

upon it, and devour it! *The hireling, says the Saviour, and he, who is not the shepherd; whose own the sheep are not; seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep and the hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and he careth not for the sheep.—John x. 1. Not so the good shepherd. He giveth even his life for the sheep.—Not so the Catholic pastor, who enters the sheepfold by the door; to whom the porter openeth; while they who climb up another way, the same, the Saviour says, are thieves and robbers. Ibid.*

Some, I know, of the Protestant clergy, from their own natural goodness of heart; or to win the esteem of their hearers, refuse not to visit their dying parishioners. But such evidently exceed their commission; and are better in this respect than their Church would make them. To attend the sick with them, is quite a work of supererogation: for by no precept in their persuasion are they compelled to do so. The external rite of anointing the sick being set aside; a rite which renders the Pastor's attendance on the dying indispensable; he may justly consider a prayer put up for them at his own fire side, as sure of being heard, as one repeated by him at their bedside, after a long and painful journey. And as for his exhortation and advice, does not his, and every Protestant sect teach its adherents to reject, as fallible, the word of man; and to rely, in spiritual matters, on the written word alone, on the Bible, as read and understood by themselves; and not as interpreted by any man, nor all men: for this is the only principle which separated, and still separates them from the Catholic Church?

In that Church, which is neither of Luther's, Calvin's, nor of any man's invention; which, as her greatest enemies must confess, had Jesus Christ himself and his holy Apostles for her founders in that Church, though of every age, tongue and country, which is wonderfully exempted from all doctrinal discord: how ready, sure, and perfect, are the helps and comforts afforded to the Christian in the trying hour of death; the most critical, important, and all-decisive moment of his mortal existence?

Unimpeded by wife and family. (for whose hinderance to their clergy, in the discharge of their parochial duties, Protestants pay so dearly.) the Catholic pastor flies at the earliest notice to protect those of his flock, who are announced to be in danger: bearing along with him the living and life-giving bread; the Saviour's sovereign antidote against eternal death; and his surest pledge afforded us of a glorious immortality. Thus is present with his Pastor the chief shepherd himself, and owner of the flock, to defend them from the fierce attacks of the hungry prowling wolf: and, while his awful presence keeps the murderous fiend at bay; he gives an inward moving efficacy to the words of his deputy exhorting: excites in the dying a wholesome loathing at sin: makes them freely void in confession the deadly poison from their ulcerated consciences; infusing at the same time into their souls the healing balm of grace: then ratifies, ac-

ording to his promise, the absolving sentence passed upon them by his lawful minister.

The soul being thus revived in grace, the body, her sinful organ, is next anointed, and sanctified in all its senses. *The whole man, thus purified from the contagion of sin, is clothed with his original justice, and fitted for appearing before his Maker.—Thou from his loving Saviour does he finally receive the cordial kiss of reconciliation in the Viaticum, his strengthening food against the last conflict he has to sustain with the adversary: the heavenly fare, spread out for us upon that table, which God has prepared before us, against those that afflict us.—Ps. xxii. 5.—the true Pasch, to be eaten by the people of God, on their quitting the Egypt of this world; the land of their exile, bondage, and sufferings.*

Such are the transcendent helps and spiritual comforts, which the Catholic Church affords her children at the awful moment of their departure out of this world. And, indeed, can we suppose that her Divine Founder, who has done and suffered so much, in order to secure our salvation; and left us in the other sacraments such extraordinary mediums of grace during life; would leave us at the last, when we stand most in need of such extraordinary helps, so defenceless as Protestants finally find themselves? Would he cast off so, and abandon in the end, the dearly purchased objects of his tender solicitude? No: having loved his own, who are in the world; he loves them to the end. John 13—and therefore in this sacrament has he furnished the dying with the sure and ready means of ending well their mortal pilgrimage: the means of getting the necessary, and perhaps hitherto neglected instruction and exhortation; by bringing to their bedside their Pastor, his own Representative, whom he bids us hear, as we would himself in person:—Luke x. 16.—the means of comfort and consolation in all their mental and bodily sufferings: the means of making a full reparation of injuries done to our neighbour, and of being thus thoroughly reconciled with God and man: the means of security against the last and most desperate attacks of the infernal enemy; who strives then either to lull them into an indolent presumption on God's mercy; or to drown them in all the horrors of dark despair; the means in a word, of duly preparing for the awful change about to take place, on their entry into the unknown world of spirits. O surely, if there be a moment in all a man's life, that require the extraordinary helps of religion, such as the sacraments, it is evidently, and above all, the moment of his departure into eternity.

