

Let's talk about the

Box A-17

# Real Presence

J. F. Brady.



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**DOES YOUR PARISH HAVE A  
BOOKSTALL? THEY TAKE  
TROUBLE BUT THEY ARE  
WORTH THE EFFORT!**

*LET'S TALK ABOUT . . .*

# **THE REAL PRESENCE**

*by*

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*The narrative related in this pamphlet is purely imaginary  
and no reference is intended to any actual persons or  
churches.*

## I. THE FIRST MEETING

"It just doesn't go down with me at all," thought Bruce to himself as he rang the Rectory doorbell and stood for a few moments waiting for the Rector to answer.

"Oh, hello Bruce," said the Rector, opening the door, "you're rather early. The other members of the Fellowship Committee probably won't be here for half an hour or so yet, but do come in and sit down."

"Thank you, sir, er, I mean, Father," said Bruce. "As a matter of fact I did deliberately come around early because there's something I want to talk about with you."

A few moments later the Rector and Bruce were sitting together in the small but comfortable room that the Rector used as a study. Bruce cleared his throat and began.

"Well, Father," he said, "it's something you said in the sermon last night about the Holy Communion Service. You kept talking about the doctrine of the Real Presence or something, and if I got you right, you meant that the bread and wine are really made into the actual Body and Blood of Christ."

"Well, that's putting it pretty roughly," said the Rector, "but you seem to have the general idea."

"That's just it," interrupted Bruce, "I haven't got the general idea at all. This is something new on me and I don't think I like it—it seems so crude and materialistic—superstitious even. Back home, I mean back where we used to live, we never made all the song and dance about the Communion Service that you seem to have here—people curtsying, or whatever you call it, in the aisle and everything else. We always were taught that if we believed that Christ died on the Cross for us and trusted Him in our hearts, then we were saved and that no amount of bowing and scraping could ever do us any good."

"Don't you think," said the Rector, "that we at St. Andrew's trust in Christ?"

"Oh, yes!" said Bruce, "I didn't mean *that*. And I don't so much mind the ceremonies and the bowing and scraping either. After all, boy scouts, the armed services, lodges and lots of other organisations make use of ceremonies and symbols in order to teach people. No, everything was all right here until you started talking about the Real Presence and that's where I felt I had to say something to you. Not only does it seem to me to be materialistic and idolatrous, but also, it's what the Roman Catholics believe."

"Well, we'll leave the Roman Catholics aside for a moment shall we?" said the Rector. "As for our teaching being 'crude and idolatrous,' I think you should remember that many people, from the earliest times to the present day, have brought this same charge against Christianity as a whole. Let's not forget that our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we believe to be the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God in the fullest sense in other words, appeared on earth clothed in a material human body and a human soul. There is something crude and offensive about God appearing in human form and dying on a Cross, but far from turning us away it just draws us closer to God because it shows us what He was prepared to do for us. The fact that He is now prepared to come into our souls and bodies under such a lowly form as bread and wine, which are ordinary foods, is a further instance of His love for us. When we look at it this way, then rather than being rebelled by its apparent crudeness to our supposedly spiritual and sophisticated minds, we are moved to adore His love and goodness. Also, in giving homage and adoration to Christ present under the outward forms of bread and wine we are no more guilty of idolatry than were the Disciples, the women and St. Thomas, who, after the Resurrection, perceived that He was Divine and worshipped Him, even though He was with them in a form that was limited, visible and material."

"That may be so," said Bruce, "but surely our religion should be spiritual; it's what we believe in our hearts that counts, and the state of our soul."

"True enough, as far as it goes," said the Rector, "but don't forget that our bodies have to be sanctified as well as our

souls. You see, when we receive Holy Communion it's not simply that the Spirit of Jesus Christ comes into our hearts and souls—rather, it is that Christ in His full human nature of Body and Soul unites Himself to our body and soul, coming to us under the form of ordinary food. Haven't you ever noticed that when the Priest hands you the Sacred Bread he says, '*the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.*'? Also in the prayer of humble access we pray that '*our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body.*' I'm afraid you have not really grasped the fact that religion is something for our bodies as well as for our souls and minds. Christian worship and sanctification concern the whole man and not just a part of him."

