation on each Christian Church today to understand the deficiencies in its own theological understanding of the Eucharist.*" When Dr. Mascall reviewed Dr. Kung's *The Church*, he found that "*the Catholicism which Dr. Kling desiderates . . . would differ very little from Lutheranism,*" and he deplored a "virtual obliteration" of the ordained priesthood in the book, remarking that the author was left in "*much the same quandary as the sixteenth-century reformers.*"⁶ The quandary is the outcome of doctrine-corrosion by ecumenism, and we see how serious it is when we find the Swiss theologian teaching: "*The sacrament of the Eucharist is given to the Church in precisely the same way as is the sacrament of baptism. Any Christian can baptise in case of emergency. What happens when a layman celebrates the Eucharist in a place where the faithful have not had a priest available... ? I am convinced that, in this case, there would be a valid Eucharistic celebration.... The very fact of considering that ... any Christian can celebrate the Eucharist is very precious for us priests... . It means that other Christian denominations can carry out a valid Eucharistic celebration.*"⁷ This, one assumes, is the kind of stuff which made Fr. Michael Hollings, former Catholic chaplain at Oxford, write with such obvious excitement (*Catholic Herald*, October 20, 1972) : "*The light*"—apparently Christ, the Light of the World—" ... sinks in despond at the voice of the establishment, it rises to high gusts at the words of Pope John, Bonhoeffer, Suenens, Bloom, Butler, Küng or Helda Camara." How very remarkable that the Light of the World should rise to a 'high gust' over Bonhoeffer's 'religionless Christianity' or Küng's Lutheranism and sink in despond at the voice of the establishment (Pope Paul?) !

The upshot of fevered ecumenism, together with other factors to be considered, has been confusion or loss of belief. Here is disbelief stated nakedly: "*Orthodoxy is the tragedy of Christianity,*" says the Rev. Joss Arts, the priest-editor of a Catholic weekly called *De Nieuwe Linie*. "What we need is a

⁵ *Catholic Herald*, November 15, 1963.

⁶ *The Tablet*, January 27, 1968

⁷ Cf. *L'Homme Nouveau*, February 15, 1970. A *Catholic Herald* editorial (May, 1972) avers: "*Validity, if linked only to external ritual acts, may indeed appear to represent a resurgence of the Pharisaic spirit. . . . The Joint Commission (on the Ministry) cannot ultimately avoid facing the question whether the Church ... has the right to recognize or refuse recognition . . . to anyone wishing to stand up and say that he represents Christ.*" Apparently, if the Commission answers 'No,' then any non-Catholic may offer up Mass if he feels so inclined. And the Mass would be valid?

rethinking of all the basics of Christianity. We must break away from the formal dogma of the Catholic Church.'"⁸

And so we read 'atrocities' from Holland every few days . . . the bishop who rejects transubstantiation,⁹ the Hosts, of toasted bread, which are thrown out when stale¹⁰, the Sjaloom group's interdenominational *agapes* which are intended to be full eucharistic celebrations,^{11,12} the two vicars-general who investigated such a celebration but refused to condemn as "no one is fully justified in simply limiting oneself closely to Church law,"¹² and the priests who give Communion to pagans."¹³ and nearer at home there is Fr. Gerald Hughes, S.J., chaplain at Glasgow University: "On one or two occasions I have served Communion to Anglicans. I had explained the Church's ruling on this, but they insisted on receiving and I felt I could not refuse." (*Catholic Herald*, June 2, 1972.)

As today's imbalance springs from an inferiority-complex, from a desire to take on the colour of surrounding society, it will not end with an advance towards conservative Protestant beliefs. Thanks to liberal Protestantism, the 'stout Protestants' have lost a lot of weight. The society around us is humanist, and, that being so, the wilder ecumenism is not a swing towards our Protestant brethren but a leap through the paper-hoop of liberalism towards humanism; Modernism is disbelief, not sectarian Christianity. The true kinship of the ultra-ecumenist is sometimes expressed frankly... "Mr. Denis Rice, supervisor of adult education at Leicester University—and himself a Catholic—told the teach-in that he felt he had a closer relationship with Mr. Blackham (director of the British Humanist Association) than with Cardinal Heenan."¹⁴ It recalls how Fr. Bouyer, in *The Decomposition of Catholicism*, wrote that Catholics having "long given up the idea of converting the world," "we should not be surprised that Catholics who go finally out to the world allow themselves to become caught by it like flies on fly-paper."

DISBELIEF SIRE DISBELIEF

Reckless ecumenism is the first ground for re-interpretation, and the second is disbelief in another doctrine on which the Real Presence depends. Just as the Docetist in the early Church could not hold that our Lord's Body was present in the Eucharist as he did not hold that He ever had a real body, so a man today may refuse to accept that bread is changed into Christ's Body since he believes that that Body decayed in the grave. St. Paul made it clear in I Corinthians, XV, that the resurrection is a key-doctrine of our religion—"if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain: and your religion is also vain." As the Modernist could not tolerate that the Church's doctrine was true, this key-doctrine was an early casualty. Loisy picked at the dogma in *The Gospel and the Church*, Section 3: "The message of Easter (that is to say, the discovery of the empty tomb and the appearance of Jesus to His disciples, so far as these facts are taken for physical proofs of the resurrection) is not an irrefutable argument from which the historian can conclude with entire certainty that the Saviour rose in the body from the dead. The empty tomb is only an indirect argument and not decisive since the established fact, the disappearance of the body, can be explained in other ways...." Tyrrell also hoped that, if he shuffled ideas around, the dogma would go away. From *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, Chapter XII: "Now if we agree with Liberal Protestantism in taking symbolically what the early Church

⁸Cf. *Time*, March 21, 1967.

⁹ *Volkskrant*, May 27, 1969.

¹⁰ Douglas Brown, *Catholic Herald*, March 14, 1969

¹¹ Desmond Fisher, *Frontier*, Spring 1967; Fr. Van der Weyer in *Those Dutch Catholics*

¹² *Catholic Herald*, December 8, 1967.

¹³ Brian G Cooper, *The Dutch Quest for God*, in *Catholic Herald*, July 16, 1971.

¹⁴ *Catholic Herald*, February 26, 1966.

took literally, we differ in taking it all as symbolic of transcendental value ... while not discarding the imagery, we recognise that it is an envelope and not the substance. Hence we claim to be true to the 'idea' of original Christianity.... He (St. Paul) was answering those who mistakenly supposed that the resurrection phenomena had to be fitted in with the physical series. ... Yet, however subjective may be the imaginative clothing of that reality, the reality itself is not necessarily subjective. ... The physical resurrection and ascension could, at most, be signs and symbols of Christ's spiritual transformation, of the fullness of His eternal and transcendent life; they could never be its substance...." "At most" is good. Doubting Thomas, with his hand stretched out to test the reality of the wounded Flesh, had doubted like this, and the Church crushed the errors in two condemned propositions (Denzinger 2036,2037):

"The resurrection of the Saviour is not strictly a fact of the historical order, but a fact of the purely supernatural order, which is neither demonstrated nor demonstrable, which the Christian consciousness gradually derived from other things"—"Faith in the resurrection of Christ was, from the beginning, not so much concerning the fact itself of resurrection as with Christ's immortal life with God."

