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The Catholic.

Quod semper; quod ubique; quod ab omnibus.

VOL. I.

KINGSTON, FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 1831.

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SELECTED.

AMICABLE DISCUSSION.

Continued.

LETTER III.

ON THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

Fifty years before Saint Cyprian, Irenæus, a disciple of Saint John through Polycarp and Papias, and, after the martyrdom of Saint Potinus, second bishop of Lyons, wrote his great work *Upon Heresies*. Hear what he says in Book IV. ch. XLIII: "For this reason we must obey those who preside in the Church, who hold their succession from the apostles, as we have shewn, and who with the succession of the episcopacy, have received the certain grace of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father." Where the certain grace of truth is found, there, assuredly, no error is to be apprehended: and there, of course, must be found infallibility. And again in the XLV. chapter of the same book, speaking of the successors of the apostles, he adds; "It is they, who preserve the faith that we hold of God alone, who made all things they who expound to us the scriptures, without danger of errors." Let us then boldly follow their exposition of scripture, confident as we are with Saint Irenæus, that we can never go astray, while we follow their steps, nor fall into error, while we adopt their interpretations.

Tertullian, so celebrated for his writings, and above all for his excellent book on the *Prescriptions* against the heretics, addresses them in the following ironical strain, "Well! then, for your satisfaction, we will suppose that all the churches have fallen in error!—not one of them has been looked upon by the Holy Spirit; not one directed in truth by the spirit which Christ had sent, and which he had asked of his Father to be for his people the teacher of truth! This agent of God, this vicar of Christ has then we will suppose neglected his ministry, by permitting the Churches to think and believe otherwise, than he had himself announced to them by the mouth of his apostles." Tertullian observed in this passage that, according to the heretics, it would follow that all the churches had fallen into error, because they all were agreed upon the articles, which the heretics rejected. He sets off the absurdity of such a supposition, by introducing the perpetual assistance of the Holy Spirit, promised to the Church by Jesus Christ. It was his belief, therefore, that the Church was always guided in the truth by the Holy Spirit, and under its influence always secure from error: and this his belief was founded upon the same reason and the same

promises that have induced the belief of it in all christian ages before and after.

If I have prolonged the discussion of the three first ages, it is because they are in general less known, because it was necessary to shew that the promises of Jesus Christ, being then more recent must on that account have been more lively in the remembrance of men; because the bishops who illustrated the rising Church were well acquainted with the rights and obligations of their ministry, and because, to discover with more splendour the dogma of infallibility, with which their minds were profoundly impressed, nothing more was wanting in those times than the appearance of favorable circumstances. These circumstances did at last appear when Providence called Constantine* to the throne, and seated religion on it with him. Soon were the bishops of the whole world beheld assembling at Nice,† where the doctrine of Arius was solemnly condemned and banished. The doctrine of Macedonius was afterwards treated the same at the general council of Constantinople,‡ that of Nestorius at Ephesus;§ that of Eutyches at Chalcedon.¶ It would be superfluous to mention all the œcumenical councils that distinguished the following ages up to the council of Trent. Let but an attentive observation be made of the circumstances, and motives which caused the convocation of these councils, the manner of proceeding adopted by the fathers in them and the reception their decrees met with in the world, and it will be perceived that in all ages there prevailed a general persuasion that the episcopal authority was the means instituted by Jesus Christ to preserve unity among all his disciples, and that the opinions adopted by the majority of the bishops are for all an infallible rule of faith. It would be tedious to pursue in detail this examination of the councils: let us confine ourselves to that of Nice,

Arius, being condemned by a synod at Alexandria, makes his complaint to several bishops in other parts, explains to them his principles, declares his submission, implores their light and assistance, succeeds in making himself some friends, some protectors and a great number of preselytes: his cause soon becomes alarming on account of the seditious tumults, and murders which it occasions. Constantine endeavours to apply a remedy to it, but fails in his attempt. In the mean time, the flame is still on the increase, and the Emperor, together with the bishops whom he consults, see no other means of extinguishing it, besides the authori-

*In 306. Proclaimed afterwards at Rome, by the Senate first of Augustus, 313.—†In 325.—‡In 381.—§In 431.—¶In 451.

ty of a general council. He convokes it at Nice. Upon the news of this, the minds of men become calm, parties relent, each one flatters himself that he shall soon see his cause triumph, and remains at peace in the expectation of the definitive decision to be pronounced at Nice. Hither assemble from Europe, Africa and Asia, patriarchs, metropolitans and bishops, to the number of 318, and in their attendance a great number of doctors, and at the head of all the celebrated Osius of Cordova, as proxy for Sylvester, the head of the Church, Arius is cited to appear—many of his partisans were there already. He comes in person to give an account of his opinions. You, see, so far the universal opinion well proved. Every thing bows before the authority that is going to pronounce sentence. Arius and his party pay homage to it, and submit beforehand. The august and venerable senate opens its sessions. Constantine appears in all his imperial pomp. I pray, you, remark this passage, in his answer he gives to an harangue that had just been addressed to him in the name of all the fathers. "The rage of division spreading through the minds and penetrating the hearts of men, excites them one against the other, troubles peace, ruins faith by rendering it uncertain, fills the country with disorder and tumults, and after all this, exposes religion to the contempt, the ridicule, and the blasphemy of our adversaries (the pagans,) who take occasion from thence to tear it in pieces. To remedy so great an evil, I have thought nothing to be so powerful as the whole Church acting with authority in this holy assembly that represents it."*

The first business the council entered upon was that of Arius. It sets about it with that maturity and wisdom that was to be expected from so great and learned an assembly, in which also were sitting a great number of confessors of the faith, mutilated in the persecution of Licinius and covered with scars, which Constantine kissed with respect. Arius and his doctrine were unanimously condemned the consubstantiality of the word recognised and fixed to the immortal symbol, which is still to this day repeated by all christians. The fathers of Nice, at the end of their labours, addressed a synodal letter to all the Churches under heaven, to notify their decisions and to offer them to the acceptance of all the Bishops in the world. In it they say, "that with one voice it had been resolved to anathematize Arius and his impious doctrine." They had already presented the decree of his condemnation to the Emperor, who had received it with the High-

*Eusebius, Sozomen, Theodoret, Nicephorus.

ost veneration as if it had been drawn up by heaven itself and had been sent to him on the part of God. He added, that whoever would not submit should be banished as a rebel to a divine decision. This menace reduced to obedience Arius and the followers of his doctrine, who till then had refused to subscribe to the decision of the council. Constantine afterwards dispatched two letters one encyclical, addressed to the churches in general, the other to the church of Alexandria, where the heresy had first appeared. In the first are found these words:

Whatever is done in the councils of the bishops ought to be considered as the will of God.* And in the second, after enumerating the tumults, disorders, and schisms that the heresy had produced, he adds, "It was in order to put an end to all these that, by the will of God, I assembled so great a number of bishops at Nice." And at the conclusion, "What three hundred bishops have ordained is nothing else than the sentence of the only Son of God, the Holy Spirit has declared the will of God by means of these great men, whom he inspired. Therefore let no one doubt, let no one delay, but all of you return in good earnest into the way of truth."* Before he dismissed them, he reassembled the bishops in his palace, where he delivered to them an excellent discourse to recommend to them the peace of the church, which they would preserve by preserving inviolably amongst themselves a perfect union of mind and heart in unity of doctrine and sentiment, conformably with what the Holy Spirit had just established by their means in the council.

