

I hope that this exposition of the Catholic Faith on the tenet of "Exclusive Salvation," will contribute to render our creed less odious and deformed in the eyes of our dissenting brethren; and introduce into their minds a conviction that they were mistaken, when they conceived the Catholic church intollerant, bigoted and uncharitable.—No solid argument against this exposition can be adduced from the unauthorized writings or actions of Catholics. This is the doctrine of the universal Catholic church, extracted from her general councils, and the Universal belief of her members, the only true source, from which her doctrine can be gathered. Catholic kings, and even Popes, are not impeccable; but their actions, when they stand in opposition to Catholic principles, are only the actions of men, whose conduct is evil; and the candid liberal and consistent character will not attribute them to the religion which they professed. A Judas was found among the twelve Apostles, whom Christ himself had elected.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"According to the belief of the Catholic church, the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Eucharist are really and substantially changed into the body and blood of Christ." This belief was so general at the commencement of the reformation, that its first apostles recoiled from the idea of entirely destroying it. It is true, that the Eucharist is one of the deepest mysteries of Catholicity, and in proportion as men detached themselves from ancient principles and adhered to that, which taught them to believe only what they could perfectly understand, this mystery has been discarded, rejected, or ridiculed. But the thoughts of God are sometimes different from the thoughts of men.

The Catholic church builds this tenet on the express words of Christ, "this is my body—this is my blood." She understands these words in the plain literal sense; and certainly she ought not to be asked, why she understands them in this manner, any more than a traveller should be questioned why he keeps the high road instead of deviating into by-paths. If, as our adversaries contend, we are to derive the tenets of our faith from Scripture alone, it is obvious, that the Holy Spirit ought to have designated them in the clearest manner. To have described the most important points of Christian belief in figurative or metaphorical language, would have been to sow the seeds of disunion and schism; and it ought to be admitted as a canon of scriptural interpretation, that the literal should be considered as the true meaning, unless there be the clearest evidence to the contrary.

Christ, who was God, and therefore omniscient, must have known, that his words would be un-

derstood in the literal sense, by the great majority of Christians. They have been so understood by the Catholic church, and all the other churches in communion with her. The Lutheran church, although separated from her, has also adhered to the literal sense as well as the Eastern churches, whether they be united to the See of Rome, or separated from her communion. Christ, foreseeing this, should not have permitted it; he should have prevented the great majority from falling into the most pernicious errors, for it is certainly eminently erroneous to worship the Eucharist, unless the body and blood of Christ be contained under the species of bread and wine. This he has not done, and he was bound to do it, if he were even an honest man. It would be blasphemous to attribute actions to the Redeemer, which an upright man would blush to own.

The only arm, which our adversaries do, or ever did, or can oppose, to the Catholic tenet, is to maintain, that the words of the institution, "this is my body—this is my blood," should be understood in the figurative sense. Christ, they say, has frequently spoken of himself in a figurative meaning; he has said: "I am the door—I am the vine—I am the way, the truth, and the light," &c., &c. In these passages, however, the figurative expression is indefinite, it is not fixed demonstratively to any one particular object, as is the case with the words, "this is my body, this is my blood;" Christ never laid his hand on a vine, and said, I am this vine, or took hold of a door, and said, I am this door, as he took bread into his hands, and said, this is my body. Let the unprejudiced reader turn to the passages in question, and he will easily discover their meaning is evidently allegorical.

That Christ did *not* intend to be understood in a figurative sense in the institution of the Sacrament, is strongly enforced in the sixth chapter of St. John. The Redeemer there addresses the Jews in the memorable words, "I am the bread of life; if any one shall eat of this bread he shall not die: and the bread, which I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world. The Jews disputed among themselves, saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat? It is not impertinent to the question to remark, that, if Christ spoke in a figurative sense only, this occasion loudly called for an explanation. The Jews evidently understood him in the literal sense, or they would not have said, how can this man give us his flesh to eat? If they were deceived, it was the imperative duty of the Reformer of man, and the teacher of the world, to undeceive them, and, in undeceiving them, to prevent millions of sincere Christians from falling into the deepest error. But far from giving them reason, capable of inducing them to believe, that his language was figurative, he pursued a course perfectly