

To get rid of the testimony of Saint James, who in his Catholic epistle so clearly inculcates the necessity of good works together with faith; and as if writing purposely against this impious article of the Protestant Creed, compares their faith with *works* to the belief of devils; thou believest, says he, *thou dost well: the devils believe and tremble*: Ch. 2. v. 17. 19. to get rid of this unanswerable testimony, the Arch-reformer, Luther, who stuck at nothing, had the antichristian audacity to strike this epistle out of the canonical code of Scripture, stiling it contemptuously *an epistle of straw*: though his followers have since thought proper to replace it. Yet he had more reasons than one for disliking particularly this epistle; for inculcated also, in the plainest terms, as we have seen above, two rather troublesome Sacraments which he wished to abolish, *confession* of our sins to man; and extreme unction.

XXVIII

OF THE POSSIBILITY OF KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.

Protestants deny not only the merit and utility, but even the possibility of good works. for in the Scotch Presbyterian Chatechism we read, as an article of their faith, that *no mere man since the fall of Adam, with any grace received in this life, is able perfectly to keep God's commandments; but doeth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.*

God is thus blasphemously declared to be a weak and foolish Legislator; a weak one, in not being able though acknowledged omnipotent, to make his laws be kept; since with any grace he can give he cannot enable us to observe them; a foolish one; in enacting laws which no one can possibly keep. How contrary is this to the doctrine of Scripture, where we read that *Zacharius and Elizabeth were both just before God; walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame.* Luke. 1. 6. Will they then blame those who were blameless before God; and say they daily broke his commandments in every way possible, in thought, word and deed? Yet, *if thou wilt enter into Life, says Christ, keep the commandments.* Math. 19. 17. *He who loves me keeps my commandments; he who loves me not keeps not my commandments.* John. 14. 15. 21. 23, 24. &c.

But this article of the Presbyterian's Creed is evidently as absurd as false and blasphemous. For it affirms of every one what is impossible to any one; that he daily breaks Gods commandments in thought, word and deed. He may indeed break some commandment daily; but must he so break all, and that too in thought, word, and deed? Or if he keeps some, why may he not keep all? Or should he daily kill in thought, or in word, though this last way of killing is not very intelligible; must he also daily kill in Deed? the worst of sinners then is not so bad a wretch, as this wretched, Blasphemy would make the very best of Christians.

To be continued.

BIBLICAL NOTICES AND EXPLANATIONS.

NUMBERS.

Continued.

Verse, 23.—*And taking up his parable, again he said: Alas! who shall live, when God shall do*

*these things!* This exclamation shews the distance of the events foreseen.

Verse, 24.—*They shall come in galleys from Italy. They shall overcome the Assyrians; and shall waste the Hebrews: and at the last, they themselves shall perish.*

Chapter 25.—We see in this chapter from the rigour with which God punished the fornication of his people with the daughters of Madian, how detestable the sin of impurity is in his sight.

Chapter 27—Verse 12.—*And God said to Moses: go up into this mountain, Abarim; and view from thence the land which I will give to the children of Israel.*

Moses and Aaron had offended God by their diffidence shewn in his word to them, when he bade Moses smite the rock with his rod and thus bring forth water from it, to quench the thirst of the multitude. He had been merely bidden to smite the rock; but, as if doubting, he smote it once and again. Numb. 20, 11. Therefore he, and his brother Aaron, who shared in his diffidence, were deprived of the happiness of entering the promised land, towards which they had been conducting the children of Israel. Deut. 49.

But under the veil of this prohibition there is a mystery concealed. Moses and Aaron, represented the authorities in the Jewish dispensation; or the synagogues; which was not fit to introduce the spiritual Israelites into the prefigured and true land of promise, the kingdom of heaven. They who enter that land, must pass the Jordan (in baptism) under the command of the prefigured Joshua, or Jesus, the Saviour, and fight and conquer under his banner. This is the one, whom Moses begs the Lord would provide to be over his people; to go out and in before them, to lead them out, and bring them in; lest they should be as sheep without a shepherd. The prayer of Moses was that of all the just in the synagogue, whom he here represents: and by whom the promised Messiah was ever anxiously desired and expected. Joshua is therefore chosen by Almighty God, as all those must be, who are duly appointed to conduct his people: and commissioned in the presence of all by Moses: who, laying his hands on his head, repented all things that the Lord had commanded. Thus are still consecrated the lawful guides of God's people, and shepherds of Christ's one fold, very unlike our modern, self sent, reformers. These enter not in by the door into the fold: but climb up another way; and are styled by our Saviour thieves and robbers. John, 10, 1.