But still they come, in spite of the *magisterium*. . . . Here we find transubstantiation and the resurrection side by side in the report (*Catholic Herald*, September 29, 1972) of Fr. Hubert Richards's New Zealand lectures: "... modern man does not admit miracles.... Therefore, there are no miracles in the scriptures, including the virgin birth, the raising of Christ's dead body to life, and the changing of bread and wine into Christ's own body and blood." (Theologically, this is slovenly, since transubstantiation does not qualify as a miracle, which is recorded by the senses.) That number of *The Sower* (it is beginning to recall Pius X's reference to Modernism as the 'compendium' of all the heresies) teaches: "The resurrection stories are stories, and not necessarily genuine descriptions of a factual event. They are professions of faith in the risen Jesus. . . . One may wonder whether the discovery of the empty tomb has any historical foundation." In simpler language, one could put all this as Loisy put it to Le Roy: "Your doctrine of the resurrection is a beautiful poem; yet is it anything but a poem?" "All that interests us to know," Tyrrell asserted, "is to know that the resurrection is not fleshly...." "Then," St. Paul would answer, "is our preaching vain," and Tyrrell seems to have glimpsed the truth as he declared his bankruptcy: "In the sense of survival and immortality the Resurrection is our critical and central dogma, 'If Christ be not risen' ... etc. If I cannot maintain that, I will not stop at Campbell's halfway house."

Campbell's Halfway House, however, is the *poste restante* address for some now, though the voices of the Church's millions proclaim gladly and assuredly "And the third day He rose again." *Time* (March 31, 1967) reported: "Dominican Theologian Edward Schillebeeckx ... proposes that the Resurrection of Jesus may not have been the physical recomposition of his body but a unique kind of spiritual manifestation. 'One generally likes to consider his Resurrection,' he says, 'as being the impact of his personality on his disciples and his presence in the hearts of all Christians.'" ¹⁵

NO REDEMPTION, NO SACRIFICE

Wrong views on the redemption must also affect the idea of the Mass as a sacrifice and therefore the identity of the sacrificial Victim received in Communion. Loisy was condemned for, *inter alia*, throwing doubt on the redemption through the passion and cross, and it was not unnatural that he should have doubts in the matter since he had grown unsure about the very personality of God. In the nineteen sixties and seventies, sacrifice, not to a Person, but to the shapeless 'Ground of our Being' must also provoke difficulties. ("God cannot be thought of apart from this world. It is inconceivable that he existed before the world"—Fr. H. Richards is reported as saying.) *That Sower*

¹⁵ Catholics do not hold the 'physical recomposition' of the body of Jesus. It did not decompose.

states: "When reading the narratives of the passion and death it is misleading to have in mind analogies of justice, ransom, reparation, satisfaction, buying back..." and thus Fr. Richard McBrien tells us in *What do we really believe?* (p. 50) : "We need not believe that Jesus died on the cross to 'pay off a debt' to the Father. Our understanding of the sacrifice of the cross can therefore be altered and with it our understanding of the Mass as a sacrifice." *O crux ave, spes unica!*

We see, then, that 'no resurrection' spells 'no transubstantiation,' and 'no redemption' means no sacrifice and no sacrificial Victim under the appearances of bread and wine.

Reinterpretation has found justification, thirdly, in the new knowledge of matter. Linked to this has been a 'phenomenological' approach, the notion that the essence of things depends on their relation to man's mind. The Gospel tells us that a good father will not give a stone when begged for bread, but some modern fathers would counter that there is no such thing as bread. Charles Davis, in his *Sophia* article, denied that bread and wine were substances, alleging that "*Bread as bread is knowable only to man, and that is because it exists as bread only in relation to man.*" There are two things involved there, one referring to the realm of physical science and the other to philosophy.

Bread, we are told, is a conglomeration of different substances, most of which could be separated from the others by a scientist with almost as much ease as we would separate the contents of a tool box. Bread is not so much a thing as a box of things and, as a result, it is asserted that we cannot rightly talk about changing the substance in a physical sense, since bread is not one substance. Therefore, the Church must speak in another sense and (it is argued) the only sense in which this conglomeration is 'bread' is in relation to man. Man views it as bread. Let him view it in another light and its reality will have been changed since its bread-reality is determined by its relation to man. Let him now look on it as Christ's body, and it will automatically cease to be bread. This is *transignification*. The line is not peculiar to Davis, of course, but is common currency among those who re-interpret, and it is no more transubstantiation than was Calvin's doctrine with which it has strong affinities.

THE 'BREAD-BOX' & UNREAL REALITY

If bread is only an assortment, is there no such thing as bread? The modernist answers: "It exists as bread only in relation to man." This is a fallacy. It is accepted that bread is made up of several substances, but bread is an objective reality, the name 'bread' being reserved for just such an amalgam. Iron is not bread; leather is not bread; none of the components is bread—only the sum-total is, and, if the whole human race perished suddenly, and a loaf was left upon a table, bread would exist without man. Here is the legerdemain which has been practised: the re-interpretater has said that a physical thing, bread, exists only in relation to man when he should have said that, in its *functional aspect*, as *food*, it made sense only in relation to man or animals. It is only in regard to man (or animals) that fruit can be regarded as food, and yet fruits have objective existence apart from man in their reality as physical things, even if Adam was required to bestow a generic and then an individual name.

The trick that has been pulled can be paralleled in this way: I pick up a shoe to hammer in a nail, and I remark that this is no longer a shoe to me but a hammer, since 'shoe' and 'hammer' denote man's usage. Therefore, if I subscribe to phenomenological philosophy, I claim that the object has undergone a substantial change of its reality, the shoe having been transubstantiated into a hammer. The answer is: certainly the shoe has been promoted to be an 'acting-hammer', but 'shoe' was not its physical reality. Leather was its physical substance and the substance has not been changed, since the leather has not been transmuted into steel. Change that leather shoe into a wooden shaft with a steel head and *then* you can talk realistically about substantial change!

The application ... Bread is a physical reality whether I look upon a loaf as something to eat or to throw at a meeting. If I throw the loaf, I no longer look on this particular loaf in the light of food, but I certainly regard it as bread. Eat it, sit on it, throw it—it is bread used for food, coopted as a cushion, launched as a missile, just as truly as glass, air and water are physical realities even if "there is no one about in the quad."

If we turn to Calvin, we find how close his view came to the subjectivism exposed above. He tried to oppose the teaching of the early Fathers against that of the schoolmen, writing:

*"I admit, indeed, that some of the ancients occasionally used the term conversion, not that they meant to do away with the substance ... but to teach that the bread devoted to the sacrament was widely different from ordinary bread, and was now something else ... no other conversion takes place than in respect of men... I willingly admit anything which helps to express the true and substantial communication of the body and blood of the Lord ... understanding that they are received not by the imagination or intellect only, but are enjoyed in reality as the food of eternal life."*¹⁶

A current Dutch Protestant joke runs: "*Previously, nothing changed in the Catholic Church except the bread and wine. Now everything changes except the bread and wine.*" There is shrewdness in the gibe and, with Calvin's words, it gives us furiously to think. Though Calvin held that the Fathers did not mean to 'do away' with the substance, and that the conversion was only in respect of men—in our way of looking at the bread—he nevertheless advocated "a" real presence and that one received Christ's body and blood "in reality." From this we learn to look twice when someone writes that there is no longer ordinary bread after the consecration, and even when he speaks of the 'consecrated bread and wine'—though his intention may be innocent and orthodox—and to look a third time, perhaps in the direction of Luther and impanation or companation, when he tells us that Jesus gives Himself 'in the bread and wine.' We have to study also what is wrapped up in the term 'real' or the phrase 'in reality.' *It is so easy to state doctrine unequivocally that, today, we are right in asking questions when a Catholic pens ambiguities.* A true Catholic finds it second nature to speak in clear orthodox manner and is dismayed to find, for example, the Dutch catechism circling our doctrine but never touching it. Pope Paul, however, is all for manly openness: "*Nor is it right to treat of the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning the marvellous change of the whole of the bread's substance....*" (*Mysterium Fidei*).

