

ON SEEING WILKIE'S PICTURE OF JOHN KNOX.

Would that thy muse had been inspired to paint
Some holy father, martyr, or a saint—
A theme more fitting such bright tints as thine
A more profound, more orthodox divine,
More meek disciple of his heavenly master,
Than he who brought his country such
disaster
No the rude fanatic of modern ages
Wresting new doctrines from the sacred
pages.
The roaring wolf that laid Christ's vine-
yard waste,
His flock dispersed, his sanctuary defaced,
Whose erring foot was marked by devastation.
The Knoxian "ruffian of the Reformation."
EMILY.
Catholic Telegraph.

The Kirk of Scotland Not Holy. Continued.

Protestant. But these unchristian dispositions of revenge, cruelty, ambition, revolt, and such like, which make up the character of those Reformers you have just described, were perhaps peculiar to the leaders; whilst the multitude that followed them confined themselves to the reformation of their manners and superstitions, without sharing in their crimes.

Catholic. No; these crimes were common to the leaders and those that followed them. Duplicity, violence, ferocity, and fanaticism, became general in Scotland, as soon as the Reformation broke out. The whole nation was impregnated with the same spirit; and the history of that awful period does not present to the reader a single character, among those who left the ancient religion, and can reflect honour upon the new which they embraced. It is even remarkable, that they who were the warmest in the cause of the Reformation, and most imperious in forcing it upon others, were also the persons whose profligacy, in every respect, was most scandalous. They were active in their exertions as Reformers, in proportion as they were remiss in their duties as Christians; professing that they knew God, in works denouncing him; abominable, disobedient, unto every good work reprobate. Tit. i. 16.

Protestant. I allow there prevailed a general profligacy of manners among our first Reformers, as well as among the Reformers in other countries; but you should recollect, what you have told me so often, that they had been all brought up in the church of Rome. It was there then they contracted those vicious habits, which they retained for some time, even after they had embraced the Reformation. Indeed, these habits of revenge, cruelty, and lust, were so deeply rooted in their hearts, that it is no wonder if they did not renounce them immediately upon their conversion.

Catholic. But then what kind of conversion and reformation was theirs? Is not the renouncing of sin, especially of sins of so heinous a nature, the first step towards a true Reformation? It is true, your Reformers, at least many of them were wicked already, when they embraced the Reformation; and that was, we think, the very reason why they embraced it. When the fan is violently agitated, the chaff is thrown up to the surface, being

lighter than the wheat, and then is blown away. When a strong wind tosses the waves of the sea, it drives the foam and all impure matters to the shore. But you seem to suppose, that those apostates from the Catholic church, either in Scotland or other countries in Europe, came afterwards to a better sense of their duties; and that after having begun with the works of the flesh, they shewed forth at last the fruits of the Spirit. If this had been the case, it would be much to the credit of the Reformation; but unhappily it was quite the reverse. They that were bad already, became worse; and those that had been the worst before, sunk still deeper into the abyss of vice.

P. If you can make good that assertion, you will carry the point which you have undertaken to demonstrate, viz, that our kirk is not the holy church of God. But I want clear and incontestible authorities.

C. I shall produce such as you cannot possibly disallow. I mean the express testimony of the two great heads of the Reformation, Luther and Calvin; of several of their own friends, and even of your own divines, who all, in a bitter tone of lamentation complained that their followers, instead of being bettered by the change of religion, rather turned worse. "The world," says Luther, "grows every day worse and worse. It is plain that men are much more covetous, malicious, and resentful, much more unruly, shameless, and full of vice, than they were in the time of Popery."* Formerly, when we were seduced by the Pope, men willingly followed good works; but now all their study is to get every thing to themselves by exactions, pillage, theft, lying, and usury.† "It is a wonderful thing, and full of scandal, that from the time when the pure doctrine was first called to light, the world should daily grow worse and worse."‡ Calvin, the first patriarch of the Presbyterians, bears testimony to the same truth. "Of so many thousands, seemingly eager in embracing the gospel, how few have since amended their lives? Nay, to what else do the greater part pretend, except by shaking off the yoke of superstition, to launch out more freely into every kind of lasciviousness."§ To the testimony of the masters, I must join that of their disciples. "The greater part of the people," says Bucer, "seem only to have embraced the gospel, in order to shake off the yoke of discipline, and the obligation of fasting and penance, which lay upon them in the time of Popery; and to live at their pleasure, enjoying their lusts and lawless appetites without control. They therefore lent a willing ear to the doctrine, that we are justified by faith alone, and not by good works, having no relish for them."|| "All is lost," says Capito, a Calvinist minister of Stratsburg, "all goes to ruin; there is not one church among us, not so much as one where there is any discipline."—Almighty God gives me light to know

