

expressions. Neither was it in the manducation taken in the figurative sense, a thing too simple to admit of the possibility of a moment's hesitation; it was therefore the reality that they absolutely would not admit. But in the principles of your divines, that would deserve no reproach. These disciples though it to be impossible; and do not your brethren think the same? and according to them did not these disciples, by refusing their consent, reject what they ought to have rejected? did they not believe what they ought to have believed, by holding it to be impossible? They could not therefore merit any reproach; and Jesus Christ (may he forgive us!) Jesus Christ reproached them without cause.

After this many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Here ask again the most skillful of your ministers: ask them why these disciples abandon their master? In vain will you expect a solid reply. They will always tell you, and they have nothing more to say, that these disciples had permitted themselves to be staggered at expressions which seemed to them to favour the reality of the manducation, which in point of fact our Saviour had only proposed in figure. But he who saw into the interior, would immediately have seen their mistake, and to remove it he had only to say; "When I spoke to you of giving you my flesh to eat, I merely intended to give you the sign and figure of it, and to inform you that by taking them you would unite yourselves to my flesh by faith: and are not you already thus united, you who are my disciples?" And they would have fallen at his feet and would never have left him. In fact it is ridiculous to explain this fatal separation by a mere misunderstanding of terms. Men, indeed, are liable to this in their mutual communications, because they cannot read each others thoughts; but it is absolutely inadmissible between these disciples and Jesus Christ, who clearly saw whatever was passing in their minds. Consider their departure from Christ: seek out a motive for it as long as you please; you will find it only in the incomprehensibility of the mystery. In vain does Jesus Christ remind them of his heavenly mission, of his divinity, and the miracles which attested both nothing could persuade them. Neither the admiration of his person, nor the works of a power that commands nature, nor the benefits they had received, nor those which they had reason to expect, could make them overcome their repugnance to this real manducation. They obstinately persist in judging of it by the *flesh*, by the corporeal senses, by a confined and corrupted reason; they deem it impossible, and will hear no more of it: they withdraw. Alas! too often, since then, has this unhappy separation been renewed in the world! How many children of the Church have been lost through the like repugnance to believe the same mystery! How many left the bosom at the time of the reformation, and since that epoch, how many were not and still are not reconciled to it, on account of the same difficulty of embracing this incomprehensible dogma! Thus the same effect that

it produced at its first announcement in the world, it still continues to produce in our days: the aversion it occasioned in many disciples to Jesus Christ it still occasions in Christians to his Church.

At the time our Saviour saw himself abandoned by many of his disciples, he perceives his apostles, in suspense perhaps between the authority of their master and the incomprehensibility of his doctrine, humbly maintaining a profound silence. But he, wishing to ensure their attachment and faith, said to the twelve: "Will you also leave me?" And Simon Peter answered him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life: we have believed and have known that thou art the Christ the Son of God." Had the apostles here given, as a motive of their continuance with him, that they had taken the words of Jesus Christ in the figurative sense, and understood that to eat his flesh and drink his blood meant to be intimately united to him by faith, then it would be fair to conclude that the disciples had taken those same words in too literal a sense. But so far are the Apostles from expressing any such thing, that it is evident from their answer that they had inferred from them the reality of the manducation, as well as the disciples: but that having more confidence and being less disposed to judge by the *flesh* than by the *spirit*, and corresponding better with grace, they left entirely to our Saviour the manner in which he would accomplish his promise, although they could not conceive or imagine any. They believed what they could not understand, but it was what Jesus Christ had positively told them over and over again to believe; they believed because the words of truth and life eternal being in his mouth, he could not himself be deceived, nor deceive them: they believed, because they knew him to be the Son of God, the Christ: having power to do beyond what human reason could attain or conceive. These were their motives. Assuredly the easy figurative sense would have required none of this exertion. There was, therefore, something incomprehensible to them in the words of our Saviour: they discovered in them the insolvable mystery that we discover: and motives upon which they grounded their belief are absolutely the same and the only ones on which the Catholic Church has always rested hers.

Let us, if you please, cast a rapid glance over the arguments we have developed in the examination of this chapter.

1<sup>o</sup> Jesus Christ begins by producing the great motives that are to convince his hearers of the obligation of believing in his words. Therefore he has something to propose to them which will be in itself very difficult to be believed.

2<sup>o</sup> Jesus Christ comes to the proposal of it, and says that he is *bread that quickeneth*, that the bread which he will give them to eat, is his *flesh which he will give for the life of the world*. The Jews take the natural sense of these words, and reject it, because the manducation of his flesh appears to them impossible: therefore they understood his words of a true and real manducation.

3<sup>o</sup> The carnal manner in which they represen-

ted to themselves this manducation, evidently supposes the reality of it, and not less evidently excludes the figure. Then, it was the reality they understood.

4<sup>o</sup> If they had been mistaken in understanding the reality, our Saviour would have disabused them immediately. But far from disabusing them, by explaining himself in a figurative sense, he resumes what he first proposed, repeats it six times in succession, and always with expressions still stronger for the reality, and even with an oath. Therefore he had the reality in view, and in it he required their belief.

5<sup>o</sup> Many of the disciples take offence at the words they had just heard our Saviour pronounce in six successive verses, and declare them to be too hard to be borne. Therefore these words conveyed the sense of the reality, incomprehensible to the human mind, and not the figurative sense so conformable to our ideas.

6<sup>o</sup> Instead of softening down the expressions which alienated the disciples, Jesus Christ declares that if they are scandalized now, they shall soon be scandalized still more when they shall see him going up to where he was before; that is, that his doctrine will then appear to them more incredible than before his ascension. Now the figurative manducation becomes still more easy to believe after his ascension, and the real manducation appears more incredible in consequence. Therefore it is not the former, but the latter which had been announced.

7<sup>o</sup> Jesus Christ who never reproached his disciples with not having understood the sense of his discourse, reproaches them here for not believing. Now the reproach for not believing can only fall on the reality. Therefore he had announced the reality in his discourse.

8<sup>o</sup> Jesus reproaches them with not believing in this reality. Therefore they did wrong, and you do still more so, in pronouncing it to be indefensible. The Jews and disciples judged soundly according to you, by deeming this manducation impossible. Therefore your judgment, like that of the Jews and the disciples, is in direct opposition to that of Jesus Christ, and you are all equally condemned together.

9<sup>o</sup> Jesus declares that no one can believe in him concerning this manducation, if he have not received grace from his Father. Now, to believe a figurative manducation, there is no need of any grace, since there is no need of any exertion: therefore he speaks not of that kind of manducation.

10<sup>o</sup> The doctrine of our Saviour on the manducation is such that it hindered many of the Jews from believing in him. Now the doctrine of the Catholic Church on this point is also such, that it prevents many Christians from joining its creed, and has induced many of its children to quit it. whereas the doctrine of the reformed, whatever be the strength of the expressions they make use of in the Lord's Supper, has never engaged any one to quit them, nor prevented any one from joining them. Therefore the doctrine of the reformed upon this manducation has not the characters of the