

we are addressed by him in our two-fold capacity; and acquire our knowledge from without through the medium of the senses. Images bind to the memory the passing thought; which is otherwise apt to slip away from us, and vanish like a vapour, leaving not a trace behind.

But, indeed, what is all this visible world, and all the objects it contains, but one boundless scene of endlessly varied and ever varying figures, images, forms and appearances, presented to the visual organ of the soul. It is all but a collective and transient image thrown upon the eye in our passage through this life, as the apostle observes; *præterit enim figura hujus mundi*; "the figure of this world," says he, "passes away." (1 Cor. 7, 31.) We ourselves are made to the image of God, not only internally but in some sense externally; as by the dominion which he has given us over all the other creatures here below: *Ego dixi Dii estis*; "I have said that ye are Gods," says the Almighty Father, speaking to his human children (Ps. 81, 6), and when his august image in us was defaced and degraded by sin; he did not disdain, by taking upon himself our nature, to make himself to our image, in order to raise it up from its fallen state and restore it, even enhanced, to its original majesty and perfect condition. If then, with Protestants, we discard all images, what in all this visible universe remains as signs or landmarks for the soul to steer by on the wide and interminable ocean of abstract cogitation?

All letters and remittances are to be forwarded, free of postage, to the Editor, the Very Rev. Wm. P. McDonald, Hamilton.

THE CATHOLIC.

Hamilton, G. D.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12.

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS, SIGNS AND CEREMONIES.

Si enim in corpore carnis, nuda et incorporea tibi dedisset dona: sed, quoniam omnia corpora continentur in sensibilibus intelligibilia tibi parata. S. Chrysostom. Rom. 70, ad populum, antiphona.

Hadst thou been made without a body God's gifts to thee would have been purely spiritual. But since thou hast a body joined with a soul, he renders, by sensible signs, his gifts to thee intelligible.

It is truly surprising that none of our Protestant sects, in discarding so from their several systems of religion all sacred symbols, signs and ceremonies, never perceive that the scriptures, the sole authority which they pretend to go by, indirectly contrary to their reforming schemes in this particular; for in the whole sacred code, from beginning to end, God is seen directing and instructing man by emblematical figures, signs, symbols and ceremonies. The Creator is there represented addressing himself to his human creatures, not as to pure spirits, in merely mental communications, but as to rational beings of a different order; to beings who have bodies and bodily senses; through the medium of which he communicates to their minds his truths and directions; under ten thousand allusive shapes and images; which arrest and fix

the passing thought, and cling as painted reminiscences of simple ideas to the imagination. What were also all the various victims offered up to God by his own appointment, down from the beginning of the world, till their fulfilment in the final sacrifice of our all suffering victim Jesus Christ, to whom in so many ways and senses they all allude? What, for instance, was "the tree of life," with its immortalizing fruit, planted in Paradise in opposition to "the tree of death; the tree of knowledge," with its forbidden fruit? What, but the emblem of the tree of the cross; not indeed "the tree of knowledge," which it utterly confounds; for it is "a stumbling block to the Jews, and folly to the Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1, 23), but of firm faith, and entire reliance on the word of God; the fruit of which, on that which hung upon it, the body and blood of our divine victim, we are now commanded to eat, as the sovereign antidote against the death incurred by eating of the former fruit forbidden; the fruit of knowledge disallowed. By our firm reliance on the word of God, which reveals to us so incomprehensible a mystery; and by our ready compliance with his injunction to eat; believing what we eat to be just that which God has said it is; no guiltily wishing to know what God, to try our faith thinks at present fit to be concealed from us; "bringing thus our understanding into captivity in obedience to Christ" (2 Cor. 10, 5). We make amend for man's original distrust in God's word, and for his disobedience in Paradise; and are restored to never ending life and bliss by a conduct the very opposite of that by which we unhappily forfeited them.

Were not the cherubims, guarding from guilty man's approach the tree of life in Paradise, represented by those figuratively guarding in the Jewish tabernacle what represented the life-giving fruit of that mystical tree; "the manna, shew bread, loaves of proportion and wafers of fine flour;" the very forms under which the immortalizing fruit that hung upon the cross, was to be kept in the Christian tabernacle of the Saviour's church among the converted Gentiles? Through the gate of this tabernacle, when the full atonement for our guilt was made, we are restored to God, from whom we had fallen, and readmitted into Paradise; for there is Paradise where the Saviour God resides; as he does under the sacramental veils; and there is preserved the reality of all that the Jewish tabernacle contained, but in figure; what the Saviour himself declared to be "the living bread that came down from heaven; of which he who eats, shall live for ever" (John 6, 52). It is this, the choicest of his gifts, which the spirit promises to give, when addressing in the Revelations the churches as follows: "to him, who overcomes, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God." (Apoc 2, 7.) And again: "to him, who overcomes, I will give the hidden manna; and I will give him a white counter, and in the counter a new name written," &c. Ibid. verse 17.