"But," broke in Bruce, "I find it so difficult to think of the Lord giving Himself to us under the form of material things like bread and wine."

"There you go again," said the Rector. "always ready to tell God the way in which He must do things. As a matter of fact, when you think about it, could you possibly think of any more appropriate way? It requires neither great intelligence nor education nor good health to make use of the means God has provided in the Blessed Sacrament for our sanctification. All that is required of a person is that they should love Our Lord Jesus Christ and in receiving Holy Communion they are united to their Saviour in this wonderful way. If I may quote again from the prayer of humble access:

*"Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through his most precious Blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us."*

"Actually," went on the Rector, "far from thinking it unsuitable or crude, I myself never cease to wonder at the wisdom of Christ in choosing such a wonderful thing for those who love Him."

The two of them sat in silence for a few moments and then the Rector continued. "Of course," he said, "we don't teach the doctrine of the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist simply because we think that it is

beautiful or appropriate. We believe it because Christ himself taught it to His Disciples and because it has been the belief of the Church ever since. Only the groups of Christians who broke away from the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century have ceased to believe it and their followers have only been a small minority compared with the hundreds of millions of Roman, Greek and Anglican Catholics who have held to the traditional belief of the Church in Our Lord's Presence in the Holy Eucharist."

"But it could be," broke in Bruce, "that the minority are correct."

"Well, then," said the Rector, "it's about time we turned to the Bible to see just what it says on the subject."

"I know," put in Bruce, "that the Lord at the Last Supper took the bread and broke it saying, *'This is my body which is given for you,'* but surely His Disciples would have understood that He was only speaking symbolically."

"I don't think so Bruce," said the Rector, opening the well-worn Bible which lay on his table. "They would have taken Him that way if they had thought Him to have been just a great man, but they were coming to understand that He was more than that. They realised, you see, that He was more than human—that the power which created and sustained the whole Universe was at His disposal. They had seen Him work miracles, two of which were concerned with the breaking of bread. Remember how He took the loaves, blessed and broke them, and miraculously fed the large crowds with them. When we read the accounts of these miracles we often miss the point of them. They were not just demonstrations of His Divine Power as if He was showing the people how He could create matter. The important thing is that each of the feeding miracles is a kind of 'advance rough copy' of the Christian Eucharist. Jesus took the bread, blessed it and broke it—and that bread satisfied the bodily needs of vast crowds of people. In the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel we read that after one of the miraculous feedings the crowds followed Him, hoping no doubt to obtain more food without effort. Our Lord, however, pointed out to them that the important thing was not simply to satisfy themselves with earthly bread but to look for *'the true bread from heaven which could give them life in the fullest sense.'*"

"But, by the 'bread from heaven,' did He mean exclusively the Holy Communion?" put in Bruce. "After all we used to get little books of Bible reading notes called *'Daily Bread.'* The idea was that we received our daily spiritual bread by meditating on God's Word."

"Well," went on the Rector, "if you look at verse 51 of John Chapter 6, you will see that Christ says unmistakably, *'the bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'* Those who were listening found it rather difficult to take this literally and began to argue among themselves just what He could mean—as we read in verse 52. Jesus, however, did not withdraw His statement, nor did He try to explain that He did not mean to be taken literally. Instead, He declared His position more emphatically. In verse 53 He says: *'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.'*

"If you look, also, at verse 56 you will see that He speaks there of the result that will follow from this eating and drinking. *'He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.'* You might compare this with the prayer of humble access in our prayer book—I quoted it a little earlier—and you will see clearly that the men who devised our prayer book and composed its prayers took the *'eating'* and *'drinking'* of John, Chapter 6, as referring to our reception of Holy Communion.

"You see, the events and sayings recorded in John, Chapter 6," said the Rector, "prepared the Disciples to see just what Our Lord meant at the Last Supper when He took the bread, blessed and broke it, saying that it was His Body, given for them. They would then see that the One Who had created the Universe was working an even greater miracle than the multiplication of the loaves, by giving His Sacred Flesh and Blood under the forms of bread and wine. In this way He provides for the feeding of countless numbers of His followers with the true bread from heaven."

