

subject in question.—The passage alluded to, is, as follows.

“ Judas Maccabæus, having made a collection, sent twelve thousand drachmes of silver to Jeru- salem, that sacrifice might be offered up for the sins of those, who had fallen in battle: thinking well and religiously of the resurrection: for unless he hoped that they, who had fallen, would rise again, it must seem vain and superfluous to pray for the dead: and because he considered that they who had fallen asleep in godliness, had great cause laid up for hope. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.”—2 Maccab. vii. 48.

This doctrine and practice of the Jews, the Savi- our never found fault with. I could wish there- fore to know upon what authority, scriptural, or unscriptural, Protestants venture to condemn this article of the ancient faith, still held by the Jews as well as by the Catholics.

Or, scriptural authority, which they as readily produce, as the Devil did, to tempt then the Savi- our; but it is always on scripture misunderstood, or misapplied, as in their present, and sole remain- ing quotation. They cite again, a middle state after death, the following text from the Ecclesiastes. 3. *If the tree fall to the south, or the north, in whatsoever place it shall fall, there it shall lie.*— Their sole and constant argument, against such a middle state, is: *as the tree falls, so it shall lie.*— And so it surely shall, says the Catholic also: for we all acknowledge that at death is decided the eternal fate of every one. To whatever side we then fall, to the south or the north, to the side of heaven, or of hell, on that side, to which we fall, we shall lie. Yet may those, who fall to the side of bliss, not deserve to be put at once in full possession of it; though it is now to them inalienably secur- ed.

To be continued.

BIBLICAL NOTICES AND EXPLANATIONS.

Continued.

NUMBERS.

Chapter xxi.—The Israelites again murmuring against God and Moses; *the Lord sent among them fiery serpents,* (that is, serpents, the bite of which excited in the wounded a burning pain.) *These bit and killed many of the people.* But on their humble acknowledgement of their sin to Moses; and on his prayer in their behalf, God orders Moses to make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: declaring that, *whosoever, being struck, shall look upon it, shall live.*—Verse 8.

Verse 9.—*Moses therefore made a brazen ser- pent, and set it up for a sign; which, when they who were bitten, looked upon, they were healed.*

Here, according to Protestants, God orders his own express commandment to be broken: since, according to them, he had made it a distinct part of his mandatory code never to make any graven image; or the likeness of any thing in the heaven's above, or in the earth beneath, &c. On the contra- ry, however, and according to Catholics, though he expressly forbade all idols, likenesses and graven things to be made, in order to be worshipped; as having in themselves the power of seeing, hearing or helping us; that which the ignorant and benight- ed Pagans imagined; he shews by this order given

to Moses, that likenesses may be made, for most holy and instructive purposes; as that was of THE BRAZEN SERPENT: which, as our Saviour him- self informs us, was a figure of himself crucified. As Moses, says he, *lifted up the serpent in the desert; so must the Son of Man be lifted up.* John 8, 14. The brazen image of the serpent was there- fore the first crucifix: or figure of the Saviour crucified: a miraculous too, and wonder-working image: but an image which the devil cannot but abhor, as the sign of the Man-God's triumph over him; and of the salvation of our race, whom he thought to have ruined for ever. To whom then can such a sign be odious, but to those, who are called his brood; and over whose minds he has obtained a blind-folding influence? The Saviour calls it his own sign; the sign of the son of man; and surely whatever belongs to him, should be dear to the christian.

But how, one may say, could a brazen serpent have represented the Saviour? That it did so, is evident from his own words. Let us see then how his likeness is found in the serpent; which, one would think, represented rather the devil, who, under that form, had tempted and seduced our first parents in Paradise.

In order to understand the justness of this simili- tude to the Saviour, we must know, what none but the learned in languages can tell us; that the He- brew name of the Serpent is HEVE, a word at the same time which signifies LIFE, whence is de- rived the Latin word EVUM, signifying the dura- tion of life; and its compounds *primævus cœvus* in English, *primæval*, or living before; *cœval*, or liv- ing at the same time. EVE too, the name of the first woman, the mother of all mankind, from whom they were to derive their life, is from the same verbal root. LIFE then in Hebrew is the name of the serpent, & the figure traced of the serpent, be- fore perhaps the invention of letters, was equivalent to the written word life, on the Egyptian monuments, the most ancient of any, the figure of the serpent, always signifying life, is seen frequently traced: and life eternal, an attribute of the Deity, is there indicated by the serpent formed into a circle; which has neither a beginning nor an end; placed over the heads of the Egyptian divinities, *anubis, oovris, isis, serapis* as their distinguishing sign, or hieroglyph. We find also on the forehead of the Egyptian Mummy the figure of a serpent coiled up, indicating thus the seat of life.