In like manner was the ark, built by the only one who was found truly just of

our race; in which none but he and his family were saved by water; an emblem of the Church founded by the sole just and perfect one of our race; in which, through him are saved, by water also, none but his family, or those born to him in baptism. (John 3, 3.)

What was Jacob's ladder, but a symbol of the entry or gate to heaven; a free passage into which is afforded only from the spot, where the prefigured Jacob reposes on the "chief corner stone" of his church; "the house of God; the house which wisdom built for herself," and for which "she has hewn out her seven pillars" (the sacraments), Proverbs 9; the house founded by "the wise man," by the Saviour "on the rock; against which" he has assured us "the gates of hell shall not prevail;" and "with which he himself, together with his spirit, the spirit of truth, shall abide at all times, even to the end of the world." Hence the holy patriarch foreseeing this in the prophetic light, exclaims, "terrible is this place. Truly this is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."

The miraculous rod of Moses and that of Aaron, were they not the emblems, the former of the kingly, the latter of the priestly sceptre, or power of Jesus Christ? "The brazen serpent," which God commanded Moses to raise as a healing sign, to his people, who were dying of the bites of the fiery serpents in the wilderness (Numb. 21). Does not the Saviour tell us (John 3, 14) that it was the figure of himself crucified. It was then a mysterious crucifix; a sign so hated by Protestants. It was a holy image, commanded by God himself to be made, and set up, and looked upon by his people; a miraculous and wonder working symbol.

What was that tree, which, cast into the bitter waters of Mara, rendered them sweet? If not the emblem of the cross: the contemplation of which, and of all that the Saviour suffered on it to expiate our guilt; sweetens the cup of sorrow and sufferings, which we are doomed to drink on our journey through the desert of this world towards heaven our promised home?

The budding of Aaron's rod in the tabernacle, was, according to the interpretation of the fathers, the emblem of the blessed virgin's conceiving and bringing forth the Man-God, Jesus Christ; according to the prophetic simile of Isaias: "and there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse; and a flour shall rise up out of this root: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him," &c. Isaias, ch. 11, v. 1, 2.

The fleece of Gedeon, first receiving exclusively the dew of heaven, represents, according to the same holy interpreter, the same most privileged of creatures "full of grace;" as the archangel declared her to be; adding, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the virtue of the most high shall overshadow thee; and therefore also the holy, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the son of God." Hence the prophet Isaias, alluding to the same figure, exclaims, "drop down dew, ye heavens, from above; and

let the clouds rain the just one! Let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour! (Isaias, 45, 8.) And again: "he shall come down, like rain upon the fleece; and as showers falling gently upon the earth." (Is. 71, 6.) The second wonder of the fleece shewed that, when it was thus itself first exclusively and so fully saturated with the dew of grace; the heavenly dew was thenceforth diffused over all.

The pitchers, with lamps burning in them, which when broken, showed forth in the midst of the nocturnal obscurity the lights which they contained; represented the mean and frail vessels which the true Gedeon, the Saviour, made choice of in order to confound and defeat the enemy: and it was there above all, that their light of faith and fire of divine charity shone forth, in the midst of the pagan darkness; when their vessels of clay, their frail bodies, were dashed to pieces in martyrdom.

"The hearth cake" rolling down from the mountain, which uses the whole camp of Median, is interpreted in the very text itself, and interpreted truly; Gedeon himself; the prefigured Gedeon, the real hearth cake; "the living bread that came down from heaven;" who, rushing with his followers into the enemy's camp, establishes on the grounds which they occupied, his camp; his religion, his unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine, and his everlasting priesthood, "according to the order of Melchisedech."

The salt used by Elisha to sweeten the fountain, and fertilize the barren soil, and the meal to render wholesome the contents of the pot; is but the emblem of that mystic salt, to which the Saviour alludes, when styling his apostles "the salt of the earth." For they, by their holy preaching, and edifying example, were destined to season the rest of mankind; and thus preserve them from the corruption of sin: and of the flour, of which is made that which is changed into "the bread of life?"

What important and wonderful truths are thus made known to us, and fixed in our memory by these, and numberless other such sensible signs and symbols. These render to the mind the simplest ideas discernible objects; and give a kind of body to the purely spiritual thought. Hence we find the whole holy scripture abounding with hieroglyphical symbols; allegorical descriptions; parabolical similes, tropes, figures of speech and action, used by the prophets and inspired writers, in their announcements to the rest of mankind of God's will and command, threats or promises.

But, indeed, is not all the knowledge which we receive from without, communicated to us by sensible signs? A book presented to the eye is as much an informing sign, as (but if representing any thing holy, is not so relished by the Protestant) an image or a painting. Speech itself and words, are but external signs, informing through the ear our thinking principle. Besides, the whole external part of God's worship, consists but in sensible signs and significative ceremonies.