The case of Pope Honorius is raked up today, but it must be faced that the charge against him was that he left out when he should have spoken explicitly. The ambiguity with which we have to wrestle appears in these words written by Davis: the words of consecration "*do not merely tell us of the change but they bring it about in the real order. But ... what happens is not a change in the physical substance. . . .*"¹⁷ His 'real' is a relation to the mind, while ours is at the level of material reality. We shall see how carefully the Pope states that "*the bread and wine have ceased to exist after the consecration,*" and this "*in the reality itself, independently of our mind.*"¹⁸

¹⁶ *The Institutes*, Book IV, Chap. XVII.

¹⁷ *Sophia*, April 1964

¹⁸ *The Credo of the People of God*

MORE ABOUT MATTER

Does the fact that a scientist might describe bread as several substances affect the doctrine of the Church? In no way, since she has never committed herself as to the nature of material reality. She confines herself to stating that the underlying reality is changed at the consecration, without advancing any theory of matter. Put it this way, if I may do so without irreverence. Suppose that it was a question not of bread but of a chocolate biscuit. Theologians would speak as confidently about the change of the substance of the biscuit, though they knew that the object was originally chocolate as well. The academic question as to whether it was one, two or more substances would be irrelevant ... it does not matter if the 'wall' of bread is built of five hundred 'bricks'; the whole underlying material reality is changed into another Substance.

Modern science, as everyone knows, has thrown new light on matter. "*I have called my material surroundings a stage set,*" wrote C. S. Lewis in *Letters to Malcolm*, "... if you attack a stage house with a chisel ... you'll get only a hole in a piece of canvas and, beyond that, windy darkness. Similarly, if you start investigating the nature of matter ... You will get mathematics." Others will say that matter is only a form of energy. Yet this does not affect Catholic doctrine, since it in no way conflicts with the reality which we all deduce when the child moulds his clay horse, with our awareness that there is basic reality and surface appearance.

We have all heard, too, of the atomic structure of matter, of molecules, protons, neutrons and electrons, but this does not touch our traditional belief, though there is need for care in case we compromise it. A Catholic has affirmed that, at the consecration, "*there is no change in the molecular or atomic structure*" of the bread and wine, classing atomic structure as an 'accident' in scholastic terminology. It appears that he is mistaken and that differing molecular structure goes to *make* a substance, to make this thing bread or that thing flesh. I am buttressed in this view by Fr. C. Vollert, S.J., who writes in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* that the entire agglomeration of substance, i.e., protons, neutrons, electrons, atoms, is converted while properties like mass, electrical charges, energies, remain. Fr. Joseph Powers (*op. cit.*, p. 177) says rightly that an electronic microscope cannot reach the underlying reality, and then propounds as a conclusion that there is no change in molecular structure when the conversion takes place; this is a *non-sequitur*. The Real Presence escapes scientific tests since the scientists cannot dig beneath the 'accidents'—appearances, reactions etc. "*He gives Himself,*" Fr. Powers adds, "*in His own way, in sovereign freedom from all the conditions of our material existence*" but it is one thing to be untrammelled by the ordinary laws of nature and quite another to act independently of the *nature* itself of matter.

MATERIAL, PHYSICAL PRESENCE

There emerges from the above the truth of Francis Clark's words that transubstantiation is "*an intervention of divine power in the world of material creation...*" Some were annoyed when the non-Catholic Press reported that, in *Mysterium Fidei*, the Pope maintained "*the material presence of Christ in the Eucharist,*" but the Pope *did* teach it, maintaining that Christ was "*bodily present in His physical reality.*" This body, as Berengarius proclaimed, is the body that hung upon the cross, and Newman was right when he wrote in the *Apologia* that our doctrine "*deals with what no one on earth knows anything about, the material substances themselves,*" though our knowledge of matter has since widened.

Why, then, did the present writer shy away earlier from saying that Christ was physically present in the sacrament? It was simply because the phrase is ambiguous and ambiguity can be deadly. If we say he is physically present, this may be taken as meaning that His physical reality is present, conveying *what* is

present, and that is as orthodox as can be. On the other hand, and especially if the adverb is put last—"present physically"—it may be thought to describe the way in which He is present, and someone may translate it as "in a natural or normal way" instead of "sacramentally", and then we are in trouble, since our Lord is not present "physically" in the manner that physical objects are accustomed. The adverb should therefore be ruled out as favouring misunderstanding, and one can expound doctrine without its aid.

FRS SMITS, SCHOONENBERG & SCHILLEBEECKX

And now a hard look at the Fathers of transignification or transfinalization.... Most of us were unaware of trouble until we heard the first rumble in *Humani Generis*: "You will find men arguing that the doctrine of transubstantiation ought to be revised, depending as it does on a conception of substance which is now out of date. The real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is thus reduced to a kind of symbolic communication, the consecrated species being no more than an effectual sign of Christ's spiritual presence...." Pius XII reprimanded the "bolder spirits" who insist that "the mysteries of faith can never be expressed in terms which exhaust the truth—only in approximate terms, perpetually needing revision," and drew attention to "the contempt they show for the teaching commonly handed down, and for the terms which enshrine it." He voiced a warning that "the views which are put forward obscurely today, hedged about with safeguards and distinctions, will be proclaimed tomorrow, by other, bolder spirits, openly and extravagantly." He suggested that young priests in particular would fall victim to the wiles of the reinterpreters. The encyclical's reference to such doctrinal revision, Francis Clark reveals, was aimed at the work of Père Yves de Montcheil, S.J., and the rest of the genealogy of error is given by Fr. Powers (*op. cit.*). Until we come nearer home, we need mention only three names, Fr. Luchesius Smits, O.F.M., Cap., Dr. P. Schoonenberg, S.J., and Dr. E. Schillebeeckx, O.P.

Fr. Smits made world-headlines when *Time* (July 2, 1965) reported some Dutch theologians' advocacy of transignification, which it bluntly explained to mean "the change does not take place in the substance of the bread and wine but in its meaning." It revealed that the Capuchin compared Christ's giving Himself in the Sacrament to "the gesture of a Dutch housewife who offers her guests tea and cookies. Just as the housewife offers not food itself but her welcome 'incarnated' in the gift, Christ also offers himself, incarnated in the bread and wine." "With transubstantiation we can't go forward," *Time* reported him as saying, "but transignification? Now it is possible to be a Catholic in the modern world."

