

THE CATHOLIC.

QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB OMNIBUS CREDITUM EST.—WHAT ALWAYS, AND EVERY WHERE, AND BY ALL IS BELIEVED.

VOLUME II.

HAMILTON, [GORE DISTRICT] JUNE 22, 1842.

NUMBER 41.

THE CATHOLIC

Is Printed and Published every Wednesday morning, at

No. 21, JOHN STREET.



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Original.

ALDARNO.

Fies nobilium tu quoque Fontium
Me dicente. — Hor.

Aldarno down the clifty steep,
His crystal stream is hurling;
My ev'ry care he lulls asleep,
Sooth'd with his ceaseless purling;

As oft through each his flow'ry glade
Or with my friend I'm walking;
Or, stretch'd beneath the birchen shade,
Our minds we're freely talking.

The warbling birds from ev'ry bough
Around are sweetly singing;
Each scented flow'r of lovely hue,
To paint the mead, is springing:

Where frequent hums the prudent bee,
Her task industrious plying;
The rest, like man, with thoughtless glee,
In airy dance are vying.

Forth from the passing cloud is seen
The sun effulgent beaming;
And through the waving foliage green
His noontide radiance streaming.

The rural life I here perceive
For man was first intended,
Had ne'er the fiend sought to deceive,
Nor he his God offended.

The city now his noisy home,
To rural bliss a stranger;
Or doom'd o'er all the world to roam,
Expos'd to ev'ry danger;

Should e'er he view sweet scene, like this,
Remov'd from ought alarming;
His heart would own primaval bliss,
Nor feel ought else so charming.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION DEMONSTRATED DIVINE.

CHAPTER XL.

Judges.

The writer of this Book, according to the generally received opinion, was the prophet Samuel.

CHAPTER I—Verse 8. Jerusalem was divided into two parts. The one was called *Jebus*, the other *Salem*. The one was in the tribe of *Juda*; the other in that of *Benjamin*. It was taken and burnt by the men of *Juda*; but was retaken and rebuilt by the *Jebuzites*, as appears from verse 22, and continued in their possession till it was finally retaken by King *David*. D. B.

Verse 16. *The Children of the Cinite*, these were the posterity of *Jethro*, the father-in-law of *Moses*; who following the *Israelites*, having embraced their religion were afterwards designated *the Rechabites*. Jerem. 35.

Verse 18. *Gaza*. There were three of the principal cities of the *Philistines*, famous both in sacred and profane history. They were taken at this time by the *Israelites*; but as these took no care to put garrisons in them; the *Philistines* soon recovered them. D. B.

CHAPTER III—Verse 4. "And he left them that he might try *Israel* by them." This life is the time of trial for the just; who, if they had no temptation, could have no merit in resisting it; nor any occasion afforded them of proving their fidelity to God.

CHAPTER VI—Verse 12. "The Lord is with thee, &c." This is the usual salutation of the angelic messengers to God's favourites of the human race. It was the one addressed by the archangel *Gabriel* to the virgin mother of God. It implies all good, for if "the Lord be with us, who can be against us." It is therefore that also, which the priest, God's deputed messenger to his people, addresses to the faithful in the Mass, and other solemn services, prayers and benedictions of the church, saying: *DOMINUS VOBISCU*; or *the Lord be with you!*

Verse 15. "Behold, my family is the meanest in *Manasses*; and I am the least in my father's house."—God uniformly chooses the least and the humblest to effect his greatest and most glorious ends.

Verse 20. *Gideon's* sacrifice of "the boiled kid, and unleavened loaves;" was the emblem, as has been already noticed, of the Saviour's bloody and unbloody sacrifice. He is desired by the angel to place it on the rock; the figurative firm foundation of the church, in which the divine victim, who took the appearance of a sinner, indicated by the kid; and the true bread from heaven, represented by the unleavened loaves, is offered up in sacrifice to God. The rock itself on which the sacrifice was laid, by *Gideon*, God's chosen minister; and consumed by the fire rising out of it; is the emblem of Christ himself, devoured up, as it were, by his own divine fire of charity; that fire which "he came down to cast upon the earth; and which he so much desired to see kindled."