And is it not wonderful that Protestants never perceive the immense spiritual losses they have sustained; and the absolutely nothing, but carnal liberty they have gained, by all the commodious retrenchments made by their Returners from the faith and observances of the Apostles: made by those, who, as Saint Peter says, promise them liberty, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption.—2 Pet. ii. 19. *Who, as the same apostle affirms, leaving the right way, have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor*

who loved the wages of iniquity.—ibid. v. 16.—by those, in fine, whom Saint Jude, as with his finger points out to us—*These are they, says he, who separate themselves; sensual men, having not the spirit.—Jude, v. 19.*

To be continued

BIBLICAL NOTICES AND EXPLANATIONS.

Continued

EXODUS.

Chapter 32, verse 21, &c.—It would appear from Aaron's answer to Moses, by whom he was chid for bringing upon the people the most heinous sin of idolatry; that he had suffered himself to be awed into compliance with their wishes: and that the gold cast into the fire, to form their idol, had by some permitted infernal agency, come forth a calf; such as the Egyptians were wont to worship. We may judge of the heinousness of the crime by the severity of the punishment.

Verse 31. In the humble supplication of Moses in behalf of his guilty people; for whom he is willing to become an *anathema*; and in the pardon he obtains for them; we observe the powerful efficacy of the prayers of the just in behalf of sinners.

Chapter 33—verse 3.—*For I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff necked people; lest I destroy thee on the way.* From this declaration we are led to suppose that the angel, who had hitherto conducted the Israelites, was the Filial Deity himself; the Angel of the great council; the object of whose special favour and mercy was man. But here we learn, that, when our crimes remove from us his immediately protective presence; he still charges his angels to watch over us, as we are surrounded with enemies visible and invisible, who would otherwise accomplish our destruction.

Verse 8.—*No the children of Israel laid aside their ornaments by Mount Horeb.* This they did at the express command of God. How then can Protestants blame the Catholic Church, for recommending to her sinful children external mortification, and even penitential attire, as a means of appeasing the anger of God?

Verse 19.—*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy: and I will be merciful to whom I shall please me.* God is the free disposer of his own gifts and graces. And, though he grants of these a sufficiency to each; yet, beyond this, he can give more or less, as he pleases, and to whomsoever he pleases: and deprive the unworthy of them wholly or in part, in what time, place, or manner he chooses or thinks proper.

Verse 22.—God here shows himself to Moses under some borrowed, visible, and mystical form.—And can he not do so still, if he chooses; as he assures us he does, in the Eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament? For we cannot see his face here and live. But placed with him, like Moses, on the rock of his Church; his right hand protecting us in a hole of that rock, till his glory shall pass: when he takes away his hand; that is, removes the sensible obstruction to our mental sight,—we then see him in his hidden parts; and recognize his presence under the form which he has designed to assume.

Chapter 31.—verse 23.—*Three times in the year all thy males shall appear in the sight of the Almighty Lord, the God of Israel, &c.* The solemn homage to be paid annually to God, is tripled, because it was addressed to the eternal one in three.

Verse 25.—*Thou shalt not offer the blood of thy sacrifice upon Leaven.—Leaven, as we have shown above; and as Saint Paul explains it,—1 Cor. v. 7. is the emblem of sin. By this prohibition therefore, we are given to understand, that to God's sacrifice and sacraments nothing sinful must be suffered to approach.*