Eusebius, of Cesarea, who a long time opposed the word consubstantial, afterwards wrote the life of Constantine, in which he praises his indefatigable zeal to secure the superiority of that salutary faith which the Holy Spirit himself had truly promulgated by the holy fathers assembled at Nice.

After the condemnation of Arius, they examined the question of the paschal solemnity; all the fathers agreed to observe it on the same day, and the orientals promised to conform to the practice of all the other churches, that is to say, of Italy, of Africa, of Lybia, of Egypt, of Spain, the Gauls, Britain, Greece, Asia, and Pontus. "The council of Nice," says Athanasius in his apology, "has been doubly useful, because these people of Syria, Lybia, and Mesopotamia, had not been accustomed to celebrate the pasch on the proper day, and because the Arian heresy had arisen against the Church. The catholic world assembled in council. The day of the pasch was regulated for all, and Arianism was condemned. It is true that for the day of the pasch they used these terms, it hath seemed good to us, after the example of the apostles, in order that all the world may obey—but to regulate faith they said: the Catholic Church believes; and immediately they add the entire confession, to shew

*Thus it was that the decision of the council was proposed as a divine oracle after which there was nothing more to be examined, for we are not to doubt that these letters of the Emperor were dictated by the bishops, or at least drawn up according to their instructions. This is the reflection made by the judicious Fleury, after introducing the letters of the Emperor.

that it was not a new doctrine, but that of the apostles, and that what they had put down in writing was not their own invention, but derived from the apostles."

But if afterwards Arius and some of his adherents retracted their word and the obedience they had sworn, the passions incident to men explain this perjury but too well; we should doubtless lament it and deplore the fatal consequences it produced upon the unfortunate reigns of Constantius and Valens. But it is enough for our present purpose to know that Arius and his partizans had recognized this authority before it explained itself, and that they themselves had afterwards submitted to its decision, and that they did not venture to revolt against it, for a considerable time after their condemnation. With regard to the other bishops in various parts, who had not been able to assist at the council, they almost all applauded its decrees; the most enlightened doctors took up the defence of them, immediately they were called in question, and generally all nations conformed to them. The Nicene Creed, already adopted by the universal Church was for the second time universally proclaimed at the council of Constantinople, and there received the additions made necessary by the heresy of Macedonius against the Holy Ghost. From the other age, it was publicly recited in the Greek churches, according to the ordinance of Timotheus, patriarch of Constantinople; sung in the Churches of Spain, according to the form of the Oriental churches, by the decree of the council of Toledo: in the Gauls and Germany towards the end of the eighth century, towards the year 1014; and in all Italy by the constitution of Benadict VIII, in fine it has been kept by the reformation: and in our days it is still held in honor among almost all protestant communions.

And to say a word upon the particular opinion of the most celebrated doctors of the Church, the learned Eusebius of Cesarea, who in the Council, held out a long time against the term consubstantial was not on first account prevented from writing afterwards, that the Holy Spirit himself had truly promulgated the faith, by the instrumentality of the fathers of Nice. He had already reckoned among the evils inflicted by Licinius on the church, the prohibition to assemble councils. "For," adds the historian, "important controversies can never be terminated without a synod." We know with what strength, spirit and eloquence Athanasius supported during a struggle of 60 years, against the Semiaris, the decisions of the council of Nice. Threatened with exile when in his see, and with death in his exile, he evinced the same courage and had not less credit at the extremities of the Gauls, at Treves, than in Egypt, and at Alexandria. From all the places where he was constrained to take refuge, he combated with unshaken firmness that heresy armed as it was with the power of two Emperors, and many times in synod carried off in triumph the formula of Nice, as the rule of the orthodox faith. He calls it the word of God, the divine and sacred oracle of the holy Spirit. "What can be wanting to the council of Nice that we can desire

further? The Indians are not ignorant of it, and all the christians of barbarous countries revere it. The word of God, who has spoken by this oecumenical council, will remain for ever." See now how he commences the profession of faith, which the Emperor Jovian had demanded of him in 363, after the agitated and unfortunate reigns of Constantius and Julian. "Know then, O Emperor, that the faith which the fathers of Nice have acknowledged, is the faith that has been preached from the beginning; know that it is followed by all the Churches of the world, whether in Spain or in England, in the Gauls, in all Italy, in Dalmatia, Dacia, Mysia, Macedonia and all Greece, in Pamphylia, Lycia, Isauria, Egypt, Lybia, Pontus and Cappadocia. To these we must add all our neighbouring Churches, as well as those of the east, except a small number, who are in the party of the Arians. We know all those whom we have just named and others still more distant: we even have letters from them." Cyril of Alexandria expresses himself of the fathers of Nice with the same veneration. "Truly, with them was Jesus Christ, who said, when two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them, for how should we be permitted to doubt that Jesus Christ himself invisible presided over this great and holy assembly?" St. Hilary, St. Basil, and St. Jerome hold the same language. St. Ambrose whose sentiments ought to be discoverable in every christian heart, hesitated not to declare: "I embrace the decrees of Nice, from which neither death nor the sword shall separate me." Saint Augustine calls it "the council of the world, whose decrees are equal to the divine commandments." Speaking of the error of Saint Cyprian upon rebaptisation, he says, that "this holy martyr would have adhered to the decision of the Church, if the truth had been cleared up and declared in his time by a general council," as it afterwards was at Arles and Nice. From these principles, which are also ours, this great man concluded in another passage, as we also conclude with him, "that disputes may be tolerated before the matter is decided by the authority of the church, but that to dispute after such decision, is to root up the foundation of the Church itself.

