

Church, in which the revealed mysteries are carefully retained: to the camp that worships before the sanctuary, where the cloud and the fire are seen to rest. Exod. 33, 9, 10.—Num. 9, 17.

*And in the midst thereof the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; there was the likeness of a man in them.*

The four living creatures are generally understood to denote the four evangelists. *There was the likeness of a man in them*; because in their Gospels the eternal Son is described under the likeness of man; whose nature he assumed.

*Every one had four faces; and every one had four wings.*

The four faces and four wings of every one, shew that the Gospel of each is addressed, and the flight directed, to all the four quarters of the earth. That they are the winged bearers in all directions of the Gospel, or glad tidings of salvation to every creature.

*Their feet were straight feet: & the sole of their foot was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the appearance of glowing brass.*

The straightness of their feet marks their undeviating tendency forward to the end proposed; the instruction, sanctification and salvation of all, among whom, in their onward progress, they arrive. Also, that they are not to be diverted from their course; or made to swerve by any forced or fanciful interpretation from their original meaning in the light that they relate: their march and gait being ever determined, controlled and directed, by the spirit of truth.

*The sole of their foot was as the sole of a calf's foot.*

It is on the sole of the foot that one stands: and it is on the typical religion of the Jews that the Christian Religion is founded. Now the supreme act of the Jewish Religion, that is, Sacrifice; consisted in the emblematical offering up chiefly of oxen, oxen, bullocks, &c.

*Their sparkling, like the appearance of glowing brass,* denotes the bright, and likewise durable quality of the truths they proclaim.

*And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides.*

It is with real human hands that the bearers of the Gospel to all the four quarters of the earth; the lawful pastors of Christ's Church; administer to the faithful the Sacraments, and all the sanctifying and saving helps, which the gospel preached by them implies.

*And they had faces and wings on their four sides—as above. And the wings of one were joined to the wings of another. They turned not, when they went: but every one went straight forward.*

All this shews their close connection, and the undeviating tendency of their flight: that their four Gospels are but one: and that the bearers, or preachers of that Gospel, having their wings so joined, keep the same unerring and steady flight: that their Rule of Faith is not a whimsical, crooked, zig-zag one; bending, according to human caprice, from right to left: that they are not, as the Apostle says, carried about with every wind of

doctrine—Ephes. 5, 14—but that their doctrine is invariable and unerring; ever tending straight forward, and directing us onwards to the happy end, for which we were created.—Not such is the march and progress of error; which follows the allurements of its fancy; or shrinks from the objects of its fears. The reptile Serpent brood can never proceed in a straight line. They are condemned to wriggle on their crooked way in the dust and filth, on which they feed. Gen. 3, 14. They have not the wings of the Dove, to carry them aloft, and bear them clear of all earthly obstruction. Ps. 54, 7.

*And, as for the likeness of their faces, there was the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side of all the four: and the face of an ox on the left side of all the four. and the face of an eagle over all the four.*

The face of a man is understood to allude to Saint Matthew; who begins his Gospel with the human genealogy of Christ; showing him thereby to be truly man, as descending from man; who at the same time is truly God. Thus the first of the four Gospels begins by describing the human; and the last, or that of Saint John, by describing the divine generation of the Saviour. In this the wings of both meet, and are joined.

The face of the Lion indicates Saint Mark; who begins his Gospel with the voice crying in the desert; where the Lion's voice is the loudest heard; and by shewing the Saviour, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, entering the wilderness; and there, according to Jacob's prophecy—Gen. 49, 9—*Couching like the Lion, or Lioness for his prey*: trying, as man, his strength in secret against the ruler of this world, before coming forth conquering to conquer. As David tried his strength upon the Lion, whom he slew; before openly facing and slaying the Goliath of the Philistines. This Gospel besides was written under the direction of Saint Peter, the immediate representative of Juda's lion; and is hence called Saint Peter's Gospel.

The right side is that of the Gentiles; for on their side did the Man-God display in their conversion the resistless might, and all-subduing force of the lion.

The left side is that of the Jews: and the face of the ox on that side, the emblem of their sacrifice, alludes to Saint Luke; who gives the priestly genealogy of the Saviour; shewing him, and also his precursor, to have been descended from the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron.

The face of the eagle over all the four. The eagle is the allegorical emblem of Saint John; who soaring over all the others, darts forth at once beyond the bounds of time: contemplates the eternal generation of the Son from the Father; and thence allighting on his native earth, proclaims him *God the word; who was made man and dwelt amongst us.*

*And their faces and their wings were stretched upwards: two wings of every one were joined, and two covered their bodies.*

*Their faces and their wings were stretched upwards to Heaven, the place to which they tend:*

the object of their utmost wishes and expectations.

The two wings of each joined, denote their close union; their moral and doctrinal concert: and the two, with which they cover their bodies, their mysterious and allegorical character.

*And every one of them went straight forward; whither the impulse of the spirit was to go, thither they went: and they turned not when they went.*

They are impelled and directed in all their movements by the impulse of that divine spirit, which the Saviour promised to send to teach his pastors all things; and guide them into all truth, to the end of the world. John 16, 23.

*And, as for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like that of living coals of fire: and like the appearance of Lamps. This was the vision running to and fro in the midst of the living creatures: a bright fire; and lightnings going forth from the fire.*

Coal is a terrestrial substance. It is here therefore the appropriate emblem of the earthly creature man all on fire with divine love.

The living creatures, thus likened to burning coals of fire, are also likened to Lamps: because, as our Saviour said of them, *they are the light of the world.* Mat. 5, 14.

Their running to and fro, denotes their indefatigable activity; their anxious and restless endeavours to spread all around them the sacred fire of that charity, with which they glow: and to shew forth, like Lamps, the light of faith, enhanced by the bright and edifying example of their virtuous conduct: as Saint Paul exhorts—*preach, says he, the word. Be instant, in season; out of season. Intreat; rebuke, in all patience and doctrine.* 2 Tim. 4, 2, and verso 5. *Be thou vigilant: labour in all things: do the work of an evangelist: fulfil the Ministry: be sober, &c.*

The bright fire; and lightnings going forth from the fire; represent proceeding from the fulminance of charity; and from their hearts all on fire with that divine virtue; their bright convincing and all subduing doctrine: their enlightening & instruction and heart-enkindling exhortations; which, for their splendid evidence, and rapid overpowering effect; are compared to the vivid and instantaneous flashes of lightning. Some consider the lightnings here mentioned, (since lightning is usually accompanied with tempest,) as emblematical of the power, with which the Church, in her Anathemas and Excommunications, blasts, as with irresistible lightnings, all heresies, schisms, and scandalous immoralities.

To be continued.

BIBLICAL NOTICES AND EXPLANATIONS.

Continued.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

This Book relates the transactions from the death of Saul, until the end of David's reign; being a history for the space of about forty-six years.

Chapter i.—Verse 10.—*I killed him.* This story of the young Amalecite was not true, as may easily be proved by comparing it with the last chapter of the foregoing book, verse 4: D. B.

It appears, the young man in the confusion of the defeat, had been able to take the diadem and bracelet from the dead body of Saul. And, in delivering them up, he thought to enhance his merit, by representing himself as the one who had finally delivered David from his most cruel and relentless persecutor.

Verse 18.—*As it is written in the book of the Just.* Here is another Book of the scripture mentioned, which has been lost.

Chapter ii. v. 10.—*He reigned two years, that*