"Of course," said Bruce, "I've no doubt that Christ could give us His Presence under the outward forms of bread and wine if He wanted to, but I'm not really sure, yet, whether He meant to be understood that way or not. After all, in

the Acts of the Apostles we do find the Communion service referred to as the *'breaking of the bread'* and St. Paul, too, in I Corinthians, says something about *'eating of that bread'* and *'drinking of that cup'*."

"True enough," said the Rector, "the early Church was not so precise and philosophical in its use of words as we are. Controversy about the nature of Our Lord's Presence in the Blessed Eucharist had not arisen. It is commonplace in the history of doctrine that writers of these early periods will use expressions which, taken in isolation, would be inaccurate and even heretical by the standards of later ages. The Christians of the New Testament attended a gathering at which prayers of thanksgiving were said over a loaf, which was then broken into pieces and distributed. They had no difficulties about calling this gathering *'the breaking of the bread'* even though they knew that the bread they received conveyed to them the Sacred Presence of their Lord. The fact that they did, in fact, believe the broken bread to be the Body of Christ and not just an empty symbol of Him is shown in the warning given by St. Paul that, *'whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.'* You will find this in I Corinthians, 11:27 and if you look at verse 29 of the same chapter you will see the terrible sentence He passes on those who approach the Sacrament carelessly or in a state of unrepented sin.

"*'For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.'*"

Just at that moment the doorbell rang and a few seconds later the sound of young voices babbling down the hall indicated that the Fellowship Committee was converging on the Rector's study. As he sat through the meeting Bruce's thoughts kept drifting back to his earlier conversation with the Rector.

The statements of the Bible were quite clear—in fact their clarity was rather overwhelming. Furthermore, there did not seem to be any definite Biblical statement to indicate that the words of Christ and of St. Paul about the Sacrament

should be taken in a purely symbolic sense. Why then had he, Bruce Webster, understood them in such a way?

He began to see that the acceptance of the Catholic doctrine would not involve him in any difficulties with regard to the interpretation of Biblical texts. He would, however, need to overcome his prejudice against the very idea of receiving any real grace or spiritual benefit through material things.

In that 'very spiritual' atmosphere in which most of his religious life had been spent, the Eucharist had been far from the centre of things—Bible study and prayer meetings had occupied that position. From one point of view this seemed quite logical. In fact, the Salvation Army, by altogether discarding both Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, seemed to be acting in full accord with what he had always understood to be a basic principle of Christianity, namely that holiness is to be found in the mind and soul only. As he saw it now, the Eucharist was either what Father Reid had claimed that it was or else—well, it was hard to see just how it could be at the heart of Christianity at all.

A little later, during supper, the Rector approached Bruce to arrange another meeting.

"If you can come around next Tuesday evening," he said, "I will show you what some of the ancient writers and saints of the Church have said about the Holy Eucharist. In the meantime, I suggest you read carefully through John 6, I Corinthians 10 and 11 and also the prayer of humble access in the prayer book Communion service."

## II. FURTHER DISCUSSION

A week later Bruce and Father Reid faced each other again, this time over a table in the Rector's study, on which lay half a dozen or so large volumes. Opening one of them, which was entitled *'Apostolic Fathers,'* the Rector began:

"When looking at the writings of these early fathers," he said, "it's very important to realise the situation in the Church of their time. Now take Ignatius for instance. He was an early Bishop of Antioch who suffered martyrdom at Rome about the year 107 A.D. While on his way from Antioch to Rome under armed guard, he wrote several letters in which he warned the faithful of the dangers threatening them, both from outside and inside the Church. One of the greatest internal dangers at that time arose from what has been called the Docetic heresy. Groups of Christians had somehow or other adopted the idea that all material things were necessarily evil and that only that which was purely spiritual was good. Needless to say, this gave them a completely distorted view of Christianity. Apparently, they tended to stay away from the Eucharist and the meetings of the Church for prayer, devoting themselves instead to special 'spiritual exercises' of their own. In pointing out the errors of the Docetist heretics Ignatius incidentally bears witness to his own belief in the Real Presence of Christ's Flesh and Blood in the Eucharist.