"Reckless journalism!" some have cried when they read the above, "Misrepresentation!" But the facts cannot be brushed aside as easily as that. The doctrine of Fr. Smits, given at length in *Actuele vragen rondom de Transsubstantiatie en de tegenwoordigheid des Heren in de H. Eucharistie* (1965) is in all important respects the same as that of Dr. Schoonenberg and, summarised in the book by Fr. Powers and Fr. Colman O'Neill's *New Approaches to the Eucharist*, fully lives down to its press reports. Even if the reader looks only at the précis supplied in *Herder Correspondence* (December, 1965), he should see why the Holy Father has been in such anguish.... "In the Eucharist our Lord embodies his love in bread and wine. . . . The doctrine of Transubstantiation was understood by Fr. Smits on the basis of the doctrine of the hypostatic union. Just as in Christ the human nature . . . is taken up into a higher mode of being, so bread and wine in the Eucharist are taken up into the mode of existence of the risen Lord. Our Lord takes possession of the bread and wine which become as it were part of his heavenly corporal nature." We might add that Fr. Smits would appear to have gone back to Guitmund of Aversa's error, impanation, which alleged that Christ and bread are united in a hypostatic union. "The consecrated bread is not in itself the body of the Lord," he proclaims, "but it is only the bread taken up by the Lord." No wonder that he could not go forward with transubstantiation, as he was in flight to Calvin and 16th century Geneva! Yet his elaboration of the Real Presence has been echoed in *Bible Catechism* by Fr. John C. Kersten, S.V.D.,—"Jesus is present in the bread and wine as the giver in the gift. . . . Neither is there a physical or chemical change of bread and wine. What happens at the Consecration is a 'trans-signification,' a sign-change." Dr. Schillebeeckx has

rallied to Fr. Smits' aid, explaining that "*His central idea was the uniqueness of Christ's giving of himself in the gift of bread and wine*" (*The Eucharist*, p. 121) but this is merely to confirm that Fr. Smits is in confusion, since Christ cannot give Himself in bread and wine which have ceased to exist.

For Dr. Schoonenberg's views, one may read the works by Fathers Powers and O'Neill, *Herder Correspondence* for December, 1965, for March, 1967, and for May, 1967, and his own article in *Cross Currents*, No. 1, 1967 (summarised in *Herder* that May). All these are in tune with the words attributed to him in the *Time* article: "*I kneel not for a Christ who is supposed to be condensed in the host, but for the Lord who through the host offers me his reality, his body.*" The teaching which emerges is: bread and wine are given to eat and drink in the Sacrament. We cannot speak of a physical transformation of the bread and wine. Transubstantiation is transignification... "*The bread signified our Lord's real self-giving. Precisely because this giving takes place under the species of bread, which must be eaten, the physical reality of bread must remain after the consecration....*" (This reverses Catholic doctrine which holds that Christ's body will not be present unless the bread 'goes'; Schoonenberg holds that He will not be present sacramentally unless the bread stays.) Dealing with the complaints of the Dutch traditionalists against the new catechism, he thought to minimise them by replying, "*Their complaint is concerned with transubstantiation, not with the presence of Christ,*" and by teaching that bread's new relation to man is "*constructive of the essence*" and thus, as Davis urged, the change of relationship or viewpoint marks a real change.

We have listened to the Capuchin and the Jesuit. Now we come to Dr. Schillebeeckx the Dominican, on whose behalf the Dutch bishops sent a telegram to Rome attesting that he had always shown the greatest possible care for the maintenance of the orthodoxy of modern theology. He is of the opinion that Pius XII was shadow-boxing in *Humani Generis*: "*I have never been able to discover a purely symbolical interpretation of the Eucharist in Catholic theology prior to 1950. Rome's criticism is probably based on a misunderstanding*" (*The Eucharist*, p. 110), and he laments that "*some theologians of the Roman school must judge the theology of the whole world.... Rome has got itself into such a panic that it can no longer distinguish between true attempts at renewal and other kinds*" (*Herder Correspondence*, December, 1968). It will be interesting to see, then, if a symbolical interpretation has reared its head in his own writings and if he has given Rome grounds for concern, if not 'panic'.

Dr. Schillebeeckx tries to write of the Eucharist "*in a manner that is open to the experience of modern man and above all as an authentic dogma which every Catholic can accept and with which he can feel at home in the ... thought of the twentieth century.*" It is the kind of thing which drew from Chesterton: "*An imbecile habit has arisen in modern controversy of saying that such and such a creed can be held in one age but cannot be held in another. Some dogma, we are told, was credible in the twelfth century, but is not credible in the twentieth. You might as well say that a certain philosophy can be believed on Mondays, but cannot be believed on Tuesdays.*"¹⁹ If Dr. Schillebeeckx feels a need to adjust doctrine to the taste of today, it is not because the doctrine has become less credible, but, because he has abandoned the Dominican Aquinas for the German semi-rationalist Kant. The scholastic distinction between substance and accident, he holds, "*has been philosophically untenable since Kant,*" thus placing himself on the path which led Charles Davis into the theological wasteland. Kant, it may be remembered, held that things in themselves were unknowable—"that objects must conform to our knowledge, not our knowledge to objects."

"If we abandon any attempt to re-interpret the Eucharist," he lays down, "*we shall then either have to live with a double truth, which will result in an increasing gulf between our lives in the Church and our lives in the world, or else we shall be letting the reality of what we celebrate in faith in the Eucharist sift out*

¹⁹ Orthodoxy

imperceptibly." (*Op. cit.*, p. 156). It is not clear what he means by a 'double truth'—probably one truth and one falsehood—but he has revealed the quandary in which he ("we") has placed himself. Having rejected the commonsense view of nature, embodied in the scholastic theology, which alone makes sense of transubstantiation—"an Aristotelian distinction between substance and accidents cannot help us in interpreting the dogma of transubstantiation" (p. 145)—he has either to give dogma a new meaning, that is, deny the old truth, or live a lie. He does not see that to reinterpret in this way is to live a lie. Davis saw it and left.

The reality of the bread, he believes, is changed because it becomes a sign of Christ's presence, which makes one wonder if he would hold that the reality of a flag (bunting) changes when it flies over a palace and becomes a sign of the Queen's presence, and, indeed, one reinterpreter has compared transubstantiation to the change in a piece of cloth when it is adopted as a national flag. This for him is substantial change. Does the bread remain throughout the Mass? He would prefer to say that "the bread remains, but not the 'bread-reality'." It should not be called *simply* bread, and transubstantiation, as a concept in natural philosophy, can be set aside if it is no longer in agreement with present-day philosophy ... whereas *Humani Generis* was acid about "*impermanent fashions of speech, borrowed from our up-to-date philosophies, which today live, and will feed the oven tomorrow.*"

"The Tridentine statement," the Dominican is confident, "*is, therefore, apart from its specifically Catholic significance, first and foremost a denial that the bread can still be called bread after the consecration.... A further analysis of what the bread is, for example, physically or metaphysically outside this context, is irrelevant.*" (*Op. cit.*, p. 133) It is not clear what the qualification "apart ... significance" is intended to convey, but we have here nonsense to which no one should be asked to extend serious consideration. The Tridentine statement is not primarily the denial stated, but an affirmation that the whole substance of the bread has been changed into Christ's body, with a barb of anathema fitted for anyone who holds that the bread remains. It deals with what things are objectively. The bread is unchanged in its material reality in Dr. Schillebeeckx's view, as in the view of Smits and Schoonenberg, however they make play with terms like 'real', 'reality', 'simply' or 'primarily.' Unhappily their approach is shared by the body of their country's bishops. They teach in their catechism that "... one should therefore say that the reality, the nature of material things is what they are ... for man," and so, in place of *Mysterium Fidei's* teaching that "*nothing is left of the bread and wine but the appearances alone,*" we get after much nervous circumambulation: "*It is better to say that the bread is essentially withdrawn from its normal human meaning....*" In consequence, the Commission of Cardinals laid down: "... it must be explained that the bread and wine in their deepest (not phenomenological) reality ... are changed." The Dutch should heed Abraham Lincoln. He was determined to be so clear, he said, "*that no honest man can misunderstand me, and no dishonest man can successfully misrepresent me.*" "*I am never easy when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north, bounded it south, bounded it east, and bounded it west.*" If a catechism cannot get round to lucid Eucharistic doctrine in sixteen pages, charity does not bar us from scenting disbelief. And now we are in a position to evaluate Fr. Corbishley's words—"As to the doctrine of the Real Presence and the idea of the Mass as a sacrifice, it is emphatically not true that any reputable theologian has done any more than try to safeguard the essential truth by presenting it in a more acceptable way" (*Catholic Herald*, October 22, 1971) . "Reputable"? And "more acceptable" to whom? Loisy and Renan?