Pope Leo declares that, "they could never be reckoned among catholics, who would not follow the definitions of the venerable synod of Nice, or the regulations of the great council of Chalcedon." "I declare, (wrote Gregory the Great) that I receive and venerate the four first general councils, as the four books of the holy gospel." Socrates, who wrote his ecclesiastical history a century after the council, says, that "the fathers of Nice, although for the greater part simple and unlearned, could not fall into error; because they were enlightened by the light of the Holy Spirit."

It would certainly be very easy, were it not long and tedious, to produce here many other passages which the writings of the fathers of the Church furnish upon this subject. You will perhaps be more pleased to learn that the authority of the fathers of Nice has found defenders even amongst

the reformers. The most learned and the most moderate protestant theologians have made no difficulty in submitting to the decisions of the four first general councils; and upon that of Nice hear how, amongst others, Bull, bishop of St. David's, one of the most skillful divines of your English Church, expresses himself. "In this council was discussed one of the principal articles of the Christian Religion, (the divinity of Jesus Christ.) If upon a leading article we can imagine that all the pastors of the Church could have fallen into error and led the faithful astray, how shall we able to defend the word of Christ, who promised his apostles and, in their persons, their successors, to be always with them? a promise, which would not be true, since the apostles were not to live long were it not that their successors are here comprised in the persons of the apostles."* You see the infallibility of the council of Nice here recognised by the learned bishop of St. David's, as resting on the firmest foundation, the promises of Jesus Christ, whose word shall never pass away. The reasoning of Dr. Bull, is the reasoning of antiquity, of all the fathers, and of the church at all times. It might and it ought to have led him to the church, and yet did not do it. A deplorable example this of the tyranny, that the prejudices of education and the miserable interests of the world exercise over even well disposed minds †

What I have been saying on the circumstances, preceding, accompanying, and succeeding the first general council, ought one would imagine, to be sufficient to convince you that before and after this assembly as well as during its sitting, it was the general persuasion that infallibility had been promised to the Church, to maintain unity of doctrine and government. You have seen the motives that induced the bishops to desire its convocation, and the Emperor to effect it. You have seen all the parties acknowledging beforehand the authority of the great council and prepared to submit to its decisions. You have heard the illustrious testimonies that have since been given of it; its formulary of faith, applauded throughout the world, received as coming from heaven itself, celebrated in hymns, in the solemnities of worship, and in the Liturgies: engraven upon the memories of all the faithful and repeated from age to age from one end of the world to the other, by every christian tongue.

As to the opinion which prevailed among the fathers of this council, whatever distrust they might individually have had of their own lights, there

* Defence of the Nicene Faith. pref. No. 2. p. 2.—† During my residence in England, there fell into my hands a very voluminous collection of notes upon Ecclesiastical history. They were loose and superficial, indicating much reading but little learning. The author who called himself a theologian, alluding to the passage above quoted, evinces much spleen against the learned bishop. He observes nevertheless, and with more reason than he appears to think, that with such principles upon the authority of the church, Bull ought to have taken a bold step, and finished the business by passing over to the Church of Rome. There is not less justness in this observation, than truth in the doctrine that gave rise to it. Happy would have been both the church and the bishop, had the former learnt the principle from the latter, and had both been blessed with courage enough to follow up its consequence! This author whose right notes have left but few traces in my mind, is called, to the best of my recollection Doctor Jortin.

was undoubtedly not one of them, who did not remember the promise of Jesus Christ, and who, upon his word, was not convinced that the spirit of truth hovered invisibly over the assembly to direct its decisions. You have already heard one of those who sat among the judges of the faith, Eusebius of Cesarea: and also Athanasius, who had the honour of accompanying Alexander, his patriarch, to the council, and of distinguishing himself by his erudition and eloquence. There will be no necessity for recurring here to their testimonies. The anathemas pronounced by the council will suffice. They plainly shew an entire confidence of infallibility. "A society that does not possess it, and that from its own confession may be surprised into error, might indeed exclude from its bosom those who should refuse to conform to its laws; but to denounce to execration, to devote to eternal malediction, and to deliver up to satan, those who would not receive its decisions, this goes far beyond the rights and the power of man; it belongs only to a society, convinced that it possesses an extraordinary privilege, and which, feeling itself under the protection and direction of the Holy Spirit, is firmly persuaded that, with such a guide, it cannot err in its decisions.

To be continued.

DEFENCE OF CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES,

By Demetrius A. Gallitzin, a Russian Prince; now a Catholic Priest; addressed by him to a reviler of our Holy Religion.

Continued.

Permit me a few words more on another important subject, on which our doctrine is grossly misrepresented—I mean the doctrine of the Catholic Church on.

TOLERATION.

We are represented as the most intolerant set of men upon earth. The most cruel the most uncharitable intolerance is laid to our charge; but this charge against us, probably proceeds from a misunderstanding of our doctrine on that subject.

The question here is not about civil Toleration. Catholics and Protestants are united in considering civil Toleration an invaluable blessing, especially in a country like ours, where there were so many different denominations at the time its constitution was formed. We all agree in believing, that no authority merely human, possesses any right of controlling the consciences of men.

The question then before us is concerning theological Toleration, viz. whether almighty God can approve of so many different religious systems, which we find established upon earth; whether all these different religious systems can be considered as so many different ways to Heaven. If so, we ought to be in favor of universal Toleration.

The Catholic church teaches, that Jesus Christ established but one church for the salvation of man, and that out of that one church salvation is not to be had.

The written word is very plain on this subject: there shall be made one fold and one Pastor." John

x. 16. "I beseech you, that you all speak one thing, and that there be no schisms among you, but that you be perfect in one sense and one judgment." 1 cor. 1. 10.

Christ prayed that his disciples might be one, John xvii. 11.

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Ephes. iv. 5. "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

Marc. xvi. 16. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6.

"I believe one holy Catholic and Apostolic church," says the Nicene Creed, which is admitted by both Catholics and Protestants.

"This is the Catholic faith," says the Creed of St. Athanasius, (likewise admitted by Catholics and Protestants,) "which if any one does not faithfully and firmly believe, he cannot be saved."

Several creeds and professions of faith which I have carefully perused, very plainly and unequivocally assert, that out of the Church, which is but one, salvation cannot be obtained; so says the church of England; so says the church of Scotland, &c. What, indeed, can be more reasonable? And what, on the other hand, more unreasonable, more absurd, than universal Toleration? to be convinced of it, it is only necessary to examine what true religion is.