Verse 26. The altar, which *Gideon* built, as God had commanded him, on the top of the rock; and on which he laid his sacrifice; is the same figure continued of the church, in which the true holocaust is offered up, the church founded on the rock: and of which Christ is styled the chief corner stone.

Verse 37. *Gideon's* fleece, on which alone, at first the dew of heaven descended; is recognized by the holy fathers and doctors in the church, as the emblem of innocence in the mother of God; on which in an extraordinary degree the all purifying and refreshing dew of heavenly grace descended; as the angel *Gabriel* saluting her declared in these words; "Hail *Mary!* full of grace." The dew is often used in Scripture as the emblem of grace: and the fleece is the native clothing of the harmless sheep. In the second trial of the fleece, the dew was seen diffused all around it; shewing after her repletion with grace in a supreme degree; and when she had given us the Saviour; the benediction, through him, and grace extended to all. Her innocence, however, was indicated by the fleece, before the extraordinary descent of the dew upon it; she having been so sanctified from the first moment of her existence, as became the

one chosen of all womankind to be "the mother of the most holy and high God."

CHAPTER VII—Verse 7. None but the three hundred warriors, who, in their readiness to fight, only lapped the water from their hands, as they passed along; are chosen to be the champions and deliverers of *Israel* from the yoke of the *Madianites*; while the others, more sensually intent on quenching their thirst, who had bowed down their knees to drink, are rejected, as unworthy of sharing in the promised victory. By this we are taught a lesson of self denial, and given to understand how much in our spiritual warfare our success depends on the mortification of our animal appetites. The Saviour thus "drank of the torrent; therefore did he lift up his head."—Ps. cix. 8.

Verse 13, 14.—Under how many figures does God in his scriptures convey to the human mind the knowledge of his truths and mysteries; instructing us by our senses; and imprinting thus upon our imagination images, which it easily retains; and along with them the simple truths thereby clearly indicated. Thus, the *hearth cake* rolling down the hill, was interpreted the sword of *Gideon*. But *Gideon*, at the same time, like all the illustrious deliverers of God's people, was a prototype of their chief deliverer, the Messiah; who being, as he himself declares, the "living bread which came down from heaven;" is still more appropriately represented by the *hearth cake*, than *Gideon*. In this sense has the rolling *hearth cake* upset the camp of *Madian*; by the universal destruction of idolatry; and the establishment in its stead of his religion and her eucharistic sacrifice, in which he himself is the victim.

V. 16, &c.—By the division of *Gideon's* troops into three bands, is indicated the strength of the God in whose cause they fought; the eternal one in three. By the earthen pitchers, in which lamps were placed; are designated the mean, weak and frail instruments pitched upon by Almighty God to bring disorder and defeat into the enemy's camp; namely the Apostles, and their followers, the earliest christians; who by being agitated and beaten against one another, in persecution, and finally broken to pieces in martyrdom, displayed to their astonished and confounded enemies amid the dark night of error, the divine light of their confirming spirit, which their frail earthly vessels contained.

The sounding of their trumpets is their preaching and proclaiming of the gospel.

The men dismissed from the three hundred, were the multitude, who after, so far following, at last, from their attachment to the enjoyments of this life, abandon the true *Gideon*, *Jesus Christ*.

CHAPTER X—Verse 16. The moment sinners set about in earnest to prove by their deeds their sincere repentance; God "is touched with their miseries;" and is ready to forgive them.

CHAPTER XI—Verse 31. It is most reasonably supposed that *Jephtha's* vow was to consecrate to God whatsoever should first meet him, according to the condition of the thing; so as to offer it up as a holocaust, if it were such a thing as might be offered by the law; or to devote it otherwise to God, if it were not such. And therefore it seems probable that the daughter of *Jephtha* was not slain, by her father; but consecrated by him, tho' with regret, to perpetual virginity.—D. B.

This supposition seems confirmed, from her "bewailing with her companions her virginity;" for in the old law the bearing of children was much coveted by women, in the hope that some day the Saviour might be born of their posterity.