



# The Real Presence

Of Christ in The Eucharist

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“Onward Christian Soldiers”

From Sabine Baring-Gould's

*The Golden Gate*

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Bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Eucharist are consecrated by a Priest, and by that act become “verily and indeed” the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, not naturally, but supernaturally present on the Altar. If naturally present they would be naturally discerned by touch and taste and sight, but being supernaturally present they can only be discerned by faith. This presence depends on God’s will, not on man’s belief.

The reason for believing the Real Presence is because the Bible tells us about it no less than eight different times, in order to impress it fully on us<sup>1</sup>; all tell us that our Lord Jesus Christ said of the Bread and Wine in Holy Communion, “This is My Body, this is My Blood.” And St. John, the only Evangelist who does not give the history of the institution of the Sacrament, records for us a long discourse of our Lord’s wherein He says, “Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you”; and again, “My Flesh is meat indeed, and my Blood is drink indeed.”<sup>2</sup> Besides these five statements, we have three more from St. Paul.<sup>3</sup>

The doctrine of the Real Presence is, and has been that of the Universal Church of Christ.

**But I cannot believe in the Real Presence...**

You cannot *understand* it maybe, but believe in it you certainly can. . . .

People object to the doctrine of the Real Presence, that their senses tell them the Bread and the Wine retain still their natural properties. A nobleman takes a slip of paper called a cheque [or “check”], and he writes on it a thousand pounds [or dollars], and signs his name. That slip of paper is then worth a thousand pounds [or dollars]. But a country boor [or village idiot] says, This is nonsense. You won’t persuade me that a little bit of paper is a thousand pieces of gold. Why I can see it is only paper and ink, and that I can burn it. This is precisely equivalent to the objection raised against the Real Presence. The words of consecration are the signature of Christ making what was mere bread and wine to become His Body and Blood of incalculable value and importance.

. . . Let us see whether nature itself does not help us to grasp this doctrine. Now what becomes of the water you pour on the roots of the vine? It is taken up into the plant, and, by God’s power, is changed into grape juice. Christ once, at Cana of Galilee,

by a word turned water into wine, but in the ordinary course of nature water is being constantly turned into wine through a lengthy process. Again, the bread you eat is changed by the mysterious process of digestion into your flesh. This is being performed every day, and you think nothing of it. Why, then, cannot God turn bread and wine sacramentally into the Flesh and Blood of Christ? But you say, “Yes, but my senses tell me that the wine and bread remain sensibly identical with what they were before consecration.” Quite so, but for all that they may be different. The Church does not teach that the bread and wine become *materially* changed into Flesh and Blood, but that they are *spiritually* and sacramentally changed.

Again, you object, “Christ according to you is offered on many Altars all over the world. How can He be in many places at the same time?” We answer, Because His is a Spiritual Body. In the same manner the one and the same sun shines at one and the same time on Iceland, England, and Africa. The Icelander, the Englishman, and the African look up and see at the same moment the sun, and enjoy its light and warmth.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22: 19-20; 1 Corinthians 11: 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> John 6:53-55

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:27-29