"*'They abstain from Eucharist and prayer because they confess not that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father of His goodness raised from the dead. And for this cause, contradicting the gift of God, they die in their disputes. But much better would it be for them to receive it that they might one day rise through it.'*"

"That's pretty clear," said Bruce, "but what exactly does he mean by Eucharist? I've heard many people use the word here at St. Andrew's."

"It's an old name for the Holy Communion," explained the Rector, "and, actually, it literally means thanksgiving. From the very beginning the prayers associated with the consecration and offering of the Sacrament have contained a large element of thanksgiving for the gifts of God's creation, and for the Sacrifice of Christ which we are able to

offer by our participation in the Holy Eucharist. Early Christian writers sometimes used the word to refer to the service itself, that is, the offering of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and sometimes they used it to refer to the Consecrated Elements of bread and wine. Some of them even made a verb out of it and refer to the Consecrated Elements as having been *'Eucharistised.'* For instance, Justin, a Christian philosopher, who also died as a martyr at Rome in the year 167 A.D., writes, in section 66 of his First Apology or Defence of the Christian faith that, *'the food is Eucharistised by prayer and becomes the Body and Blood of the Incarnate Jesus.'*

"Here," said Father Reid, opening another large brown-covered volume, "you read it for yourself."

Bruce took the book and read aloud the part the Rector had indicated, pronouncing the word slowly. By the time he had practised it sufficiently the Rector had opened another volume larger than any so far.

"This," he said, "contains part of the writings of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who died in the year 202 A.D., having written several large treatises against various heresies, principally the Gnostics, who had the same kind of basic principles as our old friends the Docetists. Irenæus' idea of the Eucharistic service was that it was the presentation to God of the fruits of the earth, namely bread and wine, which, by consecration become the Body and Blood of Christ, our Perfect and Pure Sacrifice to God. This is how he puts it in Book IV, Chapter 17, of his work, *'Against Heresy.'*"

The Rector again indicated the place and Bruce read aloud, "*'Giving counsel to His Disciples to offer to God the first fruits of His creatures, He took that of His creatures, which is bread, and gave thanks, saying: This is My Body. And the Cup likewise, which is of His creatures He declared His Blood and taught the New Sacrifice of the New Testament which the Church receiving from the Apostles offers to God.'*"

Bruce sat silently for a moment and then spoke. "It appears," he said, "that in these great, thick volumes which were written by these early Christian Fathers there are only passing references here and there to the Eucharist. If it is such a great thing as you say, why didn't they devote a few chapters to explaining in detail what they believed about it?"

“Well,” said the Rector, “the doctrine of Christ’s Presence in the Sacrament was not the main concern they had in writing these books, because no one at the time doubted it. They were actually defending other doctrines of the Christian faith and devoted most of their space to these, only mentioning the Eucharist when it has something to do with their argument. However, when they do mention the Eucharist they speak of it as really being our Lord’s Body and Blood, present in a special and mysterious manner. They just assume that all their readers will believe this, whether or not they believe the doctrines that *were* under dispute. They speak quite freely of the Eucharist as being Christ’s Body and Blood and, obviously, do not expect to be contradicted.

“There were some third century writers who were actually heretics but references in their writings show that they too believed in the doctrine of the Real Presence. For instance, Tertullian, a North African who died in 245 A.D., says in his treatise on the Resurrection of the Body, Chapter 8, that *‘the flesh is fed with the Body and Blood of Christ.’*

“In the fourth century,” the Rector went on, “references to the Eucharist are more numerous and more detailed. We have copies of sermons and instructions given by some of the great fathers of the time, in which they explain clearly to the newly Baptised, and to those preparing for Baptism, just what the Eucharist is. You may have heard of St. Athanasius—?”

“Yes, I think so,” put in Bruce, “wasn’t he one who put up such a long, hard fight defending the doctrine that Jesus was really Divine, when so many were being influenced by some fellow or other who said that He wasn’t?”