what it is to be a pastor; and the wrong we have done to the church, by our injudicious rashness, and indiscreet vehemence, in rejecting the Pope. For our people, now accustomed, and as it were brought up in licentiousness, have thrown off all subordination, as if, by overturning the authority of the popish pastors, we had also destroyed the virtue of the sacraments, and the vigour of the ministry. They cry out to us, I know enough of the gospel. What occasion have I for your help to find out Christ? Go and preach to those who are disposed to hear you."* The general assembly of your divines, in the year 1648, about a hundred years after their first Reformation, at a time, therefore, when your kirk, if it had been a good tree, had sufficient time to yield good fruits, acknowledged that "Ignorance of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, prevailed exceedingly in the land—that it were impossible to reckon up all the abominations that were in the land, and that the blaspheming of the name of God, swearing by the creatures, profanation of the Lord's day, uncleanness, excess, and rioting, vanity of apparel, lying and deceit, railing and cursing, arbitrary and uncontrolled oppression, and grinding of the faces of the poor, were become ordinary and common sins."† But is your kirk now in a more flourishing state than it was at that period we are speaking of? "It is surprising to think (say your Divines in the Associate Synod in 1778) what gross ignorance of the meaning and authority of the truths they profess to believe, prevails at present among many."‡ "A general unbelief of revealed religion (prevails) among the higher orders of our countrymen, which hath, by a necessary consequence, produced, in vast numbers, an absolute indifference as to what they believe, either concerning truth or duty, any farther than it may comport with their worldly views."|| And then, speaking of the country at large, they lament it is now, "through the prevalence of infidelity, ignorance, luxury, and venality, so much despoiled of all religion, and feeling the want of it."§ Thus far your divines, from whose testimony you may infer that your kirk is not the tree from which figs and grapes can be gathered. But let me add the opinion of the celebrated Erasmus. "What an evangelical generation is this? Nothing was ever seen more licentious and more scditionous. Nothing is less evangelical than these pretended evangelics."¶ Take notice of this evangelical people, and shew me an individual among them all who, from being a drunkard, has become sober; from being a libertine, has become chaste. I, on the other hand, can shew you many who have become worse by the change."** Those whom I once knew to have been chaste, sincere, and without fraud, I found, after they had embraced this sect, to be licentious in their conversation, gamblers, neglectful of prayer, passionate, vain, as spiteful as serpents,

and lost to the feelings of human nature. I speak from experience."* You see now what fruits the Reformation has produced in Scotland and other countries of Europe,

P. What then do you think of the long prayers of our reformers, their fasts, their frequent quotations of scripture,† their zeal in reproofing sinners, &c. Were not these manifest proofs of their sanctity and apostolic spirit?

C. In men, like our reformers, who came in their own name, without a lawful mission from God or his church, I consider these exterior demonstrations of zeal and piety, as the cleansing of the outside of the cup, when the inside is left unclean; as the sheep's clothing, which wolves never fail to put on, in order to get admittance into the sheep-fold; and as a form of godliness, which is always studiously affected by imposters, at the same time that they deny the power thereof. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Our Reformers, you say, were most zealous in reproofing sinners? And so were the Pharisees. But when we consider their pride, cruelty, lasciviousness, and other notorious vices, which form the character of these Reformers, have we not good reason to apply to them this reproof of our blessed Saviour to the Pharisees: *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.* Mat. vii. 5. They fasted, and made long extemporary prayers. True, and so did the Pharisees. But were they saints for that? *Not every one that saith to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Mat. vii. 21. Mary, Queen of Scots, used to say, "She was more afraid of a fast of the ministers, than of an army of soldiers," because their fasts, were commonly the signal of some new insurrection against her: Ye fast for strife and debate: It is not such a fast I have chosen. Isa. lviii. 4. They quoted scripture, no doubt. All heretics pretend to build their opposite systems upon the word of God. They never fight against the church, and among themselves, but with the bible in their hands. † It is a peculiar property of false "teachers," says a famous writer of the fifth century, "to wrap themselves all over with sentences of scripture, as it were with sheep's fleeces; that whilst any one feels the softness of the wool, they may not fear or suspect the sharpness of their teeth. Thus they readily fly through all the volumes of scripture, from Genesis to the Revelation, both privately and in the public, in conversation and writing, at table and in the streets. They seldom bring out any thing even of their own, but they endeavour to express it in scripture phrases. But so much the more are they to be dreaded, and cautiously read, as they lie lurking and concealed under the cover of the divine law."‡ The devil himself quoted scripture to lay a snare for our Saviour: *It is written, said he,—it is written again. But what did our Saviour answer? Get thee hence, Satan.* Mat. iv. 10.

To be Continued.

* Ad. Frat. Infer. Germ.
† The Presbyterian Reformers abolished all the fasts and days of abstinence that were practised in the catholic church; but upon extraordinary emergencies, proclaimed a fast, or a solemn day of humiliation and prayer, in which they used to beg God's pardon for being too remiss in persecuting catholics and others who did not approve of their doctrines.
‡ Vincent Lerin's admon. adv. Her.

* Sermons in Postill. Evang. I. adv.
† Sermon. Dom. 26. post. Trin.
‡ In Sermon. Conviv.
§ Calv. L. iv. de Scand.
|| De Regno Christi. L. I. c. 4.

* Ep. ad Farel, among Calvin's Lett.
† An acknowledgment of Sins
‡ Warning, p. 52. || Warning, p. 54.
§ Warning, p. 64. ¶ Ep. L. vi. 4.
** Spong. advers. Hutton.