I suggest that disbelief in transubstantiation lurks in these words of the Dutch catechism: "*Little particles which may have been left behind on the altarcloth are not in any sense the presence of Christ.*" This thought is not 'bounded'—note the slackness of "*particles are not the presence*"—and the view is phenomenological. "*The point,*" according to the catechism, "*is this. What would be called bread by ordinary, sensible people?*" We are back to the Kantian idea that the essence of things hang upon

man's outlook. "So too a piece of bread which has been reduced to dust is no longer called bread." Again—"called"—and a trick concealed in ambiguity. If bread powders into dust through corruption, then it is no longer bread, but, if there is a metamorphical 'dust' of bread in a bin, fragments, "ordinary, sensible people" talk of tiny breadcrumbs. They do more than talk—these are bread and a starving man will brush them into a pile with infinite care. In a parallel way, particles of the Host are *that* to us, not dust, not breadcrumbs ... 'This is my Body.' Even on phenomenological grounds, the Modernist case is faulty, for a man, who had no further use for crumbs and threw them out, would still say that he threw out bread-crumbs. Our grounds are deeper *Fracto demum sacramento, ne vacilles, sed memento, tantum esse sub fragmento, quantum toto tegitur.* Faith is our ground.

Before ending this section, might I address a word of respectful criticism to the German bishops? In their letter of September 22, 1967, which defended traditional teaching, they sought to see genuine values in transignification, putting forward the idea that "*the doctrine of transubstantiation can be elaborated in terms of transignification and transfinalization, but not replaced by these.*" "*The terms are indeed new,*" they said, "*but their content is old; the one emphasizes the fact that the natural bread becomes spiritual bread, the other that the new food is food for eternal life.*" I can only say that that is what the terms might have emphasized, but is not in fact what the terms were created to mean; that I have never heard anyone elaborate genuine transubstantiation in terms of transignification and every attempt has been at substitution. Is the German bishops' fatherly smile not rather like beaming at the man who comes with matches and petrol to burn down your house, greeting him with a cry that these will be splendid for a bonfire of weeds in the garden? The gentleman is not interested in a garden bonfire. There is a vital difference between transignification and Pope Paul's teaching that not the bread and wine, but their appearances, acquire a new significance. I suggest then, that the attempt to meet the opposition half-way can only generate confusion, and that the gambit tends to appear weak-kneed. "*Dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,*" Chesterton wrote of the Reformation era, and, though we must keep anger as far as possible out of sight, we have to remember a saying of C. S. Lewis—"Such anger is the fluid that love bleeds when you cut it."

On pages 334 and 341 of their catechism, the Dutch bishops teach: "*It (the Church) is convinced that the Spirit of God will not permit it to err in this matter.*"—"And we also believe that the Spirit of Jesus does not allow the Church to err in its interpretation of this gift." The traditional teaching of the Church, then, on the Eucharist, is infallibly true and must not be changed.

MYSTERIUM FIDEI: 'THE MATTER IS SETTLED'

In 1965 the magisterium spoke. Pope Paul swept aside the attempts to replace transubstantiation and stood firm by old doctrine and ancient formulation. His encyclical, *Mysterium Fidei*, was published a few days before the opening of the last session of Vatican II, which gave it an air of forestalling discussion, and was greeted in some quarters with contempt. "*I should not have accepted the document as a piece of work from a student,*" was the reaction of Charles Davis.²⁰ *Commonweal* (September 4, 1965) was hardly more happy. *Herder Correspondence* found the Pope guilty of having a "Lockean concept of substance" (July, 1968). The remarkable Fr. Gregory Baum, in *The Canadian Register*, September 25, 1965, accused the Pope of stressing Trent as against Vatican II, of wishing to slow down the movement of renewal. Thomas Sartory alleged in *A New Interpretation of the Faith* that the Pope had "*missed the actual question which interests every theologian who knows the actual data of the New Testament.*"

And there were those who saw beyond the letter to a hidden spirit.... Dr. Schillebeeckx spoke of living with a double truth if we abandoned attempts to reinterpret, and appended: "*it seems to*

²⁰ *The Observer*, January 1, 1967.

me that the deepest meaning of the encyclical . . . is that it points to this as a very real danger." (*Op. cit.*, p. 157.) "What the Pope is doing", maintained the *Catholic Herald* bravely, "... is to encourage the desire to find new and fuller expressions of the faith." Though the Pope insisted on the vital importance of our fixed rule of speech, Fr. Nicholas Lash wrote in *Dogmas and Doctrinal Progress*, in the symposium *Doctrinal Development and Christian Unity*: "Notice that it is the concepts which he says are not tied (to any specific cultural system), not the formulae" and then, from Olympus: "May I add that it is not my intention either to approve or to question some . . . presuppositions of the theologian employed by the Pope to write the encyclical...."

We go on now to break down the encyclical into its main affirmations, but first we remind the reader who has, we hope, learned the lesson of the previous chapter: this is a very solemn act of the papal magisterium, and the teaching of "the teacher of the whole Church" closes debate. Transignification is now ruled out as an explanation of, or substitute for, transubstantiation. Some, we know, have rejected the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* and some of these same people will disdain *Mysterium Fidei*. There will be others, however, who, while resisting *Humanae Vitae*, will be horrified by the tattered faith of those who dismiss the teaching of the Pope on the Eucharist, and these must look in the mirror and see their true face. It is the same authority which teaches, with equal right and weight, in the two encyclicals. We leave aside the devotional aspects of the pronouncement and list the main principles and implications, with one or two cross-references to the *Credo of the People of God*.

1. Theologians are causing "considerable mental confusion in matters of faith" by their writings regarding transubstantiation.
2. No interpretation is acceptable which "whittles away the natural meaning of the words or the accepted sense of the concepts."
3. It is wrong to treat of the topic without mentioning the marvellous change of the whole substances of the bread and wine; these changes cannot be reduced to transignification or transfinalization.
4. This is the mystery of faith, and we must shun poisonous rationalism; human arguments ought to be hushed and we should "follow the magisterium of the Church like a star."
5. Careless language breeds false opinions. The Church has elaborated a rule of speech which has been a "token and standard of orthodox faith. It must be observed religiously. No-one may presume to alter it at will or on the pretext of new knowledge." It is *intolerable* that a Catholic, independently of the magisterium, should want to modify Trent's formulations.
6. These formulae express concepts which are timeless, not being the offshoot of passing cultures, scientific views or particular theologies. The terms are "appropriate and certain" and the concepts present concrete experience of reality; "They are, therefore within the reach of everyone (a) at all times and (b) in all places."
7. As Vatican I taught, the original meaning of a doctrine must be retained.
8. Christ is truly present in the Church in many ways, but the supreme form of real presence is the "substantial presence by which Christ is made present, whole and entire, God and man" in the Eucharist. It is a "true, real and substantial presence." (*Credo*) This is not an omnipresence, a pneumatic presence, of Christ's Body in glory.
9. Our Lord becomes present precisely by the change of the bread's whole substance into His Body and the wine's whole substance into His Blood, the singular change aptly termed transubstantiation. The Real Presence can come about *only* through transubstantiation (*Credo*).
10. "Nothing is left of the bread and wine but the appearances." It is not a matter of the bread and wine no longer being *ordinary* bread and wine, or of the so-called bread-reality, as distinct from the bread, having changed. The appearances contain another Being "for

beneath these there is no longer what was there before but something quite different."