True religion is an institution, of which God himself is the founder. It is an institution, in which God makes known to man what he must believe, and what he must do in order to obtain salvation. It is a system, not the offspring of human reason, not the result of human philosophy, not the ingenious contrivance of human talents and learning; it originates in the fountain of eternal and infinite wisdom, and was, by the supreme authority of God, established on earth, to control both the understanding and the will of man, dictating to his understanding what he must believe, and to his will what he must submit to do, in order to obtain salvation. It will not be denied, that God has as much right to control our understanding, to require a submission of our understanding to the belief of whatever mysteries he chooses to reveal, as he has a right to control our will to submit to his commandments. It will be acknowledged, that God alone can save man; that God alone can institute [a religion worthy of himself, and adequate to supply all the spiritual wants and necessities of man; a religion, in which all those heavenly blessings are administered, which transform the carnal into a spiritual man, and finally into a citizen of Heaven. God alone can draw man out of the mire of original corruption, and he alone has a right to determine by what means this wonderful change from depravity to innocence is to take place. None but God can attach to the weak element of water the power of performing this astonishing change.

None but God can wash away the iniquities of man, and restore to him his sanctifying grace; and none but he has a right to determine the means by, and the conditions upon which, this blessing of reconciliation and forgiveness is to be granted.

None but God can feed and nourish the soul.

man, or arm the soul with power sufficient to overcome his spiritual enemies, and to persevere to his last breath in the performances of his duty, and in the service of his Creator.

In short, sir, whatever blessings we stand in need of none but God can convey them, or determine the precise manner in which we are to obtain them. To say that man, even the wisest man, may, by the force of reasoning, contrive the religious system calculated to answer the above purposes, is to equal him to God.

Religion, then, is that divine institution of God's own creation, in which is shown to man the way to glorify God, and to procure everlasting happiness to his own soul. In it are established by Jesus Christ, certain rites or ceremonies, as so many channels to convey to our souls those manifold blessings which we stand in need of. Those rites are called sacraments, and must be precisely the very thing that Jesus Christ instituted. If they are only of the institution of man, they are no longer entitled to religious respect, as man has not the power to annex heavenly blessings to the performing of certain external acts. I shall explain this general position by a few examples.

Jesus Christ has annexed to the pouring of water on a person, and the pronouncing of the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the grace of cleansing that person of the guilt of original sin. So we are told by the church, the infallible interpreter of God's word.

Pray, sir, would it be in the power of man to substitute some other words and ceremonies, and to make them equally efficacious in conveying the same blessing? I believe not. Jesus Christ has annexed to the words, *absolve te a peccatis tuis*, (I absolve thee from thy sins,) when pronounced by a lawful successor of the apostles, the power of really remitting sins, provided the sinner is well disposed. So we are told again by the infallible interpreter of God's word. Pray, sir, would it be in the power of man to give the same efficacy to some other words of his own contrivance? I think not.

Jesus Christ has annexed to the imposition of hands by legally consecrated bishops, and to the pronouncing of certain words, the power of communicating the Holy Ghost; which rite we call the sacrament of Confirmation. So we are told again by the Church. Is it in the power of man, by some other ceremonies and words of his own contrivance, to impart the spirit of God to his fellow-mortals? Certainly not.

It is obvious then, that none but the one system of religion, which Jesus Christ himself established, is entitled to any religious respect whatever. In that one alone is to be found the true scripture, the true interpreter of scripture, the true word of God, the true sacrifice, the true sacraments, in that one only system of religion is to be found the true ministry of Christ, the power of the keys, &c. Reform that system of religion in one only point, and you deform it; you change the work of God into the work of man. Denominate this doctrine uncharitable, cruel, barbarous, or whatever you please, it

is beyond all doubt the doctrine of truth and common sense, and of course the only one which genuine charity will make use of, because it is the duty of charity to lead along the thorny paths of truth, and not along the enchanting and flowery roads of falsehood and deception. I here appeal, not to your learning; not to your genius and talents, but only to your common sense, to that share of common sense which enables you to know that black is not white; and I ask you, whether it be uncharitable to teach, that contradictory systems of religion cannot all proceed from the holy spirit of truth; whether it be uncharitable to say, that of a hundred religious systems, contradicting one another in some point or other, only one can possibly be true, only one can proceed from the spirit of truth! When we hear one minister preaching up the necessity of baptism for salvation, and another promising salvation without baptism, is it uncharitable to say, that one of them is the minister of error, and not of Christ? When we hear one minister declare infants not admissible to baptism, and another, on the contrary insisting on the necessity of baptizing infants, is it uncharitable to say, that one must be a teacher of error?

In short, sir, comparing together those many hundred religious systems which your fruitful reformation has produced, contradicting one another in the whole or in part, is it uncharitable to say, that but one of them (if any at all) can originate in the fountain of truth?

Is it uncharitable to say, that if Calvin is right, Luther must be wrong; if Arminius teaches the truth, Gomar must be a teacher of falsehood; if Socinus be the teacher of pure and undefiled truth, Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Melancthon, Fox, Zuinglius, &c. &c. must all be ministers of error?

Or will it be more charitable [adding blasphemy to deception] to say, as the independent minister appears to do, page 58, that all these different teachers, although contradicting one another in most essential points, are all ministers of the God of truth? He makes mention of no less than seventy odd names of persons who were raised, he says, by the Almighty, from the seventh to the sixteenth century, to oppose the errors of the Church of Rome; many of whom differed more from one another in matters of faith, than they did from the Catholic church. It appears then that he, with many more of his colleagues, admits of but one criterion of the true faith, viz, that of protesting against the holy Catholic church. Thus when Luther pleads the necessity of baptism, and the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, he will say, *the man is right*. When Fox rejects Baptism, Eucharist, and all other sacraments, he, with the poetical Tinker, will say again, *the man is right*. When Calvin, differing from both, sees nothing in the Eucharist but signs or symbols of the flesh and blood of Christ, again he will say, *the man is right*.

When Wickliff rises up against almost all divine and human institutions, and tries to establish his abominable system of liberty and independence, which caused so much blood to flow; here again *"the man is right"*.

The independent minister and I believe, all our modern ministers, those I mean, who would appear liberal, charitable, and I suppose, fashionable, will tell you, that all those men and many more were true ministers of God. They will tell you forsooth, that they evinced their divine mission by opposing, by protesting against, the Church of Rome.

Thus is common sense sacrificed at the shrine of spite and malice, and a most impious, blasphemous system, a compound of the most palpable contradictions, obtruded on the ignorant and the prejudiced, as the pure religion of Jesus, under the name of *Protestant Religion*.

