

fount of living water that should spring up into life everlasting, the evangelist is not shy to record the woman's very human, very reasonable, very plain reply: 'Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst nor come hither to draw'. (John 4, 15.) She does not understand the high meaning of his words, but her simple and practical reasoning is effective evidence of a shrewd peasant woman who knows what she wants. But a still better example is when the cultured, educated Pharisee, Nicodemus, voices the clear human reason in his exact reply to the gospel of a divine re-birth: 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again?' (John 3, 4.) At least he understood a material sense in the new Gospel, and to this he offered a sensible and intelligible difficulty. When later, in the sixth chapter of the same Gospel our blessed Lord proclaims the holy sacrament of Communion, the mystery of the Eucharist, St John writes down the obvious rational objection to that wholly supernatural truth, the same objection that was made in the first century of the Church's history, and is substantially the modern objection restated afresh by the anti-Sacramentalists in England today: 'The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: how can this man give his flesh to eat?' It is evident enough that they understood what he said; and their reply gives clearly the reason why they reject it. He who had created them, understood their reason and equally their unbelief; but he reaffirmed his dogma even more emphatically: 'Amen, Amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you'. And hearing this, even many of his disciples exclaimed: 'This saying is hard and who can hear it?' and leaving him, they walked with him no more.



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