



UNIVERSALITAS & PERVASIVITAS

IL COSTITUIRSI E DIFFONDERSI DELLA S.J. E SUOI ECHI (1540 - 1773)

di A. Pisani

Schede autori In difesa

Adam Tanner

Controversialist, born at Innsbruck in 1571; died at Unken, 25 May, 1632. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1589, and taught at first Hebrew, apologetics, and moral theology.

When in 1601 the religious debate between Catholics and Lutherans was arranged at Ratisbon, Tanner aided his fellow Jesuit **Gretser** in proving that the dead word of the Bible could not be the supreme arbiter in matters of faith. He himself published an account of the proceedings (Mainz, 1602) and in subsequent apologies hurled back the charges brought against the Catholics by the Reformers. In 1603, the Bavarian duke invited him to occupy the chair of Scholastic theology in the University of Ingolstadt. A stranger in no field of science and gifted with a keen intellect, Tanner now developed an increasing activity both in teaching and writing on theological subjects. In his "Anatomiae confessionis augustanae" (Ingolstadt, 1613), he points out the fallacies of the Augsburg Confession, both from Luther's own assertions and from the qualities essential to the true Church. Against the so-called Utraquists¹, he wrote several works, both in Latin and in German, defending

¹ [Utraquismo:] The principal dogma, and one of the four articles, of the Calixtines or Hussites. It was first promulgated in 1414, by Jacob of Mies, professor of philosophy at the University of Prague. John Hus was neither its author nor its exponent. He was a professor at the above-named university, which required its bachelors to lecture on the works of a Paris, Prague, or Oxford doctor; and in compliance with this law, Hus, it seems, based his teaching on the writings of John Wyclif, an Oxford graduate. The opinions of Wyclif — which were a cause of Utraquism — were imbibed by the students of Prague, and, after Hus had been imprisoned, the Wycliffian influence showed itself in the Hussites' demand for Communion under both forms as necessary for salvation. This heresy was condemned in the Councils of Constance, Basle, and Trent (Denzinger-Bannwart, 626, 930 sqq.).

Utraquism, briefly stated, means this: Man, in order to be saved, must receive Holy Communion when he wishes and where he wishes, under the forms of bread and wine (sub utraque specie). This, said the Hussite leader, is of Divine precept. For, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (John 6:54). To receive only the Sacred Host is not "drinking" but "eating" the Blood of Christ. That this is of Divine precept, continued the Hussite, is further evident from tradition, as up to the eleventh or twelfth century the Chalice and the Host were offered to the faithful when they communicated. Add to this, that more grace is conferred by the reception of the Eucharist under both forms, and it is clear, so Jacob of Mies maintained, that communion sub utraque specie is obligatory. This conclusion the Council of Constance rejected (Denzinger-Bannwart, 626). Then followed the Hussite wars. To make peace, the Council of Basle (1431) allowed Communion under both forms to those who had reached the age of discretion and were in the state of grace, on the following conditions: that the Hussites confess that the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ were contained whole and entire both under the form of bread and under that of wine; and that they retract the statement that Communion under both forms is necessary for salvation (Mansi, XXX). To this some of the Hussites agreed, and were known as the Calixtines, from their use of the chalice. The others, led by Ziska, and called Taborites, from their dwelling on a mountain top, refused and were defeated by George Podiebrad in 1453, from which date Utraquism in Prague has been practically an empty symbol. But it is still a tenet of Anglicanism, and is enumerated among "The Plain reasons against joining the Church of Rome" (London, 1880). The Catholic Church has never said that Communion under both forms is of itself either sinful or heretical. The Church has withheld the chalice from the laity out of reverence for the Precious Blood, and condemned the Hussites because they argued it was essential to salvation, and threatened to revive a heresy.

The Nestorians were condemned in the patristic period, and the heretics in the Council of Trent, because they denied that the Real Presence was whole and entire under each form (Denzinger-Bannwart, 930 sqq.; Mansi, XXX). The Nestorians had denied that the Real Presence was wholly and entirely under each form. The bread, they said, contained only the Body of Christ and the wine only His Blood. This is heretical. Because, as the Church quotes (and the text is the authentic Greek), "whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27). For, "Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more" (Romans 6:9). Separation of flesh and blood is death, and hence Christ's presence whole and entire under each species



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the Church's practice of giving Communion under one species only, and the sacrifice of the Mass. Other pamphlets were issued by him to clear his order from the false accusations of its enemies. When the conflict between the Venetians and Pope Paul V broke out, an able defence from his pen, "Defensionis ecclesiae libertatis libri duo" (Ingolstadt, 1607), vindicated the Church's freedom against the tyrannical aggressions of the State.

After fifteen years spent at Ingolstadt, he was called by the Emperor Matthias to the University of Vienna. While there he published his greatest work, the "Universa theologia scholastica" (Ingolstadt, 1626-27), which resembles the "Summa" of St. Thomas not only in its arrangement, but also in its solidity of doctrine and conciseness of diction. Ferdinand II, Matthias's successor on the throne of the Habsburgs, appointed him chancellor of the University of Prague. Fleeing from the Swedes, Tanner died at Unken, an insignificant village near Salzburg. There he still rests amid unlettered peasants in an unknown grave. But, as Cordara says, "his virtues, coupled with his eminent erudition, will ever be his most splendid epitaph and mausoleum."

Sources

is a dogma of Catholic belief. Catholic theology offers this explanation: By the words of consecration, Christ's Body is under the appearance of bread, and His Blood under the appearance of wine. The Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ form one indivisible Person, and must be found together. That virtue or force which unites the body to the blood, and vice versa, in the Eucharist, is known in Catholic theology under the term concomitance. Utraquism tended to undo this dogma, because it declared communion under both forms essential to salvation. This was virtually to deny that Christ was whole and entire under each form. It went further, in declaring that Communion-the reception of the Eucharist-was absolutely necessary to salvation.

Theologians distinguish two kinds of necessity: that of means and that of precept. Necessity of means is that absolutely obligatory use of those things required to attain a purpose. It is an "imperative must" that arises from the very nature of things. Necessity of precept is an obligation imposed by a command, and for good reasons that which is prescribed may be dispensed with. The Hussites contended that the Eucharist was a necessary means to salvation, so that those who died without having received the Eucharist, e.g. the insane, the young could not, according to the Hussites, be saved. All this they inferred from Christ's words: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood you shall not have life in you" (John 6:54). Now the Catholic Church denies that the Eucharist is necessary as a means to salvation. She commands the faithful to receive the Eucharist, emphasizes its importance, and declares it wellnigh impossible for one to continue long in the state of grace without it. This is a precept; from it dispensations are possible. Hence if any one died without this sacrament, his eternal loss would not, merely for this reason, be a necessary consequence. This is clear from the practice of the Early Church. Even when Communion under both forms prevailed, some received under only one species. To the sick it was thus often given, and the Church has never considered them lost. As to the text which seems to oblige Communion under both forms, it is a question of interpretation. The Catholic Church is the only authoritative interpreter of Christ's doctrine; to none other has this power been granted. Omitting here the many meanings Catholic theologians attribute to the verse, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (John 6:54), it should be noted that the Catholic Church has officially declared that these words do not make Communion under both forms obligatory (Denzinger-Bannwart, 930). This conclusion is substantiated by Scripture: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world" (John 6:52). It is true that some theologians believe more grace is conferred by Communion under both forms. But this question is speculative, not practical. It does not affect the Church's dogma, nor is this opinion by any means common to all Catholic theologians.

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