Here is toleration and liberality extended to all sorts of creeds, but excluding the greatest number of the christian people.

You will hardly call such toleration and liberality charitable; as on the one hand it makes too many exceptions, and on the other hand, as I have proved it is not founded upon truth, and cannot meet, the approbation of common sense: it is a deceptive kind of charity; it calls out peace, peace, and there was no peace, it lulls the unhappy sinner into false security and under the pompous names of reformation, protestantism, &c. leads him far away from the only true Church of Christ.

Catholic intolerance is both rational and charitable; it is founded upon the immovable rock of eternal truth. Sure of the assistance of Christ for ever sure of being directed by the spirit of truth into all truth for ever? the holy Catholic Church has at all times condemned as heresy, any doctrine contradicting her doctrine.

As a tender mother and faithful spouse of Jesus Christ, she has always, in the spirit of charity, endeavoured to preserve her children from the delusive and flowery paths of heresy; and in the most sorrowful accents, she prays, she entreats those that have left her, to return to her pale. She perseveres in fervent prayers for the conversion of her strayed children, and would fain carry them back upon her shoulders to the only one fold of Christ. Is not this the genuine charity?

Moreover, whilst the Holy Catholic Church guided by the Holy Ghost for ever, fulminates her anathemas or curses against all kinds of heresies or false doctrines, she feels nothing but charity and compassion for so many individuals, professors of heresy; she charitably supposes them honest in their errors, and therefore not guilty in the sight of God of the crime of heresy. She considers them as invincibly ignorant of the true church; and consequently as excusable in the sight of infinite mercy. But still she deploras their misfortune of being deprived (although frequently not through their own fault) of so many means of salvation, not to be found out of her pale.

Catholic intolerance then exhibits stronger features of genuine and practical charity, than Protestant toleration and liberality. Yet I must confess its sound is harsher, and by no means so melodious as the syren song of deception and flattery, which calls every system *the true Church of Christ*, provided, it protests against the Catholic Church.

CONCLUSION.

I have endeavoured to explain the most essential articles of Catholic faith, in order to prove that we are not guilty of superstition, and I hope that, with the candid, I have succeeded. Those who are not sincere, who with seeing eyes will not see I cannot expect to convince. Many points of minor importance I have omitted, not wishing to swell my Defence into a large volume. Thus I have said nothing about the sign of the cross, about holy water, blessed salt, blessed candles, and many more things made use of by Catholics. It is surprising, indeed, that people who call themselves Christians, should be scandalized at the sign of their redemption. Freemasons have their signs, many other societies have their signs, soldiers have their signs and countersigns, pray why should the soldiers of Jesus Christ not be permitted to arm themselves with the sign of the standard of Christianity, under which our chief conquered the powers of hell and under which alone the Christian soldier is to conquer? Tertullian testifies (in his book *de Corona Militis*), that the practice of making the sign of the cross is most ancient and most common in the Church of Christ.

Pray how will those feel who despise and ridicule that practice, when they shall see *the sign of the son of man* appear in Heaven? *Mat. xxiv. 30.*

As for holy water, blessed salt, and many other things blessed by the prayers of the church, I do not understand how they can become any subject of scandal to any one believing in the power of Christ.

If inanimate things have been cursed by God, of infinite justice, in punishment of the sin of our first parents, (*Gen. iii. 17*;) the curse cannot be removed and changed into a blessing, but by the power and the merits of Jesus Christ. This supreme power, confided by Christ to his ministers, *Mat. xxviii. 18.* is exercised by them in blessing water, salt and many other things for the use of man.

Where is the superstition in believing, that those elements created for the use of man but, cursed by a justly irritated God may be blessed again and sanctified by the prayers of the Church, thro' the merits of Jesus Christ?

Instances are so very common of the good effects produced by the use of holy water, blessed salt, and many other blessed things, that it would take many volumes to publish them all. I have been frequently applied to by parents, whose children were afflicted with the most strange and unaccountable symptoms, and have found that, after all the powers of medicine had been tried in vain, a little blessed salt, or some other things, blessed by the prayers of the church, through the merits of Jesus Christ, very often performed a complete cure.

If you were to read the memoirs of those missionaries, who with unabated zeal, and often at the expense of their blood, converted millions of idolaters, in Canada, South America, the East Indies, China, Cochinchina, Siam, Persia, &c. you would find instances by hundreds of the efficacy of the sign of the cross, holy water, &c. in banishing evil spirits, and destroying that power which those infernal spirits frequently exercise over the souls' be-

lies, and property of those who are guilty of idolatry, of which we find so many instances in the New Testament.

God has chosen the weak things of this world, that he might confound the strong. *I Cor. 1. 23.* The efficacy of blessed things is so well known to many Protestants that it is not very uncommon to see Protestants apply to Catholic Priests for holy water, blessed salt, candles, &c. To believe that any miraculous power or virtue resides in that water, salt or any other of God's inanimate creatures, would be superstition indeed; but to believe that the infinite power and goodness of Jesus Christ, exercised by the church, may apply a certain blessing to those inanimate creatures, so as to render them productive of certain happy effects, when applied to man, is no more superstition, than to believe that the waters of Jordan, through the power of God, became instrumental in curing the leprosy of Naaman. *4 Kings, v. 14.*

Our age, dear sir, is the age of incredulity, commonly called the age of philosophy. It is almost fashionable to disbelieve, to reject with disdain and contempt, every thing which we cannot perceive with our carnal senses, or compass with our limited and much corrupted understanding. At the hour of death, at the entrance of eternity, when the senses shall have lost their baneful influence, and corrupted reason shall be almost extinguished, we shall remember that there is an omnipotent God, who can do what he pleases; to whom the laws of nature are subject who can and does, for his own glory and the salvation of man, subvert those very laws; as he did through the Ministry of Moses, when he opened the Red Sea, and as he did again through the ministry of Joshua, when he stopped the Sun in its course. We shall then remember that there is a God of truth, who ought to be believed, and as much so when what he reveals is incomprehensible, as when it is ever so plain; as much so when what he reveals appears contrary to the laws of nature, as when his revelations are in unison with those laws.

Permit me, Sir, to close my subject by contracting in as narrow a compass as possible, and exhibiting before your eyes, under one point of view, all the sublime mysteries of my creed, which have been explained to you one by one.

To be continued.

From the Philadelphia.

DEFENCE OF MT. ST. MARY'S COLLEGE.