“Full marks for that,” said the Rector, “and the fellow concerned was a person named Arius, but that doesn’t concern us now. St. Athanasius is really one of the great figures in the history of the Church. There is a part of one of his sermons in existence in which he says, *‘You will see the levites (i.e., deacons), bringing loaves and a cup of wine and placing them on the table. So long as the prayers and invocations have not yet been made it is mere bread and a mere cup. But when the great and wondrous prayers have been recited, then the bread becomes the Body and the cup the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.’*

“Another great figure and popular preacher of the time was St. Cyril of Jerusalem,” continued the Rector, turning to another book. “In the nineteenth of his Catechetical lectures which were delivered to those who were preparing for Baptism,” he says, *‘the bread and wine of the Eucharist, before the Holy Invocation of the Adorable Trinity were mere bread and wine; but after the Invocation has been made, the bread becomes the Body of Christ and the wine the Blood of Christ.’*

“There are many other statements from fourth and fifth century Bishops which I could show you,” continued the Rector, “men like St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom and others, testified very clearly in their sermons and writings to their belief in the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist. There is just time now to give you one more reference and this is from the greatest and most influential Bishop of the time, St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, who died in 430 A.D. In his sermon number 227, delivered to newly Baptised persons, he says, *‘that bread which you see on the altar, sanctified by the Word of God, is Christ’s Body. That cup, or rather the contents of the cup, sanctified by the Word of God, is Christ’s Blood. By these elements the Lord Christ willed to convey His Body and His Blood which He shed for us.’*

“Well, so much for the early fathers,” said the Rector, rising to his feet, “and enough for us today, too, I think. You had better come around next week at the same time and we’ll have a look at some of the writings of men who lived more recently and belonged to the Church of England.

### III. THE CONCLUSION

The following Monday found Bruce and the Rector together again, and the Rector immediately began.

"By the time the sixteenth century came around," he said, "people had allowed their attitude to the Eucharist to become somewhat unbalanced. The mediæval philosophers discussed the precise nature of the change that took place in the bread and wine at the Consecration, in very abstruse and difficult philosophical language. The people, generally, were quite satisfied to adore the Presence of Christ on the Altar after the Consecration and actually received Communion only very rarely—once a year was the usual custom, although many of them would have been present at the Mass every day. They went to see the Sacrament rather than to receive it. The Church of England tried to remedy this situation by devising a simpler form for the Service, by placing more emphasis on the importance of receiving the Sacrament and by abandoning much of the mediæval philosophical terminology that had become associated with the Eucharist. This really amounted to an attempt to get back beyond the errors that had grown up in the Middle Ages and to recapture the attitude towards the Eucharist that was to be found in Christians of New Testament times and the earlier centuries."

"And I thought," put in Bruce, "that the English Reformers also cut out belief in the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament."

"Well, not really," continued the Rector. "although there were doubtless many in high places in the Church who would have gone much further in cutting away the traditional Christian faith and practice from the Church of England if they had been able to do so. Fortunately, the Church survived all the difficulties of the times with her traditional, age-long faith still intact, although there were many within her then, as there are now, who refused to acknowledge this."

"There is one part of the prayer book I found," said Bruce, "where it says *'the Body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the Supper only after an heavenly and spiritual manner.'*"

"That's right," said the Rector, "and I shall allow Bishop Guest, who wrote that article in 1571, to explain in his own words just what it means. You see, when the articles were being revised in 1571, Bishop Cheney of Gloucester was concerned because it seemed to him (as it apparently does to you), that the phrase *'only after an heavenly and spiritual manner'* told against the doctrine of the Real Presence. Well, in order to ease Bishop Cheney's concern, Bishop Guest explained to him why he had used the phrase and then sent a letter to Lord Cecil, in which he explained the whole matter. In his letter to Cecil he says: *'I told him (i.e., Cheney) plainly that this word only in the aforesaid article did not exclude the presence of Christ's Body from the Sacrament, but only the grossness and sensibleness in the receiving thereof; for I said unto him, that though he take Christ's Body in his hand, received it in his mouth and that corporally, naturally, really, substantially and carnally, as the Doctors do write, yet did he not for all that see it, feel it, smell it or taste it. And, therefore, I told him that I would speak against him herein and the rather because the article was of my own penning. And yet I would not for all that deny anything that I had spoken for the presence.'*

"In other words," the Rector went on, "Bishop Guest, who wrote this article, says that it is quite consistent even with the strongest statements made by the mediæval philosophers on the subject of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament. Our article 28 is in fact, quite in line with the general teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas the greatest of the mediæval theologians, on this subject. Aquinas is quite emphatic that the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament is something unique and quite unlike any kind of presence which could be detected by the senses. It is a presence which can only be known by the eye of faith. Our article is saying much the same thing.