After what has been premised on the several sacrifices and their accompanying rites, it were needless to dwell any longer on those enumerated and commanded in the two following Chapters; as their meanings have already been generally explained.

In the next chapter God sanctions vows, and directs how they are to be made. If they are now unlawful, as protestants pretend; let them shew in all the scripture, when or where God ever abolished them. *I came not, says our Saviour, to abolish, but to fulfil the law.*—Mat. v. 17.

Chapter xxxii.—The tribes of Ruben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasses, who obtained their inheritance on the near side of the Jordan; and before crossing it with Joshua; represent those of the people of God, who, before the coming of our Saviour, and his institution of baptism, were saved, without that sacrament. Such, however, received their desired portion only on condition of fighting with the rest of their brethren, under the command of Joshua; till all their enemies were subdued. This was spiritually done by the just in the synagogue, who believing in the Saviour to come, and practising those virtues, which he afterwards more fully and clearly inculcated; were joined in faith and practice with those, who, under the real Joshua, passed the Jordan, and defeated their enemies. In other

words, the religion of the Jews and the religion of the Christians are the same religion; as in both, the same God was worshipped; the same virtues were inculcated: the same sins forbidden: the same Saviour was looked up to. The whole hope of the synagogue was in the Saviour to come. The whole hope of the Christian Church, is in the same Saviour, who has come. The only difference between them; and a fatal one for the Jews, is that, as was foretold: these last disowned and rejected the Saviour when come; and the Christians acknowledged and received him. The Jews clung to the prefiguring rites: the Christians to their fulfilment in the Saviour's institution.

Chapter, xxxiii.—9.—*The twelve fountains of waters, and seventy palm trees, round which the Israelites encamped, are considered as prefiguring the twelve Apostles, and the first disciples.*

Verse 52.—*Destroy all the inhabitants of that Land. Beat down their pillars, and break in pieces their statues; and waste all their high places; cleansing the land, and dwelling in it; for I have given it to you for a possession.*

God, the arbiter of life and death: and the just judge and punisher of the wicked, who can use what instruments of his vengeance he pleases, orders his people to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan; the measure of whose iniquity was full. Every body acquainted with history knows, what murderous use the first reformers made of this order given by God to his people to root out and destroy the Canaanite, the Hethite, the Jebusite the Amalechite &c. and how, like the devil tempting Christ, they turned the sacred text to suit their own selfish views, and forward their iniquitous purposes, to exterminate the Catholics, whom they denounced as an idolatrous and accursed race; and establish themselves, the self-styled people of God, in their stead. They adopted the order, as addressed to themselves; and acted upon it to the utmost extent of their power. Who has not heard of the furious harangues, of a John Knox, that true son of *Apollo the destroyer*; and of the demulcing deeds of his fanatical followers. In every corner of Scotland, once a respected kingdom, from the ruins of so many churches, abbies, monasteries, and nunneries, the hallowed haunts of piety and learning; the asylums of the peaceful followers of Christ; the very stones themselves cry out against him and his desolating maniacs. Contemplate next on scripture authority the ruthless war-waging covetisers. Next the bloody horrors of the Cromwellian usurpation; the civil massacres of fellow-Christians and fellow countrymen—all based upon scripture interpreted to the aggressor's sole account. Need I mention the same perversion and profanation of the most holy word of God, still practiced in the swearing dens of the Orange blood and plunder boys? They are the champions commanded to root out the *Papish amulechite*. To them alone is justly due the inheritance of the Catholic forfeited soil. O! the darkest page in British history; and for which some day, our posterity will blush; is that which details in our islands the rise and progress of the Reformation. But where has it not caused equal horrors at its very earliest appearance? Without describing the scenes of desolation caused in the south of France by the *Albigenses*: the rebellious wars of the Anabaptist fanatics; or the civil commotions raised in Germany by the new and never heard of doctrines of Huss and Wickliffe: let us only reflect on what human blood was spilt in France in the wars raised by the rebel Hugonots; and then let us not altogether condemn those sovereigns, who thought it necessary to take measures to exclude from their dominions the desolating mania of self-taught scriptural interpretation; and a doctrinal or dogmatizing, not a moral, reformation.

To be continued.