Dear Sir,

I have read the attack of the ungrateful Cooper published in the "Philadelphia," and whilst a sense of justice towards myself and the Institution, as well as of respect for the opinion of a candid public, compels me to allude to the circumstances of his late expulsion, I must beg leave to retreat unceremoniously from every thing like a personal issue with Mr. Cooper, or any other student of this place who has contrived to have himself branded with the deepest note of infamy known to college discipline.

James Cooper is a boy of about 25 years of age, who previous to his admission, had been for some time labouring in the vocation of a country schoolmaster. His petition to be admitted was supported by the special request of his father, and with

his own solemn assurance that notwithstanding his age, "he would conduct himself (in reference to the rules) with the docility of a child." He was admitted under these circumstances: and his acquirements entitled him to a place in the elementary classes of Latin and French. Mr. Cooper's "docility of a child," soon gave place to an extraordinary talent for mischief. He began to create discontent in the minds of the Protestant students, by representing that their principles were outraged and their prejudices unrespected. The history of this real or pretended outrage was simply this: Two Protestant boys, without my knowledge, and I am sure without any bad intention, organized what they designated the "African Church."—This was the origin of "sheep-pen and beer barrel preachers," &c. and this was immediately prohibited by me as soon as the "memorialists" made known to me that it existed and was offensive.

This cause of discontent being thus promptly removed, it was hoped that the harmony for which this Institution has been distinguished uniformly from its first establishment, would be disturbed no more. But it appears Mr. Cooper had determined otherwise. His violation of the rule by which it is enjoined to keep silence in the dormitories and elsewhere after the hour of retiring, had become so frequent and so wanton, that it became necessary for the Prefect to enforce the penalty, which consisted in a task of memory and loss of recreation. Here again Mr. Cooper forgot the "docility of a child," and trusting to the arm of flesh, declared publicly that he would have "knocks down first." The alternative of obedience to the rule or expulsion had for the moment the desired effect.

In his intercourse with the larger of his fellow students, Mr. Cooper was equally pugnacious. One of them, in the public play-room, he dared to a "fist fight;" and when the young gentleman declined the honor of contending for a bully's fame, Mr. Cooper, reckless of the influence which his bad example might have on the minds of his younger fellow students, sent the following challenge & threat, the autograph of which is still preserved in the college.

"St. Mary's, 16th of March 1831."

"Mr. H. will not flatter himself that the occurrence of Saturday evening is forgotten: although he is, at present, protected by his own meanness, it will not always afford him protection: at another time and in a more suitable place, the punishment his insolence so richly merits will be inflicted.

Your obedient Servant,

James Cooper, jr."

From these and other exhibitions of an objectionable character, it became every day more apparent that Mr. James Cooper, jr was not a proper companion for our students, nor a suitable inmate for a well ordered house of public education. Besides the influence of his example, the discontent which he created, and which under his tutelage was waxing into proximate insubordination, was unprecedented in the history of the institution. Cooper's assertion in which he states that a boy received forty lashes for one misdemeanor and thirty for another, is false. The boy indeed was subjected to corporeal chastisement, but it was merited and did not amount to one seventh part of the misrepresentation. Neither was it for quitting a communion society, as Cooper falsely asserts, but solely for leaving the College premises without being attended by one of his tutors, who would be responsible for his moral and personal safety. There is no person who does not see the imperious necessity of enforcing this all important rule.

With regard to the assertion that I "declared I would rather be an Atheist and abjure God, than be a Calvinist!" I deem it almost unworthy of notice, and the artfulness of Mr. Cooper consists in making me speak against a sect, whereas I spoke against

st a doctrine. I was lecturing on the possibility of salvation, proving on the assurance of the sacred Scripture, that God suffers no one to be tempted above his strength, that he wishes the salvation of all men, and that I would find it more rational to be an Athiest than to believe that God could create any one, under the *unavoidable destiny of being damned.*

The readers of the "Philadelphian" would suppose that the expulsion of Mr. Cooper, trod on the heels of his "memorial" praying for respect to be paid to Protestant feelings, which were never interfered with. But the fact is that three months elapsed before the faculty had recourse to the last remedy. And during this interval the teachers in order to diminish as much as possible the disproportion between his age and his education, gave him at the generous sacrifice of their own times, *private lectures in Geometry and Greek.* Gratitude, we are told, is the index of a noble mind!

In a word, it is almost evident, that this young man came or was sent for the express purpose of producing one of those Collegiate insurrections with which this Institution has been unacquainted; thanks to the unbending energy of our discipline, which is blind to the distinctions of age, and preses with equal impartiality on the child of ten, and the child of twenty-five. That Mr. Cooper should call the act by which he was dismissed from the College an act of *tyranny*, is quite natural, and that he should represent himself as the victim of my thing; but his own ill conduct, is equally so.—But impartial men will judge.

I also send you two documents which have been sent to me in consequence of Cooper's publication. The one is signed by sixteen of his fellow students still in the College, including Protestant and Catholics; the other by two Protestant young gentlemen of Frederick, who have been educated here. The closing paragraph of the former will give you an idea how far Mr. Cooper is likely to be sustained in appealing to the testimony of his late fellow students.

Their letter concludes in these words.

"We, therefore, deem it no more than an act of justice to assure you, that we disclaim every thing which might be interpreted as a concurrence in the sentiments which he (Cooper) has expressed—that we consider his publication in the "Philadelphian" to be the malicious effusion of an ungenerous heart, an attempt by an *humbled* student, as base as it is unavailing, to bring into disrepute the authors of his just humiliation, by representing his expulsion as the result of religious intolerance, and endeavouring to excite the sympathies of an unsuspecting public in his behalf, as the devoted victim of religious persecution—in a word, we regard all his accusations as false and ungrounded, and we consider his expulsion from this College as the just meed of his own misconduct.

We are, Rev. Sir,

Most respectfully, Yours," &c.

The other letter is in the following words.

Frederick city, May 4th, 1831.

Respected Sir,

Having seen in a late number of the "Philadelphian" an article calculated to impair the future usefulness of the institution over which you have the honor to preside. we deem it our duty as Pro-

testants, and an act of justice to the gentlemen associated with you, to state, that during our residence at the College, we observed nothing in the conduct and treatment of Protestant students to support the author of the article alluded to in any of his assertions.

We entered the College Protestants, we left it such; we never perceived any distinction made on account of difference of religious belief—no persecution for opinion's sake—the honors of the College were conferred on those, and those only, who merited them by their superior knowledge of the branch they had studied, their talents, and good conduct.