"The Body of Christ is there, because It is given, taken and eaten but the Body is there in a special way which cannot be detected by the senses. The aim of the English prayer book and articles is simply to cut out any idea that the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament is of a kind that would affect our senses or involve any measure of humiliation for Our Lord Who is now Risen and Glorified."

"Could you explain that a little more," said Bruce, and in reply the Rector went on:

"I think it can be grasped if we look at another part of the prayer book," he said. "Let's look at what is called the '*black rubric*,' the last of the rubrics at the end of the Order for the Holy Communion. This statement (for it is not really a rubric at all) says that no adoration ought to be given to any supposed '*corporal*' Presence of Christ in the Consecrated Elements. Now this declaration first appeared in the prayer book in 1552 having been inserted rather hurriedly while the book was in process of being printed. In its original form, however, it denied any '*real and essential*' Presence of Christ in the Consecrated Elements. When the prayer book was reprinted in 1559 it was omitted, but at the next important revision, in 1662, the Puritan element pressed for its inclusion. Convocation, the Church Parliament, was very reluctant about this and at first refused the Puritan request. Eventually, however, it was re-inserted with a slight but very significant alteration. The declaration known as the '*black rubric*' now only denies any supposed '*Corporal Presence*' of Christ and not His '*Real Presence*' as it had originally done."

"I'm afraid I still don't quite see the difference," said Bruce.

"Well," said the Rector. "to say that Christ is present '*corporally*' could imply that He was present in the same manner as I am present here in this room. My size, shape, colour, etc., are visible to you and I am occupying a definite volume of space with different parts of me at various points of that space. However, the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament is quite different to this. His Body, although present really and essentially, cannot be seen, touched or moved and It doesn't actually occupy space since everyone who receives any particle of the bread or wine receives the Whole Christ and not just a part of Him."

"And has the Church of England always believed this?" asked Bruce.

"The whole of Christ's Church has believed it always," explained the Rector, "and the various documents of the English Church which were drawn up in the sixteenth century were devised so as only to rule out certain incorrect ideas about the precise nature of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist.

The Church of England certainly meant to continue the traditional belief of the Church and men like Bishop Guest and others were quite concerned to see that this should be done. The Church of England attitude is well illustrated by a quotation from Nicholas Ridley, who was Bishop of London in the time of Edward VI and was executed by Queen Mary in 1555. Ridley says that '*the bread is converted and turned into the Flesh of Christ by a sacramental converting or turning.*'

"This quotation and others that I could give you from Bishop Ridley, are valuable as showing that one who associated himself so closely with the reform movement as he did, held a view of the Sacrament closer to the traditional outlook than were the ideas of many who later considered themselves heirs of the reformation. The same applies to some of the other reformers, both in their views of Baptism and in their ideas about the Eucharist."

"And did the people who believed in the Real Presence die out soon after the reformation or something?" asked Bruce.

"No, not by any means," answered the Rector. "Right through the seventeenth century references to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist occur in the writings of Anglican Divines. For instance we find Bishop John Overall, who compiled the section on the Sacraments in the prayer book Catechism, writing '*it is confessed by all Divines that upon the words of Consecration the Body and Blood of Christ is really and substantially present and exhibited and given to all that receive It, not after a physical and sensual, but after a heavenly and incomprehensible manner.*'

"Another Bishop who had a big hand in the compilation of our prayer book was John Cosin and he says that '*in this mystical eating by the wonderful power of the Holy Ghost we do invisibly receive the substance of Christ's Body and Blood as much as if we should eat and drink visibly.*'

