

to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John i. 12. And it receives him according as he is proposed and exhibited unto us in the declaration and promise of the gospel, wherein he is proposed; it receives him by the gracious *assent* of the mind unto this truth, the *choice* of him, cleaving and trusting unto him with the will, heart, and affection, for all the ends of his person and offices, as the mediator between God and man: and in the sacramental mysterious proposal of him, his body and blood,—that is, in the efficacy of his death and sacrifice,—in this ordinance of worship, faith acts the whole soul in the reception of him unto all the especial ends for which he is exhibited unto us in this way and manner. What these ends are, which give force and efficacy unto the actings of faith herein, this is not a proper place to declare.

I have mentioned these things, because it is the great plea of the Papists at this day, in behalf of their transubstantiation, that, *if we reject their oral or carnal manducation of the flesh of Christ and drinking of his blood, there cannot be assigned a way of participation of Christ, in the receiving of him in this sacrament, distinct from that which is done in the preaching of the word.* But hereby, as we shall see, they only declare their ignorance of this heavenly mystery. But of this blessed, intimate communion with Christ, and participation of him in the divine institution of worship, believers have *experience* unto their satisfaction and ineffable joy. They find him to be the spiritual food of their souls, by which they are nourished unto eternal life by a spiritual incorporation with him. They discern the truth of this mystery, and have experience of its power. Howbeit, men growing carnal, and being destitute of *spiritual light*, with the wisdom of faith, utterly lost all experience of any communion with Christ, and participation of him in this sacrament. On the principles of gospel truth, they could find nothing in it; no *power*, no *efficacy*,—nothing that should answer the great and glorious things spoken of it: nor was it possible they should; for, indeed, there is nothing in it but unto faith,—as the light of the sun is nothing to them that have no eyes. A dog and a staff are of more use to a blind man than the sun; nor is the most melodious music any thing to them that are deaf. Yet, notwithstanding this loss of spiritual experience, they retained the *notion* of truth, that there must be a *peculiar participation* of Christ in this sacrament distinct from all other ways and means of the same grace.

Here the wits of men were hard put to it to find out an image of this spiritual communion, whereof in their minds they could have no experience; yet they fashioned one by *degrees*, and after they had greatened the mystery in words and expressions (whereof they knew nothing in its power), to answer unto what was to be set up in the room of it,

until they brought forth the *horrid monster of transubstantiation*, and *the sacrifice of the mass*. For hereby they provided that all those things which are spiritual in this communion should be turned into and acted in things carnal: bread shall be the body of Christ carnally, the mouth shall be faith, the teeth shall be the exercise, the belly shall be the heart, and the priest shall offer Christ unto God. A *viler image* never was invented; and there is nothing of faith required herein;—it is all, but a fortifying of imagination against all sense and reason. Because there is a singular mystery in the sacramental union that is between the external signs and the things signified,—whence the one is called by the name of the other, as the bread is called the body of Christ,—which faith discerns in the exhibition and receiving of it, they have invented, for a representation hereof, such a prodigious imagination, of the real conversion or transubstantiation of the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, as overthrows all faith, reason, and sense also. And in the room of that *holy reverence* of Christ himself, in his institution of this ordinance, in the mystical exhibition of himself unto the souls of believers, in the demonstration of his love, grace, and sufferings for them, they have set up a wretched image of an idolatrous adoration and worship of the “*Host*,” as they call it, to the ruin of the souls of men. And—whereas the Lord Jesus Christ, “by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” appointing this ordinance for the remembrance of it—having lost that spiritual light whereby they might discern the efficacy of that *one offering*, so long since accomplished, in the application of it by this ordinance unto the actual perfecting of the church, they have erected a *new image* of it, in a pretended *daily repetition of the same sacrifice*; wherein they profess to offer Christ again for the sins of the living and the dead, unto the overthrow of the principal foundation of faith and religion. All these abominations arose from the loss of an *experience* of that spiritual communion with Christ, and the participation of him by faith, which there is in this ordinance by divine institution. This cast the thoughts of men on invention of these images, to suit the general notion of truth unto the superstition of their carnal minds. Nor is it ordinarily possible to retrieve them from these infatuations, unless God be pleased to communicate unto them that *spiritual light* whereby they may discern the glory of this heavenly mystery, and have an experience of the exhibition of Christ unto the souls of believers therein without these. From innumerable prejudices and inflamed affections towards their idols, they will not only abide in their darkness against all means of conviction, but endeavour the temporal and eternal destruction of all that are otherwise minded.

This *image*, like that of Nebuchadnezzar, was once set up in this