We thank Mount St. Mary's a valuable institution, and highly approve its rules and regulations, and the manner in which they are administered.

With due respect, &c.

WILLIAM R. SANDERSON,
G. M. TYLER."

REV. J. B. PURCELL, D. D.

President of Mt. St. Mary's College.

With this simple statement of facts, and the request that the Editor of the "Philadelphian" will publish it as an act of justice to an injured party, I take leave of Mr. James Cooper, jr. and of the subject. Where he and Mount St. Mary's are known, even this statement is unnecessary. Would it be asking too much to request that those papers which have copied the attack of Mr. Cooper from the "Philadelphian," would also insert the explanation?

JOHN B. PURCELL,

Pres. of Mount St. Mary's College.
Mount St. Mary's College, May 5th, 1831.

ORIGINAL.

The following interpretation of one of the darkest portions of Holy Writ, will, we hope, be acceptable to most of our readers.

THE VISION OF THE MYSTICAL CHARIOT IN EZEKIEL EXPLAINED

CURRUS DEI DECEM MILLIBUS MULTIPLEX
MILLIA LÆTANTUM: DOMINUS IN EIS; IN
SINA, IN SANCTO. Ps. 67, 18.

The Chariot of God is attended by tens of thousands; thousands of them that rejoice. The Lord is among them in Sina; in the holy place.

EZEKIEL—Chapter I—Verse 4.

And I saw; and behold a whirlwind came out of the North: and a great cloud: and a fire enfolding it: and brightness was about it: and, out of the midst of the fire, as it were, the resemblance of amber.

Explanation.—The *whirlwind* is the sudden, impetuous rushing, and overwhelming blast of the Gospel; bursting forth from the North; that is, from Rome, the Babylon of the Gentiles, and Capital of the Heathen world; whence the faith of the Redeemer, taught there by Saint Peter, his chief Apostle and Representative; (the rock on which Christ said he would build his Church) and by Saint Paul, the specially chosen Doctor of the Gentiles; was to take its progress over all the nations of the earth; prostrating and levelling with

the breath of their preaching, and that of their successors; as with a sudden rushing and irresistible hurricane, the whole wide spread fabric of Idolatry, error and immorality.—So rapid and effective was this *whirlwind* of the word divine; that Saint Paul, in his epistle to the Roman converts, gives thanks to God that their faith is already spoken of in the whole earth. Rom. 1, 8. So soon was verified the prophecy of the Psalmist: *their sound has gone forth into all the land: and their words to the ends of the world.* Ps. 18, 4.

And a great cloud, &c.—The impenetrable mysteries of the Christian revelation, always represented and prefigured by the cloud. No man ever entered within that cloud; or saw and understood the mysteries it concealed; but the Man-God; the divine law giver himself; represented by Moses, the law giver of the Jews. Exod. 20, 21.—24, 2, 18.

And a fire enfolding it.—It is all embraced, that Revelation, by that fire divine, which the Saviour said he came to cast upon the earth; and which he desired so much to see enkindled: Luke 12, 49, the sacred, all-enlivening and purifying fire of Charity, which he sent down upon his early followers in the form of fiery tongues; his holy spirit thus indicating by the form he then assumed, the gift he gave; that of enkindling the tongues of his teachers; and thereby making them the fit instruments for spreading abroad the holy flame; for dispelling every where the darkness of error; and for lighting up all round the mystic cloud, the heart-expanding conflagration, of love to God above things; and to our neighbours as to ourselves.

And brightness was about it.—That is, the brightness of evidence, so visible to all, who do not shut their eyes against it. We behold it every where surrounding the impenetrable cloud of the mysteries revealed; the truth of which is so clearly demonstrated by the miraculous establishment, propagation and preservation of the Saviour's Church; the exact fulfilment of all the ancient figures and prophecies: in a word, by all the invincible arguments adduced in favour of Christianity.

And out of the midst thereof, that is, out of the midst of the fire, as it were, the resemblance of amber.

Amber is a substance of a rich, clear, transparent, but not dazzling brightness; not concealing the extraneous substances, which it happens to contain: a substance too, which acquires by friction an electric heat and an attractive quality. It may therefore be considered as representing in the midst of the divine fire that embraces it, the righteous portion of the human race; the just, so mild, unostentatious, humble and open-hearted; who seek not to hide their imperfections; and whose benevolence and friendly sympathies are excited and warmed by their contact, or communication with their fellow creatures; whom they win over, and attract to themselves by the endearing ties of good offices and brotherly love. These, though not so resplendent as the glorified in heaven; continue to dwell and shine in the midst of the bright evidence of truth, and the fire of Charity, which encircles the mysterious cloud: that is, they adhere to the true

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 that which 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 alighting 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, say 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*

as, before he began visibly to decline : but, in all, he reigned seven years and six months ; and so long did David reign in Hebron. D. B.

Chapter iii. Verse 35.—*So God do to me ; and more also ; if I taste bread, or any thing else before sun set !* Here is furnished another scripture proof that fasting was always a penitential observance among the people of God.

Chapter v. V. 4.—*David was thirty years old when he began to reign.* See also 3 Kings, ii. 11. The Saviour, whom David prefigured, was thirty years old, when he began his spiritual reign ; by issuing his royal mandates, in his public preachings, first to the Jews ; as David did first to the tribe of Juda : and finally to the Gentiles ; represented by the other reclaimed tribes of Israel.

Verse 8.—*The blind and the lame ; who hated the soul of David.* They are only the blind and the lame in the spiritual sense, who oppose the conquests of the spiritual David.

Chapter vi. V. 7.—*And the indignation of the Lord was kindled against Oza : and he struck him, for his rashness : and he died there before the ark of God.*

Are the things now appertaining to the worship of the true God less holy, than formerly ? Surely not. But, as the Christian dispensation is, not like that of the Jews, a temporal, but a spiritual one : so in every offence is visited with a spiritual punishment, far more awful than any temporal or bodily one. Oza's punishment shews besides that God's tabernacle or church, is not to be upheld by the hand of man ; but by his own divinely supporting power. Look at all the sects of man's establishment ; though formed with all the cunning of human prudence ; though fenced in with the laws of powerful states ; and defended with all the resources of the mightiest monarchs : have we not seen them all successively crumble to nought ? And do we not even now behold a sect, that had clung like the barren parasite Ivy to the Catholic constitution of England ; as it is seen still clinging round our Catholics Cathedrals ; do we not see it now beginning to be shaken loose from the agitated boughs and branches of the venerable oak, to which it adhered with serpentine embrace ; drinking in its vital sap, and withering quite the supporting tree, on which it soluxuriantly throve ; but now withering and mouldering in its turn ? While that church alone which Christ founded, survives them all ; and shews her majestic and imperishable form still towering over their shattered remains and unscemingly wide spread, uncombining ruins.