11. This is not a re-valuation arising from the Church's belief. "This is so in very fact." It is not a matter of the use of bread and wine as determined by man. "To be in accord with Catholic faith," we must "maintain that in the reality itself, independently of our mind, the bread and wine have ceased to exist.... (*Credo*). Kant is thus relegated to the world of unreal shades.
12. Bread and wine do not take on a new signification, since they no longer exist after the consecration but their appearances acquire a "new expressiveness and a new purpose." Christ does not give Himself in the bread and wine—even God cannot give Himself in the no-longer-existent.
13. Christ is bodily present, in His physical reality, whole and entire. This is the fundamental difference between the Real Presence and other 'real presences' of our Lord; it, is first and foremost physical, material.
14. But He is not present in the manner in which bodies occupy and are circumscribed by space, and so we say "sacramentally", this case being unique.

There, then, is the teaching of the Church. And as the encyclical was greeted with disdain by some Catholics, so also was the *Credo*, to the authority of which Canon Drinkwater rightly drew attention. The Dutch paper *De Volskrant* said it merely repeated old teaching, in old words, "as if the world and man have not changed in the meantime," while *De Nieuwe Linie* was confident that many Catholics who *thought* about these thinkings "are for the most part thinking differently from the Pope."²¹ How often are the phrases "thinking Catholics" or "educated Catholics" introduced by way of argument! Professor Butterfield contended: "More often than people generally recognise, it is true that a moral element—pride or wilfulness or a tendency to wishful thinking, for example—enters into the constitution of even our intellectual mistakes" (*op. cit.*, p. 30).

THE STRAW CROZIERS

Near the end of *Humani Generis*, Pius XII emphasised that his warning about false teaching was addressed to all bishops and heads of religious houses. One false trend concerned transubstantiation. The Pope ordered the bishops and superiors to "take every possible precaution against the utterance of such opinions in schools, in gatherings for discussions, in writings of whatever sort, and against their being passed on in any fashion either to clerics or to the faithful at large." The next words were addressed to professors in seminaries, pointing out "that they cannot with a clear conscience, exercise the office so entrusted to them unless they dutifully accept the principles we have here set forth, and observe them narrowly in educating their pupils. Mind and heart of their pupils must be impregnated with the same spirit of loyal reverence towards the teaching authority of the Church...."

It is undeniable that some bishops have failed in their duty and have allowed those under them to obscure the Faith. The present section of this chapter will indicate that we have not been beyond reproach in these isles, nor have those elsewhere in the English-speaking world. It was for this reason that I confessed to being only partly convinced by Cardinal Heenan's "Since nobody knows which theologians are being condemned (by the Pope), it is impossible for bishops to take any action." We may not be certain as to the identity of all the theologians censured, but we are certain about the views, and Pius XII's command stands with regard to schools, publications etc.

On page 69 of *Dialogue*, the Cardinal mentioned the Austrian bishops' reaction to attacks on the Eucharist and commented, "We have heard echoes here of this iconoclastic thinking, but in England the exponents of false thinking on the Eucharist have been so few that the bishops have not found it necessary

²¹ Cf. *Catholic Herald*, July 19, 1968.

to make any official pronouncement on the subject." Are they so few? And is there not a fallacy in the idea that a statement solves problems? If the pope's utterances are disregarded, so will the bishops', and problems are solved by *action*. (Everyone talks now about 'failure to communicate.' What about 'failure to excommunicate' or suspend?) We refer again to St. John Fisher who had seen it all happen: "We go *nothing nigh to the matter*...."

One recalls that, when Frs. Charles Davis, P. de Rosa and H. J. Richards were moved from their seminary posts to important posts at Heythrop College and Corpus Christi College, *Herder Correspondence* intimated that Cardinal Heenan had rid St. Edmund's College, Ware, of an *avant-garde* group, only to be told by the Cardinal that this interpretation was false and unflattering. Yet it was widely known that they were of uncertain orthodoxy, the magazine of their old college gave them a woundingly cool farewell, and Davis has left the Church, Fr. Richards is pounding the Loisy trail, while de Rosa, who issued from Corpus Christi two round robins, one (addressed to the bishops) demanding that a priest who rejected his vows should be allowed to marry after a month, the other a letter to *The Times* denouncing *Humanae Vitae*, has given up his priesthood to fight against papal error, saying that the Cardinal had resisted any plea to sack him and that the sole restriction imposed on him had been that he was not to make public pronouncements against the pope's teaching, which left him free to indoctrinate students in unofficial conversation.²² Yet Cardinal Heenan is a man of passionate general attachment to the Church; perhaps his enormous kindness of heart, a marvellous priestly quality, has here betrayed him. The root of disappointment in the bishops is not that, in the main, they lack faith. The nerve of the matter is nerve, the bowstring (as the Latin suggests) which launches the arrow. If Cardinal Heenan regrets that the pope does not pin-point individuals or books, may we not voice the same complaints against our bishops? Thus it is that the views condemned in *Mysterium Fidei* circulate.

IT COULDN'T HAPPEN HERE?

Newman wrote in the *Apologia*, "It is not at all easy ... to wind up an Englishman to a dogmatic level." Thus we do not expect to find much theological writing here, or much in it that is original, but there has been some work which verged on Cranmer's teaching in Tennyson's Queen Mary:

*"It is but a communion, not a mass;
A holy supper, not a sacrifice;
No man can make his Maker...."*

and parroting of Smits-Schoonenberg-Schillebeeckx has gone on to an extent which seems to have escaped the eye of authority.

Davis' article in *Sophia* appeared before *Mysterium Fidei*, as did also an article from the pen of Fr. Herbert McCabe, O.P., in *The Clergy Review*, December, 1964. We repeat here some passages from the latter and the reader may compare them with the points laid down in the encyclical... "It is sometimes thought"—Fr. McCabe put forward—"that the real presence is due to transubstantiation ... transubstantiation is simply the form that the real presence takes in the Eucharist... To say that Christ is present in the sacraments through our faith will sound Protestant to some Catholics; they will want to say: 'Yes, but ... there is also his sacramental presence in the Eucharist.' The man who makes this objection reveals that he has himself a Protestant conception of faith." (Actually, the man who made the objection turned out to be the Pope, who wrote: "He Christ] is present too when she is administering the sacraments ... Yet there is another form of presence, the supreme form, in which Christ is present in his Church in the sacrament of the Eucharist....") Again—"There is no more question of a

²² *The Daily Telegraph*, September 1, 1971, and *Catholic Herald*, January 14, 1972.

physical change in the bread and wine when they are consecrated than there is in the man when he is baptised.... Christ is present in the same way (ecclesially) in the Eucharist and in baptismal character. The fact that in Eucharist transubstantiation occurs does not mean that Christ is present in a different way ... the Council of Trent, HO far from teaching the physical presence of Christ, need not even perhaps commit us to the physical absence of the stuff that was bread and wine."

In fairness, it must be remembered that this article appeared before *Mysterium Fidei*. Have the English-speaking voices which jeopardised Catholic belief been *de facto* silenced so that our bishops need recognise no duty either of making statements or of dealing with the obdurate? The answer involves two considerations. First, books written in other countries are finding their way here. Fr. Joseph Powers, for example, is American. He claims in the introduction to *Eucharistic Theology* that his book is written in the spirit of *Mysterium Fidei*, gives this only the briefest mention in his text, and proceeds to disregard it, writing: "*It is in the genuine reality of this transignification, in the change of the meaning (de-italicised text mine) of this bread and wine ... that the substantial realities involved are changed ... one cannot speak of bread and wine unless one situates them in a concrete action.*"

Secondly, not only do tendentious imports continue to arrive, but the effects are seen in the writings of British priests. Let me give a few examples, leaving the reader once more to check with the encyclical if necessary.