"There is also a rather beautiful prayer composed by Bishop Thomas Wilson who was Bishop of Sodor and Man. It is often printed in modern prayer manuals—let me see now, oh yes, here it is," said the Rector, opening a small prayer book and handing it to Bruce who read aloud "*'most merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look*

*graciously on the gifts now lying before Thee and send down Thy Holy Spirit upon this Sacrifice, that He may make this bread and this wine the Body and Blood of Thy Christ'."*

"One more quotation from the seventeenth century," said the Rector, opening one of the set of volumes lying on his table. "Here is what Bishop William Forbes says, '*Christ in the Eucharist is to be adored with Divine worship inasmuch as His living and glorified Body is present therein.*'"

"What are all these books from which you are taking these quotations?" asked Bruce. "There certainly are a lot of them in the set."

"These," said the Rector, "are a set known as the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology. You see, Bruce, during the eighteenth century the traditional faith of the Church of England was largely forgotten. The Sacraments were widely neglected and the prayer book was followed in a very careless and lazy manner. Even so the older teaching survived in many places—more, in fact, than is often recognised. On the whole, however, the English Church during the eighteenth century was barely conscious of being a living part of the Holy Catholic Church. It was in 1833 that a group of Oxford scholars started a great crusade to recall the Church of England to be her true self. In order to show Englishmen what their Church really believed and what her formularies really said, Dr. Pusey and others collected the writings of the seventeenth century Anglican Bishops, calling the resulting work the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology. To show that the belief of the Church of England was in line with what the Ancient Church believed, these Oxford Scholars also produced a Library of the Fathers, containing the translations of early Christian writings.

"As a result of their labours and the brave witness (often in the face of bitter opposition) of those who followed them, the Church of England has largely recovered her true outlook. For instance, in 1937 the Convocation of Canterbury approved a report produced by a committee which had held discussions with a group of Eastern Orthodox Churchmen. This report contained the following statements:

*"In the Eucharist the bread and wine become, by consecration, the Body and Blood of our Lord."*

*"The Eucharistic bread and wine remain the Body and Blood of our Lord as long as these Eucharistic Elements exist."*

*"Those who receive the Eucharistic bread and wine truly partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord."*

"And now, just to round things off nicely," said the Rector, "here is a statement made by Archbishop Ramsey, who was elected as the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1961. In 1956, as Archbishop of York, he took a leading part in some discussions between Anglican and Orthodox theologians in Moscow. In the course of the discussion he commented on our Lord's words at the Last Supper, saying, '*We value the tradition of Ancient Church that these words mean the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament.*'"

There was a moment's silence and the Rector went on, "Well, now," he said, "I've shown you just what we mean when we talk about the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. I've shown you why we believe Christ taught this doctrine and I've shown you how the Church in every age has believed it."

"It seems," said Bruce, "that I'm just beginning to find out what my Church teaches."

"Well, don't expect to absorb it all in one go," answered the Rector. "You need a lot more instruction yet, and above all, you need to pray that God will enable you to appreciate the value of these great mysteries of the faith and to use them for your spiritual advancement. It's no good just knowing these things as if they were a lot of theorems in Geometry. They have to become the very centre and mainspring of your whole being. God has been merciful to you in your past ignorance because it was no fault of your own, but now that He is leading you into the truth you must co-operate with Him by giving yourself completely to serve the Truth. You had better keep on coming to see me at the same time each week."

"Thanks very much," said Bruce, "there are a lot of things I want to learn, but I'll tell you now that there's one thing you'll never get me to put into practice and that's this Confession business."

"Well, we'll see," said the Rector. "Goodbye for now and God bless you."

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Reverend F. H. J. Brady was educated at Sydney Technical High School and at the University of Sydney, where he obtained the degree of Bachelor of Science with Second-class Honours in Mathematics in 1955.

After obtaining the Diploma of Education he was on the staff of the Sydney Teachers' College for two years before entering Moore Theological College in 1958. He was the Eleanor Abbott Scholar for 1959 and was awarded the Hey Sharp Prize in the same year, gaining First-class Honours in the Th.L. examination.

Father Brady is at present working in the Parish of St. Paul's, Burwood, Diocese of Sydney, as Assistant Priest.