Chapter vii. V. 12.—*I will establish his kingdom.* This prophecy partly relates to Solomon : but much more to Christ, who is called the son of David in scripture ; and who is the builder of the true temple, which is the church ; his everlasting kingdom, which shall never fail. D. B.

Chapter xii. V. 11.—*I will raise up, &c.* All these evils, in as much as they were punishments, come upon David by a just judgment of God for his sin ; and therefore God says : *I will raise up, &c.* But, in as much as they were sins, on the part of Absalom and his associates ; God was not the author of them : he only permitted them. D. B.

Verses 13, 14.—*The Lord hath taken away thy sin : thou shalt not die. Nevertheless, because, &c.—the child that is born to thee, shall surely die.*—Here we see the guilt pardoned, to the repenting sinner, the eternal punishment thereby remitted ; and yet temporal punishment inflicted.

Verse 16.—*And David kept a fast ; and, going in by himself, lay upon the ground ; And the animals of his house came to make him rise from the ground ; but he would not ; neither did he eat meat with them. And it came to pass, on the seventh day the child died.*

Verse 22.—*And he said : while the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept for him ; for I said :*

who knoweth whether the Lord may not give him to me ; and the child may live ?

Is not this, (as the Catholic church teaches we should) joining penance, and fasting with prayer ; in order to appease God's wrath ? And yet Protestants, who mock at such Catholic doctrine and practices, pretend to square their faith by scripture !

Chapter xv. V. 30.—*Weeping, &c.* David on this occasion wept for his sins ; which he knew were the cause of all his sufferings. D. B.

Chapter xvi. V. 10.—*The Lord hath bid him curse.* not that the Lord was the author of Semei's sin, which proceeded purely from his own malice, and the abuse of his free will ; but that, knowing and suffering his malicious disposition to break out on this occasion ; he made use of him, as his instrument, to punish David for his sins. Ibid.

Verse 21.—*Their hands may be strengthened, &c.* The people might apprehend lest Absalom should be reconciled to his father ; and therefore they followed him with some fear of being left in the lurch ; till they saw such a crime committed as seemed to make a reconciliation impossible. Ibid.

Chapter xviii. V. 33.—*Who would grant me, that I might die for thee, &c.* David lamented the death of Absalom, because of the wretched state in which he died ; and therefore would have been glad to have saved his life, even by dying for him. In which he was a figure of Christ weeping, praying and dying, for his rebellious children ; and ever for them that crucified him. Ibid.

Chapter xxii. V. 2.—*David's Canticle* is prophetically allusive to the Redeemer, of whom David was a figure.

Chapter xxiii. V. 1.—*He is here called the man to whom it was appointed concerning the Christ of the God of Jacob : the excellent Psalmist of Israel. The spirit of the Lord, (says he) hath spoken by me ; and his word by my tongue.*

Chapter xxiv. V. 10.—*But David's heart struck him, after the people were numbered.*—that is, he was touched with a great remorse for the vanity and pride, which had put him upon numbering the people. D. B.

End of the second Book of Kings.

THE THIRD BOOK OF KINGS.

This, and the following Book are called by the holy fathers the third and fourth Book of Kings ; but by the Hebrews the first and second. They contain the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Juda from the beginning of the reign of Solomon to the captivity. As to the writer of these Books, it seems most probable they were not written by one man ; nor at one time : but, as there was all along a succession of prophets in Israel, who recorded by divine inspiration the most remarkable things that happened in their days : these Books seem to have been written by these prophets.—Sec 2 Paralipomenon, alias, 2 Chronicles, ch. ix. 29—ch. xii. 15. ch. xiii. 22—ch. xx. 31—ch. xxvi. 22—ch. xxxii. 32. D. B.

Chapter ii. V. 5.—These instructions, given by king David, to his son, with relation to Joab and Semei, proceeded not from any rancour of heart, or private pique ; but from a zeal for justice ; that crimes so public and heinous might not pass unpunished.—Verse 6.—*To hell.* This word *hell* does not here signify the place or state of damnation ; but the place and state of the dead. D. B.

Chapter iv.—The peaceful reign and wisdom of Solomon, were emblematic of the peaceful reign of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the most high ; and the temporal riches of the former, of the spiritual riches of the latter.

Verse 32.—*Three thousand parables, &c.* These works are all lost, excepting some part of the parables, extant in the Book of Proverbs ; and the

chief poem, called the Canticle of Canticles. D. B. Chapter vi.—The temple built by Solomon was a figure of the church built by Christ.

Verse 9.—*Was built of stones hewed and made ready.*—The stones for the building of God's eternal temple, in the heavenly Jerusalem, (who at the faithful) must first be hewn and polished here by many trials and sufferings, before they can be admitted to have a place in that celestial structure. D. B.

There was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, when it was in building. This shews the quiet manner in which the church of Christ was reared. It was not established by compulsion, violence and blood shed ; but by mild and meek persuasion ; the effect of the peaceful preachings of the Saviour's Apostles and their lawful successors.

Verse 38.—*And he was seven years in building it.* The duration of our time is regulated by the number seven. We have explained this before when speaking of the week of days, of years and of thousands. It is during all this time that the true Solomon is building his everlasting temple ; which will be completed at the end of time, when all its chosen parts, the elect, are built up in it ; and united together in heaven for eternity.

To be continued

Extracted from Charity, a manuscript poem ON THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

—And lo ! At length now to th' expecting world, As long foretold, the saviour-god descends : Th' eternal son ; his father's image bright ;—Philip. 2, 6 In man's frail form appears.—Nor nature felt Her maker's tread ; so silent from his throne.—Is. 41, 3. He glided forth ; and sought our lowly sphere.—Ps. 71, 6. But ah ! how mean disguis'd ! heav'n's king on earth, An outcast vile, nor home, nor welcome finds 'Mong those, blest with his earliest visit paid. A ruin'd stable from the wintry blasts Its shelter sole affords ! A crib his couch ! Such was the palace ; such the bed of state For nature's lord prepar'd ! his royal robes Were swaddling bands ; and all his courtier train, His mother blest, with her chaste guardian spouse : An ox, an ass ; meek menials, station'd near.—Is. 1, 3.

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