As the art of medicine is for restoring health, and preserving life: the emblem of that science is the serpent. Hence Esculapius, a renowned Egyptian physician, was distinguished in the representations made of him, by the accompanying sign of his art, the serpent: and his daughter, Hyggria, who pre- pared his medicines, by her cup, and a serpent re- presented drinking out of it when full; or rising out of it, when drained: indicating that the sick wish- ing for life, must drain her cup; and that whoever drains it, shall have life. Both these were finally worshipped by most of the Heathen nations; the one as the God and the other as the Goddess of medicine.

The serpent then signified life; or rather was the word of life itself; and the very thing it signi- fied. It was therefore the fittest figure possible, to denote him, who is life itself: and the author and restorer of life to all who live. *I am the way, the truth and the life,* says Jesus Christ. But he, who is the essential life, assumed our mortal humanity; and dying as man, delivered us from death; which must else have ensued from the mortal bites of the fiery serpents; that is, from the poisonous, and unfortunately prevailing temptation of the serpent fiend whispered to our first mother in Paradise, and still plyed by him and his snaky legions against her envious posterity. The Israelites looking up for a cure to the dead serpent on the pole, shew that mankind must look up for salvation to life's

author slain: to the Saviour crucified. Why then did the Devil assume the figure of life, the serpent? Because he promised life; he was the false serpent, who promised life but gave death.— And God allowed him to take that form; that the Saviour might shew forth under the same hiero- glyphic form the ease with which his wisdom infi- nitely can defeat all the arts of the crafty fiend: and turn all his mischievous machinations to his own utter confusion, and discomfiture.

Verse 14.—*Wherefore, as is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, &c.* This book, which, like several others quoted in the sacred text, has been lost; shews that the scriptures, the protest- ant's pretended only rule of faith, is deficient.

Chapter xxii.—Balaam is represented by Saint Peter, as the prototype of those, who for the sake of filthy lucre and worldly advantages, turn aside from the way of truth; and pour out their calumni- ous vituperations against the camp of Israel; the church of the Saviour, leaving, says he, the right way, they have gone astray: following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of iniquity: but had a check of his madness; the dumb beast used to the yoke; which, speaking with man's voice, forbade the folly of the prophet. 2 Peter, 2, 15.

Verse, 19.—The inclination of Balaam to gratify Balac: for the sake of worldly gain, appears from his desiring that king's second messengers to stay with him, till he should know what the Lord would answer him once more. For he had already been fully informed that it was not God's will that he should go with them to Balac. Yet, on a second application, God allowed him to go; though not to curse the Israelites. He was suffered thus, on ac- count of his covetous propensity, to fall deeper and deeper into sin; till he came at last to give that abominable counsel against the people of God, which ended in his own destruction: so sad a thing it is to indulge a passion for money. D. B.

Chapter, xxiii.—It is evident from the choice and number of Balaam's victims, that he had re- tained the faith of the Ancient Patriarchs. His victims were the same as theirs; which, as has been shewn, pointed at the final all sufficing victim; and his seven altars thrice erected; on each of which he placed a calf and a ram, alluded to the seven ways in which the propitiating merits of the Saviour would be offered up, to the most holy trinity, and made applicable to the salvation of mankind; Jews and Gentiles, denoted by the double victim: the calf and ram: in other words to the seven sacra- ments of the Saviour's church.

Verse 9.—*This people shall dwell alone; and shall not be reckoned among the nations.* The church of God, as we observed above, never asso- ciated before, nor since the Saviour's time, with any other. She has ever stood, and still stands ALONE, insulated and unconnected with all other churches of man's invention. She thus preserves entire and pure the sacred depositum of faith and morals, entrusted by her divine founder to her keep- ing: and were it not for her uncompromising nature we should have witnessed long ere now the light of his revelation quite extinguished, his redeeming dispensation rendered null and void; and mankind plunged in deeper mental darkness, from the num- berless wild and contradictory theories of blasphem- ing sectaries, self-styled reformers; than even the benighted Pagans were, before the coming of him, whom the holy Simeon so emphatically proclaimed: *a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people, Israel.* Luke 2, 32.

To be continued.