First we look at *For All Men* by Fr. John Baptist Walker, O.F.M., which contains lectures given to parents, teachers and catechists at a Brentwood diocesan catechetical centre, and which was reviewed by Fr. Michael Richards, editor of *The Clergy Review*, as "a most admirable achievement," giving "A deep and inspiring insight into Catholic belief as the best theologians are expounding it today."²³ Fr. Walker tells us that we have interpreted transubstantiation in too materialist a fashion, and explains its meaning as the change by which what was *ordinary* bread and wine becomes Christ. . . . "And though it does so by referring to 'substance' and 'accidents', what it really says is...." He goes on to show that he does not know what 'substance' is, writing, "Most of us do not nowadays believe that all the things around us are made of a spiritual substance coated with a covering of material accidents...." (Because substance is invisible, he has taken it to be spiritual.) "Nor does the Church require that we should. She simply states that, *for its time* (italics mine), the explanation ... was the best way of putting the truth. . . ." (This is a contradiction of the Pope's "at all times and in all places".) Then he leads us into the fairyland of transignification, showing first that he does not know what transubstantiation means, as he says that, when a carpenter takes wood and makes a table, he has 'transubstantiated' the wood. "We know that it is something different from what it was because it has been given a new *meaning*...." and, finally, "the bread ... now stands for and signifies the risen Lord ... this bread is something different from what it was before...." It is most depressing, this disregard of *Mysterium Fidei*, for it means that Catholics are parroting views which are far further from orthodoxy than was the doctrine of Luther. Luther wanted to deny the Real Presence, since he was all for giving the Papists "a really hard slap in the face," but he found himself "imprisoned by the text of the Gospel" and held at least for consubstantiation and impanation. When he met Zwingli in conference, he chalked on the table 'This is my body' and refused to be won over to a symbolical interpretation. Luther did hold, in a heterodox way, the material presence of Christ which is what the 'transignificationists' certainly do not.

Just as disturbing as Fr. Walker's catechesis was that contained in a teaching aid circulated to secondary schools by the Liverpool Catechetical Centre in 1969. The director of the Centre is Fr. Anthony Bullen who brushed aside criticism of the Dutch catechism by writing, "there are people

²³ Fr Walker has since left the priesthood

who are really intent on sniffing out heresies in each new book: and, of course, you can make almost any sentence read like heresy if you try hard enough,"²⁵ which was the same line as adopted by Fr. Corbishley, S.J., who, declaring the catechism "profoundly orthodox and immensely enlightening," thought some rewriting might be needed "for the benefit of those who are determined to find the catechism un-sound."²⁶ We are content to print some of the handout's sentences, leaving the reader to assess them.... "If we think about it, we will see that it is not a question of several different real presences but only the one Real Presence which we encounter in many ways and that has its centre and climax in the Eucharist ... after the consecration what lies upon the altar is no longer *ordinary* bread and wine (italics mine); it is truly Christ's body and blood ... no physical or chemical change has taken place at the consecration. . . . Unfortunately, many people ... do tend to think in terms of some sort of physical change. Young people especially are unable to think about Christ's words except in a completely literal sense. This leads to them thinking of Christ being somehow physically present in the host; a physical presence, 'screened' by the bread and wine.... The term transubstantiation for them signifies the removal of some inner part of the host and Christ taking its place. But within the bread nothing is removed, nothing physical happens to the bread or wine.... If Christ were physically present then we really would eat his body as cannibals eat people²⁷ ... He is not present in order to bring us physically closer to himself. That would be quite impossible and of no significance anyway." Yet Fr. Bullen carries a certificate of orthodoxy. When the staff of Corpus Christi College resigned, Archbishop Beck hastened to send his clergy a letter announcing, "I think I am right to reiterate the expression of the confidence I have in Father Anthony Bullen...."

We have glimpsed the catechesis given in two English dioceses and, without any expenditure of energy in heresy-hunting, one comes across frequent examples of Dutch theology in articles or reports of lectures. The *Catholic Herald* editorial of April 23, 1971, dismissed as "amateur theology" the statement that "Christ is present whole and entire, bodily present in His physical reality", a statement taken from *Mysterium Fidei*. The homely magazine *The New Franciscan* printed in July, 1968, an article by Fr. Godric Young, O.F.M., which championed transignification, and concluded not surprisingly: "When we see more clearly how Christ is present in his people, in us, we shall not feel that something is missing even in a church in which the Real Presence is not there." The editor, coming to the writer's defence in subsequent issues, turned out to belong to the same camp, and warmly recommended Fr. Walker's *For All Men*.

Another case is that of Fr. John Coventry, S.J., who, reviewing the Dutch catechism, lodged only one complaint in regard to the evasive pages on the Eucharist and that concerned merely the terminology of the statement that we "receive the whole Jesus."²⁸ The *Catholic Herald* for August 30, 1968, reported a paper given by him at Maynooth Union Summer School, and we print from the report, with a minimum of comment.... "... no one formulation could purport to explain the Real Presence.... It was not a special ... not a physical presence; if the word was to attain any assignable meaning, not a corporal or bodily presence, as Christ's humanity was not present in corporal form. It was ... the unique presence of a heavenly reality to faith." (We interject that the Council of Constance defined a "*propria prae-sentia corporali*".) "One had to say something like a change of substance.... Fr. Coventry said that centuries of Eucharistic devotion had brought about a serious imbalance, at least in the popular mind...."

Mention of the popular mind, and the ambiguity of Eucharistic interpretation, brings back to mind the story of Uerengarius which may fittingly end this section. C. E. Sheedy in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* tells us that he approached the Eucharist as a rationalist, looking down on the common belief which he dubbed 'the opinion of the mob.' He was contemptuous of Rome's authority, and "the distinction between substance and accidents was lost on him...." At the Council of Rome in 1079, his eel-like quality showed. Traditionalists took pains to see that the word

'substantially' was inserted into the oath proposed for him, and he was enraged, feeling himself trapped. He seized the document, read through it, looking for an escape, inserted the clause 'saving the substance of the bread' and said that he was ready to take the oath. The bishops would have none of this evasion, and the upshot was that Pope Gregory came down on him 'like a bolt', ordering him to prostrate himself and admit his error in omitting the key word 'substantially.'²⁹

The Catholic world has not seen a 'bolt' for a long time. "Dangerous writing on ecumenism and the Eucharist incurs no episcopal censure," admitted Cardinal Heenan. And truth suffers.

' St. Thomas, *Summa*, Pars Tertia, Q.LXXV, Art. V: "Christ wished to put forward His body and blood in the Eucharist for our consumption, under the appearances of bread and wine, so that faith might gain in merit, unbelievers would not be able to mock, and there would be no trace of that disgust which men associate with the eating of human flesh."

The Tablet, September 23, 1967.

