

down from Heaven," "drinking the blood of the Son of Man," "eating the flesh of the Son of Man," as absolutely identical in meaning with *believing on the Son*, a phrase also used by him there. This, thus rests on authority that can never be shaken:—

Compare v. 40. with v. 54. of Chap. 6. The first is, "and this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Here, "having everlasting life," and "being raised up" are made to depend on "seeing the Son and believing on him." The language of v. 54. is, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Here we have those very same effects ascribed to "eating the flesh" and "drinking the blood."! Our Lord has moreover thus identified the meaning of "eating the flesh" with that of "eating the bread:." The 51st verse is, "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; *and the bread that I will give is my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world." On what then, does "the life of the world," as referred to an individual man, depend according to the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ? He has thus declared it to depend, *alike and indifferently*, on eating the bread of life; or on "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man;" or on "seeing the Son of Man and *believing on him*." He who does the one or the other of these three things, differing in words, but identical in import, hath, *independently of all other things*, eternal life! ✱

As the phrase "living water" was used by our Lord at the well, in a sense purely figurative, an authority would be required, even if Jesus had not explained the figures used at Capernaum, for holding that He at the last named place, spoke of eating the bread or the flesh, or of drinking the blood in other than a purely figurative sense! When I speak of authority, I mean that of the Word of God. In the opinions of uninspired men, individually or collectively considered, a sanction can be found for almost any conceivable interpretation of any controverted passage of Holy Scripture. Such opinions, whether of individuals, churches or Councils, as they are often conflicting, even when pronounced by men or associations *equally competent to judge*, and, always but the judgments of fallible men, are in truth, therefore, no authority whatever. This is as true with regard to the Fathers, as with respect to the best and wisest Christians who have lived in subsequent ages. We find superstitions so marking even the most excellent of the Fathers, as to lessen materially the weight of their opinions. (See Appendix A.)

Such indeed is the nature of Revelation, and such the constitution of man's nature, that for ascertaining the meaning of Holy Scripture where it is doubtful, recourse must be had to private interpretation. "Prove all things" is a precept as obligatory on us, as it was on the cotemporaries of the Apostles whom they addressed. ✱ ✱

* * i. e. That There is no authoritative teacher in the last resort but the Spirit of Truth.

✱ See note 2 at the end.