THE WINDSOR STATEMENT

At the end of December, 1971, the Press announced that the eighteen members of the joint Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission had reached substantial agreement on the doctrine of the Eucharist. The Catholic theologians included Bishop Christopher Butler, Bishop Alan Clark, Professor J. J. Scarisbrick, Fr. Herbert Ryan, S.J., from Woodstock College, New York, and Fr. E. J. Yarnold, S.J., Master of Campion Hall, Oxford. Among the Anglicans were Very Revd. Henry Chadwick, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and Rev. J. W. Charley, Vice-Principal, St. John's College, Nottingham. The statement of 'substantial' agreement which they published occasioned an outcry in the Catholic press. Why? Was it only Catholic Colonel Blimps reacting according to form? That this was not the case may be deduced from the post-agreement reflections of two of the Anglican theologians. Dean Chadwick explained: "We tried to escape from the assumptions of the past and the immovable positions formerly adopted"—which rings an alarm bell for any Catholic who holds to traditional teaching—"We wanted to preserve the activity of God in the Eucharist without anything 'thingly' remaining around to be manipulated. The word activity occurs frequently, not the traditional language of substantiation. It is not that we were trying to avoid its use but we thought emphasis on action made things clearer."³⁰ But it is obvious that they were trying to avoid its use . . . and—"anything 'thingly' remaining around to be manipulated"? Surely, 'thingly' here means 'substantial', and the idea is that there is no transubstantiation, and no Blessed Sacrament after Communion to be placed in tabernacle or monstrance. How could sane *men* speak of substantial agreement when the one thing they had taken care to dissemble was the key matter of change of substance?

The Rev. Julian W. Charley published an historical introduction and theological commentary with the text of the Agreement (Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts). The Catholic signatories, in order to achieve substantial agreement, had incredibly allowed the doctrine of transubstantiation (without which there is no 'the' Real Presence) to be relegated to a footnote which ran: "The word transubstantiation is commonly used in the Roman Catholic Church to indicate that God acting in the Eucharist effects a change in the inner reality of the elements. The term should be seen as affirming the fact of Christ's presence and of the mysterious and radical change which takes place. In contemporary Roman Catholic theology it is not understood as explaining how the change takes place." The Catholic theologians, therefore, uninfluenced by *Mysterium Fidei*, had allowed 'contemporary Roman Catholic Theology' (Smits, Schoonenberg and Schillebeeckx?) to guide the Agreement. Not unnaturally, the Rev. J. W. Charley commented: "The footnote to paragraph 6 concerning transubstantiation shows the suspicion of contemporary Roman Catholic theology for the philosophical ideas of substance and accidents.... If the term (transubstantiation) has had to undergo modification in its usage by Catholic theologians, it would seem appropriate to discard it. However much it were to be re-interpreted, its retention could only prove a major obstruction to

Anglicans." Mr. Charley did seem to find hope in the fact that Anglican theologians from Jewel onwards regarded the consecration "as an action whereby God set apart bread and wine for their holy use, which might be called trans-signification." In his conclusion, he suggests that "This consensus should cause Roman Catholics to re-evaluate the relation between their current eucharistic theology and that contained in the dogmatic decrees of the Council of Trent." This was the impression made by our Catholic representatives at Windsor, though one of them, Bishop Butler, had recalled to us (*The Tablet*, March 7, 1970) what Vatican II laid down in the Decree on Ecumenism: "Of great value ... are meetings between the two sides, especially for discussion of theological problems, where each can deal with the other on an equal footing.... *It is, of course, essential that doctrine be clearly presented in its entirety....*" The italics are mine, and I add the words implied by the last dots: "Nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false conciliatory approach which harms the purity of Catholic doctrine and obscures its assured genuine meaning."

Bishop Alan Clark, for his part, suggested that "We had to find a new language to express it (the Real Presence)." With all respect, new language was required only if the old doctrine was to be bypassed, since non-Catholic theologians *do* understand our terms; if not, the terms are easily explained. He, too, published a commentary on the Agreement, and the commentary did nothing to allay concern. "... it would be wrong," he said, "to expect to find in the Agreed Statement ... the familiar terminology of Trent or of the Anglican Articles. The whole purpose ... is to express the understanding of the Eucharist that underlies these formulae, to express the present faith of both Churches, and do so in language which people can understand today." He has suggested that *one* understanding underlies both Trent and Anglican Articles though Article XXVIII declared transubstantiation repugnant, and he has left himself open to a charge of holding that the 'present faith' of the Church is not that of Trent. Further the bishop treats papal teaching in cavalier fashion. He tells us that "the Council had no wish to lock itself to a particular philosophy of substance and accident," and adds that the development of the notion of transubstantiation "rests on a particular philosophical framework." Not so Pope Paul in *Mysterium Fidei*! And, in reference to the relegation of transubstantiation to a footnote, we read: "It was therefore no attempt to avoid doctrinal controversies or divergencies that made us relegate an explanation of the term to a footnote, but a conviction that this Catholic doctrine can be misinterpreted even by ourselves." May one say to this that no Catholic, reading *Mysterium Fidei*, can misinterpret transubstantiation ... but Mr. Charley, re-reading the Agreement, interprets Bishop Clark as no longer believing in the traditional doctrine.

"THE STILL LOWER DEPTHS"

The vital weakness of the Agreement is that it merely papers over differences of belief with vague terminology; there is no Catholic doctrine of the Mass as sacrifice; there is no clear doctrine of the Real Presence. I have, indeed seen a more Catholic-sounding 'Agreement' drawn from (Calvin's *Institutes* and Calvin did *not* share our beliefs. It is apposite here to quote the splendid editorial which *The tablet* published on July 4, 1896, when Leo XIII spoke out manfully in *Satis cognitum* on papal authority and the real problems of reunion: "He might have led Reunionists on, dangling as a bait before their eyes the hope of possible compromise, or of one or other of those small ecclesiastical mercies which some men have agreed to magnify into 'informal communion.' Or, without committing himself to any doctrinal statements, he might have studiously used the language of platonic generalities, dwelling unctuously on points of concord, and adopting the cheap policy of burking the points of disagreement ... he might have stooped to the still lower depths of the deliberate use of a nebulous speech—of phrases designedly chosen as sufficiently loose and vague to cover both a Catholic and an Anglican meaning, adaptable at will by each class of readers—in a

word, to those childish devices by which men are led to play at believing they are one, because the antagonisms of sense are hidden in the sameness of sound.... From the chair of *Peter* he has given to mankind the example of the charity and dignity of Apostolic honesty." This is what has angered Catholics—that our theologians at Windsor chose 'the still lower depths'.

One of the best critiques of the Agreement will be found in Chapter XII, *The Royal Supremacy and Theology*, of Professor Scarisbrick's fine book *Henry VIII*. There he studies the doctrinal utterances of the latter part of Henry's reign to determine whether the king was moving from Catholic orthodoxy as he had moved from papal allegiance. He passes the judgments "by Catholic standards, a very inadequate statement," "not an impressive performance," etc., on doctrinal statements which are more truly Catholic than anything set down at Windsor.

Windsor, therefore, has been one more move against the key doctrine of transubstantiation. Defending the Agreement, Fr. Peter Hebblethwaite, S.J., wrote in the *Catholic Herald* (January 21, 1971)—"when Trent declared that 'transubstantiation' was the 'most appropriate' way of speaking of the 'remarkable change in the bread and wine,' it did not say, and should not be made to say, that it was the only appropriate way of stating the nature of the change." This is a sophism. What Trent did, as we have seen, was to state the one and only nature of the change, and then to say that this precise change was most aptly termed 'transubstantiation.' The Modernist pretends that his debate is over a term; but it is in fact over a statement of fact. And the result of all this theological fog can be seen in Fr. David Woodard's account of church-sharing with the local Anglicans: "We are all united in asking for the reservation of whatever Eucharist is celebrated." (*Catholic Herald*, January 21, 1972.)

Cf. *Berengar and the Reform of Sacramental Doctrine*, by Rev. A. J. Macdonald, D.D. (non-Catholic), 1930.